WOMEN AND SALT MINING AT KIBIRO SALT GARDENS IN HOIMA DISTRICT (1894-2015)

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DECLARATION

I, JULIET SSEMATIMBA, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for the award of a Degree in any University or Institution of Higher Learning.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled "Women and Salt Mining at Kibiro Salt Gardens in Hoima District 1894-2015" is submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved Children, Tumusingize Anderson, Tumusingize Andersen, Tumusingize Ariannah and Ssenkumba Gaddafhi. You are a blessing to my life.

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However, much as many have contributed towards this work, all the views and interpretations in this dissertation remain my own responsibility. The dissertation is subject to individual scholarly interpretation for which, as a professional historian in the making can accept.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGEA:	African Gender and Extractives Alliance
BAKODA:	Bakibiro Development Association
CMS:	Church Missionary Society
EITI:	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
G.S.R:	Gender Sensitive Research
IBEAC:	Imperial British East Africa Company
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
LC1:	Local Council One
NAPE:	National Association of Professional Environmentalists
SACCO:	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF PLATES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that explain women participation in salt mining at Kibiro salt gardens and how Kibiro's geographical setting acted as a basis for discerning factors underlying salt mining and challenges faced in this mining between 1894-2015. The study was motivated by the observation that while Kibiro's salt mining was not new in historical discourse, attention had largely been on its process and its archaeological explanations. Thus not much attention had been paid to the factors that explain why it was only women who engaged in Kibiro salt mining. The study also intended to identify the benefits and challenges faced and how the challenges were dealt with. The study was guided by four specific objectives that were: to explain Kibiro's geographical setting as a basis for discerning the factors favouring salt mining; to examine women in salt mining during the pre-colonial period; to analyse continuities and changes for women salt mining in Kibiro during the colonial period; to examine the state of women in salt mining at Kibiro during the post-colonial period. The study utilised a qualitative approach. Data were collected using documentary review, observation and face-to-face oral interviews guided by an interview guide. The snowball sampling method was used to identify key informants who then directed the researcher to other knowledgeable informants. Data were analysed using documentary analysis and narrative techniques. The results reveal that women's exclusive role in salt mining can be traced from the pre-colonial period and it is deeply rooted in the Bakibiro cultural fabric. This breaks the established narrative which suggested that women did not play a key role in pre-colonial societies. The study was also guided by the liberal feminist theory of gender.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Benefits: Positive gains realised from salt mining.

Challenges: Problems, limitations and constraints faced by women during salt mining and distribution.

Factors: Reasons explaining why salt mining is in the hands of women.

Salt: The end product realised from salt mining to be used as an additive that makes food tasty, a preservative for perishable goods, for exchange to get food and other commodities required to satisfy domestic needs, and as an economic good used to pay tribute to kings or royalty to government.

Salt gardens: Ground surfaces that produce salt in a renewable way that sustains Kibiro people in a manner similar to how a fertile garden supports growing of crops that sustain cultivators. They are called gardens simply they get everything that sustains them from there and they don't get exhausted

Salt mining: The process of extracting salt from the salt gardens.

Dealing with: Find ways of overcoming challenges faced in salt mining.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The study has investigated on why mining is done by women in Kibiro and yet the worldwide historical patterns indicate that such an important economic activity is usually carried out by men as noted by Germerts[1] salt mining has always attracted both forms of gender with men dominating it in most cases.

The information that exists only indicates that mining is done by women and only talks about the process but it does not provide historical factors to explain why mining at Kibiro is done by only women, benefits and challenges faced by the women. Therefore this study was needed to provide history with the answers to those questions. This study is covering the period from 1894-2015.

1.1 Background to the Study

The history of salt dates many centuries back and a synoptic overview of this history reveal that the rocks and the ocean, sea, lake, river and spring waters which supply salt have existed since their natural formation millions of years ago. According to Halima[2], salt is a naturally occurring substance. Even humankind is reported to have been using salt for various nutritional, preservative, medicinal, economic, political and industrial purposes for thousands of years.[3]The overview of this history, particularly the work of Germerts[4] suggests that, salt mining is not as old as the mineral itself and that the women-oriented perspective of this economic activity is still

underdeveloped not only worldwide but also within the context of particular countries such as Uganda. On the contrary the case of Kibiro changes that idea.

It therefore reveals a gap to which scholarly attention needs to be paid, particularly in Uganda where very little has been done as far as the women role in salt mining is concerned. The fact that the women role in salt mining has attracted little attention is largely explained by the gender theories, especially those that were developed prior to the formulation of the feminist theory of gender, which guides this study generally and its liberal feminism variant in particular.

Salt mining at Kibiro[5] is not a new phenomenon in historical discourse. Using archaeology and historical narrative, Connah, Kamuhangire and Piper[6] have shown that Kibiro salt mines, locally referred to as 'salt gardens', have been in operational existence for centuries that far predate Uganda's colonial era. The fact that Kibiro's mining has always been exclusively in the hands of women was reported by Thruston[7]to have started over a hundred years ago. This fact is in contrast with the worldwide historical pattern which, according to Germerts[8], indicates that as an economic activity like salt mining has often attracted both forms of gender, with men dominating it in most cases. However, they only mention this fact and describe the process that the women used to mine this salt delve into what historically caused women to be only miners of salt at Kibiro, the benefits the women realised from this mining and the challenges faced by them. There is therefore, a gap in the existing body of knowledge to which scholarly attention needs to be paid. This is the gap this study filled using the rationale of the feminist theory of gender, particularly its liberal feminism as explained in section 1.9 of this chapter.

However, not much scholarly attention has been paid to the historical factors accounting for the contrast depicted at Kibiro. Even the existing gender theories do not support this contrast as their general rationale, as explained by Allen, and Felluga[9]depicts women as a culturally and capitalistically oppressed sex under male dominance. There is also a dearth of history on how the women mining salt at Kibiro have been benefiting from it, the challenges they have been facing and how they have been dealing with these challenges since the beginning of salt mining in pre-colonial times.

The available information suggests that from its very beginning, Kibiro's salt mining has been playing a key role in sustaining the livelihoods of the households located in and around this rural township. The role has however, been largely played at a subsistence level and is hence still far below the modern development role salt mining is reported to play in the livelihoods of salt miners in other areas of the world. The vast majority of Kibiro's salt miners are still living in conditions of abject poverty, but the history of the factors explaining their continued involvement in this mining, the benefits they realise from it, the challenges they face, and how they deal with these challenges has not been given any attention. History is needed to act as a guide for Uganda's development planners to design community development programmes that can stimulate socio-economic transformation of Kibiro salt miners within the context of maximising salt production and the gains from it. Based on such a background this study was carried out to provide history narrative to explain why such a key economic activity in Bunyoro like salt mining was left in the hands of the women from 1894 to 2015.

1.2 Problem Statement

An appreciable amount of scholarly work has been written about salt mining at Kibiro such as Connah[10], Robertshaw and Kamuhangire[11], Robertshaw [12] and Connah *et'al*[13]. This work recognises that this mining has, since its very beginning, been entirely in the hands of women. The fact that this mining is exclusively conducted by women is in contrast with the international historical pattern which indicates that as an economic activity, like salt mining was conducted by both men and women, with men dominating it in most of the cases.[14]However, all the scholars who have revealed this contrast have not explicitly explained why this important economic activity has been exclusively in the hands of the women whom even gender theories take to be culturally regarded as inferior, especially in patriarchal societies such as that of Uganda in general and at Kibiro in particular. [15], women are still largely marginalized and excluded from the benefits that could have stimulated increased participation.

Despite mentioning Kibiro in their works, the above scholars do not clearly show how and why women have been key in the mining and processing salt at Kibiro. These scholars do not also show the benefits that women have gotten from this activity. The same writers have shown that women salt miners experience a number of challenges some of which are as a result of the geographical setting in which this mining takes place. However, little of the information availiable covers the case of Kibiro women salt miners. Therefore, there is a vacuum regarding the factors explaining why salt mining at Kibiro has exclusively been in the hands of women, how they have been benefiting from it, the challenges they have been facing and how they have

been dealing with these challenges from pre-colonial through the colonial to the postcolonial Uganda.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the history of salt mining at Kibiro from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period and also account for why it was entirely in the hands of women, from 1894 to 2015.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To explain Kibiro's geographical setting as a basis for favouring salt mining.
2. To examine why women participated in salt mining during the pre-colonial period.
3. To analyse continuities and changes for women salt mining in Kibiro in the colonial period
4. To examine the state of women in salt mining at Kibiro during the post-colonial period.

1.3.3 Research Questions

The study was set out to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the geographical setting act as a basis for favouring salt mining?
2. Why was salt mining at Kibiro entirely in the hands of women during the pre-colonial era?

3. What were the continuities and changes experienced by women in salt mining in Kibiro during the colonial period?
4. What was the state of women participation in salt mining at Kibiro up to 2015?

1.4 Scope of the study

1.4.1 Content Scope

The study focused on examining the history of salt mining at Kibiro from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period and also account for why it was entirely in the hands of women, from 1894 to 2015.

1.4.2 Time scope

The study covered a period from 1894 to 2015. The year 1894 was considered because; Uganda was declared a British Protectorate. The study will give a background of salt mining in this area beginning in AD 900. According to Agena[16] it was in AD 900 that women started mining salt at Kibiro. The year 2015 was selected because it was the year the study ended due to the fact that Banyakibiro Development Association (BAKODA) was formed as a uniting association for the women were participating in salt mining. This association has also played an important role making the women to be recognised as the only miners of salt in this area.

1.4.3 Geographical Scope

This study covered Kibiro salt mines located on the Eastern shore of Lake Albert in Hoima district. These mines were selected because they had, since their beginning, been entirely in the

hands of women. They were therefore, appropriate for a study whose content scope was as explained above. This scope is explained in detail in Chapter Two.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it provides a historical account explaining why salt mining at Kibiro has since its beginning been in the hands of women, the benefits they have realised, the challenges they have been faced and how they have been tried to overcome these challenges. This account is important in that it provides an empirical basis on which other studies can be carried out in Kibiro and other parts of the country.

This particular study also enriches the existing body of knowledge about the theory and practices of women in the mining history of Uganda and other parts of the world which predominantly patriarchal societies. Therefore study breaks the historical narrative which had shown that women did not play any important role in the economy of the society in many parts of Uganda and the world at large. This knowledge too, can be used by gender-oriented history researchers and academicians to conduct further research.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

A number of gender theories have been and continue to be formulated to explain the gender roles in society. This study is guided by the rationale of the feminist theory and first reviews two other gender theories to justify the choice of the feminist theory to underpin the analysis of salt mining by women at Kibiro. These include: the reviewed theories include the functional theory, conflict

theory, and symbolic interaction theory. Each of these three theories views society as realm in which socio-economic roles are assigned in a gender-specific manner as discussed below.

1.6.1 Functional Theory

The formulation of the functional theory was spearheaded by Talcott Parsons in 1950s.[17] This theory was developed to explain the realities of gender roles and inequalities. In essence, it focuses on division of labour between men and women, assigning breadwinning roles outside there to men and roles conducted within homes to women.[18] This theory assigns all roles (such as hunting and gathering in ancient societies), mining, manufacturing, construction, and other types of modern society work carried out outside to men, and home-based roles such as mothering, nursing, housekeeping, childcare, emotional support and other such roles to women.[19] This theory assigns the roles in this manner based on the biological differences between men and women, and claims that every culture does it the same way not because of the biological programming of women but as a logical basis for organizing society.[20] Evidently, believers in this theory could not think of women participating in salt mining as doing work worth their attention.

1.6.2 The Conflict Theory

The conflict theory was developed by Karl Marx and Friederich Engel, focusing on the struggle between the dominant group and dominated group in society.[21] This theory posits that a group that owns tools of production exploits the group that does not own these tools. Applied to gender, this theory asserts that tools of production and private property rights are transmitted in a patriarchy or male dominated manner. It asserts that inequality exists in society, especially in a

capitalist system, and its expression puts the roles played by men as those of the exploiter and those played by women as those of the exploited. It asserts that most of the work carried out by women is not valued, receives no pay, is viewed as uneconomic and is therefore unnecessary; it's the work of men that is recognised and paid.[22] Since this theory considers the work of women as unnecessary, its believers could not waste time studying about it, even when it was in form of salt mining.

1.6.3 Symbolic Interaction Theory

This theory was developed by Herbert Blumer from the work of George Herbert Mead around the middle of the twentieth century.[23] According to Macionis,[24] the symbolic interaction theory focuses on relationships that take place at a micro-sociological level or in daily life. In a gender relationship, this theory puts men at the control centre of society, asserting that its men who shape behaviour in society. The role of females is to respond to the behaviour started by men. In the world of work, women are expected to supplement or complement what men do, but not to dominate it.[25] Believers in this theory assume that when a study about work any form of work focuses on men, it automatically takes care of women since they covered as helpers of men.

The first developed gender theories painted a picture that women constituted a male-dominated group whose work was home-based, uneconomic and unnecessary. This picture was only changed by the feminist theory whose rationale guides this study. The feminist theory was developed in the United States of America in 1840s to protest the suffering of women and their unfair dominance by men.[26] The theory is against many gender-based injustices in society, but all of them can be generalised in five categories, namely: working for increasing equality in

society and creating more choices for women (liberal feminism); destroying gender stratification (Marxist/socialist feminism), and averting sexual violence and encourage sexual freedom (radical feminism).[27]

This study is particularly guided by the rationale of liberal feminism, which advances a view that women are not more inferior, weaker or less of human beings than men.[28] Ignorance of these facts should not make society socialise women under male-dominance because they can play important roles in society by doing whatever men can do and sometimes, in an even better way.[29] Therefore, irrespective of being biologically different from men, they deserve equal rights, equal treatment, and equal opportunities with men, and their work should be as recognised, valued and paid for as the case is with the work of men.[30] Clearly, the rationale of liberal feminism suggests that the work women do in society should not be ignored. This applies to the work women conduct in salt mining. However, this work and its contribution in communities have not received the attention they deserve, particularly at Kibiro in Uganda. This study was hence conducted to cover this gap using the methodology explained henceforth.

1.7. Literature Review

The available literature suggests that despite the fact that the global, African and countrywide history of salt mining has been voluminously growing, most of the writers have been using archaeological, socioeconomic, political, nutritional, medical and industrial perspectives. The women-oriented perspective of this activity has not been given much attention. Even the few scholars who have applied this perspective such as Kuntala [31] have not focused on salt mining as the main theme. Their main focus has been on small-scale, extractive or artisanal mining in

general. Salt mining appears in their writings as a mere illustration of artisanal mining and it is treated in a brief manner.

In addition, all the studies available on the women perspective of salt mining were conducted outside Uganda and none of them cites Kibiro mining as an illustration, let alone the factors explaining why at Kibiro, it is only women carrying out salt mining, the benefits accruing to them from this process, the challenges they face and how they deal with these challenges. There is therefore a general gap about the historicity of these variables. This gap is particularly evident in the history of salt mining at Kibiro. While scholars such as Graham[32] etal[33] made appreciable efforts to write the history of Kibiro's salt mining, they concentrated on describing this process and how it was exclusively in the hands of women since its very beginning. Even when these authors made this latter observation, they fell short of delving into the issues identified above. A review of the literature available on salt mining helps bring out this gap at the global, African and Ugandan perspectives.

However, they only mention this fact and describe the process that the women use to mine this salt. They do not delve into what historically caused women to be the only miners of the salt at Kibiro, the benefits the women realise from this mining, the challenges they face during mining and the efforts they make to deal with the challenges. There is therefore a gap in the existing body of knowledge to which scholarly attention needs to be paid .This is the gap that this study fills using the rationale of the feminist theory of gender, particularly its liberal feminism variant as explained in Section 1.9 of this chapter.

1.7.1 The global perspective

Different scholars have taken keen interest in the history of salt mining at the global level. These include Robin and Olivier, Weller[34], Thomas. Maugh II[35], BBC[36], David [37], Hinton etal[38] and Kurlansky Mark[39,40], amongst others. Generally, these scholars have made significant efforts in tracing the archaeological beginning and historical development of salt mining, but their use of a worldwide perspective has made their respective writings largely generalised and therefore, not detailed enough to cover salt mining at the local perspective such as that of Kibiro on which this study focused. Moreover, some of these scholars do not even mention women in their entire historical writings.

Specifically, Thomas. Maugh II[41] observed that archaeologically, salt mining began in Europe as early as 5400 B.C at Solnitsata, a now six-millennium-old town located in the present day Bulgaria. He noted that salt mining at this town involved residents using rough ceramic bowls to collect spring water whose salt content was as high as 160 to 190 grams per litre. The collected water was then boiled to evaporate the liquid content and leave behind a solid block of salt ready for use as a food additive, preservative or for trade to gain economic or political benefits. Evidently, this writer pointed out the involvement of residents in salt mining without giving their gender disaggregation. He also did not delve into the factors that accounted for the residents' involvement in salt mining and the challenges the residents faced in this process. Even when he briefly identified the benefits to which salt was put after its mining, he did not indicate the proportion that was shared by women.

Kurlansky , Mark[42] took a world historical approach to study the genesis of salt mining in countries such as China, India, Egypt, Japan, Morocco, Israel, Africa, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, England, Scandinavia, France and the United States of America. His two historical accounts reveal that salt mining started much earlier than the 5400 BC, which is reported by Thomas Mark Maugh II[43], and that it did not start in Europe. This account reveals and is also supported by Karen Eva Carr[44] that salt mining started in China at least 6000 BC when the Chinese began harvesting salt from the surface of Lake Xiechi located near the town of Yuncheng in Shanxi. It also indicates that between 6000 BC and 5000 BC, salt mining led to the use of salt as money, salary and a status symbol defining power relations between haves and have-nots. Around this time, salt was the most treasured item, even more precious than gold. The paths that salt merchants used to transport salt to trading centres, palaces and to far areas such as India were eventually developed into tarmac roads. The result was a well-developed road network that connected salt-works, trading centres, palaces and places near and far.

Kurlansky Mark[45] narrated further that as the population that got involved in salt mining and trading expanded, salt mines turned into towns such as Nantwich, Middlewich, Northwick, and other towns, especially those whose names bear a suffix 'which', an Anglo Saxon term for salt. He observed that by the time the Industrial Revolution set in around the onset of the 18th century, much of the road network that had appeared in many parts of Asia, Europe and North America was as a result of salt mining. He also noted that before the days of refrigeration, salting was the main method of preserving perishable food. Clearly, throughout this writer's historical account, no attention is paid to women in terms of whether participated in salt mining, the factors explaining their participation, how they benefitted, the challenges they faced and how they

overcame them. This is the gap this study was intended to cover using Kibiro in Uganda as a case in point.

The writings of Olivier and Dumitroaia Gauthier[46] observed that salt mining began even much earlier in 6050 BC, not in 6000 BC and not in China but in Eastern Europe, being manned by the Neolithic people during the Iron Age. They noted that Neolithic people carried out salt mining by collecting salty water (also called brine) from springs, boiling the water to evaporate the solvent and crystallise the solute into hard, salt cakes, moulded in pottery containers that could be transported home, to palaces or by salt merchants. It should be noted that these two writers were overly concerned with establishing the possible earliest beginning of salt mining and how the process was conducted. They did not delve into the women perspective of salt mining by the Neolithic people, thereby falling short of covering the aspects on which this current study focuses.

A similar criticism applies even to the work of Robin Brigand and Olivier Weller[47], which used an archaeological approach to trace the history of salt mining in countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, France, South America and Japan, West Africa (Niger), China (Sichuan area), and Oceania (West New Guinea). This work covers the technical aspects that characterised salt mining from its beginning in 6050 BC to the onset of the Industrial Revolution, and how these aspects improved the social and economic lives of salt miners. The work however, does not delve into the women perspective of the entire salt mining process.

The literature reviewed so far suggests that salt mining was started in different parts of the world at different times ranging between 6050 BC and 5400 BC. It also indicates that salt mining

involved mainly collection of salty spring and lake water, boiling this water to evaporate its solvent element and retain the solute in form of salt crystals, also called salt case or solid salt. The literature reveals further that salt mining improved the socioeconomic status of the miners, created power relations between haves and have-nots, led to transformation of footpaths into tarmac roads and to the growth of salt production centres into cities that have a suffix of 'which' in their names. The literature is however, not gender-disaggregated and is therefore not clear about the women perspective of all the changes that salt mining brought about in the lives of the miners, the factors that drove people into salt mining, and how the women benefited from it.

According to BBC[48], a salt mining process akin to what is described above was begun during the Iron Age (6th century BC) at Droitwich Spa, a very old town located in Northern Worcestershire on the River Salwarpe in England. This writer noted that the salt content of this river was very high; making up 30% of each litre and that at first, its mining was carried out by local citizens. However, the Romans, who were the main buyers of the mined salt, took over the salt works at Droitwich Spa in the 15th century AD in order to get more salt they needed to pay their soldiers. The Romans occupied Droitwich for 400 years, named its salt works 'Salinae', and while there, they expanded salt mining to the extent of producing and selling up to 1000 tons of salt each year.

BBC[49] observed further that towards the beginning of the 19th century, Droitwich's salt works were transformed into a commercial salt factory that used large iron pans and big furnaces to heat and evaporate large volumes of brine, thereby producing large quantities of crystallised salt measuring up to 120,000 tons a year. This salt was being sold throughout Europe and as far as

India. It increased the sellers' economic gains until 1922 when commercial production was ended after the more viable salt mining was started at Stoke Prior. Evidently, BBC's[50] historical account reveals how salt mining at Droitwich Spa evolved from a small-scale informal activity to an industrialised activity that eventually declined following the discovery of more viable sources of salt. The account however, does not disclose anything to do with women, the main focus of this study.

The World Bank[51] indicates that since its beginning in the prehistoric era, artisanal and small-scale mining has been taking placing in about 80 countries worldwide, especially those in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Central and South America. This source indicates further that this kind of mining includes all the informal and sometimes illegal small-scale mining of gold, mercury, sand, sapphire, gypsum, and more importantly for this study, salt, amongst other minerals. It also shows that this mining has mostly been carried out by individual workers and their families as a source of employment, economic support for household livelihoods, road network formation, and marketplace and township development. Those deriving their livelihoods from this mining have grown in number to approximately 100 million globally, and have considerably surpassed those who have been working in formal industrial mining; for the worldwide number for the latter has grown to only 7 million since the onset of the Industrial Revolution.

It should be noted that the World Bank[52] explained the global numerical growth and benefits of artisanal mining. It also pointed out that this mining subsumes salt mining. Nevertheless, all its observations remained general. They did not pay attention to the women perspective of the explained growth and benefits. There are however, some world history scholars who have

written about women in mining, but even then, their writings do not cover the specific case of women salt miners at Kibiro.

