

Analyzing the Role of the White Fathers' Mission Stations in the Socio-Economic Transformation of the Freed Slaves in Bukoba District, Kagera Region, Tanzania, from 1892 to 1914

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Abstract: *This study examines the role of White Fathers' mission stations in the socio-economic transformation of freed slaves in Bukoba District, Kagera Region, Tanzania, between 1892 and 1914. Guided by the Mode of Production theory, the study employed a historical case study design using interviews, focus group discussions, observations, archival documents, and documentary analysis. Data were critically analyzed and corroborated through multiple sources. The findings indicate that the mission stations significantly contributed to improvements in literacy, healthcare, vocational skills, agriculture, and social organization, thereby enhancing the living standards of many freed slaves. At the same time, missionary activities weakened indigenous knowledge systems, altered traditional cultural practices, and increased dependence on colonial institutions. The study concludes that White Fathers' mission stations played a significant role in both the liberation and socio-economic transformation of freed slaves while simultaneously facilitating aspects of colonial influence. The study recommends that contemporary religious institutions adopt the humanitarian values demonstrated by the missionaries while respecting and preserving indigenous cultural heritage.*

Keywords: White Fathers; Mission Stations; Freed Slaves; Bukoba District; Socio-Economic Transformation; Missionary History; Colonial Tanzania; African History

1. Introduction

The contribution of Missionaries of Africa's mission stations in the socio-economic transformation of freed slaves is explored in terms of various areas of social and economic changes, including spiritual changes, education and skills acquisition, economic development, and healthcare. The White Fathers were properly active in many regions, providing skills to freed slaves in Tanzania, including Kagera in Bukoba District. They concentrated on various activities like religious conversion and the welfare of the indigenous populations, together with freed slaves. Their mission stations gave opportunities for freed slaves to develop their living standards and integrate into the new system. Thus, the study details a discussion on how Missionaries of Africa's mission stations funded efforts to alter the socio-economic status of freed slaves.

2. Methodology

The study employed a case study research design using a historical approach. This design was effective and cost-efficient, as it allowed the easy collection of relevant data and supported the research findings; it provided detailed and comprehensive insights into the historical significance of the establishment and growth of White Fathers' mission stations in Bukoba District. This approach also enabled the integration of multiple data sources, including archival records, interviews, and observational data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the study. The study was conducted in Bukoba District. The area is largely dominated by the Haya people and their various sub-groups, such as Abaziba from the Kiziba chiefdom; the Abayoza and Abakala from the Kyamutwara chiefdom; the Abahamba and Abasharankoro

from the Kihanja chiefdom; the Abanyangiro from the Ihangiro chiefdom; and Katoke. Other ethnic groups like the Nyambo, Zinza, Subi, and Angaza also live in the region, though the Haya are the predominant indigenous group (Rweyemamu, 2012). The target population in this study included the elderly and adults such as descendants of colonial chiefs and freed slaves, priests, nuns, retired mission teachers, catechists, Catholic Christian converts, historians, and scholars, because they are experts on the establishment and growth of the White Fathers' mission stations regarding socio-economic transformation. This study used non-probability sampling methods, purposive and snowball sampling, to gather in-depth information from a targeted group. The sample comes from Bukoba District. The study used interviews, document analysis, a focus group discussion, and observation for data collection. The researcher visited archives such as the Tanzania National Archive, the Bukoba Catholic Diocese Archive, White Fathers Atman House in Dar es Salaam, and Nyegezi Mwanza in Tanzania. Libraries such as the Catholic University of Eastern Africa-Nairobi and the University of Dar es Salaam Library in Tanzania. All the data collected were critically analyzed and corroborated with other sources, such as published works and the data from the oral interviews, and supported with photos

3. Findings and Discussion

The Contribution of White Fathers' Mission Stations in the Social Transformation of the Freed slaves

The changes took place in education practice and literacy. In their annual reports, the Missionaries of Africa exposed how they played a serious role in the education of the freed slaves and their descendants. They established schools for freed slaves to learn reading, writing, religion, the Swahili

language, and basic arithmetic skills, which were crucial for their incorporation into the colonial economy. Education, therefore, was a means of emancipation and empowerment for the freed communities as it allowed them to drift away from the old-style labour roles they had held in slavery and pursue a new opportunity in the colonial and missionary contexts. In their reports, the missionaries revealed the establishment of Kashozi mission school, under the priests and the White sisters' supervision, to provide education to freed enslaved Africans. (BCD, Annual Report, 1910-1911). The education of freed slaves' children helped them to change from a local way of thinking to a modern one, from an agricultural to a more urban and literate economy.