In particular, the International Labour Organisation (ILO)[53] indicated that over the past 100 or so years, small-scale mining, which includes salt mining, had been expanding rapidly and often uncontrollably, employing larger numbers of women in many developing countries. This source reported that between 1995 and 1999, this mining grew in 35 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America by an average of 20%, and was expected to maintain this growth for the next decade or so. ILO continued to point out that this mining was growing because of the promise of employment and subsequent cash earnings it held for up to 13 million workers who looked to it as a source of livelihood and poverty alleviation, with a whole 4 million of them being women.

ILO[54] noted further that this mining however, exposed miners to various challenges, including having no choice but to work not only for subsistence and low pay but also in unhealthy, unsafe, dirty, precarious, appalling, dangerous, and damaging conditions whose fatality rate was up to 90 times higher than the mining conditions of industrialized countries. ILO[55] made all these observations based on illustrations of small-scale mining obtained from countries, which included Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Colombia, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Clearly, Uganda was not mentioned in this list, suggesting that the benefits realised by Ugandan miners who participate in small-scale mining and the challenges they face were not discussed. Moreover, the benefits and challenges were discussed for small-scale mining in Uganda, not for salt mining in particular. This raises the question of whether the benefits and

challenges faced by small-scale miners in Uganda are similar to those raised by ILO or not. This study was therefore proposed to answer this question based on Kibiro's salt mining as a specific form of small-scale mining.

Hinton, Veiga and Beinhoff[56]elucidated women participation in artisanal mining, identifying salt mining as one of its various forms. The intent of these scholars was not only to explore women's evolving roles in artisanal mining but also to provide a rationale and strategy for women to maximize the potential benefits of engaging in the various forms of this mining. In their discourse, Hinton and his colleagues[57] provided a statistical analysis of women who participated in artisanal mining. The analysis revealed that women made approximately 30% of the world's artisanal miners and that this proportion varied considerably across continents. Artisanal women miners were found to be less than 10% in Asia, between 10% and 20% in Latin America and 40% – 50% in Africa. The analysis also showed that the proportions of women participating in this mining varied considerably even at the country level as illustrated in Table 1.1.

Table1.1 : Women in Artisanal Mining in Selected Countries

Continent and Country	Number of Women	Proportion within country (%)
Africa		
Burkina Faso	45000 – 85000	45%
Ghana	89,500	45%
Malawi	4000	10%
Mozambique	18,000	30%
Mali	100'000	50%
South Africa	500	05%
Zimbabwe	153,000	50%
Asia		
India	33,500	07%
Indonesia	10,900	10%
Philippines	46,400	25%
Papua New Guinea	12,000	20%
Latin America		
Bolivia	15,500	22%
Ecuador	6,200	10%

Source: Hinton, J., M. M. Veiga, C. Beinhoff, 2003 Op. cit. p.2.

Hinton *et'al*[58]provided a rich statistical analysis of women's involvement in artisanal mining and the direct and ancillary roles the women played in this process. They also pointed out that it was poverty that drove most of the women into artisanal mining, and that these women faced health challenges such as body injuries resulting from chemical exposure. However, despite covering various country experiences of women in salt mining, these scholars' discourse did not cover Uganda. Moreover, the discourse was generalised to all forms of artisanal mining and was therefore, not comprehensive in the particular context of salt mining. The review the studies of Kuntala [59], Gier Jaci and Laurie Mercier[60], Hinton, Veiga and Beinhoff[61] and Hilson Gavin[62]

reveals that they each portray the same weakness. Therefore, the present study was conducted to establish whether the observations made in this discourse were also valid in the specific case of Uganda's salting mining, taking Kibiro as a case in point.

Kuntala [63] noted that salt mining is not non-traditional to women, but women do not own the mines due to limited access to and control over resources such as land and that this one of the major challenges they face. After mentioning this, Kuntala [64] placed their emphasis on the proportion of women who participate in salt mining compared to men, and on what women exactly do as direct or ancillary labourers in salt mining and how their health is affected as they mine. Clearly the factors forcing women to mine salt and the benefits they realise from it are not given attention.

1.7.2 The African Perspective

The scholarly work of Mannar and Yusufali [65] indicates that over the last millennium, salt played a major role in the development of internal trading networks, which, amongst other factors, contributed to the growth of urbanization and emergence of states in some parts of Africa. The work of Gemerts[66] and Hinton et'al[67] agrees that women have been participating in artisanal mining, in which small-scale salt mining is categorised, since pre-colonial times and that globally and that Africa has been having the largest proportion of such women, averaging at 40%-50%. In specific countries, women constitute 50% of those carrying in artisanal mining in Zimbabwe, 40% in Tanzania, and 90% in Burkina Faso.[68]

It should be noted that while the writers cited above provided statistical analysis of women participation in artisanal mining, they neither delved into the factors accounting for this participation nor explained the benefits that have been accruing to these women and the challenges the women miners have been facing. Moreover, artisanal mining is treated in general and salt mining appears as a mere illustration. Further, Uganda is not mentioned anywhere in the given statistical analysis; yet Kibiro women on whom this study focused are located in Uganda.

According to Valiani[69], the first ever Africa Mining Vision developed in 2009 by African Ministers in charge of mineral resources development, and its accompanying policy framework provided a comprehensive strategy for mineral and other natural resource extraction. However, this vision, policy framework and strategy were all silent about African women miners, even when extraction primarily affects women especially in rural areas. The silence was particularly on factors that push women into mining, the challenges they face along the way and how to deal with these challenges. Valiani[70] therefore, stressed the need to carry out national studies with intent to understand these issues. This study was hence proposed to break this silence using a historical perspective focusing on women salt miners at Kibiro.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)[71] indicates that as a principle, the wealth from a country's natural resources should benefit all its citizens in terms of production, generated revenue, its allocation and utilisation. This source shows further that the benefits should first go to the real owners and producers of the resources, be they oil, gas or minerals. It is however, doubtable whether this has been happening to the women miners of salt, a natural resource at

Kibiro; for there is no history that can provide evidence. This study was hence needed to provide the necessary evidence.

The study of Mokotong [72] indicates that women miners experience challenges and use different coping mechanisms to deal with these challenges. This study outlines the challenges, including working in a different labour culture, hard labour, occupational hazards, and physical demands that stretch women's health and work-life balance, poor sanitation facilities and sexual harassment. The different mechanisms women miners use to cope with the challenges include adapting to the labour culture, convincing men to give support where necessary, and to be empathetic to them when the challenges being faced are naturally unique to women. Mokotong's study was however, conducted in South Africa and about underground mining. Whether the challenges and coping mechanisms it identified are also applicable to the women who use surface mining at Kibiro was therefore important to investigate.

Another study by Akpalu, Wisdom and Ametefee [73] indicates that many mineral-rich countries in sub-Saharan Africa overlook serious challenges facing miners, including high levels of pollution, which raise the risk of pollution-related sicknesses, such as skin infections, upper and lower respiratory disorders, and cardiovascular diseases suffered in mining communities. These challenges are overlooked as a way of attracting foreign mining companies, but they increase the already high healthcare expenditures in affected communities. This study was however, conducted about gold mining in Ghana, not about salt mining in Uganda, let alone Kibiro area.

In the course of their discourse, Hinton[74] et'al discussed salt mining in Africa, observing that women participation had tended to vary considerably, ranging from over 75% in countries such

as Nigeria to slightly over 40% in countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These scholars noted that the majority of women were pushed into artisanal mining by the desire to overcome extreme poverty. They added that the efforts of some women, especially those whose spouses did not exploitatively control by requiring them to surrender all the economic gains, were paying off in form of realising benefits such as education of daughters, providing economic support for family, and rising social status in the community.

Hinton[75] noted further that in some countries such as Zambia, women miners faced challenges such as chemical exposure, spirits barring them to reach some positions within the mines, under-pricing of their mining products, lack of skills, remoteness, poor access roads, and host of others. Furthermore, these scholars pointed out that deliberate government-supported community roads development initiatives, educational campaigns and training programs in mining have been used to overcome some of these challenges. The authors were however, writing about Africa in general, and did not even mention salt mining by women at Kibiro.

According to Hilson [76] women who have been participating in salt mining in Ghana is over 75%. However, most of the proceeds from the women efforts go to their spouses because of the cultural male chauvinism over women. This arrangement has continued in Ghana for a long time because of the chauvinistic culture that hampers women's ability to not only attain knowledge of control over the contribution they make towards household resources but also participate in decision-making regarding the utilization of these resources. A similar scenario was reported by Amutabi and Lutta-Mukhebi[77], who added that Kenya's women salt miners kept on experiencing the situation despite the fact that they were doing most of the production work and even the

marketing of the produced salt owing to the fact that buyers preferred them to men. According to Yakovleva and Natalia[78], women continued being subjected to such challenges because of lack of alternative economic opportunities not only due to lack of skills needed to do other better and more paying jobs but also due to lack of enlightenment about their economic rights.

It is imperative to note that the above observations were made about women salt miners in Ghana and Kenya, but not in Uganda, let alone Kibiro. The question then is: Do the observations apply to the women salt miners at Kibiro.

According to Hilson[79], women have tended to dominate salt mining in most of the West African countries, including Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mali, and Nigeria. This writer attributed this dominance to strong traditional association of women with artisanal mining. The writer explained that the process of salt mining carried out in Nigeria, particularly at Keana involves placing salt-rich sand in pots, pouring water into the pot to dissolve the salt and drain it through a small hole at the bottom of the pot. The salt-rich solution (brine) is then collected in a hollowed-out log from where it is poured into another pot and heated on fire until it crystallizes. The women then sell the crystallized salt to earn revenue which they use to sponsor their children to attend school and meet some of the household needs. Clearly, Hilson[80] discussed the case for West African countries, not that of Uganda.

1.7.3 The Ugandan Perspective

Different writers and researchers have taken interest in studying about women participation in salt mining in Uganda. A review of their writings reveals that salt mining has been going in

Uganda at mainly three locations. These include Katwe, Bulyampanga and more importantly for this study, Kibiro. The analysis of the writings reveals further that no records exist about salt production in each of these locations prior to the reports of Europeans in the 1800s. This suggests that the pre-colonial history of salt mining in Uganda is still a matter worth exploratory investigation. Therefore, this study was needed to provide this history using Kibiro salt mining as a case in point.

In particular, Ndiho [81] focused on salt mining at Lake Katwe. His writings indicate salt mining at Katwe has been going on for centuries and is therefore one of Uganda's oldest economic activities. This mining does not involve manufacturing of salt. This writer reports that Katwe salt miners "don't manufacture salt ... neither do ... (they) process it, but ... (they) depend on the salt which naturally forms within ... (their) pans and lake." He continues to note that these miners have just been constructing large semi-permanent pools around the edges of the lake to intensify salt formation through evaporation caused by the scorching sun. He observes that these pools, ponds or plots are dug using hoes and demarcated using earth and pieces of wood; they are square-like, measuring about nine feet wide and two metres deep, and are referred to as salt-pans. The pans can be owned by miners either as groups or in most cases as individuals, having been dug, bought, or inherited, and it is within them that salt forms naturally.

Ndiho[82] indicates further that Katwe salt mining involves both women and men standing in toxic, chest-deep water and using bare hands to extract salt from that forms on the surface of the water trapped in the pans. He writes that since its beginning, Katwe's salt mining has been and continues to be the main source of livelihood and economic support for families of the local

community in the area. After mining salt, the miners, mostly men sell much of it to traders who come from other parts of Uganda and neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Economic benefits have been arising from this exchange. Today, Katwe salt miners can earn as much as $150 per week in seasons of boom and as low as $20 in times of bust. This has resulted into salt mining playing a significant political and economic role in the history of Katwe's salt mining community. Those who own large pans are economically more powerful and control those who have small or do not have pans. Most of the women do not own salt pans and are thus controlled by men. They are employed as labourers working for men for long hours a day but earning peanuts from their labour.

Ndiho[83] continues to note that Katwe salt miners have, since the beginning of this activity, been facing challenges, including exposure to toxic chemicals and using back-breaking rudimentary tools. His work indicates that Uganda government under President Idi Amin Dada started building a salt factory in order to industrialise the process, do way with the rudimentary methods and expand salt output. This, according to Tumusiime, [84] and Halima[85], was around 1975 when German industrialists from Thysen established Lake Katwe Salt Company. Not only had this company been established to save Uganda the millions of dollars that were being spent on salt importation. It was also put up to export Uganda's salt and to establish a salt factory that would help improve the livelihoods of the communities around Lake Katwe. However, the pipes of the factory that this company established corroded soon after it began operating. This discouraged the Germans and they abandoned the factory. Consequently, salt mining based on the use of rudimentary methods continued and as a result, salt miners, particularly women, continued living in conditions of exposure to safety and health risks and extreme poverty notwithstanding the

much labour they continued putting into salt mining. These observations are however, made about women salt miners at Katwe. Could they also hold for women at Kibiro?

While Ndiho's writings covered Katwe's salt mining in general, the African Gender and Extractives Alliance (WoMin) and National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) (2013)[86] focused on only the women who participate in this mining. The work of WoMin and NAPE indicates that salt mining at Lake Katwe dates as far back as the 16th century and as a labour-intensive activity, it has sustained thousands of Katwe inhabitants. It also shows that while both forms of gender have been participating in this mining since its beginning, women have been doing much of the work, spending more than eight hours under the scorching equatorial sun harvesting salt amid various challenges. WoMin & NAPE[87] summarised these challenges as follows:

> The waters from which women harvest salt contain concentrated brine and are highly polluted by ammonia, hydrogen and other gases. Women have all along been working without protective gear and have as result, been suffering the consequences of prolonged exposure to hazardous chemicals and inadequate access to health care.... Common health problems as a result of salt mining include inflammation of the uterus – and even outright loss of the uterus – dehydration, and chemical-induced burns and infections. Due to the influx of transient traders from other parts of Uganda..., the prevalence of HIV infection is also high and women ... are the most vulnerable... They are also exposed to) sexual harassment and rape...

Some of the challenges cited above are also reported in the work of Masinde[88], Mwenda[89], Abdallah [90] and Tumusiime, [91] WoMin & NAPE[92] indicates that women carry out salt mining by stepping into highly corrosive Lake Katwe salty waters. As they do their work, salt crystallises on their bear arms as the brine on the arms gets exposed to the scorching sun. WoMin and NAPE[93] further pointed out that not even the governance body, Katwe Salt Conservation Board, has helped women overcome the challenges they face. Consequently, women continue working for

long hours but get poor returns ranging between Uganda shillings 4000 and 10000 (1-2.5 United States dollars) per day. These observations suggest that women salt miners have been facing different health and economic challenges. The observations were however, made while referring to Katwe Salt Mines. The question then is: Could the same challenges be experienced by women salt miners at Kibiro? This is the question that this study sought to answer.

There are scholars who have written about salt mining at Bulyampanga and Kibiro (for instance Connah[94], Robertshaw and Kamuhangire[95]; Robertshaw [96,97] etal[98] All these scholars agree that mining at Kibiro has entirely been in the hands of women since its beginning that predates Uganda's colonial era by many centuries. Specifically, Robertshaw and Kamuhangire pointed out and so did Robertshaw that whereas salt mining at both Katwe and Bulyampanga had always involved both men and women, salt mining at Kibiro had always been exclusively conducted by women. These scholars however, did not delve into the factors that caused this situation at Kibiro; for their concern was about presenting preliminary results of their archaeological research in Bunyoro-Kitara. They therefore, left the reader questioning why this economic activity has entirely been conducted by women only.

Connah etal[99] wrote about salt mining at Kibiro, noting that this mining had archaeologically been established to have started 700-800 years ago. After observing that this mining was exclusively carried out by women since its beginning, these scholars explained the mining process that women had developed to mine salt. They noted that this process involves spreading loose dry earth on top of moist saline earth or alluvial deposited by several hot springs as they flow downwards to the base of the Western Rift escarpment. The loose dry earth is spread to

absorb the salt contained in this alluvial as this salt percolates upwards to the surface as the sun heats the alluvial. The loose earth is left to absorb salt from the alluvial or ground surface for about seven to ten days. Thereafter, the absorbent loose soil is collected off the ground surface into a container. Water is then poured into this soil and leached as a means of draining the absorbed brine (liquid salty water) from it. The brine is drained in another container and boiled to separate water from salt through evaporation. The leached earth is poured back on top the alluvial and the process is repeated again. Since the same alluvial keeps on releasing brine when the same process is applied, it acts in a renewable manner that led salt miner to refer to it as a 'salt garden'. This is why Kibiro salt mines are locally referred to as salt gardens.

However, despite pointing out that Kibiro's population concentrated at one point because of salt mining, Connah etal[100]fell short of describing the factors that led to continued successful exploitation of salt by women.

Connah[101]noted that salt mining is the main economic activity of the Kibiro women, and in a society that is patrilineal, salt-gardens are inheritable in the female line. Salt-gardens cannot be bought and sold, although in recent times it has become possible for them to be rented. He observed that women profit from it and that it is the reason behind the development of Kibiro as a rural township. This scholar however, does not per iodise these observations. This paints a picture that what he explains has been happening all along. Is this the case? Have women been viewing salt mining as an economic activity and have they been profiting from it since its beginning? Moreover, as mentioned earlier, nowhere in his analysis are the factors explaining women dominance in salt mining, challenges faced and solutions to these challenges mentioned.

Robertshaw and Kamuhangire [102] wrote about the past in the present based on an analysis of the archaeological sites, oral traditions, shrines and politics in Uganda. Their work covers a description of salt mining by women at Kibiro, but it does not delve into the factors explaining why it is women dominating this mining. This is because these authors wrote about Kibiro salt mining not as the main focus of their analysis, but as a centre of economic production in the pre-colonial Bunyoro state.

Overall, all scholars who have written about salt mining have focused more on describing the archaeological beginning of this mining, its geographical setting, the methods used to extract the salt and how the extracted salt is utilised. While some scholars have elucidated how beneficial this mining is to the miners, the challenges they face and how these challenges are dealt with, their focus has not been on Kibiro women miners. In all cases, little scholarly effort has been spent on delving into the factors explaining why salt production at Kibiro, which played a vital economic and political role in the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara, and later, in the British Protectorate government, was exclusively in the hands of women. In addition, not much is documented about the benefits accruing to these women from the mining, the challenges they face and how they deal with these challenges. These are the gaps that motivated the conducting of this study to fill them.

1.8 Research Methodology

This section discusses how the study was conducted. It focuses on the research design, study population, sampling, research instruments, data sources and collection procedure, and data

analysis applied in this study. It also outlines the limitations of the study. Details of how each of these was determined are explained in the following sub-sections:

1.8.1 Research Design

This study employed a case study research design based on a qualitative approach. This design was used to facilitate realisation of the objectives of the study based on an in-depth historical analysis of women miners at a particular mining centre – Kibiro salt mines (locally called salt gardens). According to Creswell[103], this research design has advantages such as permitting desk research through document review and field research through the use of interviews, photo and other methods that can facilitate a detailed and better analysis and understanding of the studied case. The researcher made use of these advantages to review relevant online and printed texts, take Plate graphs and interview respondents who were considered resourceful sources of the data that was needed to accomplish the study.

1.8.2 Study Population

The study population consisted of all women who were involved in salt mining as well as elderly people and opinion leaders (Chairperson of the village and BAKODA chairperson) at Kibiro. Women were included in the population because they were the units of analysis or the main focus of the study. They were therefore expected to be resourceful as far as eliciting data needed to accomplish the study was concerned. Elderly people were considered based on the rationale that by virtue of their long life, they were in a position to provide historical data about how

Kibiro's salt mining came to be exclusively in the hands of women and how this mining had progressed over the entire time they had lived.

Opinion leaders were included in the study population because they were expected to be in a position to provide generalised data about Kibiro's salt mining within the context of the objectives of the study. Uganda's 2014 Housing and Population Census indicates that Kibiro has an estimated 8000 households. According to Kigorobya Sub-county records, as a fishing village, Kibiro has a population of 16,849 residents of whom 9,907 are female.

1.8.3 Sample Size and Selection

Since a qualitative approach was employed in this study, Amin[104] indicates that the requirement of selecting a sample that is statistically representative of the study population did not apply to it. Therefore, the researcher reached the saturation level of the required data after interviewing 20 respondents, including five men and 15 women. Women were more because the study was about them. All these respondents were selected using snowball and convenience sampling. As Baxter and Susan[105] observed, convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that permits selection of respondents according to their suitability, availability, accessibility and willingness to participate in a study. It was applied in this study to enable the researcher to select respondents who were suitable, available and accessible at Kibiro, and were willing to be interviewed to provide the required data.

1.8.4 Data Sources

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. Primary data sources included the selected respondents, that is, the women, elderly and opinion leaders, as well as observation and Plategraphy. Secondary data sources consisted of online sources and printed sources, which included relevant history documents and manuscripts.

1.8.5 Data Collection Methods

As alluded to earlier, three methods were used to collect data. These are explained below:

a) ***Interview:*** Creswell[106] observed that this method was used to collect data from all the selected respondents in a face-to-face manner because of its advantage of flexibility and ability to collect detailed qualitative data. Its flexibility enabled the researcher interview respondents according to their levels of literacy. With this flexibility, respondents who knew English were interviewed in English while those who did not know this language were interviewed through an interpreter who used mother tongue. In all cases, an interview guide was designed and used to guide the conducting of the interviews in a systematic manner. The questions used to conduct the interviews were designed according to the objectivities of the study. A copy of the administered interview guide appears in Appendix A.

Before conducting any interview, prior arrangements were made to select and train two research assistants in ways of appropriating, requesting and asking questions. This was intended to equip these assistants with questioning skills as well as how to write down crucial responses in the course of an on-going interview. Further effort was made to seek permission from the

Chairperson of Local Council One (LCI), Mr Yafeesi Babyesiza, who also doubled as the Chairperson of the Bakibiro Development Association (BAKODA).

After getting the permission, the chairperson was requested to help the researcher identify women who had spent at least 10 years in salt mining at Kibiro, those who had retired from this economic activity, the elderly in the area and the opinion leaders. At least 10 years were considered long enough for any woman miner to have acquired knowledge about the history of Kibiro salt mining and the dynamics of women participation in this mining.

The chairperson was further asked to convince the respondents to participate in the study. The date and time of the interviews were agreed with respondents. In most cases, interviews were held on the first visit. Very few respondents rescheduled the interview appointments to a later date and time. All the responses to the questions asked during the interviews were recorded using the researcher's mobile telephone. Notepads were also used by the researcher and her assistants to record responses which were considered crucial about women's involvement in Kibiro's salt mining. The crucial responses were noted down for the purpose of taking note of them during data analysis. Plate 1.1 below indicates the researcher and her assistants conducting an interview with one of the respondents at her home at Kibiro.

The researcher also used Gender Sensitive Research that is research that takes into account gender ,it pays attention to the similarities and differences between men and women especially in terms of roles and development G.S.R is usually more participatory and it greatly contributes to empowering women This explains why this methodology was employed.