As was stated from the oral interview with Belnarda, from an ancient period, the indigenous people of Bukoba had their own dominant education in their community, similar to freed slaves from their previous homes. This was traditional African education, which united and kept them together. Boys cultivated the farm, cared for the cattle and sheep, and both girls and boys were recipients of this relevant education for their future use. (Belnarda, O.I, May 23rd, 2025). Kanyaruanga's oral interview supported this view by stating that traditional education was free of charge and given practically through different activities like fishing, pottery, agriculture, and iron smelting (Kanyaruanga, O.I, May 21st, 2025). Therefore, it can be concluded that this education was passed from one generation to another and gave the recipients confidence. However, Nyanhoga pointed out that missionaries' education transformed the freed slaves from slavery to liberty. Freed slaves were coached to adopt prayer

ceremonies as a sign of emancipation (Nyanhoga, 2023). This idea is supported by the annual report of Kashozi, the Missionaries of Africa's education, which transformed the freed slaves from slavery to gaining freedom, as well as the Haya of Bukoba, from learning applicable topics related to their families that prepared them for their future. Instead, they were separated from their families through the creation of boarding schools. Other local students who traveled far to attend these schools requested visits with their relatives. For example, the children of freed slaves began learning outside their mission village families and adopted different behavioral norms from their home places. The goal of the missionaries and colonial government was to get assistants like administrators, clerks, and peasants for their projects (BCD Kashozi Annual Report, 1910).

Additionally, in the oral interview, Kahwa argued that the freed slaves' society resulted in disunity and classes. The one who acquired missionary education changed in terms of ideas, appearance, dressing, culture, and living. They therefore started to ignore each other. An elite was nicknamed *Mushomi*, which means the learned one (Kahwa, O.I, May 13th, 2025). Hence, the huge number that remained behind became inferior to the missionary elites. Thus, the education confused the freed slaves because it was not relevant to their society. They totally got away from what they knew from their societies to modern ones, due to boarding school, especially Kashozi boarding school. Kashozi boarding school, which admitted children of the freed slaves, orphans, refugees, and indigenous people of Bukoba, was transformed through education

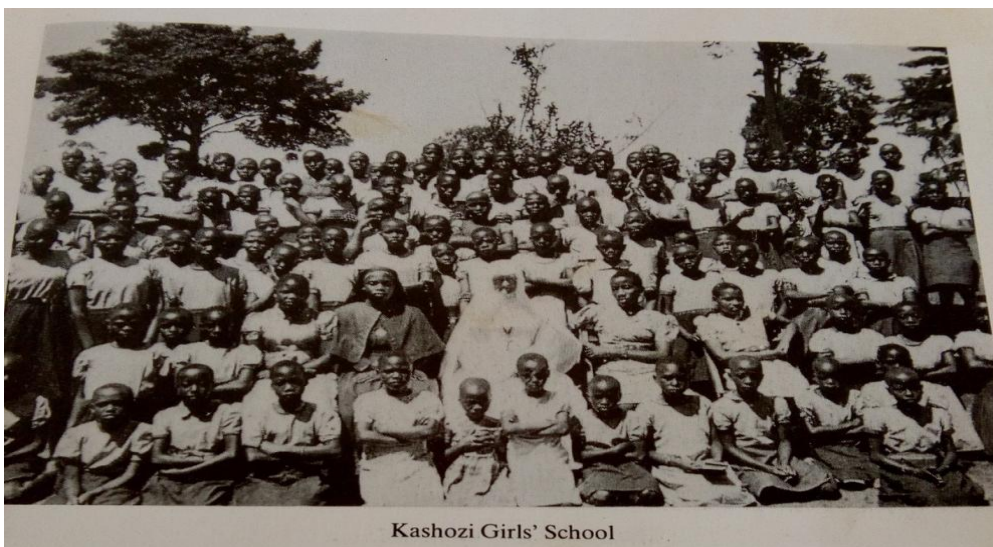


Figure 1: Kashozi Girls Boarding School in the 1900s

Source: Bukoba Catholic, Diocese Archive

Further, changes in spiritual and traditional beliefs were among the effects of missionary stations. Before the arrival of Catholic Missionaries of Africa, several parts of Africa practiced traditional religions. They believed in their ancestral spirits in everything that was around them. For instance, the use of traditional medicine and religion (Otto, 1959). In the oral interview, Mwijage argued that, with their advent in Bukoba, the Missionaries of Africa sought to Christianize the inhabitants they came across, including freed slaves. While their main aim was religious conversion, the introduction of Christianity frequently had socio-cultural consequences. For

instance, the ethical teachings of Christianity, such as the holiness of work and family life, assisted in restructuring social norms in liberated slave societies. Spirituality altered them from their traditional belief to modern ones (Mwijage, O.I, July 18th, 2025; Kilaini, 1990). It was reported in their annual reports that many of the freed slaves adopted Christian values, which in turn influenced their social systems, interactions, and work ethics. For instance, Bishop Hirth instructed them to take freed slaves as their relatives, and hence the local people called them slaves of the White Fathers. In this way, the slaves regained their dignity (Atman

House, Dar es Salaam, Kashozi Annual Report, 1898). The conversion of indigenous people from traditional religious beliefs to Christianity in Bukoba. This was done through Christian literature and numerous spiritual books. Through homilies, often White Fathers convinced the freed slaves and indigenous people to abandon their traditional beliefs and follow Jesus Christ (Rweyemamu, 2012). The 1903 Annual Report revealed that the provision of Catholic missionary education changed local priests by training Catholic Christian priests. For instance, they temporarily established Kyegoromora Seminary to train indigenous clergy to replace missionaries. Bishop Hirth appointed Fr. Riollier as the first rector of the seminary. The seminary was opened on 1st November 1903 with 30 pupils from the Bukoba vicariate and Mwanza (BCD Archive, Kagondo Annual Report, 1903).

Besides, in an oral interview with one Kajuna, it was reported that the indigenous people of Bukoba started to call the Christian religion “the religion of the Book” as the liberated converts were taught to read the Bible and the catechism book. Additionally, some of the freed slaves adopted Christianity and started to recognize a baptized person as *Omushomi*, which means a converted person due to the tendency of attending every day mass and the catechism studies (Kajuna, O.I, May 11th, 2025).

Further, Mwijage (2012) commented on the way the Catholic missionary mission of education changed the freed slaves from worshiping under the tree to the church. Indeed, they built churches where to attend mass. For instance, Kashozi, Kagondo, Mugana, Katoke, Rubya, Bunena, and Katoma, to mention a few (Mwijage, 2012). The points of previous scholar supported by Kanyaruhanga are that, at a place where they established a church, they also established schools near the church and their residence. The sons of the freed slaves had to acquire both secular and religious education. The White fathers forbade them from worshipping the trees and their ancestors. Therefore, pupils changed from adoring their ancestors to Jesus Christ, which cut them from the roots of society (Kanyaruhanga, O.I, May 21st, 2025).

Also, in the TNA, it was reported in the Katoke missionaries’ reports that Missionaries of Africa not only went deep to alter freed slaves but also the chiefs and their sons. The reporter wrote that, during the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the six sons of Chief Kasussura, including Silvester Katemba, Mathias Rwekaza, Jovin Rutahozibwa, Makaka, and Kaketo, registered for catechism and some were later baptized. To rescue his son, the chief appointed Kateto, his second son, as prince of Kimwani; still, Kateto invited the catechist to begin the catechism school at Kimwani. In 1912, about 635 Christians were baptized. By the end of the same year, they found 465 neophytes’ community and 293 serious catechumens (TNA, Katoke Annual Report, 1912).

Additional, in the Kashozi report, missionaries noted that Catechism or religious education for the freed slaves was provided daily, along with Swahili, reading, writing, and arithmetic. It was from this group of 11 to 18-year-olds that the best students were chosen to join Rubya Seminary. The second group with 18 to 25 years old, was hoped to select catechists (Atman House, Dar es Salaam, Annual Report, 1910-1911). Through oral interview, Belnarda stated that, as

catechism started from the village school to the advanced school, it changed the freed slaves from listening to oral history from their elders. For instance, Catechist Sembali commented that after adopting the way after adopted Christian religion, every evening before supper, his family stopped listening to oral history and instead revised catechism from the prayer book. Thus, the situation propelled the previous slaves and indigenous people to lose the related education from their former people (Belnarda, O.I, May 21st, 2025). Christianity propelled the freed slaves and the indigenous to be humble, to have respect and obedience. In addition to that, the freed slaves had a strong belief in one God. However, Mwijage commented on the way traditional beliefs made people stop committing crimes, fearing their ancestors (Mwijage, 2012). This was also pointed out by Kamugisha in the oral interview that, the adoption of Christianity from traditional philosophies changed the freed slaves and reduced discipline and order to the freed slaves because through ancestor’s spirit, they feared to involve themselves in crimes so that they may not be directly punished, while in Christianity, they were told to keep ten commandments of God, in case they fail God is mercy, they should repent and return to God, which increased crimes in Bukoba society (Kamugisha, O.I, May, 12th, 2025). Furthermore, in an interview with Kajuna, it was established that respect, humility, and obedience led them to accept colonialism. There was no way the converts could differentiate between the colonialists and White Fathers, and thus, they had to obey them all. This situation perpetuated colonialism in the Bukoba District (Kajuna, O.I, May 11th, 2025).

Another change was in medical practice and social services. The pre-colonial African societies had their medicines and doctors, and healers known as *Abafumu* or *Embandwa*. They treated several diseases and injuries of sick people (Majoya, 1974). Traditional healing was cheap and offered by low sacrifices such as hens, goats, or sometimes free of charge (Kamugisha, O.I, May 12th, 2025). Ranger (1992) states that the White Fathers’ mission stations operated a lot as centers of healthcare, offering medical care and treatment for diseases that had ravaged ex-slaves and indigenous people, who were offered free medical treatment and cured, which improved their quality of life (Ranger, 1992). Thus, the diarist of Katoke wrote that, in the Bukoba District, numerous freed slaves experienced severe physical circumstances during their time in enslavement and encountered health challenges. The missionaries established health centers and hospitals where freed people and indigenous people had to be treated. They also handled various cases of outbreaks of diseases in the region, which propelled many people to trust medical treatment over traditional ones. For instance, in 1902, the Russubi area was afflicted by pestilence. The White Fathers had to treat the dependents of Kasussura who came for it (Nyegezi Archive, Katoke Diary, February 9th -11th, 1902).