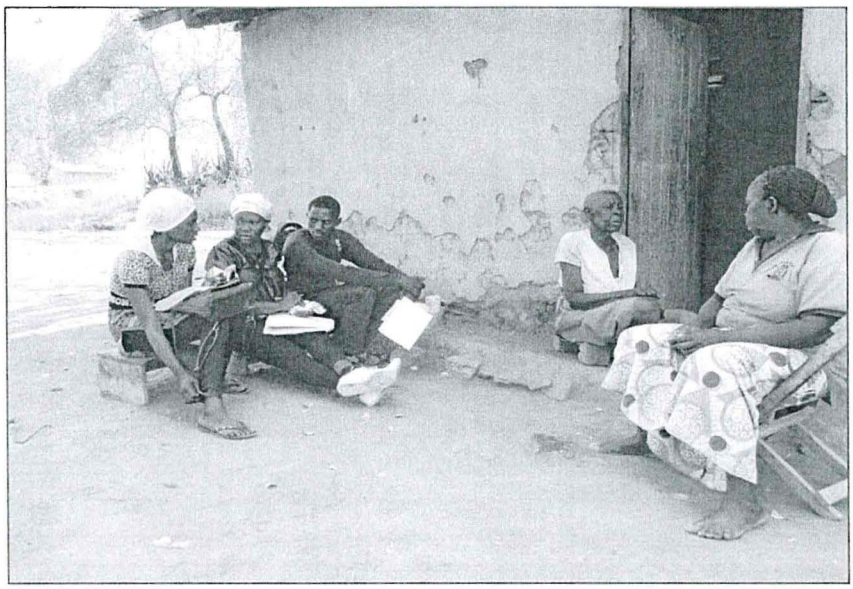

Figure 1.1 Researcher conducting an interview with a respondent

In Plate 1.1, the researcher and her assistants were in an interview session with Nyakato, an elderly woman of 99 years (in the middle) while her daughter (on the right) was listening. The interview was held on 7 January 2017. In Plate 1.2 below, the researcher is interviewing Tumusiime, a 65-year-old daughter of Nyakato, at her salt garden surrounded by heaps of sandy soil.

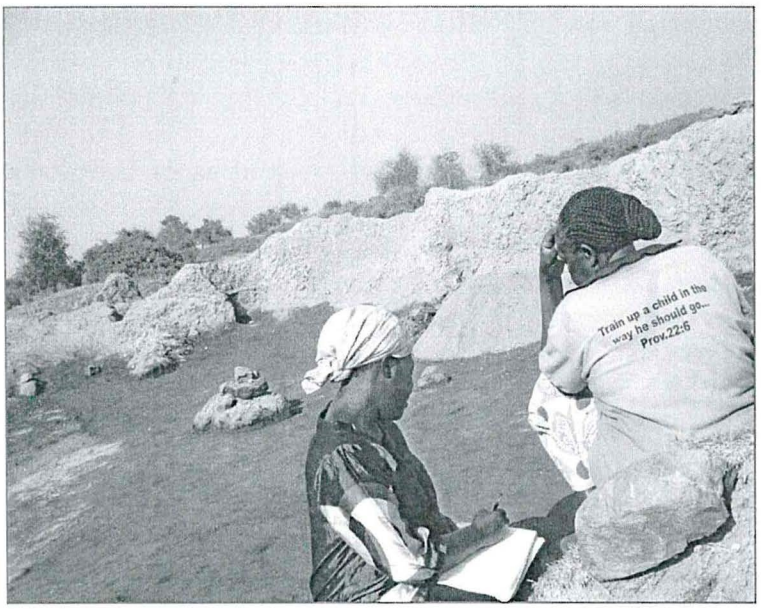

Figure 1. 2: Researcher interviewing another respondent

Source: Primary Data

b) ***Observation and Photography***: This was another method used to collect primary data. It involved the researcher observing features relating to salt mining and what respondents regarded as physical benefits from this process and using the camera to take their photographs in order to reinforce the data collected through interviews. Some of the taken photographs covered the challenging physical conditions in which women mined salt.

c) ***Document review***: This method involved data collection from online sources and printed sources. Data was collected from the online source using mainly Google search of documents (journal articles, textbooks, and other online manuscripts) that were relevant to the study. Data was collected from printed sources by visiting libraries and archives to identify manuscripts that had been written about women participation in salt mining at Kibiro. The libraries include Kyambogo University main library and Makerere University main library as well as History

Department libraries of both universities. The archives from which relevant documents were identified included the Uganda Museum and National Archives.

1.8.6 Data Processing and Data Analysis

All the data collected from interviews and document review were compiled together for processing and analysis. Data processing involved sorting and editing the data according to the main themes of the study, which were derived directly from the objectives of the study.

Data analysis was conducted after data sorting and analysis. The narrative method was used to analyses the data. As explained by Elliot Jane[107], this method was applied by transcribing interview responses and data collected from document review, editing them for completeness and accuracy where necessary and quoting them verbatim into the text of the study as demonstrated in the chapters that follow. Data from photography was carefully incorporated into the results obtained from the analysis of the data collected from interviews and document review.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher was able to give a general introduction of Kibiro salt mines and related literature it's upon this that chapter two comes in to start explaining the factors why women starting with the geography of Kibiro.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER TWO

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF KIBIRO: THE STUDY AREA

2.0 Introduction

Broek[1] posed the following questions: Is there any human phenomenon that can be considered historical when its description is delinked from its spatial relationships, that is, from its geographical context? Can history of any people be meaningful without any sense of the place or environment in which they live or lived? Both of these questions have one implication and that human history does not take place in a vacuum. It is also meaningful when it is contextualised within its geographical setting. The history of women in salt mining at Kibiro is not an exception. The main focus of this chapter is therefore to look at the geography of Kibiro area as a way of developing the context dictated salt mining as that the major activity of the women living in this area.

2.1 Geographical Setting

This chapter describes this geography in terms of location, physical appearance, climate, soil, migration and settlement.

2.1.1 Location

Kibiro is located in Hoima District in Bunyoro Kingdom in Western Uganda. As shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2; its location in Bunyoro kingdom is shown in Figure 2.2 and its spatial location is shown in Figure 2.3.

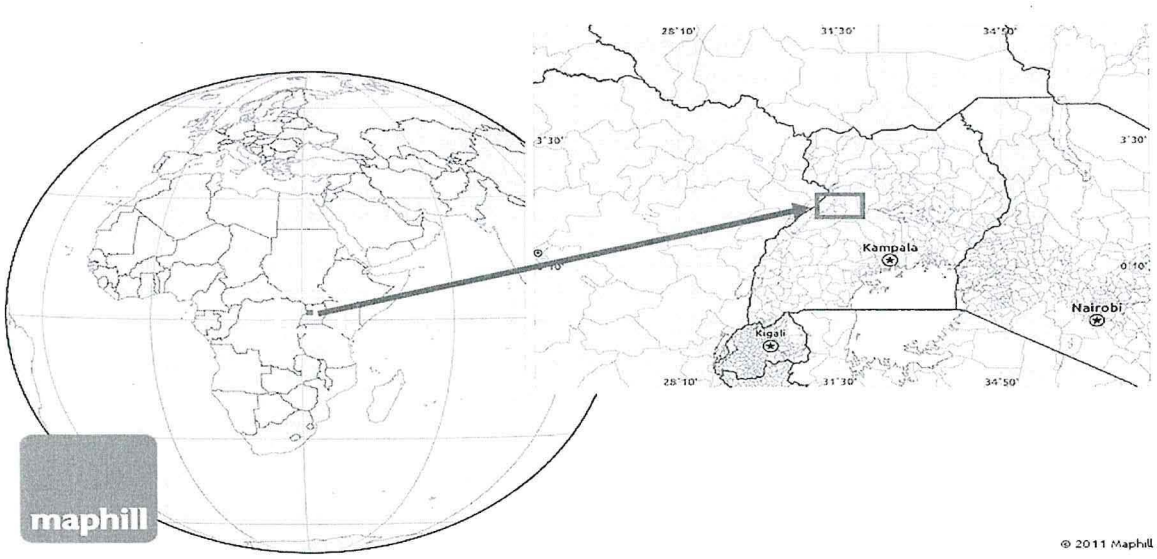


Figure 2.1: Location of Kibiro in Africa and Uganda

Source: Free Physical Location Figure of Kibiro, 2011[2]

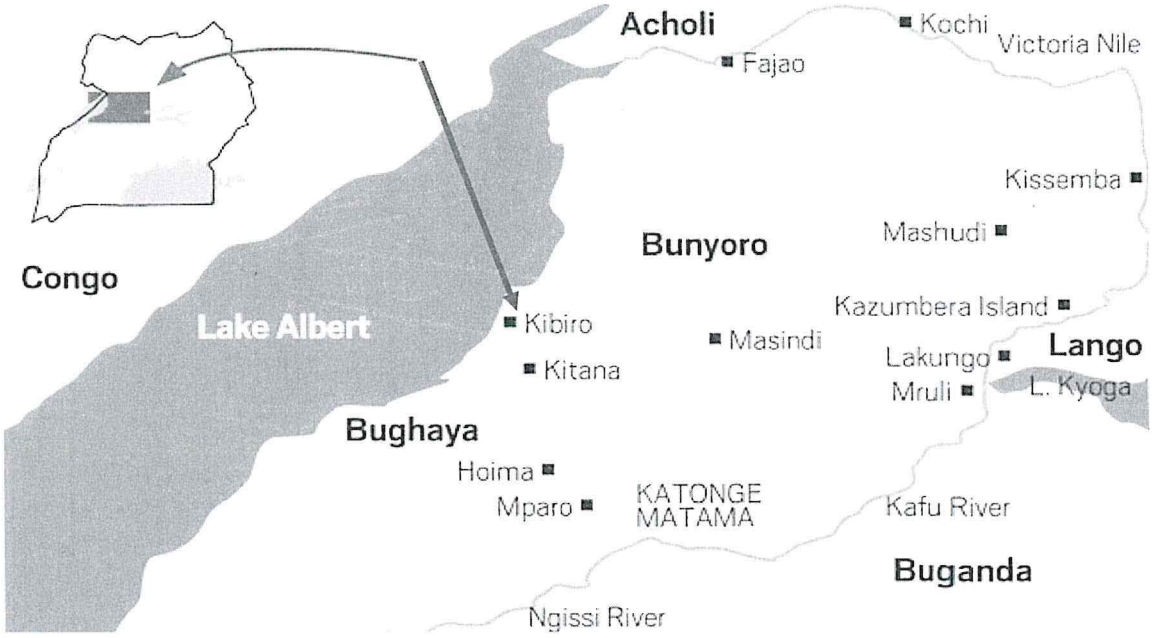


Figure 2.2: Location of Kibiro in Bunyoro Kingdom

Source: Doyle Shane, 2012[3]

As shown in the Figure 2.1 and 2.2 above Kibiro is a triangular shaped site located in Hoima district in mid-western Uganda in Bunyoro Kingdom

The site is located on the eastern shore of Lake Albert.[4] This site is situated in Kigorobya Sub-county about 35 kilometres north of Hoima town, which is located approximately 234 kilometres northwest of Kampala. By coordinates, Kibiro salt mining site is located 1.6726° N, 31.2541° E.[5] It has neighbouring villages such as Kachuru in the southwest, Kaiso-Tonya in the south, Kitana in the south-south east, Muntere in the north, Mwibanda in the west, and Mukabiga in the southwest[6] (See Figure 2.3 below).

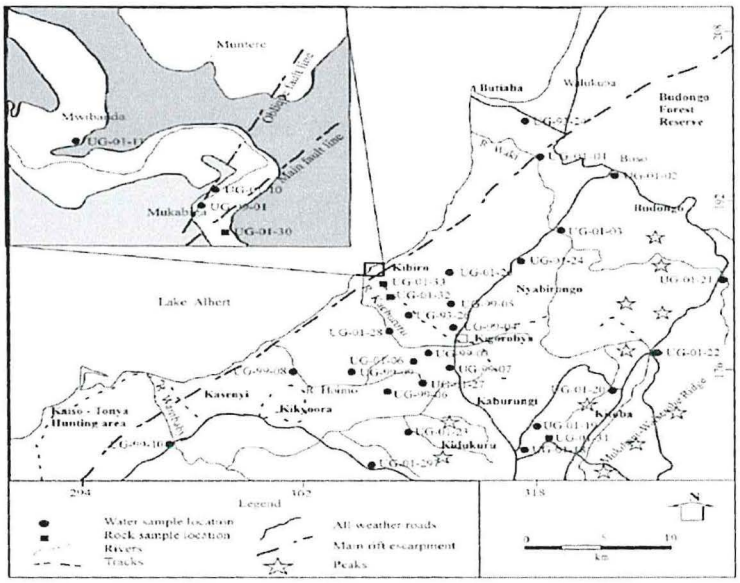


Figure 2.3: Kibiro and surroundings

Source: Godfrey Bahatia and others, 2005.[7]

2.1.2 Physical appearance

A section of Kibiro depicting its physical appearance is shown in Plate 2.1.

Plate 2.1: Section of Kibiro at the foot of the Escarpment

Source: Primary Data. A photo taken on 21st. January. 2017

In Plate 2.1, Kibiro is made up of different geographical features, including the escarpment, a gentle slope punctuated by rocks, a plain surface covered by sand and visible and white salt deposits in some parts. According to Gíslason et'al[8], this site is located at the foot of the escarpment. Gíslason et'al[9] continued to note that the escarpment rises over 300 metres above Lake Albert. According to Uwe[10], the escarpment is also a part of the downward slope of the western branch of the East African Rift System, locally referred to as the Albertine rift valley. As Ebinger[11], observed, this rift system is geologically estimated to have been formed around 22–25 million years ago through down-warping that resulted from tectonic continental drift.

According to Connah[12] Kibiro is situated on the narrow plain of Lake Albert that has two levels: a slightly higher area of gently sloping, typically stony ground that abuts the escarpment base; and a lower, flatter, often swampy, sand area adjacent to the lake but separated from it by two beach ridges. A section of Kibiro showing these features is demonstrated in Plate 2.1. This physical setup is one of the reasons why the transport route to and from Kibiro salt gardens is rugged and difficult for most vehicles to negotiate. It therefore, presents one of the main transport challenges which the people in this area including women salt miners have long been facing not only in their own movement but also in the transportation of mined salt as shall be explained later.

2.1.3 Drainage

The drainage system of this area is made up of a water stream that originates from hot springs located at the top of the escarpment which escapement is also part of the down ward slope of the western branch of the East African Rift Valley system locally referred to as the Albertine rift valley. According to Gestsdottir[13], the stream traverses down the sloping rugged surface towards Lake Albert into which it pours its water. The direction and location of the river is shown in Plate 2.2

Plate 2.2: Stream of salty water flowing downwards through Kibiro

Source: Photo taken during my fieldwork on.21st January 2017

Plate 2.2 (Source: Primary Data).as above taken on 23rd January 2017

According to Plumptre et'al[14], the water contained in this meanderingly flowing stream contains varying amounts of minerals and chemicals. The minerals and chemicals include: potassium chloride, lithium sulphate, calcium sulphate, calcium phosphate, magnesium chloride, and sodium chloride whose amount is the largest in this water.(source?) This sodium chloride enhances the salt content contained in the alluvial, and in doing, eases the leaching of brine out of this alluvial. The different minerals contained in this water also make it culturally believed to be medicinal. According to Asaba[15] :

We use this water as medicine. When a person gets a wound or is spiritually possessed, they come and swim in that water for three days. It is believed that the spirits will no longer be disturbing that person. As for wounds, I have also proved that because my family members and I go and swim in that water whenever we get wounds...and still in case of fever we drink it and we get healed. The above narrative Cleary shows how salt is used for medicinal purposes therefore salt is very important.

2.1.4 Climate, Soil Composition and Vegetation

Kibiro is located in a rain shadow[16], implying that it receives rainfall that is less than that is received in areas adjacent to it such as Kigorobya, Kigwera, Ngwendo and others. The area's annual rainfall pattern is summarised in Graph 1.

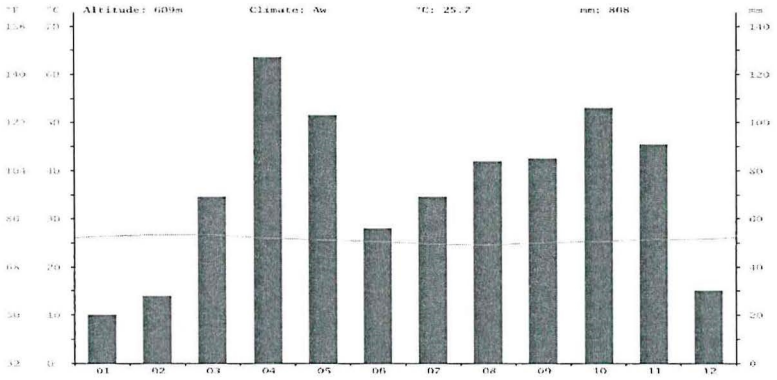
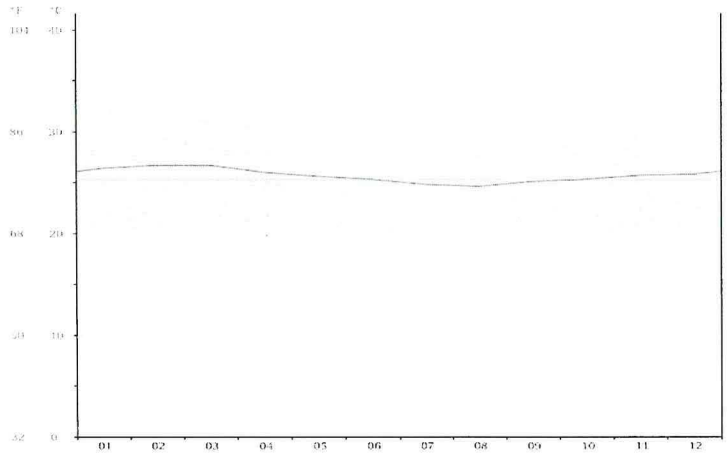


Figure 1: Annual Rainfall Pattern of Kibiro

Source: Climate Data Organisation[17]

The right hand axis of Graph 1 indicates the amount of rainfall received from January to December plotted from 01 to respectively. Rainfall is depicted by bars and the line that runs through the bars indicates the area's temperature. A critical analysis of the lengths of the bars reveals that the driest month of Kibiro is January (01), which gets 20 mm of rainfall. Most precipitation falls in April (04) whose average is 127 mm. This rainfall is too low to support agriculture. It is therefore not surprising that no cultivation and livestock keeping takes place at Kibiro, not even at the subsistence level. The situation is exacerbated by the site's harsh temperature whose range is represented by a line in Graph 1 and expanded for a better view as shown in Graph 2



Graph 2: Annual Rainfall Pattern of Kibiro

Source: Climate Data Organisation[18]

From Graph 2, February (02) is the warmest month of the year. The temperature in February averages 26.7 °C. In August, the average temperature is 24.6 °C. It is the lowest average temperature of the whole year. Plumptre et'al[19] described this temperature as generally hot, adding that the site's weather is typically windy and unfavourable for plants and animals that cannot stand frequently blowing wind. It is upon this description that different economic activities especially salt mining among the women and fishing and rearing of animals especially goats among the men.

2.1.5 Soils

Connah[20] describes the soils of Kibiro as shallow, made up of a mixture of rocky, stony, sandy and clayey soils formed thousands of years ago during the down warping process by which the western arm of the East African rift valley was formed. Coupled with little rainfall, these soils hardly support any agricultural activity. Even the vegetation of the area is largely woodland punctuated by thorny trees and short grass (NEMA), the fact that these soils cannot support agriculture implies that people who live at Kibiro have to improvise other means of livelihood. The details of this implication are discussed in the next section. The nature of rugged, stony and sandy soils is illustrated in Plate 2.3 and the general nature of Kibiro's vegetation is depicted in Plate 2.4 below.

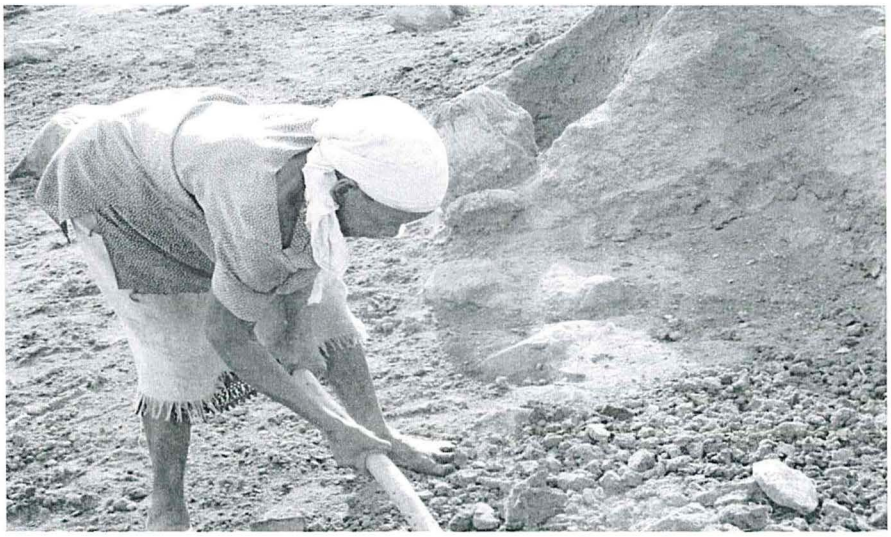


Plate 2.3 ; Nature of Soils at Kibiro

Source: Primary Data photo taken on 23rd, January 2017

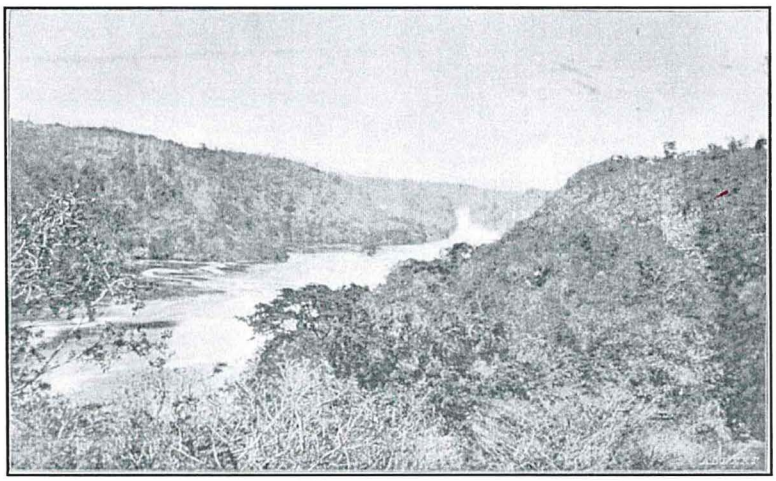


Figure 2.4: Kibiro's woodland vegetation; Primary data on 10th Jan

2.1.6 The People of Kibiro: Migration and Settlement

According to oral tradition, the first settlers of Kibiro were Bagungu who came as Bagungu people who were a subgroup of the interlacustrine Bantu – a large group of people whose languages are linguistically similar in a remarkable manner.[21] As an integral part of this Bantu group, the Bagungu are said to have migrated from West Africa near Nigeria in about 1000 B.C.[22] they first settled at a place called Kasenyi in Congo basin from where they migrated eastwards and southwards around 3,000 years ago.[23] The Bagungu moved further, crossing Lake Albert, locally referred to as Lake Butiaba or Lake Mwitanzige, at a shallow place called Ntoroko.[24] This was around 900 years ago.[25] After crossing the lake, the Bagungu took two different routes. One group took the eastern

direction while the other moved northwards in the direction of Lake Albert. According to Makuru there were mainly four Basimba men who were hunters who are believed to have come from the forests looking for food and water for their animals in this area which the whites called a forest(Kibiro) hence the name Kibiro only misinterpreted by Europeans in 1891 hence the name Kibiro. Later the Musimba man married an Alur woman gave her the name Nyasimba hence the biggest clan of Basimba clan in Kibiro.