In their reports and diaries of Rubya, Father Samson noted that the main obstacle to liberated conversion was the people’s strong belief in their ancestors. When faced with misfortune, the freed slaves and new converts would turn to traditional priests and make offerings to their ancestors. The Christian faith is perceived as too dry to meet their spiritual needs. Thus, the missionaries used their own time to assist

and treat the freed slaves and the indigenous. For instance, the Rubya Seminary fathers provided medical care, treating an average of 5000 patients annually. The child mortality was a serious matter, which was estimated at a 56% mortality rate among the children of the freed slaves and new converts in 1911 to 1912. Some of the freed slaves turned to medical treatment. Those who remained in distrust, Fr. Samson addressed the spiritual needs of those. He introduced liturgical ceremonies to replace the traditional ancestor cult and the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as a solution to the mentioned needs. Bishop Hirth obtained the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes for the Seminary. The statue arrived at the Bukoba port on September 9th, 1911, the devotion to Our Lady from Europe, assisted freed slaves and indigenous people of Rubya to consolidate faith in Kagera than other religions. The great veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and its important role to the people of Rubya gave a human face to the Christian beliefs. It gave the freed slaves and the neophytes a living mother in heaven to whom they could tell their sorrows and be sure of being heard. She replaced the ancestors as their mediator between them and God (TNA, Rubya Annual Report, 1909-1911: Nyegezi Archive, Rubya Diary, September 20th, 1909: March 1st, 1910).

Besides, according to the diarist Katoke, from November 1907 to March 1908, the missionaries treated the outbreak of dysentery with carbon and water. Chief Kasussura, who hated the missionaries, also changed his mind and asked for medicine for his people at the court. Further, there had been an outbreak of smallpox in Kagera, which killed people from 1904 up to 1910, when a doctor from Bukoba came to vaccinate them against the disease, though many people hid themselves because the last time some who were vaccinated fell sick. Missionaries also treated a high volume of cases annually, ranging from 3000 to 4500, which changed freed slaves' and indigenous minds (Nyegezi Archive, Katoke Diary, June 15th, 1910).

Further, in the early 1900s, a hospital Camp for sleeping sickness patients opened at Kigarama in Kanyigo on the Northern frontier of Kiziba at the border of Uganda, with the invitation of the colonial government. Dr. Koch was in charge, and Bishop Hirth appointed Fr. Roussez from Kashozi as a chaplain of the Camp. The Camp had 500 patients and by the end of 1907 was also a mission where priests helped the sick and baptized the dying (Tourigny, 1958). Due to the rise in sick people, another Camp was opened at Kishanje in September 1908 with 150 patients. The missionaries from Kashozi and Mugana cared for the patients at these camps. The disease was eventually controlled with the use of the drug atoxyl. Between 1909 and 1910, 40 people died at Kigarama and 30 at Kishanje, with most being baptized before death. (Kilaini, 1990).

Furthermore, the introduction of hospitals, dispensaries, and health center services in dissimilar areas of Bukoba, like Kagondo, Mugana, Rubya hospitals, as well as Kashozi health center, generated changes in medical care by transforming freed slaves and indigenous people from their usual use of traditional medicine to Western medicine (Mwijage, O.I, July 18th, 2025).

The White Fathers' writings reported that, in their schools, the White Fathers forbade magic healing because it opposed the gospel doctrines about God. For instance, Kashozi dispensary was allocated between Kashozi girls and boys mission school, where the freed slaves' children, young girls and boys, slaves, orphans, and refugees were schooling, to offer health services. Also, students were advised by missionaries to stop using traditional doctors who were identified as pagans and witches because missionaries regarded the belief in supernatural traditional healing as superstitious (White Fathers, 1925). Kobukale, in the oral interview, pointed out that, due to the extensive power of missionary treatment in the mission schools, apprentices started refusing the customs and beliefs of their society in favor of missionary medical treatments. When they return to their society, they spread their knowledge acquired from the missionaries' school and change more people in their societies, which reduces the number of traditional doctors (Kobukale, O.I, March 14th, 2025). The situation led the indigenous people to suffer, and some died, as the majority of them had no money for treatment. The Bukoba society started to lose its economy and rise the missionary economy through hospital, health center, and dispensaries payment (Kilaini, O.I, March 4th, 2025).

Further, Kilaini tresses on changes in dressing style. On the eve of Catholic missionary education, the indigenous people of Bukoba had their own way of dressing. Children, both girls and boys, used to put on pearl necklaces, cowry shells, and banana fibers, literally called (Ekishenshe), while children aged zero to five years remained naked. Men wore the bark cloth (Orubugo), banana fiber, and animal skin, while women wore skirts which were made by palm tree threads and strings of beads around their waists (Kilaini, 1990). In the oral interview, the indigenous people of Bukoba's dresses were designed by skilled elders. Their dressing style was crucial and affordable to the whole society. Apart from that, indigenous people wore according to their age, dignity, and culture (Kamugisha, O.I, May 12th, 2025).

Due to the Catholic missionary mission stations, freed slaves changed from their traditional way of dressing to the Western dress style. The diarist reported that the freed slaves and indigenous students got away from their early local dressing style and put on cotton dresses, which were brought by White Fathers. The ex-slaves' and indigenous demand for cloth was increasing rapidly in 1893, when White Fathers were constructing the church at Kashozi. The freed slaves and their sons who carried bricks, water, and stones for the construction, in turn, were given cotton clothes (Atman House Archive, Dar es Salaam, Kashozi Diary, February 24th, 1894).

Additionally, in the oral interview, Fr. Kajuna asserts that he started to put on shoes when he joined the seminary (Kajuna, O.I, March 16th, 2025). In other instances, the freed slaves started to leave their *Rubugo* local dress when they went to school. In the oral interview, Bernalda pointed out that, at Kamukukubwa Girls' School, the daughters of free slaves and indigenous students of Bukoba were given uniforms by the White Sisters. Sr. Bernaida was among the pupils who started to wear a cotton dress at school (Bernaida, O.I, May 21st, 2025). Kajuna commented that the freed slave elites also appeared differently in dress from the illiterate. The unschooled continued to dress locally due to a lack of money

for buying cotton clothes. In a way, this led to classes of the haves and have-nots (Kajuna, O.I, March 16th, 2025).

Furthermore, the White Fathers' ready-made cloth swamped the freed slaves and indigenous people of Bukoba, replacing indigenous local clothes. The freed slaves strengthened the White Fathers' industry, which in turn crushed whatever industry existed in the Bukoba District society, which is now named the 'underdeveloped' society. The new existence of clothes put an end to the expansion of indigenous cloth manufacture. The craft cloth producers either abandoned their tasks in the face of cheap, available White Fathers' clothes (Mutakyamirwa, O.I, May 11th, 2025).

The White Fathers' group not only transformed freed slaves but also their freed slave masters and chiefs. The diarist wrote that on 19th February 1909, Fr. Hautmann, during a walk, Chief Nyarubamba admired his father's raincoat and asked him if he would be glad to have a similar one. On the spot, the father took off his raincoat and handed it to him as a gift. The chief received a gift with great happiness, which altered the Chief from traditional dressing style (Nyegezi Archive, Rubya Diary, May 10th, 1909). Therefore, there was the existence of 'technological arrest' or stagnation, and in some instances, actual deterioration, since the skilled freed slaves forgot even the simple techniques of their forefathers.

A further outcome is a change in Cultural and traditional systems. The Bukoba societies had freed slaves, and indigenous people practiced polygamous marriages, dances, bride price, and drinking local beer, which were practiced before slavery. After their liberation, they hoped to practice what they knew from their society before Catholic missionary mission stations (Majoya, 1974). In the oral interview, Sembali commented that, in traditional marriage, the freed slaves had a period of bride seclusion, which was a period during which different ceremonies took place on payment of the bride price, and girls left their paternal family. Besides, the girl could stop being seen on the way to her home. It was a time when she was instructed in the clan and customs of the family. As a bridegroom, she could be recognized by women as married after passing the entire procedures (Sembali, O.I, May 13th, 2025).

In addition to that, the freed slaves had their local dances, which were an aspect of individual and social life. Music education was provided. Music was crucial in times of joy, communal work, journeys on land, and even in voyages on the lake (Mwijage, 2012). Hence, traditional marriage assisted a girl to keep the law of the clan and customs of the family, while music and dances aided in educating a society through songs which carried a message (Kanyaruhanga, O.I, May 21st, 2025). However, Majoya points out that White Fathers knew that a good way to maintain previous slaves and get the indigenous people was to colonize their total way of life. Therefore, through Western education, they introduced Western culture by reproducing methods of some African customs and traditions, including traditional African marriage and religion, to mention a few. They termed them as devil practices (Majoya, 1974). They aimed to capture the African mind by letting them hate their cultural practices. In Addition to that, the White Fathers abolished the freed slaves' style of traditional marriage, which made the isolated bride not attend

mass on Sunday, though it took a long time to end (BCD Archive Conceals of Kashozi, June 19th, 1910). Thus, in the oral interview, Brandina pointed out that any bride had to attend mass on Sunday and they had their own place of sitting in the church. It was like a certain show: the offertory and holy communion; the brides had to line up together while other people watched them (Brandina, O.I, May 11th, 2025).

Furthermore, the White Fathers associated drums and dance with savage and immoral practices. Hence, they condemned the freed slaves and the indigenous people of Bukoba District's dances that were obstacles to Christianization. Therefore, they prohibited the indigenous, especially the catechumens, from participating in dances by introducing football to replace their dances as part of their enjoyment (Shorter, 1998). Gradually, the ex-slaves and indigenous people started to abandon their traditional culture in favor of Christianity. Changing the freed slaves' traditional culture to Western culture resulted in a high number of divorces due to the lack of traditional marriage preparation (Brandina, O.I, May 11th, 2025).

The Contribution of White Fathers' Mission Stations in the Economic Transformation of the Freed slaves

Having discussed the role of White Fathers' mission stations in the social transformation of the freed slaves, this part of the study now reports on the White Fathers' mission stations in the economic transformation of the freed slaves in Bukoba District.

The Development of Agricultural and Economic Empowerment is among the changes that took place in Bukoba District after Catholic education. As it is known, one of the intellectuals declared that the indigenous people of Kagera and Bukoba District in particular engaged in agricultural activities before the arrival of missionaries. Apart from that, the freed slaves, refugees, orphans, and indigenous people from various places had their own way of cultivating. The climate was good, which attracted the indigenous people to engage in agricultural activities (Rweyemamu, 2012). During the oral interview, Kilaini comments that, though the economy was at a subsistence level, there was no hunger and misery; instead, indigenous people had enough to eat. In the Bukoba District, bananas were the main food, while coffee was a commercial crop. Other foods were potatoes, cassava, and vegetables (Kilaini, O.I, March 4th, 2025).