The group who followed the Lake Albert direction moved for several years until they reached a place called Kibira (Kibiro) where they settled. This place was located in the juxtaposition of the eastern side of the Lake. The group who migrated to the eastern direction settled in neighbouring areas, which included Kigorobya, Kigwera, Ngwedo, Kasenyi, Kidukuru, Kaburungi, Kisaba, Nyabirongo and Walukuba. These met other migratory groups in these areas. The other groups included the Alur hunters who were migrating from the north downwards towards Lake Albert[26], the nomadic pastoral Basongola and Banyarwanda who were migrating from the south, and the Banyoro cultivators who had already reached these areas, having also migrated from Congo basin as an integral part of the Bantu group to which the Bagungu also belonged.[27]

Noriko[28] observed that although the migratory groups mentioned above were coming from different directions, they lived in peaceful coexistence because there were no reasons to warrantee resistance or conflict against each other. All the groups were still exploring new areas, looking for where to settle and for survival. None of the groups was aware of the resources that existed in the territory to which they had migrated, and their respective

numbers were still so small that they could settle in any area without causing pressure on land and other resources there.[29]

As noted in the previous section of this chapter, Kibiro's relatively harsh climatic conditions and largely infertile salty soils could not support cultivation and small-scale herding, which were the two activities that the Bagungu were traditionally doing as an integral part of the larger Bantu farmers.[30] Therefore, after several seasons of trying crop growing and small-scale livestock keeping in vain, famine set in causing the Bagungu who had settled there to split into two subgroups. One group migrated to other areas, leaving behind a group which could with stand these conditions through hunting and gathering.[31] After all, hunting had also been part of the Bantu culture during migration. Bantu cultivated only after settling in a particular area. The Bagungu who remained at Kibiro hunted edible animals and birds in the area, including antelopes, waterbucks, wild pigs, rhinoceros, and others in order to survive. As explained in the next section, these Bagungu also started fishing to supplement their hunting and gathering. Those who migrated away joined others who had settled in the neighbouring areas of Kigorobya, Kigwera and Ngwedo.

Stokes J[32], [33](observed that of all the migratory groups, the Banyoro were the largest and most powerful group. They were socially organised in several clans, and each clan was headed by a strong clan leader. The Banyoro expanded faster in terms of numerical strength and territorial coverage and after settling in their area for several years uninterrupted, they were led by Rukidi-Mpuga to establish their own kingdom.[34] The

kingdom was established in the late 15th century by carving it out of the northern portion of the Kingdom of the Songora, which was also known as the Chwezi Empire.[35] The established kingdom was later referred to as Bunyoro Kingdom, a name it carries up to date.[36] The territory of Bunyoro- included the areas where the Bagungu had settled.[37] Accordingly, the Bagungu were under the dominion of the Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara, but were ruled indirectly under a Mugungu chief appointed by the Omukama. This is how Bunyoro Kingdom 'colonised' the Bagungu.[38]This is seen by the fact that it was a must for women to take salt to Bunyoro as a way of developing the kingdom.

The people who settled at Kibiro later established themselves as Bakibiro or Banyakibiro.[39] In this study therefore, these terms are used interchangeably as synonyms of each other. The Bakibiro had begun working for their survival by getting involved in different economic activities as explained in the next section. It suffices to mention that these activities were subsistence in nature. When the Bakibiro were 'colonised' by Bunyoro Kingdom, they continued conducting the same activities, this time not for subsistence purposes alone, but also as a means of paying the compulsory tribute (effectively taxes) to the Omukama – a practice that had been imposed on all the subjects of the new Kingdom.

2.2 Economic Activities

At first, the Bakibiro that was in 1891 after the failure of the British pronounce Kibiro as Kibiro hence the name is just got from the name of the area (Banyakibiro) as noted by Tusiime we call ourselves Banyakibiro and we have two languages spoken that is Rugungu and lukibiro for the young generation .These were subsistence cultivators, hunters,

gatherers and herders.[40] However, the infertile sandy, salty nature of the soils, poor torrential rainfall, hot temperatures, windy weather most of the time, and poor vegetation of Kibiro discouraged them from cultivation and herding. Therefore, there was practically no significant agriculture in Kibiro, its being in a rural setup notwithstanding. Only small livestock such as chicken and goats were reared on a subsistence basis. The Banyakibiro were unable to grow their own food or cash crops and to keep livestock on a significant scale[41].

Instead of agriculture, the Bakibiro were at first engaged in hunting and gathering. Only men got involved in hunting, using sharp pointed sticks and other locally made tools to kill small animals while killing the big animals by trapping them using well dug deep pits (*Obuhya*) covered on the surface by tree leaves to camouflage and make them difficult for the animals to notice them. Hunting was supplemented by fishing which the Bakibiro men started soon after realising that there was fish in Lake Mutanzige.[42] The meat and fish would be preserved by smoking and drying. Some of the fish the men obtained from Lake Albert and how the fish was dried are illustrated in Plate 2.5 below.

Plate 2.5: Fish from Lake Albert on a raised drying rid carpet at the chairman's place.

Source: Primary Data photo taken on 23rd January, 2017

The people of Kibiro would then exchange the dried fish and preserved meat (*Omukaro*) with food stuffs from cultivators and cattle keepers who had settled in the neighbouring areas of Kigorobya and others. It was at this moment that the Banyakibiro, particularly women, engaged in salt mining for survival especially when women wanted to get food.

Therefore, instead of agriculture, the Bakibiro survived for 800 – 900 years by engaging in three main economic activities, which included salt production by only women, hunting and fishing by only men and trading in the products of these processes using mainly the barter system, which was later supplemented by the monetary exchange system.[43] Accordingly, the Bakibiro got all the agricultural foodstuffs and other items required to satisfy their domestic needs either by buying them using money obtained from the selling of salt and fish or through the traditional barter exchange of salt and fish with food

provided by cultivators in neighbouring areas such as Kigorobya. The Bagungu started using the money together with the barter system during President Idi Amin Dada's era (1971-1979); for it was during this reign that the monetary exchange increasingly getting gradually introduced in Kibiro by traders.[44]

According to Mugerwa[45], when the monetary exchange was introduced, even the Kibiro residents who continued with the barter system started comparing their salt to the commodities they wanted using monetary values. Mugerwa further summarised this practice by quoting one of the women salt miners as follows:

> I am waiting for a trader who will give me cassava, which is equivalent to the value of this salt. A kilogramme of crystallised salt ranges between 8,000 and 10,000 Uganda shillings. (Therefore, the goods exchanged for one kilogramme of salt should be worth 8,000 or 10,000 Uganda shillings).[46]

That was the mode of exchange used by many Banyakibiro salt miners to sustain their livelihoods.[47] Some of the used pottery tools included a trough (*Orwooto*) for spreading loose soil on the surface of the ground to absorb salt from the ground, scooper (*ekisinga*) for scooping salt from the ground, and saucepans (*biigi*) used to boil brine. What these tools looked like and how they were used in salt production is explained in subsequent chapters.

2.3 Conclusion

In general, this chapter has explained the geographical environment that defined Kibiro not only in terms of location and climate but also in terms of its people (the Bakibiro), how these people came to settle in this area and the activities they carried out to support their

livelihood. The chapter indicates that Kibiro was located in the rain-shadow at the foot of the Ugandan side of the escarpment of the Western Rift System and towards the north-eastern part of Lake Albert. Kibiro's climate was harsh and had no arable soils. The combination of these climatic and soil conditions implies that Kibiro could not support cultivation and livestock rearing. For survival, the Banyakibiro engaged in alternative activities, which included hunting, gathering and fishing. These activities were all carried out by men. The rugged escarpment meant that moving down to its foot where Kibiro was located and up was not easy, especially when carrying something on the head. However, the Bakibiro found ways of moving down and up the escarpment in order to link with cultivators from whom they obtained agricultural food. The Bakibiro started salt mining after settling in the area, but this activity was entirely in the hands of women. Why it was only women involved in this mining, the challenges they faced as a result of this geographical setting, how they dealt with the challenges and the benefits they realised from this mining during the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras are covered in the subsequent chapters. Having noted from the above chapter the researcher concludes by saying that the geography of the area was and is so much influential in explaining the different economic activities in the area especially salt mining which is only carried out by women.

Endnotes:

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CHAPTER THREE

SALT MINING IN KIBIRO DURING THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA (1870– 1894)

3.0 Introduction

The global view provided by Germerts[1] suggests that it is men who have always dominated salt mining. However, the pre-colonial history of salt mining at Kibiro indicates a sharp contrast, which even contradicts the rationale of most gender theories. Indeed, salt mining and distribution were entirely in the hands of women. Why was this so? How did women go about it? What challenges did they encounter? How did they deal with the challenges? Were there any benefits that accrued to women from this mining? These questions are answered in this chapter by writing the history of Kibiro women's salt mining from its beginning and within its geographical setting. This chapter is presented in terms of the pre-colonial factors, benefits, challenges in this mining and how the challenges were dealt with. It is presented in two parts. The first part focuses on the factors explaining the origin of women involvement in Kibiro's salt mining, the benefits they realised from this mining, the challenges they met, and how they dealt with them prior to the engulfment of Kibiro into Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom. The second part presents a history of these aspects after Kibiro's engulfment into the pre-colonial Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

3.1 Salt Mining at Kibiro before the Bunyoro- Kingdom

There are different accounts that attempt to explain when salt mining started at Kibiro. While Connah[2] et.al. Believe that salt mining at Kibiro was started by women between 700 and 800 years ago. Agena[3]suggests that this mining began 900-1000 years ago. A synoptic look at these years reveals that women are estimated to have started salt mining at Kibiro 700-1000 years ago.

In addition, the interviewed respondents narrated a story that revealed the person who began this mining, how the person came to start it, and how these two conflated to constitute a major factor explaining why this mining was exclusively in the hands of women right from its beginning. When the narrated story is corroborated with the history of Banyakibiro's migration and settlement, even the interval regarding the origin of salt mining at Kibiro can be tremendously reduced as shall be discussed after presenting the story.

The above stories were in agreement that the story about the origin of salt mining had been generationally relayed to them through oral tradition, and as Ranulph[4] noted, this is typical of much of the history about Africans – it is mainly passed on from one generation to another through oral tradition or storytelling. The story of Kibiro's salt mining was recounted by in such a way that it traced this origin to the god whom the first Bakibiro settlers found in this area. The most detailed account was provided by a 104 year old Kazara, in the following terms:

> My grandmother told me that salt extraction was started by our first ancestors who came from the south and settled here (at kibira later called Kibiro) thousands of years ago, even before the formation of Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom; but she did not tell me the exact year.[5]

The foregoing narrative reveals that Kibiro's salt mining was begun by the first Bakibiro settlers. As presented in Section 2.1.4 of Chapter Two, Agena[6] revealed that the first settlers of Kibiro were Bagungu and that they settled in the area around 900 years ago. This was around the 10th century AD. The fact that salt mining was revealed to these people when they were still in the process of settling suggests that this mining began in the early years of this century. Therefore, Kibiro's salt mining was begun much later than China's and Eastern Europe's salt mining, which, according to different authors[7]started between 6050 BC and 5400 BC.

As to whom the pioneer of Kibiro's salt mining was, Kazara[8] strongly invoked the Bakibiro's generational oral tradition to narrate that, "Five Basimba men came from the south and settled at Kibiro as hunters and herders. One of these men went back to where they had come from, across that lake (Albert) and came back with a wife whose name was Nyasimba Nyakaruru." Soon after their return, the Musimba man got a dream in which the god of Kibiro appeared to him and asked, "You have come to settle in my area, what are you going to give me in exchange for my acceptance of your peaceful and permanent stay in my area?" Nyasimba was pregnant by the time this god appeared. Upon giving birth, the baby, who was a girl, died. That night, the man got another dream in which the god appeared again saying, "You refused to give me something, now I have taken your child"[9].

The god of Kibiro continued appearing to the man in different dreams, making the same demand until the man promised to sacrifice a child to appease this god.[10] When Nyasimba gave birth to a second child who was also a girl, her husband sacrificed the child to the god at the hot springs.[11] Since the child had not been given a name at the time of her sacrifice, the hot springs and the stream flowing out of them were both named after the mother. This is how the hot springs and the stream came to be called Nyasimba Hot Springs and River Nyasimba, respectively.[12] This name has since been used to refer to each of these two features up to date. However, some Born Again Christians at Kibiro have tried to influence the change of the name of the river to 'Akabiga' to indicate that it was God-given and therefore, not related to the Nyasimba legend that is deeply rooted in the Bakibiro cultural fabric.[13]

Akiiki [14]continued to explain that in the night that followed the day of the sacrifice of the baby girl, both the man and his wife got the same dream in which the god of Kibiro told them that it had been appeased by the sacrifice and that because of this, they were going to receive a reward the following day. They found salt on the ground the next day. In the night that followed, the woman got another dream in which the god explained to her that the salt which they had seen during the day was the reward. The god then explained to her the process she was going to use to extract the salt from the ground surface. The next day, the woman implemented the process and she was able to extract the salt. This is how salt mining began at Kibiro.[15]

In a somewhat different way, according to Makuru;

> Five subsistence hunters came to Kibiro very many years ago. They came from the southern end of Lake Mwitanzige (I hear they could have come from Toro or Tanzania; in fact when you go to Toro or Tanzania, you hear people speaking a language that sounds like Lugungu-our language here). The men were looking for food and grass for their domesticated animals.[16]

Makuru[17]continued that, "upon getting hot water that tasted good, they stayed for some time. They would graze their animals and bring them to the hot spring to drink tasty water. They also started using the water to prepare and make their hunted meals tastier, and to preserve the remaining meat as well. One day, two of the men returned to where they had come from and came back here with their wives. "Makuru narrated further that, "upon reaching Kibiro, one of the women disappeared. The woman who remained was called Nyasimba and she belonged to a man called Mukwonga who belonged to the Kwonga clan. He was not called Musimba as the Bakibiro who belong to the Basimba clan claim."[18]Mukuru continued that, "Although the men found out that the water was tasty, they did not know how to extract salt out of it. Neither were they aware that the taste was from the salt some of which was even visible on the surface of the ground. This salt and the process of extracting it were both revealed to Nyasimba by the god of Kibiro."[19]

The preceding narratives do not agree on the clan of the man to whom Nyasimba was married. This was explained by Rubanga and Siimba who explained that, "the Bakibiro have seven clans of which the main two are the Basimba clan and the Kwonga clan. So, the clan of the man to whom Nyasimba was married appears to depend on the clan to which one belongs."[20] This argument seems to suggest that each clan has its own version of the same story. The different versions allude to the fact that the Bakibiro have been passing on

the Nyasimba story to subsequent generations in such a way that each clan tries to claim credit over the discovery of Kibiro's salt mining. It should however, be noted that notwithstanding this insinuation, most of the respondents mentioned that the man was a Musimba, suggesting that theirs was the most common and hence a more believable version.

Essentially however, the two versions agree that: the pioneer of Kibiro's salt mining was a woman, called Nyasimba; that this mining was revealed to this woman by the god of Kibiro. Some of the interviewed respondents, who declined to reveal their actual names but only identified themselves as Balokole, referred to this god as a ghost and that Nyasimba was also a ghost – actually these respondents felt that the whole story was so satanic, a folktale that they were not comfortable talking about it as it was against what they believed in – Christianity[21] and Nyasimba was brought to Kibiro by her husband. So, the pioneer of Kibiro's salt mining was not a native of this area, but a migrant from another area that is said to have been Kasenyi.

The fact that Kibiro's salt mining was revealed to a woman constituted one of the major reasons, to explain why this process was, throughout the pre-colonial era, exclusively in the hands of women. Specifically, Babyesiza argues that:

> When salt was being rewarded to us, the god of this area appeared to both the man and his wife, Nyasimba. However, when the salt extraction process was revealed, this god appeared to Nyasimba alone. Why do you think this was like that? I think even the god of Kibiro knew that salt mining was the work of women.[22]

Babyesiza Yafeesi[23] further pointed out that the god of Kibiro was aware that digging (crop growing) was not possible in this area; that women would be redundant if no alternative was improvised for them. Therefore, salt mining was revealed to a woman as an alternative to crop farming that had occupied women before the Bakibiro settled in this area. Babyesiza continued to emphasise his argument by noting that, "In fact, in the Bakibiro culture, any man who tries to mine salt is derogatorily referred to as a woman."[24]Before the beginning of salt mining, the Bakibiro women were not involved in any productive activity. They used to stay at home, bearing and looking after children, and fetching firewood needed to smoke and cook meat and fish which men would bring from hunting, gathering and fishing, which was started at the shores of Lake Mutanzige shortly after settling in the area, becoming Bakibiro men's main occupation as time went by.[25]

Babyesiza narratives above reveal that the beginning of salt mining created division of labour whereby women became salt miners as men continued hunting, gathering and fishing from Lake Mutanzige. Salt mining was in effect an alternative to cultivation, which women did before settling at Kibiro, but which they could not do because of the area's harsh climatic conditions and barren soils as Graham[26] and Colvile [27]described them as elaborated in Chapter Two. The narratives also imply that salt mining by only women was sustained by a cultural belief that revealing the process to a woman meant that it belonged to women. This belief was so strong that any man who tried to mine salt was disparagingly referred to as a woman. So, men left salt mining in the hands of women out of fear that they would be referred to as women. That is a legendary and mythical factor which strongly explain why women carry out salt mining.

Another reason why were only women involved in Kibiro's salt mining related to men's belief that this mining was dirty and similar to digging and cooking both of which were within the cultural role of women. Nyakato substantiated this reason as follows:

> In olden days men believed that salt mining was a very dirty activity, which only women could do. They viewed the activity more or less as digging and cooking, which constituted what was culturally regarded as a women's traditional role. Even the tools that were being used to extract, leach and boil salt were all culturally made by women.[28]

The fact that men viewed salt mining as digging was explained by the manner in which this process was conducted. Salt mining involved almost all the activities carried out in the digging process. Connah et'al [29]explained this process as cited in Chapter One. It suffices to note that Kibiro's salt mining was indeed practically similar to digging and cooking, involving preparing salt gardens by breaking up dry earth to make it loose, spreading this loose dry earth on top of moist saline earth, waiting for a number of days, collecting the absorbent loose soil off the ground surface into a container. Water would then be poured into the container, drained out as brine and boiled to evaporate the liquid and retain the crystallised salt, which would then be shaped into salt moulds. Plates depicting the dug loose soil and a salt garden after spreading this soil on the ground surface are shown below.

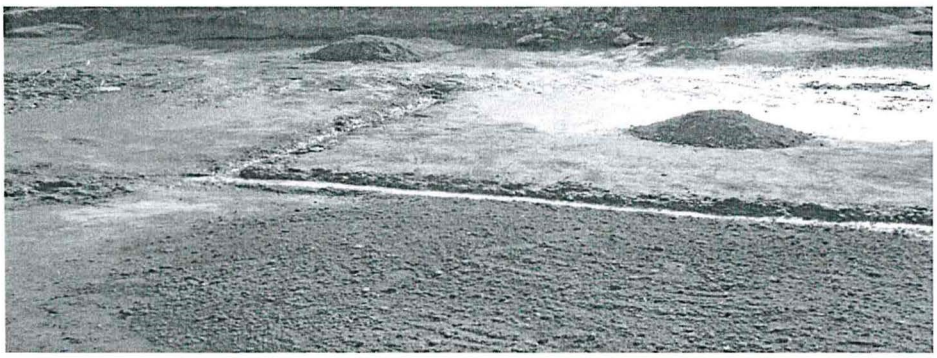

Figure 3.1: Moulds of dug loose soil for preparing a salt garden

Source: Photo taken during field work on 21st January 2017

Figure 3.2: Prepared Salt Garden

Source: Photo taken during field work on 23 rd. January 2017

In addition, men considered salt extraction as an activity that did not have economic value because the salt the women mined was in small quantities, and would only be used to make food tasty and to preserve meat in case hunters had a good kill.[30] In fact, the initial stages

of salt mining, the idea of selling or even bartering salt for something else was unheard of and never practised at all.[31] Salt was mined to meet purely domestic needs such as making food tasty and preserving meat. Therefore, the Bakibiro men demeaned salt mining as an uneconomic activity, which only women could do.[32]

Salt mining continued to be a women's activity due to the inheritance custom that was associated with it. In the Kibiro traditional culture, salt gardens were owned by women and once a woman died, her garden was inherited by one of her daughters. This was substantiated by Kiiza in the following words:

> You can see that even in critical times such as death, men did not feature anywhere near salt mining. How could they participate in something in whose ownership they did not have any share; not even through inheritance? As you know African men with property ownership, could they participate well aware that the gardens did not belong to them? I think they were too proud to do so...Women had to toil with their God-given activity.[33]

Salt mining was carried out by only women because they were the owners and inheritors of the salt gardens. This contrasts the observation made by Kuntala[34] that women do not own mines due to limited access to and control over resources such as land. It also contradicts the basis for the socialist feminism, a gender theory whose rationale casts women as a patriarchal marginalised and male-oppressed form of gender that does not own or even have access to resources. Moreover, women's ownership and inheritance of salt mines was the traditional arrangement that had become acceptable within the Bakibiro culture..

Another reason is the Geographical setting of the area where by their soils could not support farming which could have been the major activity of women and thus resorting to

salt mining. Still the presence of Lake Albert explains why men continued with fishing; hence this factor also explains why Salt mining was left to women because men were always busy fishing.

Generally, Kibiro's salt mining was entirely in the hands of women from its very beginning in the early years of the 10th century because of different reasons. A critical look at the reasons reveals that the Nyasimba legend, Bakibiro men's cultural view of salt mining and division of work, and the matrilineal inheritance of salt gardens and the geography of Kibiro which does not allow agriculture were the main factors explaining why this mining was carried out by only women.