Besides, the indigenous people of Bukoba were cultivators who, at the beginning, cultivated coffee as a monopoly of the chief and nobles. The rest were allowed to plant only one coffee tree. Coffee was used for social and religious ceremonies (Jervis, 1939). Coffee was introduced as a cash crop in Kagera in the year 1898. In 1901, it was supported by the government, and up to 1905, indigenous people exported 234 tons, which allowed freed slaves and indigenous people to earn money and buy cotton clothes (Kilaini, 1990). Ngambeki stresses that several White Fathers' mission stations concentrated on developing agricultural practices by training ex-slaves how to cultivate and apply new crops and more capable farming methods. The established mission stations operated within the colonial economic system, which aimed to exploit the indigenous labour of Bukoba for colonial gain (Ngambeki, 1985). In the oral interview, Kilaini

supported the previous writer by stating that the missionaries also introduced practices that allowed previous slaves to build more stable lives through agriculture. For instance, in Bukoba District, they established agricultural stations to assist freed slaves earn their life. They provided them with land and trained them in sustainable farming methods. These kinds of agricultural projects contributed to the creation of new wealth for freed slaves, allowing them to become independent and join indigenous markets (Kilaini, O.I, March 4th, 2025).

The annual report of 1906-1907 revealed that the missionaries of Africa were involved in agricultural activities by planting several trees at the Kagondo mission. In the above-mentioned years, Br. Barthasar planted 2000 Eucalyptus trees, 25,000 the Mishambya and Mihumura, 250 coffee trees, 200 rubber trees, 200 lemon and orange trees, mangoes and palms, as well as a vegetable garden. The whole process of preparation and planting was supervised by the brother and done by freed slaves. Thus, it was imitated, copied, and spread to their home place, which changed their life by increasing their income (TNA, Kagondo Annual Report, 1906-1907).

Additionally, in the missionaries' report, it was reported that the White Fathers established farms at Kashozi Mission Centre in Bukoba District as one of their projects. They applied animal manure on their farms to get better products. In 1906, they planted 2500 Guatemala coffee plants and expanded the eucalyptus tree project and another type of tree called Mihumura. They established a forest and got different types of seeds from the agricultural department at the Coast of experimentation (Atman House, Dar es Salaam, Kashozi Annual Report, 1906-1907). One of the comments from Kamugisha in the oral interview was that this kind of agriculture was imitated and applied by the ex-slaves, and changed their soil. The efficiency of the soil no longer existed, which led to a reduction in food, as not all indigenous people were able to depend on the use of manure (Kamugisha, O.I, May 13th, 2025).

Further, in the oral interview, Mwijage declared that the White Fathers realized that the provision of educational facilities in the rural life of the Bukoba District was useful to speed up not only the amount of conversion but also the rate of socio-economic growth. Thus, they taught freed slaves' children about advanced agricultural methods (Mwijage, O.I, July 18th, 2025). However, Kieran supported the idea of mwijage by asserting that the instruction of agriculture in mission and government schools was a government plan that accelerated the missionary and government collaboration. By that time, the education system required students to study agricultural skills at all levels, including village schools, primary schools, middle schools, and teacher training colleges (Kieran, 1969).

Furthermore, in the Advisory Committee on African Education, the discussion regarding agricultural training was that pupils were to be instructed on how to advance agriculture. The use of hand hoes was discouraged. The government policy encouraged improvement of agricultural methods that did not match the needs of ex-slaves and indigenous people but targeted the peasant government and mission workers (TNA Bukoba District Book. Advisory Committee on African Education. File No. 19484). Besides,

in the oral interview, Kilaini stated that the use of the plough and wheel was the only means of further progress. The situation led to extreme poverty through agriculture because the whole group of freed slaves' pupils and indigenous students were taught the use of a plough, but they were unable to buy the plough after leaving the school. Thus, they had to return to the hand hoe (Kilaini, O.I, March 4th, 2025).

In addition, Hirji (1980) states that teaching the freed slaves and indigenous people about the use of the plough was not as crucial to them as teaching the ways of caring for coffee trees. That is why, from there, the indigenous people did not develop more in agricultural activities because they were taught what they could not practice at their family level. The researcher, therefore, is supporting Rodney's ideas, who regarded Catholic missionary education on agriculture as a tool of colonial exploitation. The reason for the provision of education was to fulfill the colonialists' needs, such as workers in different positions. As Hirji argues, German education policy stated that "Africans must be educated to work for the colonizers" (Hirji, 1980). Hence, agriculture did not assist the freed slaves and indigenous people to develop, but rather created a peasant colonial government and missionaries, which revealed the weakness.

Further, craft and commercial skills are among the economic changes of White Fathers' mission stations in Bukoba District. After the slaves were liberated, the missionaries guided them towards vocational training and advanced trade exchange, which differed from local industries like pottery, weaving, ironwork, sculpture, and fishing industries. These local industries were largely controlled by chiefs (Mwijage, 2012). In the focus group discussion at Kagondo, it was asserted that local industries were very important to Bukoba society. For example, the making industry produced pots for cooking, drawing water, and carving, which included pots for keeping milk, walking sticks, and wood with holes used for making drums. They also made other tools like spoons, stools, and tables (FGD, Kagondo O.I, April 18th, 2025).

Missionary education led to the establishment of industrial schools that trained the indigenous in vocational skills such as carpentry, masonry, boot-making, tailoring, and welding (Ishumi, 1971). In their annual report of Kashozi, it was reported that the White Fathers, under the supervision of Br. Adrien, established a brick-making operation at the Kashozi Mission in 1893. He took advantage of the availability of good clay in the valley, about a kilometer from Kashozi, suitable for making bricks and tiles. Br. Adrien trained freed slaves in producing burned bricks. The Kashozi mission's bricks and tiles earned a high-quality prize in 1905 at the colonial exposition in Dar es Salaam (Nyegezi Archive, Kashozi Annual report, 1905-1906). The construction of Kashozi and Bukoba stations involved these bricks and tiles. The White Fathers' report noted that between June and November 1903, about 340,000 bricks and 117,000 tiles were produced for the new church at Kashozi (BCD, Annual Report, 1903-1904). The Katoke diary reported that, with skilled masons and brick makers, the house of the fathers was built in 1901. The foundation of the brick church was laid on the 6th June 1904 under the supervision of Br. Pancras. They came up with a contract system for the preparation of bricks. They were paid three rupees for every 2500 fired bricks and a

single rupee for every 1000 bricks transported to the mission to build the new church to replace the former, which was small and unstable. The payment to the freed slaves improved their lifestyle (BCD, Katoke Diary, November 5th, 1910).

In the missionaries' diary, it was commented that the chiefs also requested bricks and tiles for building houses, military forts, and capital structures. The trained freed slaves, under Br. Adrien's guidance helped establish brick and tile yards at other mission stations, including Kagondo, where they later started their own yards and earned income (Nyegezi Archive, Kashozi Diary, February 9th and 27th, 1905). Additionally, the report from Rubya stated that, from 1909 to 1912, many of the huts at the Rubya mission and seminary were replaced with brick houses, which were constructed by skilled masons, freed slaves under the White Fathers' supervision. The mission church began in 1911, collapsed due to rain and lack of construction expertise, and rebuilding did not start until after 1912 (BCD Archive, Rubya Annual Report, 1911-1912).

The study found that a carpentry industry existed at Kashozi Mission, which was established by the White Fathers and operated by Brother Adrian. As a professional vocational trainer, he skillfully freed slaves who, upon their return to their homes, shared their skills with others beyond Bukoba. Most of the orphans and children of the freed slaves had to study at the Kashozi carpentry training center. The college admitted students for four years of training and hired five teachers (Kilaini, 1990). The Annual Report supported Kilaini's observation by pointing out the superior of Kashozi that, there were freed slaves a new enterprise at Kashozi, whereby a good number of apprentices skilled in carpentry, as well as the workshop for molding the carving statues using Bahaya arts, which was beautiful, and the products were used to decorate the rooms and churches of the vicariate (BCD Archive, Kashozi Annual Report, 1908). While in the TNA, the document revealed the way White Fathers utilized freed slaves with carpentry skills to craft and sell furniture to Europeans residing in Bukoba. This was a new fashion for the indigenous people and was possible for Westerners to obtain doors and windows (TNA, Bukoba District Book, Sheet No.1). However, in their reports, the missionaries revealed that the freed slaves and indigenous people were trained to work, get assistants, administrators, clerks, and peasants for their projects. (BCD, Kashozi Annual Report, 1909 Acc. 3313). Besides, Kahwa in the oral interview analyzed that Crafts and commercial skills were developed through the White Fathers' education of freed slaves and indigenous people of Bukoba, though they lacked tools for their own furniture (Kahwa, O.I, March 18th, 2025).

Overall, Kilaini commented on the way the introduction of Catholic missionaries of African education and vocational training brought some changes among the freed slaves and indigenous people of Bukoba. Local industries shut down due to the absence of markets for freed slaves and other professionally made goods. The skilled indigenous artisans disappeared after the introduction of carpentry and masonry training (Kilaini, 1990). Some respondents in the oral interview supported the previous scholar by asserting that the introduction of brick making caused pottery-making freed slaves to shift and join those skilled in brick-making. This

shift led to a decline in traditional pottery skills (Kajuna, O.I, 16th March 2025). Juliana pointed out that the introduction of brick making led to the destruction of a source of natural water and salt, which were in the place where the White Fathers began to obtain clay soil near the source of water and salt in the Rushambala valley, Kashozi mission (Juliana, O.I, May 14th, 2025). Another comment came from Kanyaruhanga of Kazinga, who explained the way some people who engaged in pottery making shifted from Rushambala when the White Fathers started to make bricks. He sang a song which was created by their grandfathers while blaming the whites that, "*Abajungu ba Kashozi bakatwiya x2 Mbali ba tunyukwile ni Rushambala omushabo.*" (Kanyaruhanga, O.I, May 21st, 2025). Which means the whites of Kashozi removed the indigenous people from the Rushambala mud, and they lost their own land taken by the Missionaries.

Additionally, in the oral interview, Belenalda asserts that the bricks led to the existence of a long hole where they dug soil for making bricks; for that reason, making bricks led to soil erosion. Not only that, but also, the bricks made some of the Haya drop into the pit and lose their lives. To date, indigenous people avoid passing near the long hole for fear of falling in (Belenarda, O.I., 21st, 2025). So far, indigenous people with craft skills have not immediately benefited from their skills, but rather produced tools for the White Fathers or colonialists, as they lacked their own capital. In the oral interview, Kobukale commented that, in pre-slavery, the children were taught through their parents and inherited the skill for producing furniture. To the indigenous, the traditional knowledge was beneficial as it assisted them to fulfill their needs (Kobukale, O.I, April 14th, 2025).