Benefits Women Realised from Salt Mining Prior to Bunyoro- Kingdom

According to Agena[35] and Stokes[36], before the formation of the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara, the Bakibiro had spent over 400 years as an independent community conducting its activities internally with a household as their main unit of subsistence production. Salt mining by women was one of the activities. Salt was extracted not for its own sake, but to serve a number of purposes. This study has established a number of benefits that women who first mined salt enjoyed as discussed below.

To begin with, Asaba pointed out some of benefits saying that; start this in a bitter way.

> From the Bakibiro's oral tradition that goes back to over 400 years ago, salt has always been mined to make their food tasty, more delicious and therefore more appetising to eat. They also used salt to preserve meat that their husbands had acquired from hunting and fish that were obtained from Lake Mwitanzige[37]

The fact that salt started to be added to food suggests that it improved the Bakibiro's diet by supplementing it with more minerals required by the human body to develop in a healthier manner. The fact that salt was used to preserve food reveals that it benefited the Bakibiro people by acting as a preservative that improved food security by keeping food longer before it could get spoilt.

Asaba noted further that, "The first salt miners used to carry salt to neighbouring villages such as Kigorobya to exchange it with food from cultivators through the barter system."[38]This suggests that salt mining facilitated the Bakibiro to further improve their food security and nutritional quality. It enabled the Bakibiro to get food from crop growing communities, which, according to Connah[39] and Mugerwa[40], was not possible at Kibiro due to its unfavourable climate and infertile soils. Therefore, salt mining helped the Bakibiro people enrich the nutritional value of their food.

Salt mining also benefited Kibiro people by producing a product that was used as a medicinal item. This benefit was identified by Nyakato[41] who pointed out that salt was applied on wounds and the wounds would heal however big they were. Nyakato[42] went on to say that whenever one of the household members was too weak to go and bathe in the hot springs for supernatural healing, salt would be put in water, which would then be given to the member to bathe and get healed. This was particularly the case whenever the sickness was in form of skin rashes, measles, scabies, and boils. Nyakato continued to note

That salt was also used a precious gift that one household would give to the other in appreciation of something such getting married, giving birth and the like.[43]

Some of the benefits identified above support the observations made by Carr[44], Butler [45] and Brigand and Weller[46]that salt mining, which started thousands of years ago, provided nutritional, preservative and medicinal benefits. It should however, be noted that while the benefits identified above are not the only benefits that may accrue to salt miners, they were the only ones realised at Kibiro prior to the formation of Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom. These were the only benefits because at that time, the main aim of women involvement in salt mining was to meet their and their family members' domestic needs. Owing to the fact that domestic needs were indispensable to the survival of the Bakibiro, the benefits realised from salt mining compelled the miners to continue with the activity in spite of the challenges they were facing in the process.

3.2 Challenges Women Faced in Salt Mining in the Pre-Colonial Era.

Like any other pre-colonial activities, salt mining was not an easy activity. It involved many stages, a lot of bending and carrying salt moulds on the head to take them home for storage or to the cultivators in the neighbouring villages to barter it with food.[47]This caused health problems such as backaches to salt miners. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that salt miners had to move while carrying the salt moulds up a very rugged escarpment, which required spending a lot of energy.[48]It was further aggravated by the fact that men did not help women in the salt gardens because they believed that this was

women's work, which even did not have economic value. Mining was therefore entirely conducted by women, which made it very tedious for the women.[49]The tools the women used were ceramic and because of this, they used to break easily, thereby adding more work to women of replacing the broken ones.[50] There was also the challenge of fetching firewood that was needed to boil brine leached from the absorbent soil; and many of these challenges are still being faced.[51]

To emphasise how tiresome salt mining was, Kazara[52]described how it was conducted right from the time of the first ancestors of the Banyakibiro. The description was not any different from how Connah et.al[5354] had explained it. However, Kazara[55] identified the specific tools that were used in the process, which these writers had not identified. According to this respondent[56], the breaking up of the earth to get loose soil was done using sharp stones. The loose soil was then spread on the salt-moist ground surface using a pottery boat-like tool called *Orwooto*. The absorbent soil would then be heaped using another pottery tool called *Ekisinga*. The same tool was used to put this soil in a big pottery pot (called *Ekiigi*) holed at the bottom so that water poured into it would be leached as brine into another pot placed underneath. Colvile [57] referred to the *Ekiigi* as a porous tank and to the *Orwooto* as an earthen pan.

Kazara[58] continued to explain that the pot containing the drained brine would then be taken to the fireplace to boil the brine using firewood, which had also been fetched from the forest by women. A scooper was then used to take solid salt out of the pot as water boiled and evaporated. The salt would be collected in a pottery basket from which it would be

shaped into conic salt cakes ready for domestic use or to be carried on the head to neighbouring cultivating villages to be exchanged for food. The ceramic tools pointed out above were archeologically confirmed by UNESCO as follows;

> Before the introduction of metallic vessels, pottery ware was used during the leaching and boiling processes and this is evidenced by the rich archaeological depositions of potsherds throughout the village going as deep as 4 metres and dating to between eight and nine hundred years to the present.[59]

Another challenge that women salt miners faced related to the fact that this mining was carried out in open space. The challenge that this caused was that whenever torrents fell, they not only caused delays in mining but also destroyed and carried away the pottery tools that were used to mine salt. According to Nsungwa,[60] "it took much longer to complete the salt extraction cycle during the season of torrents, and the extracted salt would be of poor quality." It was further noted further that, "Salt mining was only easy during dry seasons and its quality would be much better. It was also during dry seasons that salt miners would not have their tools destroyed."[61]

The findings in this study have confirmed what Colville [62] had written that most of the rudimentary ceramic tools used in salt mining were built on the river bed and therefore, tended to be washed away by heavy torrents, leaving women salt miners with no option but to make new ones to replace those washed-away an annual basis so as to continue working the salt. Identifying the use of rudimentary and fragile tools as one of the challenges that women salt miners of Kibiro faced further confirms the observations made by Ndiho[63], Halima[64]and Tumusiime,[65]that the use of such tools was one of the factors that constrained salt mining in Uganda, especially during the pre-colonial period..

Nsungwa[66] pointed out further that there were also many customs that women had to observe while mining salt. Some of the customs were such that women were not supposed to mine salt after sunset or before sunrise; they were not supposed to do so when they are in their menstrual periods, and when they had just given birth. There was a strong cultural belief that salt would disappear or the women would themselves die if they violated any of the customs in any way. These customs not only caused unnecessary delays in salt mining but also made the women extract the salt in fear.

Women salt miners had to deal with the various challenges they faced so as to continue with the mining, since it was the main means of sustaining livelihoods at Kibiro. According to Nsungwa,[67]the Bakibiro ancestors did not have much to do with natural challenges such as weather vagaries (torrents) and a rugged route. They only had to adapt to these challenges by halting the process whenever it rained and resuming whenever rains subsided. This strategy caused delays but it was better to wait than to work during rains and produce poor quality salt in very small quantities not worth the effort.

The Bakibiro ancestors also had to find a route that would enable them to go down and up the rocky escarpment. To realise this end, salt miners avoided the steep slope of the escarpment and established the route on the gentle sloping end. Dassi Nsungwa[68] pointed out further that salt miners also did not have much to do with the fragility of the ceramic tools they used, since there were no alternatives. Once some tools such as *Orwooto* and *Ebisinga* (plural for *Ekisinga*) broke, they continued to be used in their broken state until such a time when they could not do much work. However, some tools such as *Ebiigi*

(plural for *Ekiigi*) would not be used again after breaking. In this case, the women would create time and make new replacements out of clay.

According to Nyakato[69], women minimised the tedious nature of salt mining by taking their daughters to help out. They taught the daughters how to extract the salt not only as a way of passing on the work to the next generation but also to use their daughters' labour to make salt mining less tiring. Nyakato[70] further states that the strategy of using daughters' labour started from the very beginning of salt mining. She noted that the Bakibiro oral tradition has it that although Nyasimba (the first salt miner) gave birth to both boys and girls, she took only girls whenever she went to extract salt, leaving the boys to go hunting with their father. This arrangement was adopted by all the women who came after Nyasimba. Talking about herself, Nyakato observed that;

> Personally, I started learning how to extract salt and helping my mother with some of the activities before I even made 10 years. I had a brother but whenever my mother went to the salt gardens to get the salt she would exchange to get the food we needed at home, she would take me alone. On reaching the gardens, I would help my mother as she taught me how to extract salt. The lessons were practical. She would teach me while also telling me that she, too, had been taught by her mother (my grandmother).[71]

While women took their daughters to lessen the tiresome salt extraction process, the fact that they taught only the daughters about how to conduct this mining was another reason why the process continued to be entirely in the hands of women. Boys did not get the opportunity to learn this mining until they matured into adults. Unlike at Katwe in Kibiro women are the only participants in salt mining and salt was taken to be so important at the palace though it did not put these women at Kibiro in any special position at the kingdom.

3.3 The Rise of Bunyoro Kingdom and the Women Salt Mining at Kibiro.

According to Stokes[72], Mwambutsya [73] and Uzoigwe [74],the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara was formed by Rukidi-Mpuga in the late 15th century, and in the process of its formation, Kibiro was engulfed and all its inhabitants made subjects to Omukama (king) Rukidi-Mpuga. This change was another factor explaining why Kibiro's salt mining continued to be in the hands of women. Indeed, as Uzoigwe [75] observed, when Kibiro became a vassal of Bunyoro-Kitara in the early 1490s, it had been recognised not only as a fishing site but also as a source of salt. The Banyakibiro had long produced salt and fish, but as noted earlier, they were using these items to meet domestic needs. They had not appreciated the commercial and subsequent political value of salt.

In contrast, and as Keech[76] observed, the ruling class of the established kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara was already aware of that value of salt. . They knew that salt had been sought after for a long time and by people from near and far not only as a preservative but also as a nutritional requirement for both people and livestock. According to Kamuhangire[77], salt was so viewed as a major source of economic and political influence in the entire interlacustrine region that its mining accounted for aggregation of populations at the centres of production. Therefore, the Omukama of the newly established Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom prioritised controlling the production and distribution of salt as a way of gaining leverage over the declining Chwezi kingdom and other upcoming kingdoms in the eastern area.

Consequently, when the Omukama Lukidi-Mpuga took over Kibiro territorially, his keen interest was to have it under his effective dominion. Mclntosh [78] indicates that Rukidi's rule over Kibiro was indirect rule that began in the 1490s. The Omukama appointed a Mugungu as the chief of this area. This chief was assigned the responsibility of controlling the production and distribution of salt in the area. The chief was also to ensure that the Banyakibiro started taking some of the salt they produced to the palace as a tribute to the Omukama. This was corroborated by Makuru who states in the following terms:

> My grandfather told me that when our area was 'colonised' by Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom, its Omukama appointed chiefs who started requiring women to produce sufficient salt for both bartering with the food they needed to meet their domestic needs and also for payment of tribute to the king. This was a form of tax as we understand it today, but it did not come out that way during the time of the Abakama (plural for Omukama). It had to be taken to the palace whether the women wanted it or not. They therefore increased the production of salt so that they could have an extra amount that was required by the Omukama at the palace.[79]

From the above statement, the specific change that the engulfment of Kibiro by Bunyoro-Kitara introduced in the production of salt was a tax that all salt miners were required to 'pay' in form of taking salt to the palace as tribute to the king. Taking salt to the palace was very challenging and cumbersome to the women because it involved walking a very long distance from Kibiro.

According to Mclntosh, [80]another change that was introduced was the appointment of a Mugungu Chief by Omukama Lukidi-Mpuga to rule over Kibiro. In the execution of this responsibility, the Mugungu chief established a one-point centre and required all the Bakibiro to exchange all their salt (and fish) for the food and other items they needed for

domestic purposes at this centre. The chief ensured that women did not travel long distances by establishing the centre near their salt gardens. Consequently, the centre minimised the challenge of the long distances that women salt miners had been walking while looking for cultivators with whom to barter their salt with the food and other domestic items. The centre was also beneficial to the women in that it encouraged them to produce more salt and barter it with food in a relatively easy manner.

It should be pointed out that even when Omukama Lukidi-Mpuga showed keen interest in controlling and increasing the production and distribution of salt, the common man of Kibiro was not compelled to start salt mining. If this had been done, it would have benefited women by reinforcing the labour they were spending in salt mining. According to Makuru,[81] ordinary men were not compelled to join salt mining because the chief who had been appointed to rule over Kibiro on behalf of the Omukama of Bunyoro was a Mugungu who was already aware that this activity was a preserve of women. Besides, the interest of Bunyoro kings was in their salt tribute, not in who produced it.

As such, the Mugungu chief maintained the status quo by encouraging only women to produce more and sufficient salt for taking both to the palace in order to pay tribute to the king and to the centre so they could barter it with food, pottery items, hides and skins, palm and sisal, stone, and other items that were brought to the same centre by cultivators and traders who came from near and far.[82] Traders who came from far included long distance merchants from Mombasa, Zanzibar, Unyamwezi, Buganda, Kooki, Toro, Nkore, Nyasaland (present day T~~anzania~~malawi), Rwanda, Congo (present day Democratic Republic of

Congo, West Nile, Sudan, Mombasa, and other areas. As more women salt miners, food cultivators and traders engaged in barter exchange, the centre started expanding into a trading market with salt production in its backyard.[83]Further [84]Mutoro notes that *Kibiro salt was of high level of purity and was supplied to the whole of Bunyoro and Buganda in the South as well as to the Acholiland and Alurland in the North as the major trade commodity.*

According to Dunbar [85], Kibiro salt production and barter trading centre continued to expand in the same fashion throughout the reins of the following Bunyoro kings: Ocaki [86](late 15th century – early 16th century); Oyo Nyimba early part of the second quarter of the 16th century); Winyi I (later part of the second quarter of the 16th century); Olimi I (early part of the mid-16th century); Nyabongo (late part of the mid-16th century); Winyi II (late 16th century – early 17th century); and Olimi II (mid-17th century). The centre started growing into a township from the rein of king Nyarwa (early mid-17th century) through Cwamali (late mid-17th century), Masamba (early part of the late 17th century), Anabwani I (early part of late 17th century), Kyebambe I (late 17th century) to Winyi III (first part of the early 18th century) and Nyaika of Bunyoro (second part of the early 18th century). The township continued to expand through the reign of Kyebambe II early 18th century), Olimi III (1710 – 1731), Duhaga (1731 – 1782), Olimi IV (1782 – 1786), Nyamutukura Kyebambe III (1786 – 1835), Nyabongo II (1835 – 1848), Olimi V (1848 – 1852), Kyebambe IV (1852 – 1869).[87]

However, during the reign of Omukama Kabalega (1869-1898), Kibiro was attacked, conquered and occupied with the intention of exploiting and controlling its salt deposits.

According to Efe[88], the attack was executed by the Sudanese army under the command of Emin Pasha in 1886. The trading centre was made up of grass thatched huts; so the attackers conquered it by setting the huts ablaze, thereby scaring the inhabitants to flee. This was the first time Kibiro was destroyed. Emin Pasha and his army occupied Kibiro from 1886 to 1887. During this time, all the salt that had been collected in Kabalega's underground granaries was taken as spoils. This salt was a valuable commodity which was taken to Sudan to be exchanged for economic gains.

Efe [89] observed further that by the time Emin Pasha left Kibiro, it had not recovered from the shambles. However, as a result of its women's salt production and barter trade with the Sudanese whom Emin Pasha had left behind and other traders, Kibiro had been reconstructed by the time it was attacked again by the British colonialists, leading to its second destruction. More about this destruction is explained in Chapter Four. The manual reconstruction of Kibiro as a result of women's salt production and barter trade activities continued so progressively that by 1894, this centre had become an established settlement, which, according to Graham[90], was described by Major A.B Thruston, a British military officer as, "the only manufacturing town in Unyoro', consisting 'of about a thousand grass huts closely huddled together". Graham continued to observe that:

> The reason for this aggregation of population was that the women of Kibiro had developed a method of extracting salt, from alluvial deposits adjacent to hot springs at the bottom of the Western Rift Valley that allowed sustainable exploitation of a renewable resource.[91]

This shows that by the time the British colonialists infiltrated the kingdom of Bunyoro salt production and trading by women had transformed Kibiro into one of the growing and vibrant economic centres from which this kingdom derived leverage over other kingdoms in the entire interlacustrine region. Did the women continue producing and bartering increasing quantities of salt at Kibiro and benefiting from it even during the colonial period? The answer to this question is the subject of Chapter Four.

4. Conclusion

Having seen the major reasons why only women participated in this important economic activity in the kingdom which was accepted as tribute in Bunyoro kingdom one can conclude that salt mining was an important activity carried out in the kingdom and only by women.

Endnotes

[1]Gemerts, G., 2015. *Op. cit.*, p.3.
[2] Connah Graham, 1996, 1991 and 1989. *Op. cit.* p.1-4.
[3] Agena Monica, 2012. *Op. cit.*, p.40.
[4]Dunbar, Archibald Ranulph. 1965. *Op. cit.*, p.4.
[5] Akiiki Kazara, 104 years, interviewed at Kibiro on 9th January 2017.

[6] Agena, Monica, 2012. *Op. cit.*, p39-40.
[7] These include Carr, Karen Eva, 2017. Op. cit., BBC, 2010. Op. cit., Maugh II H. Thomas. 2012. Op. cit., Weller Olivier and Dumitroaia Gauthier, 2005. Op. cit., p.306 and Kurlansky, 2002, 2003. *Op. cit.*
[8] Akiiki Kazara, 104 years, interviewed at Kibiro on 9th January 2017
[9] *Ibid.*
[10]*Ibid.*
[11]*Ibid.*
[12]*Ibid.*
[13]*Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid*
[16] Makuru Daudi, 107 years, interviewed at Kibiro on 11th January 2017
[17]*Ibid*
[18]*Ibid.*
[19]*Ibid.*
[20]Siimba Juliet, 77 years of age, interviewed at Kibiro on 11th January 2017.
[21]Nyakato Akiki, 82 years of age interviewed on 4th January 2017; Mbabazi Erivanisi, 68 years of age interviewed 5th January 2017; and Kiiza Mulokole, 76 years of age interviewed on 8th January 2017
[22] Babyesiza Yofeesi of 64-year-old of age who was the LC1 Chairperson and also the chairperson of BAKODA
[23]*Ibid.*
[24]*Ibid.*
[25]*Ibid.*
[26]Connah, Graham. 1996. *Op. cit.*, p.2
[27] Colvile, Henry Colonel, Sir. 1895. *Op. cit.*, p.157
[28] Nyakato Akiki, 82 years, 7 January 2017)
[29]Connah Graham, Ephraim Kamuhangire and Andrew Piper, 1990. Op. cit. p.1
[30] Nyakato Akiki, 82 years, 7 January 2017)
[31]*Ibid*
[32]*Ibid.*
[33] Kiiza Mulokole, 76 years of age interviewed at Kibiro, 8th January 2017
[34] Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, 2007, 2008. *Op.cit.*
[35] Agena, Monica, 2012. *Op. cit.*, p.38.

[36] Stokes, Jamie. 2009. *Op. cit.*, p.507.
[37] Asaba Brenda, 74 years of age interviewed on 7th January 2017.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Connah, Graham. *Op. cit.*, p.4.
[40] Mugerwa, Francis. 2012. *Op. cit.*
[41] Nyakato Jane, 76 years of age interviewed on 7th January 2017.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid
[44] Carr, Karen Eva, 2017. *Op. cit.*
[45] Butler, Stephanie. 2013. *Op. cit.*
[46] Brigand, Robin and Weller, Olivier, 2015. *Op. cit.*, p.26.
[47] Akiiki Kazara, 104 years of age interviewed on 9th January 2017.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] Connah Graham, 1996, 1991 and 1989. *Op. cit.* p.1-4.
[54] Connah Graham, Kamuhangire Ephraim and Piper Andrew, 1990. *Op. cit.,* p.27-30.
[55] Akiiki Kazara, 104 years of age interviewed on 9th January 2017.
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] Colvile, Henry Colonel, Sir. 1895. *Op. cit.*, p.175
[58] Akiiki Kazara, 104 years of age interviewed on 9th January 2017.
[59] UNESCO, n.d. *Kibiro (Salt producing village). Op. cit.*
[60] Dassi Nsungwa, 100 years of age interviewed at Kibiro on 11th January 2017.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Colvile, Henry Colonel, Sir. 1895. *Op. cit.*, p.175
[63] Ndiho, Paul. 2015. *Op. cit.*
[64] Abdallah, Halima, 2012. *Op. cit.*
[65] Tumusiime, K. Abdulaziz. 2011. *Op. cit.*
[66] Dassi Nsungwa. *Op. cit.*
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] Nyakato Akiiki. *Op. cit.*
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] Stokes, Jamie. 2009. *Op. cit.*, p.507.
[73] Mwambutsya, Ndebesa. 1990. *Op. cit.*, p.81.
[74] Uzoigwe, Godfrey N. 1973. *Op. cit.*, p.51
[75] *Ibid*
[76] Mclntosh, Susan Keech, 2005. *Beyond chiefdoms: Pathways to complexity in Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p.54
[77] Kamuhangire R. Ephraim. 1975. *Op. cit.*, p.73.

[78]Mclntosh, Susan Keech, 2005. *Op- cit.*, p.94
[79] Makuru Daudi, 107 years of age interviewed on 11th January 2017.
[80]Mclntosh, Susan Keech, 2005. *Beyond chiefdoms: Pathways to complexity in Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p.104
[81] Makuru Daudi. *Op. cit.*
[82]Mclntosh, Susan Keech, 2005. *Op. cit.*, p.116
[83]Beattie, John H. M. 1971. *The Nyoro state.* Oxford: Clarendon Press., p.117
[84]
[85]Dunbar, Archibald Ranulph. 1965., p.197.
[86] Mutoro H.W. Pre Colonial trading systems in Connah (ed) Transformations in Africa. Library of Conference, Britain, 1999.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88]Efe, Mustafa. 2016. *Emin Pasha's role in Africa.* Retrieved 22 April 2017 from http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1425956/emin-pasha-role-africa
[89]*Ibid.*
[90] Connah Graham, 1996. *Op. cit.*, p.1
[91]*Ibid.*

CHAPTER FOUR

KIBIRO'S SALT MINING DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

(1894– 1962)

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with factors that explained women involvement in Kibiro's salt production, the benefits they realised from it, the challenges they faced and how they dealt with these challenges during the pre-colonial era. This chapter focuses on how colonialism influenced the activity of women salt mining at Kibiro between the periods 1894 -1962. The chapter begins with looking at the coming of the colonialists to Kibiro, not as the target destination but as an integral part of a targeted territory due to the fact that salt was a source of revenue and guns to Bunyoro Kingdom. The chapter then brings out the role that the salt mined by women at Kibiro played in Kabalega's resistance to colonial rule, and how this later led to destruction of Kibiro salt mines by the British as a way of neutralising Kabalega's resistance to British conquest of Bunyoro , The last part of the chapter looks at how the colonial economic policies influenced women's salt mining at Kibiro, showing the challenges they faced, social economic changes in the way salt was mined and utilised at Kibiro and the areas surrounding it.

4.1 The Coming of the Colonialists at Kibiro

In the last quarter of the 18th century, women's salt production and barter trade activities continued transforming Kibiro into a vibrant source of a resource whose distribution had reached most of the East African kingdoms and as far as Mombasa, Zanzibar and across the Indian

Ocean.[1]By this time, the Germans and the British came to East Africa to regularise the colonial trade interests to which they had agreed as per the 1885 Berlin Treaty.[2]This was done through their first explorers and missionaries, John Ludwig Krapf and Johannes Rebmann, the Germans had come to East Africa as early as 1848 and were in the process of colonising this region.[3]

On their part, the British had developed interest in East Africa as a result of the exploratory journeys that their first explorers and missionaries to this region such as Shergold Smith and C. T. Wilson of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had written about it. These missionaries had explored East Africa as far as Buganda kingdom where they reached in June 1877 and as far as the Ruwenzori Mountains, which Henry Morton Stanley had reached in 1888.[4] From their expeditions, these missionaries had concluded that this region was a viable economic zone, especially in terms of agriculture.[5]

The British, who had taken effective occupation of Egypt in 1882, feared that the Germans, who were already in East Africa, could advance inland from Tanganyika (present day Tanzania) and eventually occupy Uganda where the source of Nile River was. The British then initiated negotiations with the Germans, which culminated in the signing of the Anglo-German Agreements of July 1890.[6] This agreement left Uganda and the neighbouring areas under the British sphere of influence. Accordingly, British efforts to effectively colonise Uganda and the neighbouring jurisdictions began that same year. Besides the desire to control the source of the Nile, the British wanted to exploit Uganda's agricultural potential, which had been reported by the missionaries. They also viewed this region as a potential market for their industrial outputs.[7]

Consequently, led by William Mackinnon, the British reached Mombasa in 1888 and established a foreign office there under the auspices of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). This company had already been headquartered at Zanzibar, operating in an area of about 246,800 square miles along the eastern coast of Africa.[8] According to Sir Gerald H. Portal,[9] the British government had also granted this company the authority to govern this part of East Africa on its behalf, raise taxes from it, impose custom duties, and make treaties with rulers in the region.

Portal[10] observed further that through IBEAC, Sir William Mackinnon had been tasked to move into the interior of East Africa, particularly to Buganda kingdom with a mission to establish the feasibility of British administration over this kingdom. Mackinnon had been sent to work with Captain Frederick Lugard who was this territory's military administrator from 26 December 1890 to May 1892. Before the coming of Mackinnon, Lugard had compelled Danieri Basammula-Ekkere Mwanga II Mukasa, who was the Kabaka (king) of Buganda then, to sign a treaty on 26 December 1890, granting certain powers over revenue, trade and the administration of justice to the IBEAC.[11] Mwanga had signed this treaty because Lugard had threatened to oust him out of power following his failure to take a decision that would translate into neutralising religious power struggles which were raging among Protestants, Catholics and Muslims in his kingdom.[12] So, the main mission of Mackinnon was to find out how best these struggles were to be neutralised to enable Her Majesty's government to establish an effective administration over the kingdom.[13]

Sir William Mackinnon arrived in Buganda in April 1890 and after observing a nasty experience for about 18 months, he reported back to the IBEAC headquarters that Captain Lugard could not do much to neutralise the conflicts.[14] IBEAC directors then wrote to the British government expressing their intention to withdraw from Buganda. They argued that Captain Lugard's operations in Buganda needed £40,000 per year, a sum that was guaranteed not to return any profit.[15] In addition, Buganda kingdom was too far deep into the interior to be effectively controlled from IBEAC headquarters at Zanzibar.[16]

Fearing that such a course of action would gravely imperil the lives of their missionaries in Buganda, the Church Missionary Society mobilized £16,000 towards the expenses that IBEAC was incurring to maintain British administration over Buganda.[17] This money was meant to facilitate the company's operations till the end of 1892. Her Majesty's government also sent more funding to facilitate the cost of this administration for an extra three months after which a new commissioner would arrive in Buganda to replace Lugard who had been recalled for another deployment in Hong Kong.[18]

The new Commissioner was Sir Gerald Portal. He was appointed to this post by Her Majesty's Government on the 30th of November 1892 and his responsibility was to realise 'The British Mission to Uganda'.[19] Portal reached Buganda kingdom on the 31st of March 1893. The kingdom was still in a state of religious conflicts and Kabaka Mwanga II was in dire need of strengthening his grip on power. Mwanga was also seeking ways of defeating Omukama Kabalega of Bunyoro-Kitara, who, at the time, was considered the most serious threat to

Buganda kingdom. When Portal got to know these details, he promised to provide the necessary reinforcement on condition that he was permitted to establish a Foreign Office in Buganda. Mwanga accepted.

Therefore, after establishing the office at the present day Kampala, Sir Gerald Portal sent a telegram to Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain requesting for military reinforcement.[20] The reinforcement was sent, including five British army officers and 400 soldiers who were obtained from the Sultan of Zanzibar on request of the IBEAC; each soldier carried a snider rifle, sword bayonet, and forty rounds of ammunition.[21] Portal used this reinforcement as an opportunity to convince Mwanga to make his kingdom an integral part of the British East African administration, so it could be protected from the threat of Bunyoro-Kitara.[22] Consequently, another treaty was signed between Portal and Mwanga in 1893. This treaty was more binding than that which Lugard had signed in 1890.[23] This treaty effectively made Buganda Portal's ally in bringing all the neighbouring kingdoms such as Toro and Nkore under British administration.[24] Nonetheless, under Omukama Kabalega, Bunyoro-Kitara used guerrilla tactics to resist the colonialists for a time much longer than they had expected.[25]

4.2 Salt mining at Kibiro and Kabalega's resistance against colonialism

Portal had established that salt, which was being distributed throughout the East African region, was mainly coming from Bunyoro-Kingdom and that this salt was one of the factors that gave Kabalega leverage to resist colonial rule.[26] Indeed, as the case was during the reins of his predecessors, the Bakibiro women used to take a proportion of the salt they mined as tribute to the palace. Kabalega realised that the women walked long distances from Kibiro to the palace

and back, and that this limited the amount of salt that could be carried to the palace.[27] Besides, not all the women salt miners could walk to the palace; some were too old or weak to walk.[28] On his part, Kabalega was very much aware of the economic importance of Kibiro salt and the role it played in strengthening his kingdom militarily.[29] The salt was exchanged during the long distance trade where Kabalega was able to acquire guns. Though Kabalega as a King did not influence or do anything to this salt process.

Indeed, the salt that the women mined at Kibiro was of higher quality than that which was mined at Katwe and other parts of the interlacustrine region.[30] This was the case despite the fact that greater amounts of salt were mined at Katwe. The higher quality of Kibiro's salt was as a result of how it was mined in the process that has already been explained in chapter three. Suffice it to say the manner in which it was leached from the alluvial ensured that it was completely free of all non-salt materials such as sand, soil and other solid substances. It was therefore pure quality salt and this made it the most demanded item throughout the long distance trade in which Bunyoro-Kingdom was involved with other coastal and East African traders.[31]. Due to its medicinal purposes, traders were very much interested in it.

In response to the increasing demand, Kabalega devised a system of taking full advantage of the salt tribute[32] so as to maximise the economic and political gains from it. Implemented by the Mugungu chief on behalf of Kabalega, the system involved digging underground granaries at Kibiro so that women would walk short distances to take their tribute there.[33] Consequently, more salt miners, including those who could not have walked to the palace, took salt to the granaries.[34] The result was that salt tribute to Kabalega increased so much that he became the

main supplier of quality salt exchanged throughout the interlacustrine region and beyond.[35]Kabalega exchanged the much of the salt with guns, ammunitions and other fighting weapons that the long distance Arab traders from the East African coast brought to him.[36] He then used this weaponry to resist the colonialists in a guerrilla manner.[37] Despite women taking salt to the palace, they were not given any special status in the political structure of the Kingdom and this can be explained by Kazara who clearly said that when Obote abolished Kingdoms, it became a blessing to them because they were already fade up with the large amounts of salt they used to take to the King's palace.

It should be noted that women were the ones mining salt from Kibiro which was taken to Kabalega as a tribute and in return they would get food stuffs from the King's palace. Kabalega would further exchange this salt for guns from the Coast, which guns he used in the resistance against the Colonialists. As noted by Kazara,

> We used to take salt to Omukama Kabalega for Development purposes of the Kingdom and for defensive purposes because that was the contribution that we could manage to show loyalty to our Omukama.

Consequently, one of the strategies Sir Gerald Portal devised to neutralise Kabalega's resistance was to seize control over the salt mining areas.[38] The Buganda army was however, not enough to accomplish this course of action while at the same time effectively protecting Buganda and other annexed territories.[39] Moreover, despite having lost some of its territory to Ankole, Toro and Buganda, Bunyoro Kingdom was still a vast kingdom, and its salt gardens at Kibiro were a great distance away from Buganda; for these gardens lay to the extreme western side across Bunyoro-kingdom. Another reason was that the Sudanese troops who had been deployed to guard the

British Protectorate along the north-western border between Buganda and Bunyoro kingdoms had mutinied when the supplies they were receiving from Sudan for sustenance were cut off, Consequently, Portal appealed to Her Majesty's government for more reinforcement. Hence forth, the salt mined by Kibiro women was used by Kabalega in his resistance as noted above.

4.3 The Conquering of Kibiro by British Colonialists

> On the 4th of August 1893, I received a telegram from the War Office, asking whether I would accept an appointment under Sir Gerald Portal, in Uganda. I answered "Yes"; and... accompanied by Captain Gibb (Worcestershire Regiment), Captain Besant (Norfolk Regiment), and Captain Thruston (Oxfordshire Light Infantry), we were sent out (to Uganda) in consequence of a telegram received from Sir Gerald Portal, asking for the services of four (British) army officers...[40]

This was a statement by Sir Colonel Henry Colvile whom Her Majesty's Government had appointed in effectuation of Portal's request for reinforcement. The purpose of appointing Colvile was to take control of the affairs regarding how to neutralise and defeat Omukama Kabalega so as to annex the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara to the British Protectorate.[41]By the time Colvile arrived in Uganda in November 1893, Portal was on his way back to Britain.[42] Portal had left because of ill-health.[43] He wanted to get medication for typhoid fever that had attacked him.[44] On reaching London, Portal presented to Her Majesty's government the report he had written about Uganda, recommending the colonisation of Uganda. He, however, did not recover from the typhoid fever. He died in London on 25th of January 1894 at the age of 36.[45]

The official declaration of Uganda as a British Protectorate was made eight months after the death of Portal, a gallant British army officer who had signed the 1893 Protectorate Treaty with Mwanga, brought down the IBEAC flag and raised the Union Jack over Buganda, and

recommended its colonisation.[46] The declaration was made in August 1894 when Lord Rosebery appeared before the British Parliament and declared:

> After considering the late Sir Gerald Portal's report and weighing the consequences of withdrawal from Uganda on the one hand, and on the other of maintaining the British interests there, Her Majesty's government has determined to establish a regular administration and for that purpose to declare Uganda to be under a British Protectorate.[47]

After the departure of Portal, Lord James MacDonald took charge of Uganda in an acting capacity until Colonel Sir Henry Colvile arrived.[48]On arrival, Colvile took charge of the whole of the Baganda army and led it against the Omukama Kabalega of Bunyoro-Kitara.[49] He strategized to engage and decisively defeat Kabalega from different lines of attack.[50] He took this course of action based on his racially condescending perception of Kabalega's resistance as a personal challenge, which even influenced him to describe Kabalega as a brutal savage who had to be exterminated and also as an African king who had to be comprehensively defeated.[51] Colonel Sir Henry Colvile pursued this end by dividing the Buganda army in three regiments.

One regiment was deployed under the command of Major R. Owen to attack and defeat Kabalega's hostile army from the south.[52] Another regiment was deployed under the command of Major A. B. Thruston to attack Kabalega from the north through Lake Albert, and another contingent was left at Kampala to act as buffer garrison just in case the other two deployed contingents needed reinforcement.[53] The buffer contingent was under the command of Sir Henry Colvile himself aided by Major later Colonel G. G. Cunningham, Captain Seymour Vandeleur, and William Grant.[54] It was later deployed to attack Kabalega along the central axis which was being guided through Bunyoro Kingdom by Semei Kakungulu who was Mwanga's trusted chief.

Since Kabalega was using guerrilla tactics of ambushing and killing the colonial forces, and disappearing in the bushes thereafter, Colvile adopted a scorched earth policy which involved setting the bushes and suspected Kabalega bases ablaze, building forts and using the maxim machine gunfire bombarded with cannon.[55] He also recognised that the success of the attacks on Bunyoro depended on his army's power to convince Kabalega's subjects – the Banyoro – who lived in conquered territories knew that their king had no ability to resist it. "Failing in this, was hardly unexpected that the Banyoro would throw in their lot with us while they were separated from their King by so slight a barrier of our chain of detached forts."[56]. To this end, Colvile's army arrested Bunyoro chiefs as prisoners of war, convinced them of his army's good intentions and sent them back unharmed to deliver the same message to their fellow chiefs, thereby luring them to the army's side.[57] After six months of advancing and neutralising Kabalega's guerrilla hostility, the regiment that was under the overall command of Sir Henry Colvile met with that which was under the command of Major A. B. Thruston and the two advanced forward towards Lake Albert.[58]

Kabalega's army had all along put up a fierce guerrilla resistance to the extent that it even ambushed and overran some of the advancing colonial forces, thereby destroying some of the forts that Colvile had established.[59] However, attacking Kabalega from the north, central and south at the same time overwhelmed his army and he fled, together with his army, to Budongo forest for safety, and perhaps to reorganise and attack again, in the face of this situation; Colvile wrote:

> My first thought...was the belittlement of Kabalega. Situated as he was in the foodless Budongo forest, it was certain that before long he would soon eat up any supplies that he

> had with him, and also be forced to come out to collect food. Now my tame locusts had eaten up all the supplies to the east of the line between his capital and Masindi; the country to the north-east of that, in the direction of Fovira on the Victoria Nile, was reported to be very barren; consequently the only food available for him was to the north, in the Mugungu province and to the south-west, so that if I could occupy those two districts, I should be able to starve him out.[60]

To establish how best to overrun and occupy the Mugungu province in which Kibiro salt gardens were located, Colvile, whose troops had arrived and taken a short rest at Kitanwa, sent Macdonald, one of the British army officers in his regiment, with a small party to spy out the province and report on the possibilities of a night surprise attack on Kibiro, its major township.[61] Colvile[62] noted that Macdonald returned soon after sunset and reported that, after marching for about three and a half miles over a barren, rocky country, he had come to the edge of the escarpment falling into Albert Lake. From this place, Macdonald got a good view of the town, which he described as a large collection of the usual beehive-shaped huts, disposed on a plain between the foot of the escarpment and the lake.[63]

Macdonald also reported that the Mugungu chief who, at that time, ruled Kibiro on behalf of Kabalega had not taken any active part in the operations against them,[64] After receiving this report, Colvile thought that even when this chief had not participated in resisting them; it was risky to just invite him at Kitanwa to amicably decide on the way forward.[65] Since the report had indicated that it was easy to overrun Kibiro, Colvile took a decision to attack Kibiro in the night of the 17th of January 1894.[66] The attack was made by a company of 100 soldiers commanded by Owen and it was successfully executed without any resistance.[67] Kibiro was captured after which Colvile observed that what he saw was alas! Kibiro was no longer the town that Thruston

had earlier described and which Macdonald had later reported to him. Colvile described what he saw as follows:

> Whether some lingering Wanyoro (Banyoro) had stayed behind for the pleasure of burning the town under the conqueror's eyes, or whether it was the work of some mischievous Sudanese (who fled from the advancing onslaught), was never found out; but shortly after entering it, Owen noticed that some huts were in flames, and within half an hour the whole place was burnt down... ruined... and deserted.....[68]

This was the second time Kibiro was destroyed after the first attack and destruction in 1888 by Emin Pasha's army as explained earlier. Colvile's observation above was however, one of the two versions available to explain Kibiro's second destruction. Another version given by Musinguzi [69]was that it was actually Colvile's army that had destroyed Kibiro. This version was also confirmed by Katusabe as follows:

> My grandmother told me that the colonial army invaded this area, they shelled it and fire started. In a very short time, the fire had become so wild that it even killed some of the residents who had not woken up in time to run away from the scorching fire and save their life. There was no salt mining for almost a week after this destruction, and some Bakibiro started starving as a result.[70]

Owing to the scorched earth policy that Colvile had adopted, it is doubtable that his version was the correct one. The fire that burnt the community down could have come from the shelling directed at it as the colonial army was advancing to conquer it. In fact, Colvile himself admits that he chose to attack the community instead of using peaceful talks with the Kibiro chief.[71] It is therefore, very likely that the above respondent's version is a valid version.

Although Kibiro was captured on the 17th of January 1894, its occupation by the colonialists began on the on the 20th of January 1894.[72] This was when Colvile took a decision to set up a garrison in this area, which was made up of the Sudanese soldiers who had surrendered to the

colonial army and the Waganda (Baganda soldiers who were already working with the colonial army against Bunyoro). The establishment of this fort was intended "to prevent the utilisation of that province by Kabalega."[73] Colvile observed that the Baganda had been promised that they would go back after conquering Bunyoro.[74] When they were ready to go, Kakungulu, their commander, reminded Colvile that Kabaka Mwanga had told them to take him a tribute of loads of salt worth a pound each load, and that he had wanted two thousand loads as his share of the spoils. This reminder suggests that Mwanga had backed the British attack on Bunyoro-Kitara not only to neutralise it as a threat but also because he wanted to exploit some of the salt that had given Kabalega great economic and political power over the entire interlacustrine region. The Baganda however, looked for the salt from all the salt granaries that Kabalega had established at Kibiro in vain. This suggested that all the salt had been taken by the fleeing Bagungu, and the Baganda went back without salt.[75]

4.4 The Colonial Economic Policies and Women in Salt at Kibiro

When calm returned to Kibiro close to a week after its conquering and effective integration into the British Protectorate administration, and after establishing a colonial garrison there, its inhabitants started returning to their homes so that they could engage in their normal subsistence activities. Colvile observed that Kibiro was barren, rocky, rugged, and although it had a gently sloping part, it could not support any viable agricultural enterprise.[76] It was therefore not anywhere near being a candidate for the cash crop production policy which Her Majesty's government was promoting in other parts of the British Protectorate as a way of increasing the supply of agricultural raw materials to the industries back home while, at the same time, creating

a tax base from which the British Protectorate government was to raise revenue it needed to meet its administrative expenses.[77] As we have already noted, Colvile and his men also realised that Kibiro was not suitable for agriculture. He was thus quick to conclude that Kibiro was only useful due "the value of its salt mines", and that the inexhaustible "salt deposits at Kibiro were worth considering a good justification for colonising Bunyoro-Kingdom"[78] During his stay at Kibiro, Colvile realised that salt was being mined by women only. He was particularly fascinated by the process through which women extracted and obtained salt; which was explained earlier in the chapter consequently, one is right to conclude that the British were influenced to establish their administration at Kibiro due to the availability of salt that was mined and produced by Women. Thus these women played an important role in creating an economic atmosphere that forced the British to recognise the economic viability of Kibiro and Bunyoro in general. They realised that taking control of Bunyoro was not only to enable the protectorate take control of the "savage" King- Kabalega, but would also empower the salt production which would empower the protectorates treasury.

This economic importance of Kibiro was soon to be seen in the new economic policy that was introduced by Colvile in Kibiro. In this new policy, it was required that the women were to take some salt as a form of royalty to the established garrisons, here it would then be collected in the granaries formerly used by Kabalega and despatched to Kampala en-route to Britain where it would be sold as raw material to the industrialists. It should be noted that apart from the use of a new terminology, royalty was not new to the Bakibiro women. It just replaced the tribute (or disguised tax) that these women were formerly required to take to the kings of Bunyoro-Kingdom, including the deposed Kabalega.[79] It is also important to note that like Kabalega, the

British also understood that leaving women in the mining of salt was important in not distorting the exercise. This clearly shows the unique and important place that women held in salt mining at Kibiro Salt Gardens.

The payment of the royalty by women salt miners increased during the reign of Winyi IV (1925-1967). This was because, acting on behalf of the British Protectorate Government, this king appointed a Mugungu chief who ensured that each and every salt miner took salt to the granaries, irrespective of the amount of salt mined. This in turn forced women to mine more salt keeping at the back of their mind that much of it had to be taken by British in form of loyalty. This is further emphasized by Mbabazi who explains that:

> We were not paying tax during the reign of Omukama Winyi, but the salt that was required from every miner as royalty made women extract as much salt as they could. Consequently, salt production increased a lot during this reign. In fact, the amount of salt produced during Winyi's reign had not been produced before. It was too much. I remember this was also the time when the Bakibiro started producing salt to exchange it with better utensils such as cups, plates, bracelets and other items that traders from Buganda used to bring at the trading centre.[80]

The statement clearly shows that the increase in salt mining during the colonial period did not benefit the people of Kibiro, especially the women who mined and processed it. Much of it was taken as royalty by the Protectorate Government. The only thing the colonial government did was to modernise the tools for salt mining at Kibiro. These tools were not aimed at improving the conditions of women miners, but increase the quality and quantity of salt mined which had a bearing on the loyalty that was later paid by the miners. This was confirmed by Rubanga who states in the following words:

> Nothing much changed. The production process remained unchanged. The way women benefited from salt did not change. It remained the same barter system in which salt

> continued to be exchanged for food and other domestic items. The only change was that the Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara was missing in the whole equation because he had been deposed in the war that even interrupted salt production for some time. The salt the women used to take to the palace as tribute was now being taken to the representatives of the colonial government whose headquarters were strategically established near the trading centre.[81]

Evidently, in terms of the production process and benefits, women's involvement in salt mining remained typically unchanged in a large measure throughout the entire colonial period. The interest of the colonial government in Kibiro salt was not different from that of the Bunyoro kings. It was not in who produced the salt and how it was produced, but in ensuring that those who participated in the production took their salt royalties to the garrison. As result, the British colonial policy on Kibiro did not contribute to improvement in the technology of salt production. It only succeeded in denying the kings of Bunyoro who rose to the throne after Kabalega, including Kitahimbwa (1898-1902), Duhaga II (1902-1924), and Winyi IV (1925-1967) from the earnings that their predecessors had gotten from the salt tribute collected from their subjects which later weakened their economic power.

By the time Obote I abolished all kingdoms in Uganda in 1967; there was no king of Bunyoro receiving salt tribute, it all went to the British Protectorate. According to Musinguzi[82] the British appropriated 66,231.67 kilograms of salt per annum, which, for the entire period of their occupation of Kibiro, amounted to a total of 43,707,290 kilograms. The fact that all these kilograms were mined by Kibiro women suggests that there was a lot of exploitation of these women by the British. Such exploitation would have caused grave concern for the women who mined salt, but because it had been going on since the engulfment of Kibiro by Bunyoro-Kitara, the women took it as a normal obligation they had to fulfil. In addition, their level of

enlightenment about the manner in which economic exploitation took place was still low and was so much influenced by feudalistic thinking that they viewed taking royalty to the colonialists as a normal practice. This was confirmed by Rubanga as follows:

> .....Our ancestors took it for granted that a portion of the salt that the women mined had to be taken to the kings and later to the colonialists; and they did not expect anything in return because they had been raised with thinking that it was something were supposed to do as a contribution to the development of Bunyoro kingdom.[83]

5. Conclusion

In general, therefore, by the time Uganda got her political independence on the 9th of October 1962, the major change that had happened to women's salt mining at Kibiro was in the context of paying salt royalty to the colonial government instead of taking salt tribute to the Omukama of Bunyoro. Another major change, which was even negative, was the second destruction of Kibiro, which rendered all the achievements that women had realised from salt production and trading ruined. Colvile's account of the mining process he observed at Kibiro suggests that during the colonial period, there was no significant positive change in the entire process of salt mining and in the benefits that accrued to these women at the personal and household level. Even the challenges that these women faced during the process of mining continued unsolved. Could the changes in these variables have occurred during the postcolonial period? The main theme of the next chapter focuses on answering this question.

It has been noted that though colonialists attacked and colonised Kibiro, they did not influence nor change the mining which was done by women. Women continued mining during the colonial period. The colonialists did not even influence the process of salt mining.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SALT MINING AT KIBIRO DURING THE POST-COLONIAL ERA

(1962 – 2015)

5.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined how the British colonialists took over control of Kibiro salt mines and how they did not have a significant influence on the livelihoods of the women who mined salt in spite of the fact that they took over the salt tribute that these women used to take to the kings of Bunyoro-Kingdom. The colonialists did not address the challenges the women faced in the production and transportation of salt neither did they improve the benefits the women realised from salt. This chapter provides a historical account of whether and how these variables changed during the post-colonial period. It was organised in such a way that it begun with continuities and changes in salt mining. It then presented the benefits women realised from the mining and the challenges they encountered during the post-colonial period. The conclusion of the chapter is provided as the last section.

5.1 Continuities and Changes in Salt Mining during the Post-colonial Era

Uganda's postcolonial period began on the 9th October 1962 when she got her political independence. As for the Bakibiro women, salt mining and production continued as before, since it was their traditional role. This was well-articulated by Tinkamanyire Loy as follows:

> Salt mining went on in Kibiro before and after independence, and it continues to be exclusively carried out by women because it is their traditional role in the Bakibiro culture. Nothing has changed this culture, and I don't think anything is about to change it. We are traditionally bound to be the miners as men go fishing and selling fish in a retail manner.[1]

Tinkamanyire Loy[2] indicated further that the division of labour in which men went fishing as women mined salt continued in exactly the same way as it was during the pre-colonial and colonial eras. Even the making of the tools that were being used to mine salt continued to be a women's preserve, particularly during the Obote I government (1962-1971). To this end, a one V. Mulokole had this to say:

> Men continued not participating in salt mining because even the tools that were being used in this Process were still made by women. This did not change in the early days of Uganda's post-colonial era. In fact, even when the colonialists wanted us to contribute salt as royalty, they did not make any effort to improve its production. The situation remained the same until Idi Amin came...[3]

Suruma Ezra had also explained a similar situation at the national level, noting that although Uganda had attained political independence, her economy was still following the development planning model that had been left behind by the British colonialists.[4] The mode of production, income generating activities, and the methods of taxation were all still in force and they focused on cash crops such as coffee, cotton, tea, tobacco, and others that colonialists had promoted. Accordingly, throughout the Obote I government (1962-1971), the Kibiro women continued producing salt using the same process and tools that they had been using during the colonial era.

The miners continued using the same pottery tools of production such as ceramic pots, porous scoopers, ceramic pans and other rudimentary tools to collect the absorbent loose salty soil from the surface of the alluvial, leach brine from the collected soil, and boil the brine using firewood collected from the nearby woodlands.[5] The entire process continued to be purely manual. Even

the salt cakes that were being made from the crystallised solid that remained after boiling to evaporate the liquid from the brine continued being carried on the heads and transported on foot for bartering with domestic needs.[6]

There were however, changes that occurred during Idi Amin's regime (1971-1979). The first changes were in the salt production process. During the pre-colonial and colonial eras, and in nearly the first decade of the post-colonial period, the salt production tools were being made by the women themselves. After Amin's ascendance to power, women started to just replace all the pottery ware, which, according to Colvile[7] and UNESCO,[8] had dominated this process with metallic and wooden ware. The replacement lessened the women's workload. They no longer made the porous salt production tools. All they now needed was to produce salt and barter it with wooden scoopers, wooden pans, aluminium saucepans, plastic jerry cans, and other tools which could replace all the porous tools. These changes were directly encouraged by Idi Amin's government in various ways.

The Late President Idi Amin Dada was a Pan Africanist who realised that the Ugandan economy was predominantly in the hands of the Asians. Ugandans were not gaining much from their economy despite contributing much to sustaining it. Consequently, while addressing Ugandan troops in August 1972, Idi Amin announced that he was going to expel 50,000 Asians who had British passports. He declared thus:

> I am going to ask Britain to take over responsibility for all Asians in Uganda who are holding British passports because they are sabotaging the economy of this country. I want the economy to be in the hands of Ugandans, especially black Ugandans.[9]

After making the announcement above, Amin nationalised thirty-five British companies, expelled the British Commissioner, Richard Slater, gave 90 days to all the Asians holding British passports to leave Uganda, and put all the businesses the Asians left behind in the hands of the black Ugandans. The expulsion caused a furrow and was widely condemned by the Western world. In retaliation, British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, cancelled a £10 million loan to Uganda, ended a technical aid program worth £1.7 million, withdrew more than 800 officers working on technical assistance projects, banned all military aid, broke off all diplomatic relations, and together with the United States of America, imposed economic embargo on Uganda's imports and exports.[10]

Amin responded to the sanctions by encouraging domestic production and export of Ugandan goods through the black market.[11] Imports were smuggled into Uganda from Kenya in the same way. Amin promoted domestic production by encouraging and facilitating all Ugandans who were involved in productive activities to increase output. It was noted that salt was one of the domestic products that Uganda used to import in large volumes before the sanctions. It was therefore one of those products whose importation declined as a result of the imposed embargos. Consequently, the demand for salt produced in Uganda increased drastically. The fact that Kibiro's salt had higher quality than the salt that was mined at Katwe meant that Kibiro's salt had a higher demand. In fact, Akiiki Kazara[12] noted that:

> Shortly after Amin's expulsion of the Asians, traders started coming from as far as Kampala looking for our salt. They would come with products, which included mainly domestic ware such cutlery, plastic cups and plates, plastic pails, plastic and metallic jerry cans, aluminium

> saucepans, wooden scoopers, and others, and they would give us these products in exchange for our salt.

The result was that women increased the production of salt in order to get as more and more of these new products. The women wanted more of these products not for domestic use only. Many of the products proved to be more useful in the production of salt.[13] They also proved to be more durable than the previously used porous tools. Consequently, many of the products that Kampala traders brought to Kibiro were used to replace the pottery tools that the women had been using to extract salt.[14] Plate 5.1 below shows the wooden scooper that replaced the earthen scooper (*Ekisinga*), which was being used to heap the loose soil before spreading it on the surface of salty alluvial to absorb salt from the alluvial. The scooper would also be used heap this soil onto the *Orwooto* (boat-like tray) on which it would be carried and spread on the moist ground surface. The same scooper was further being used to collect this soil into the pots after absorbing salt from the alluvial ground surface, and to get salt out of the boiling brine.

Plate 5.1: Ekisinga for heaping loose soil, collecting it into pots and getting salt from boiling brine. Photo taken on 7th January 2017.

Specifically, the scooper in Plate 5.1 was what a woman used to heap the loose soil she was going to spread on the moist salty ground surface as shown in Plate 5.2 below.

Plate 5.2: Loose soil heaped using *Ekisinga* to be spread on moist salty ground. Taken on 8 January 2017

The wooden *Orwooto* in Plate 5.3 is the device that replaced the porous boat-like tool that was originally used to spread loose soil on the topmost moist layer of the ground surface to absorb the salt moisture from the covered surface. Note that one of its sides is broken because of having been overused.

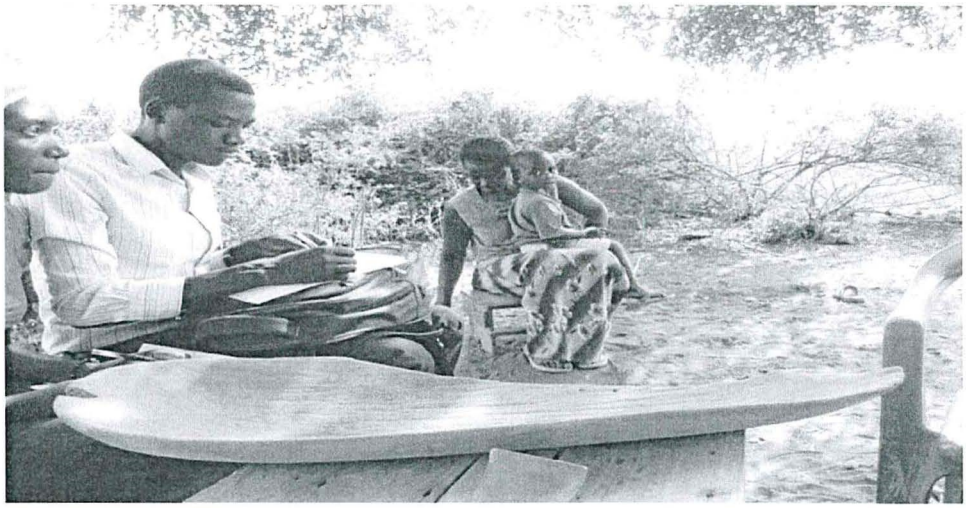

Plate 5.3: *Orwooto* women used to spread loose soil on the moist ground surface taken on 9th Jan 2017

Plate 5.4 and Plate 5.5 below depict women using Orwooto to spread loose soil on the moist ground surface to absorb the salt moisture from the covered surface.

Plate 3.4: Woman carrying loose soil in an unbroken *Orwooto taken on 9th Jan 2017*

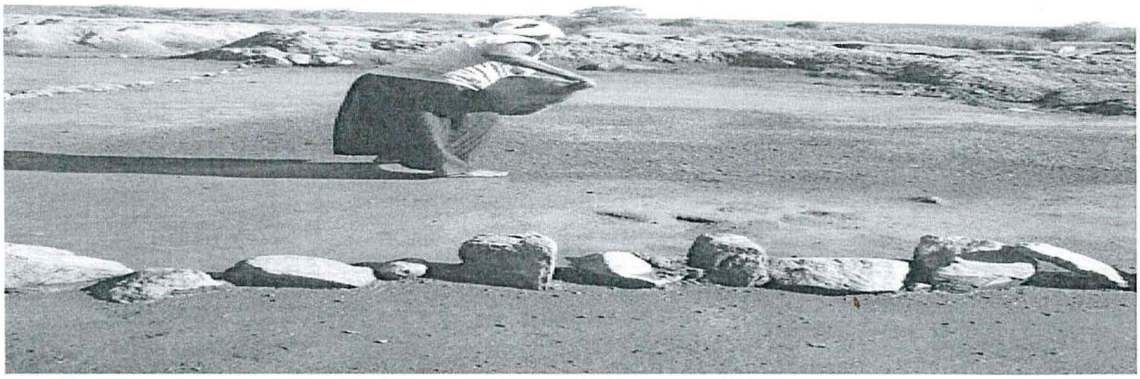

Plate 5.5: *Orwooto* being used to spread loose soil on moist salty surface taken on 9th Jan 2017.

Plate 5.6 below shows the aluminium saucepans (*Biigi*) which replaced the porous pots into which loose soil would be collected and leached during the pre-colonial and colonial times. The saucepans replaced the porous pots during Amin's era.

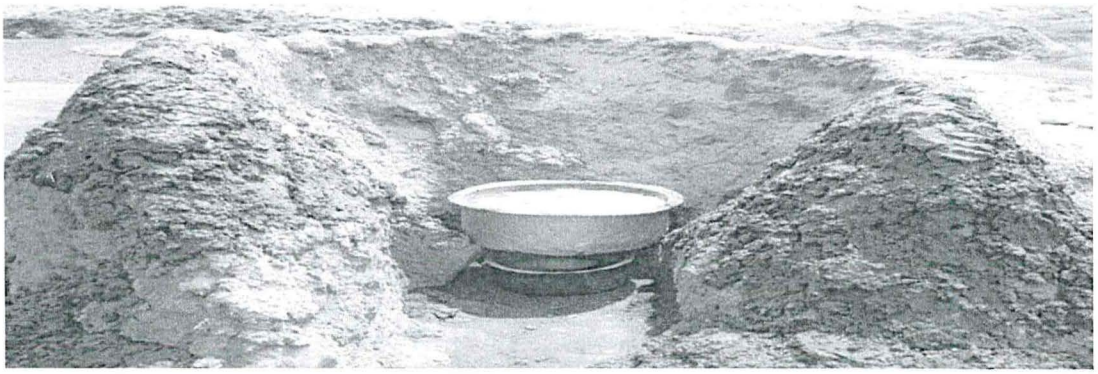

Plate 5.6: Saucepans into which loose soil is collected and brine leached. Taken on 9th January 2017.

In Plate 5.6, loose soil is collected in the saucepan on top and brine is leached into the saucepan below. Plate 5.7 below shows a woman using a small saucepan to collect water from the stream and add it to the loose soil collected in a bigger saucepan in the right hand front corner of the Plate 5.7.

Plate 5.7: Salt miner using a small saucepan to collect water from the stream to add to loose soil in the saucepan. Taken on 9th Jan 2017

Plate 5.8 below indicates a clear picture of how saucepans and pails are used in the salt production process. The water is being added to speed up the leaching of brine from the loose soil collected in the top saucepan into the saucepan placed underneath. This suggests that the saucepan at the top is holed at the bottom to allow the brine to drain through it into the saucepan below. In fact, the brine can be seen as a brown liquid collecting in the saucepan under.

Plate 5.8: Saucepans that replaced pots into which loose soil and brine are collected.

Plate 5.9 below indicates a woman who had finished leaching brine and was in the processing of pouring the remaining wet loose soil back to the ground so it can dry and be re-used later to absorb more salt.

Plate 5.9: Wet loose soil being removed from a saucepan back to the ground surface. Taken on 9th. Jan. 2017.

Plate 5.10 below indicates the jerry cans that replaced the porous pots into which brine would be poured after leaching it from the loose soil.

Plate 5.10: A lady pouring brine into jerry cans after leaching it from loose soil. Taken on 9th. January 2017.

The jerry cans started to be used to carry the brine into the metallic saucepans that replaced the porous pans women originally used to boil brine after leaching it. The saucepans that replaced the porous boilers are shown in Plate 5.11 below. As explained before, boiling was intended to crystallise salt so as to make the conic salt moulds (loads or salt cakes) out it. Some of these salt cakes are also shown in Plate 5.11.

Plate 5.11: Saucepans being used for boiling brine instead of porous pans. Taken on 9th. January 2017

At the end of the process, Plate 5.12 below indicates women carrying the produced conic salt cakes in a basket and plastic basins either for domestic use, for exchange with food or other domestic needs, or to be sold in the market.

Plate 5.12: Women carrying baskets of conic salt mould. Taken on 10th. January 2017

Plate 5.13 below indicates women selling their salt cakes at Kibiro Trading Centre.

Plate 5.13: Selling and Buying of Salt Cakes at Kibiro Trading Centre. Taken on 10th January 2017

Plate 5.14 shows the researcher and her assistant buying salt cakes from the woman.

Plate 5.14: Researcher and her assistant buying salt cakes from the seller taken on 10th January 2017

It is important to note that the entire process indicates that from Plates 5.1 to 5.14, salt mining, transportation and selling were all carried out by women. This reveals that salt mining continues to be exclusively in the hands of women even up to date.

In addition to the improvements that women introduced in the salt production process in order to respond to the increased demand, there was another positive change, which involved the introduction of the monetary system in Kibiro's salt exchange system. Akiiki Kazara explained this change as follows:

> Shortly after Amin's overthrow of Obote I, some of the traders who came from Kampala for our salt had money instead of real goods. They had coins and paper money. They would tell us that we could also use the same coins and papers to buy whatever we needed from

> other traders or even members of our community who did not have what we wanted but needed salt. This solved the challenge we used to face, that is, of having to look for a person who needed salt and at the time also had the exact items the salt miner wanted. Barter exchange remained in only those circumstances where the two parties involved in salt exchange had what they wanted from each other.[15]

The introduction of the monetary system was a consequence of the policy Amin had declared in 1972 in an effort to Africanise the Ugandan economy. The policy meant that Ugandans were now in charge of most of the trade activities that characterised the economy. They therefore had more access to the money, which had concentrated in the hands of Asians before their expulsion. Ugandans could now use money to buy whatever they needed. Since salt was one of the essential commodities whose demand had increased following the economic embargos, those who were involved in its production got an opportunity to start getting exposed to money as a medium of exchange.

The introduction of the monetary system solved the challenge that classical economists such as Nobuhiro, Wright[16] and Stanley[17] refer to as double coincidence of wants. Indeed, instead of looking for someone who needed salt and at the same time had what the salt miner needed, it became easy to sell the salt to any willing buyer and use the money obtained to get whatever the salt miner wanted. This encouraged women salt miners as they began appreciating that they could even get money out of their extracted salt.

Therefore, another factor that made women to continue producing salt was the monetisation of its exchange. Monetisation made women realise the value of the salt they mined. They could now sell their salt and get whatever they wanted at ease. For instance, it became easy to buy

food, clothing, and other products which the women needed to satisfy domestic needs. It is important to note that the introduction of the monetary system did not eliminate the barter system totally. Some salt continued to be bartered, especially when the person who wanted salt had food or other items that the salt miner needed.[18] This confirms the observation made by Mugerwa[19] that Kibiro was a place where barter trade was still thriving as late as 2012. However, much of the salt began getting exchanged using the monetary system as a one Adyeri noted:

> The Asians, who were giving us little money, were expelled by Amin. Women started selling salt for money not only at Kibiro trading centre but also as far as Kigorobya – where barter exchange of salt had started after Obote I's abolition of the kingdoms in Uganda in 1967. The expulsion of the Asians increased the monetary value of our salt, and we got a good amount of money from our salt.[20]

Generally, a number of changes occurred to the process by which the Bakibiro women produced and exchanged salt during the post-colonial period. The changes started taking place during Amin's reign and they occurred mainly to the production tools and to the manner in which salt exchange took place. Regarding the production tools, women replaced the pottery production tools with plastic and aluminium ware introduced by traders from Kampala. This effectively meant that instead of making ceramic tools, which was a slow and laborious process, women acquired better and more durable replacements either by buying them or exchanging salt to get them. The more durable tools the women acquired included metallic saucepans, plastic jerry cans and pails, and wooden scoopers. The new tools made the salt production process less cumbersome by eliminating the laborious stage of making the porous tools. However, they did not change its manual nature. Salt mining remained labour-intensive, small-scale but more beneficial to the women than it was before.

The monetisation of the larger part of the salt exchange made women realise the value of the salt they had all along mined for purposes of getting food. Monetisation made women use salt to get money which they could use to get whatever they wanted to satisfy all their domestic needs. This motivated women to increase salt production. More importantly, the monetisation of salt exchange enabled the Bakibiro women to overcome the challenge of double coincidence of wants. The specific benefits that women realised from these changes are elaborated in the following section.

5.2 Benefits Kibiro Women Realised from Salt Mining during the Post-Colonial Era

A number of benefits accrued to women salt miners at Kibiro as a result of the changes that took place in salt production and exchange during the post-colonial period. To begin with, the replacement of the pottery production tools with the more durable metallic, plastic and wooden production tools made salt mining less laborious to women and less vulnerable to torrents. Women stopped using the fragile ceramic tools that easily broke, thereby causing losses, repetition of some of the stages in salt production, and delays in salt production which would result from women taking off time to make and replace the broken tools. The use of the more durable aluminium, plastic and wooden tools stopped the massive breakages of the porous tools, which, according to Colville,[21] often took place at the river beds as a result of heavy torrents. Consequently, women extracted salt more consistently in a less interrupted manner, leading to increased production.

According to Adyeri Brenda,[22] the introduction of money made the salt mined by women the main source of income for the Bakibiro community. While fishing was another source, it was

not the main source of income. This is because by the time money was introduced, the demand for fish was not as high as the demand for salt. This monetisation generated income for women, which they used to realise different benefits. Adyeri Brenda divulged some of these benefits as follows:

> During Idi Amin Dada's regime, we started to exchange our salt for money which we used to buy groceries such as rice, sugar and other food items. We also bought better clothing, jewellery and other items were needed to improve our quality of life at the household level. it was the best regime for no regime benefited us like that man s regime[23]

During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, women mined salt as a means of getting mainly food such as cassava, potatoes and millet grown in neighbouring villages such as Kigorobya. However, as Adyeri Brenda explained above, monetisation enabled women to realise more benefits that were in form of more food items such as rice and sugar. It also enabled them to buy better clothing and jewellery amongst others. A close look at these items reveals that monetisation enabled the Bakibiro women to improve their quality of life by including new food items that could not be produced and therefore obtained from the neighbouring villages in their dietary and nutritional menu. It also enabled the women to improve their style of dress by buying better clothing and jewellery.

Adyeri Brenda[24] observed further that women used some of the money they obtained from the exchange of their mined salt to pay graduated tax for their husbands, especially those who could not raise the money from fishing. During the colonial period, the Bakibiro men were required to pay graduated tax worth thirty kilogrammes of fish, which was equivalent to 10 Uganda shillings.[25] This tax was too much for most of the men to pay, but it become easy for the women

to pay when they started getting money in exchange for the salt they mined.[26] It is imperative to note that women were not required to pay tax throughout the entire Uganda Protectorate. The explanation for this is given by the functional gender theory presented in Chapter One. As this theory posits, women did not pay tax because colonialists did not value their work. The focus of the colonialists was on men. In Kibiro, however, the form of gender that the colonialists ignored was the breadwinner. It was women who exchanged salt for food and other domestic needs. So, when the women started getting money, they found it easy to pay tax for their spouses who happened to get less money.

Furthermore, the monetisation of salt exchange enabled the women to get money, which they used to pay school fees for their children.[27] Before the monetisation of this exchange, most of the Bakibiro children were not going to school. While the girls went with their mothers to the salt gardens to extract salt, the boys went with their fathers to hunt or for fishing. Learning with purely informal and at home, in salt gardens, in the forest or at Lake Mwitanzigye[28] (Albert). This arrangement was only interrupted when women started getting money from salt exchange. Slowly by slowly, they started sending their children to school and paying the school fees.

According to Vangirina Mulokole,[29] women gave some of the money they earned from salt exchange to their spouses to build better houses roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Before getting this money, all the dwellings at Kibiro were in form of grass thatched huts.[30]Plate 5.15 below compares the grass thatched huts in which the Bakibiro dwelt and the corrugated-iron roofed houses that were built after the monetisation of the salt that the women mined. According

the Bakibiro women salt miners facilitated the transformation of their dwellings from grass-thatched huts to better houses roofed with corrugated iron sheets.

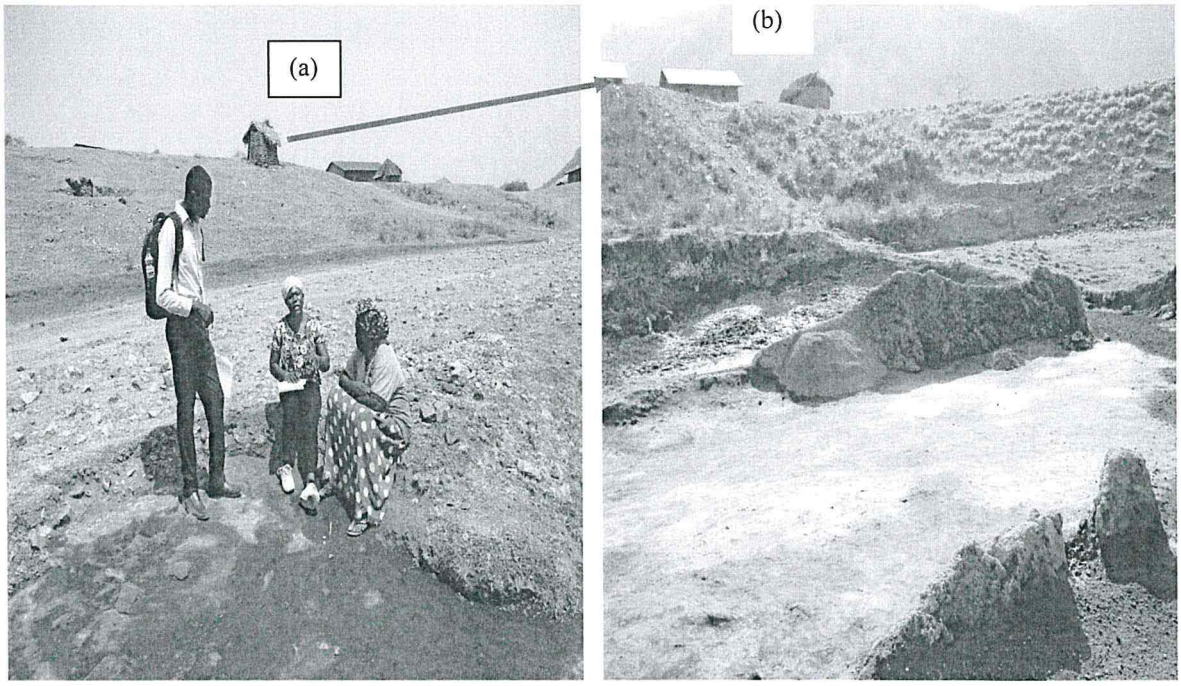

Plate 5.15: Transformation from grass-thatched huts to iron sheet roofed houses. Taken on 7th January 2017.

Another benefit was that Kibiro salt mines started attracting researchers and tourists especially during Museveni's regime, thereby becoming one of the rural research and tourist attraction.[31] This reinforces the observation made by UNESCO[32] that Kibiro is one of the tourist cultural sites in Uganda. In fact, as Nyiracyiza Jack line[33] observed, Kibiro was proposed for listing as one of UNESCO's world heritage centres in 1997 owing to its uniqueness as the only salt mines manned exclusively by women in addition to its hot springs, archaeological artefacts and sandy beach-like appearance along Lake Albert. This

proposal needs to be translated into reality so as to publicise a site where women are totally in charge of salt mining and distribution and where, therefore, the production relations are in total contrast with Nikolai Bukharin's[34] historical materialism that portrays men as the controllers of these relations.

Generally, the benefits that women realised from the monetised exchange of salt, which was introduced during Amin's regime and continued up to date (2017), brought out the power of women in playing the roles of breadwinning for and transformation of their households. Kibiro women started playing the roles culturally socialised as men's roles. This put these women in a position to control decision-making regarding how to spend on household needs and on meeting their spouses' tax obligations and children's financial needs, particularly those concerning school requirements. As such, the benefits effectively confirm the postulations of liberal feminism which maintain a view that women and men can play the same roles if the principles of gender equality and equity are observed in society.

5.3 Challenges Kibiro Women Faced in Salt Mining and Solutions during Post-colonial Era

It is noted that the various benefits that women started realising from salt mining since independence would certainly be greater if they were not limited by challenges that the women faced in the salt production and trading processes. Katusabe disclosed one of these challenges as follows:

> The transportation of the salt to the market has continued to be a challenge. The small road that connects salt gardens to the trading centre has remained very rugged, rocky and hard to go through for so long, especially when we are carrying the extracted salt on our heads[35]

The other great challenge is the change in weather patterns. Especially during the rainy season, most of the salt gardens get flooded since Kibiro is a low lying area and on the lake shores of Lake Albert. This reduces on the production of the salt drastically as most gardens become inaccessible due to floods.

The other challenge as time went by was the inadequacy of firewood. According to Katusabe Juliet[36], boiling the brine to get salt out of it required a lot of firewood. As the production of salt increased, especially after the monetisation of the exchange, more and more firewood was used. This made the woodland recede towards the upper end of the escarpment. Today (2017), women have to travel long distances in search for firewood. Of course firewood is not a renewable source of energy and cannot be relied upon to sustain the production of a renewable resource such as Kibiro salt. There is therefore need for the women in Kibiro to devise other means of producing energy needed to crystallise salt out of brine.

Akiiki Kazara[37] pointed out another challenge the women started facing after the fall of Idi Amin. The plastic, wooden and aluminium tools to which most of the women salt miners had switched started becoming expensive. These tools became particularly too costly for most of the women in the 1980s. The price of the smallest saucepan required as a tool in salt production increased from Uganda shillings 20,000 to 50,000. These prices discouraged many salt miners so much that some of them decided to go back to using pottery tools until President Museveni took over in 1986.[38] As of today (2017), it is difficult to find women still using ceramic tools because the metallic and plastic tools became more affordable.

Although the salt production tools which had become expensive in the 1980s happened to be relatively affordable during President Museveni's regime (1986 – to date), the money that the women miners started getting from salt was very little because traders started under-pricing the salt at Kibiro while selling it in Kampala at very high prices. This under-pricing was caused by the re-appearance of the middlemen whom Amin had eliminated when he expelled the Asians. Such under-pricing was also pointed out by Hinton and colleagues[39] as one of the challenges that African artisanal miners face in general. It continues at Kibiro up to date (2017), suggesting that the women mining salt there continue to be exploited.

There was therefore need to eliminate the middlemen who perpetuated it so that the women can sell their salt directly to the market in Kampala.[40] The middlemen needed to be eliminated in the light of the fact that the taxes and licenses levied on women salt sellers have implications of raising the cost of salt. Under free market conditions, this would ideally have translated into an increase in the price of salt. However, the presence of middlemen makes this difficult because of their continued use of the under-pricing strategy. Their elimination can however, be realised only when the salt miners are themselves empowered to deliver their salt not only to the trading centre at Kibiro but also to the market in Kampala and other areas in Uganda and beyond.

Another challenge that started to be faced during Museveni's regime was that the government started taxing the women salt miners whenever they took salt to the trading centre.[41] The local government that takes Kibiro under its jurisdiction imposed a local tax on all women who sold salt at the trading centre. In addition, the women who have retail shops in the trading centre are

compelled to pay trading licenses.[42] It should be noted that although tax payment was viewed as a challenge, it is actually not a challenge when it is viewed from the citizenship perspective of civic responsibility. Every citizen who earns in one way or another has an obligation to pay tax. What can perhaps be considered a challenge is the poor use of the paid tax, especially in Kibiro where there is no indicator that the paid taxes are really used to improve the roads connecting the trading centres to the salt gardens and to provide other public services.

The other challenge has been a drastic increase in population over the time since Independence and this has greatly exerted more pressure on the salt Gardens consequently reducing on the number of gardens each woman controls because the gardens have been further subdivided among the many family members because every girl who is born is supposed to get a salt garden from the family gardens and as you know land does not increase in.

The tourists and researchers who started coming to Kibiro salt mines from 1986 onwards were perceived as a challenge the Bakibiro salt miners faced in form of exploitation. This was disclosed by Asaba Amooti as follows:

> Our major challenge is that we get many visitors as tourists and researchers but they do not give us anything. The different people we have received here for the last 30 or so years have been deceiving us that they are students. They ask us to give them information about our heritage, economic activities, how we survive, and the challenges we face, and so on – the same thing you are doing now – but after wasting our time, which we would have spent doing something more gainful – they just thank us and move away. Moreover, they do not come back again, never mind that they promise to come back and to use our information to bring development to our community... We are tired of this exploitation.[43]

As the preceding challenge indicates, the Kibiro women noticed their exploitation by the tourists and researchers who went there. This exploitation exacerbated the under-pricing which they

were suffering at the hands of the middlemen. Consequently, they devised a strategy for overcoming the exploitation as Yafeesi Babyesiza explained:

> We devised a strategy in 2015, which involved forming an association referred to as the Bakibiro Development Association (BAKODA). The membership of this association is made up of all the Bakibiro women and men, but joining it is voluntary. Today, BAKODA has a total of 80 members 60 of whom are women salt miners. BAKODA was formed to meet the following objectives: (a) Preventing the under-pricing of salt by middlemen by collective bargaining; (b) Rationalising local market tax collection; (c) Improving the social welfare of the members; (d) Acting as a SACCO for the members.[44]

Evidently, BAKODA was established to fight the economic exploitation that the Bakibiro faced at the hands of not only the middlemen who had entered the salt distribution chain but also the unappreciative tourists and researchers who started visiting Kibiro during Museveni's regime. Women are faced with the Health challenge of frequent backaches that resulted from the tedious salt production process that required bending most of the time. Unlike at Katwe, salt mines, where salt causes many health problems as it had been noted in the media (Documentary on Bukedde TV on 23.07.2017), women at Kibiro only confessed that it is only the problem of Backaches as a result of salt mining. Kazaara; 'we were surprised with what we saw at Katwe where they had swollen feet and hands with wounds as result of getting in contact with salt" This has been solved by reducing on the hours spent in the gardens depending on each person's health.

In general, this chapter indicates that the exclusive mining of Kibiro's salt by women underwent a number of changes during the postcolonial era from 1962 to 2015. The changes however, started almost a decade after 1962. It was during Amin's regime, especially after the expulsion of the Asians to put Uganda's economy in the hands of black Ugandans. The specific change

was such that instead of making and using the fragile pottery tools to produce salt, the women replaced all these tools by the more durable aluminium saucepans, plastic jerry cans and pails, and wooden scoopers. Another change was the monetisation of salt exchange during the same regime and thereafter. These changes not only increased salt production but also produced benefits such as income that enabled the women to play roles that were culturally meant to be men's roles.

The roles the women miners at Kibiro played included breadwinners, paying school fees for their children, buying clothing and meeting other domestic needs. The income the women realised from salt exchange further enabled them to pay not only graduated tax for their spouses but also market levies and licenses. These benefits contrast the conventional view advanced by most of the gender theories and sociological writings that cast women as a weak sex that contributes almost nothing of economic value to the economic welfare of their households and communities. They however, give credence to the liberal feminist theory which asserts that women can play the roles played by men when the principles of gender equality and equity are observed in society. The benefits the women realised from salt production and exchange would have been more had they not faced challenges such as poor roads, working in the open, and being exploited through salt under-pricing by middlemen and receiving tourists and researchers who could not appreciate and reward them for time and information provided. The women however, formed BAKODA as a strategy for overcoming most of these challenges, except the poor road and weather patterns.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at state of women in the post- colonial era where it has concluded that women have remained in salt mining throughout period.

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CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

This study has explored the origin and factors explaining why Kibiro's salt mining was exclusively carried out by women, the benefits that accrued from this mining, the challenges they faced during the mining and distribution of salt, and how these challenges were dealt with from 1894 to 2015. Overall, the findings reveal that Kibiro women are not a weak sex that contributes significantly to the economic welfare of their households and communities. Instead, these women have the power to mine salt as a natural resource and using this salt to survive and support their households and communities in a largely barren geographical setting, and with negligible support from men, which results from the Bakibiro cultural beliefs and practices.

6.1 Conclusions

The established factors suggest that any community development initiative that can help enhance Kibiro women's socio-economic transformation based on salt mining should first focus on changing Bakibiro's cultural perception of this activity, especially as held by men. Indeed, the main factor that has been passed on from the first Bakibiro generation to the present generation is that the god of Kibiro which only revealed the process of salt mining to a woman known as Nyasimba. When this god was rewarding salt to the first Bakibiro after sacrificing their baby girl to appease it in the early years of the 10th century, it appeared to both Nyasimba and her husband. However, when this god revealed the mining process, it appeared to Nyasimba alone. Men have since been using this legend to justify that salt mining was meant to be carried out by women only. By revealing the salt mining process to a woman, the intention of this god was to create division of labour whereby women were to

start salt mining instead of digging (or crop growing which was not possible in this area) as men went hunting and later, fishing from Lake Albert. Evidently, when this cultural perception is changed, men are likely to come on board to work together with their spouses and increase salt production, thereby increasing the benefits realised from it and subsequently, improving the livelihoods of the Bakibiro.

The other factor related to the ownership and inheritance of the salt gardens. Culturally, Kibiro salt mines have, since their beginning, been owned and inherited in a matrilineal manner. Men used this as a reason to distance themselves from an activity they do not own, not even through inheritance. Accordingly, changing the ownership and inheritance of Kibiro's salt mines in such a way that they are balanced in terms of gender is important if men are to be brought on board.

Another factor that explains why only women mined salt during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras was that the pottery tools that were being used to facilitate this process were also made by women, and this justified men's total avoidance of the activity. Furthermore, men viewed salt mining as a dirty job whose production process was similar to digging – a role traditionally assigned to women in the Bakibiro culture. The men also viewed this mining as an uneconomic activity that served to meet only subsistence needs that fell within the docket assigned to women within the Bakibiro culture.

Even the engulfment of Kibiro by Bunyoro kingdom in the late 15th century did not change the status quo. Despite the fact that this engulfment caused the Bakibiro to start taking salt tribute to Bunyoro kings, salt continued to be mined by women. This was because Kibiro was governed, on behalf of the Bunyoro kings, by Bagungu chiefs whom these kings appointed; and these chiefs were already aware of and continued observing the standing tradition by

which salt mining was assigned to women. The situation did not change even during the colonial era since the chiefs whom the British Protectorate government continued using in Kibiro were still Bagungu. The only change, which the colonial era introduced in women's salt mining at Kibiro, was to turn the salt tribute formerly taken to Bunyoro kings into royalty taken to British Protectorate government.

Of course, the fact that salt mining was dirty and uneconomic and that the tools used to carry it out were made by only women was sustained through the Bakibiro's local cultural beliefs. Internationally, Carr, Brigand and Weller and Germerts indicate that even men can mine salt, make the tools used in the mining process and that salt has enormous economic value. Accordingly, changing Bakibiro's cultural perceptions about salt mining is necessary, more so because their legendary justification of women's exclusive involvement in this mining did not change even when the post-colonial era set in.

In the post-colonial era, the only change was in the salt production apparatus, especially during the reign of the Late President Idi Amin Dada. Women began replacing the fragile ceramic tools with the more durable metallic saucepans, plastic jerry cans and pails, and wooden scoopers. Another major change was the monetisation of salt exchange to a large extent. This monetisation eliminated the challenge of walking long distances that used to be caused by the problem of double coincidence of wants. The double coincidence of wants remained in force on a small scale and only where bartering favoured it. The monetisation and use of better production equipment continued throughout Amin's reign, but declined in the early 1980s because the adopted tools became expensive. It was not until Museveni took over power in 1986 that the prices of these tools started going down again. Consequently, the use of the tools in salt production increased again. The monetisation of salt exchange caused salt to gain economic value. This could be a good basis for changing men's long standing

cultural perception that salt has no economic value. The researcher noted that unlike in other societies where men were in control of the economy, women in Kibiro have been in control of this economic activity which started as barter trade as it has been supported by the theory.

The study has established that as women engaged in salt production, there were benefits that accrued to them. In the pre-colonial and colonial eras, the benefits were purely subsistence. Women would barter their extracted salt with food and other items they wanted to meet domestic needs. When the post-colonial era set in, women started realising other benefits, especially during Amin's time in the 1970s and more so, when the salt exchange system became largely monetised. Women began earning money and using it to meet their domestic needs such as food, clothing, jewellery, paying school fees for their children; building better shelter; paying graduated tax for their husbands, especially those who could not pay using proceeds from fishing. The study revealed that the benefits would have been more had the women salt miners not been facing challenges.

The challenges the women faced right from the pre-colonial through the colonial to postcolonial era were mainly two: The first was the poor, rugged, and small transport routes that one would even refer to as footpaths. This made the transportation of salt from the salt gardens to the trading centre difficult. The other was that the production of salt was carried out in the open and along the river bed where the porous tools used in the extraction process could easily get washed away by torrential rains. The other challenges faced during the pre-colonial and colonial eras included using porous tools to produce salt. These tools were so fragile that they would easily break, thereby giving women extra workload of making replacements. The women also faced a health challenge that was in form of getting frequent backaches that resulted from the tedious salt production process that required bending most of the time.

The challenge that came after the engulfment of Kibiro into Bunyoro-Kitara was the requirement that women had to mine and take salt to the palace as tribute to Bunyoro kings. This was a challenge because before the imposition of the tribute, women were at liberty to produce salt they deemed enough to meet their domestic needs. Walking long distances to take the tribute to the palace exacerbated this challenge until the reign of Omukama Kabalega. Kabalega built underground granaries at Kibiro so that salt would be collected there instead of being taken directly to the palace. This eliminated the walking of long distances. However, the challenge of taking salt tribute continued even throughout the colonial era. The colonialists only changed the names of the salt that women were required to take to the kings. Instead of referring to it as tribute to the king, they called it royalty to the British Protectorate government.

During the post-colonial era, the challenges faced included Asian traders exploiting the women salt miners by under-pricing the extracted salt. Even when this challenge was overcome when Amin expelled the Asians, it reappeared when middlemen came back into the salt distribution chain during Museveni's reign. The middlemen paid very low prices, but sold the salt expensively in Kampala. This discouraged the women salt miners to the extent that they wanted to get rid of the middlemen if they had a way of doing it. Another challenge faced during Museveni's reign was the exploitation of the Bakibiro by tourists and researchers. The Bakibiro welcomed tourists and researchers, provided them with the information they needed about Kibiro heritage, activities, physical setup, artefacts and archaeological features. However, the tourists and researchers would simply go away without appreciating the Bakibiro with any financial rewards.

It is imperative to note that women salt miners at Kibiro made efforts to deal with some of the challenges they faced. First of all, during the pre-colonial and colonial eras, the challenge of

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview guide for retired Kibiro salt miners/elderly Kibiro residents (preferably 75 years and above)

Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Juliet Sematimba, a Masters student of History at Kyambogo University. I am now at the stage of collecting data needed to accomplish a purely academic research titled ***"Women and Salt Mining at Kibiro Salt Gardens in Hoima District 1894-1995".*** You are one of the respondents selected to provide this data by accepting to be interviewed. The interview will take 30-50 minutes. I promise you utmost privacy on all data you provide during the interview. The data will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and shall only be used for the purposes of this study. Please, you are not to answer any question

you do not feel comfortable answering. Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and can be withdrawn should you feel it necessary.

A. Background information

1. Your sex
2. Your age bracket
3. Period spent as a resident at Kibiro
4. Current occupation

B. Origin of salt mining at Kibiro: Factors, Benefits and Challenges

1. Do you have an idea about the year in which salt mining started at Kibiro?
2. Who do you think started this salt mining activity?
3. How was salt mining carried out in the beginning?
4. As far as you can remember, in which year did women start to get involved in salt mining?
5. Why was salt entirely mined by women?
6. What benefits did women who first mined salt get from it?
7. What challenges did the women who first mined salt face?
8. How did these women deal with the challenges in order to continue with mining?

C. Development of Kibiro as a Salt Mine: Factors, Benefits and Challenges

1. Are there any changes that occurred to women in salt mining when Kibiro became an integral part of the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara?
2. What were the specific changes?
3. When did salt trade start at Kibiro?
4. How was salt distribution from miners to buyers conducted?
5. Who were the main buyers?
6. How was the buying taking place before the introduction of money?

7. What benefits were salt miners realizing from selling salt?
8. How did the coming of colonialists affect salt mining at Kibiro?
9. When did Kibiro start becoming a salt trading centre?
10. Are there any other commodities that were being sold apart from salt?
11. What were these commodities?
12. How did the introduction of cash crops affect salt mining at Kibiro?
13. How did the introduction of taxes affect salt mining at Kibiro?
14. When was money introduced as a medium of exchange in the salt trade?
15. How did the introduction of money affect the salt trade?
16. How was salt in salt mining linked to the wider market in (a) Bunyoro, (b) Uganda and (c) outside Uganda?
17. Are they any health effects that salt mining caused to the women?
18. If yes, what were the effects
19. How did the women deal with the effects not to stop them from carrying out the mining?
20. Are there any challenges that women salt miners faced apart from health effects?
21. What steps did women salt miners start taking to overcome the challenge?
22. To what extent were the challenges overcome

D. Post-Colonial Era (*Can include even those involved in salt mining currently*)

1. Did the going away of the colonialists in 1962 affect salt mining at Kibiro in any way?
2. If yes, how did it affect it?
3. How was salt mining at Kibiro during President Amin's era?
4. Did the overthrow of Amin have any effect on salt mining at Kibiro?
5. If yes, what was the effect during the five years after Amin's overthrow?
6. How was salt mining affected after President Museveni had taken over power in 1986?
7. What changes occurred in salt mining at Kibiro from 1986 to 2017?

APPENDIX B: GUIDE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

- Salt mining process
- Women mining salt (on-going salt activity)
- Women carrying salt to the marketing centre
- Salt marketing centre (on-going salt selling activity)
- Mined salt
- Raw materials from which salt is mined
- Panoramic view of Kibiro town
- Road network to and within Kibiro
- Any other Photograph found relevant, including those for some of the interviewed elderly respondents