Further, the existence of an Elite Middle Class is also an outcome of White Fathers' mission stations. During the focus group discussion, respondents of Kashozi shared that they learned from their parents. For example, the pottery makers could exchange tools with the fishermen (FGD, Kashozi, March 14th, 2025). The working-class group is a proletariat group that occurred as a result of Catholic missionary education provided to freed slaves and slaves' children. The German colonial rule and missionaries enabled the acquisition of cheap labour for railways, roads, and the construction of buildings, workshops, and a few manufacturing enterprises (Hirji, 1980). In Bukoba District, the group of workers was established during German colonial rule. As the government policy guided the missionaries, the freed slaves' products of their education were either employed in the government sector or in missionary projects, and the majority of them went back to their home services. For instance, in the oral interview, Kahwa commented on how the government employed those who had graduated from the mission school, including herself, as a history teacher at Rubya and Kashozi Primary School. She was paid a low salary, and the majority of teachers remained poor as they received low wages (Kahwa, O.I, March, 18th, 2025). Besides, Sembali in the oral interview commented that Catholic missionary education for the freed slaves changed them into skilled and semi-skilled workers for the mission and government (Sembali, O.I, May 13th, 2025).

Furthermore, the Education Department Annual Report, Tanganyika Territory, revealed that the freed slave catechists

were the first group of Catholic missionary education and were employed by White Fathers as teachers at bush schools and shepherds of the word of God to people (BCD, EDTT, Annual Report, 1895). The statistics in the Annual Report of 1909 indicate that, in the Bukoba vicariate, they had 34 catechists with 31 bush schools and 2350 pupils (BCD, Education Department, Annual Report, 1909). Primary school teachers were the second group of the freed slaves of Bukoba District to join the proletariat class (Kilaini, 1990). The whole Bukoba vicariate had 77 schools; male teachers were 163, while female teachers were 25 (BCD, Kashozi Annual Report, 1911). In the oral interview, Mutakyamirwa reported that carpenters and masons were the third group of freed slaves and indigenous proletariats who resulted from White Fathers' education in Bukoba District society. As Catholic missionaries needed workers with masonry and carpentry skills, they trained and employed this group, aiming at constructing churches, schools, dormitories, and dispensaries. For instance, Mr. Benedicto had masonry skills while Mr. Paschal was a carpenter, and both were employed by Catholic missionaries at Kashozi Mission until the White Fathers left Kashozi, but they continued to work for the church (Mutakyamirwa, O.I, May 11th, 2025). In their annual report, the White Fathers argued that the group of workers was employed by the missionaries during the construction of the Kashozi church. The Haya were used to carry bricks from Rushambala to the hill of Kashozi mission; the Haya were paid according to the bricks brought. Another 150 pupils served the masons in building the church for low wages. What they received was used to pay tax to the government (Atman House, Dar es Salaam, Kashozi Annual Report, 1902-1903). Below is a sample of the Kashozi church, which was constructed by a group of carpenters and masons.

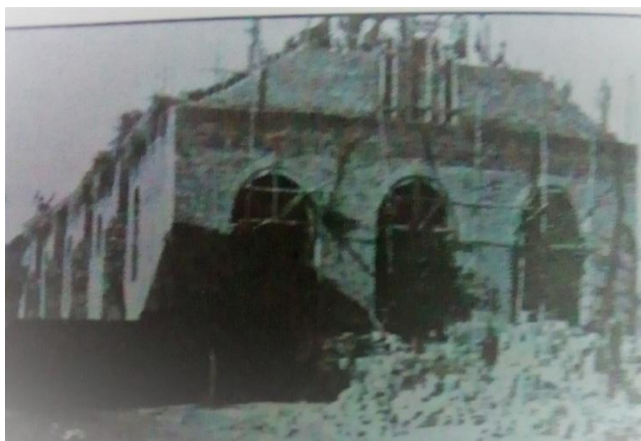


Figure 2: Masonry Work Building of the First Church of Kashozi Mission 1903

Source: Bukoba Catholic Diocese Archive

It was discussed during the focus group discussion that elite freed slaves, the middle class produced through Catholic missionary education, were targeted by missionaries and colonialists to fulfill the needs of the government. This means that the needs of missionaries and the colonial government forced them to provide education to produce the workers they needed. Through low wages, the freed slaves and indigenous people were exploited by foreign people. Hence, education was a tool for them to achieve their goals. That is why they did not want to provide higher education to freed slaves (FGD, O.I, May 13th, 2025).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings demonstrate that White Fathers' mission stations significantly influenced the socio-economic transformation of freed slaves in Bukoba District between 1892 and 1914. Through education, healthcare, vocational training, agriculture, and religious instruction, the missions improved living conditions and expanded economic opportunities for many freed slaves. At the same time, these interventions reshaped indigenous cultural practices, weakened certain traditional institutions, and reinforced aspects of the colonial system. The study, therefore, concludes that missionary activities produced both positive developmental outcomes and long-term socio-cultural changes. Future policy should encourage the preservation of indigenous knowledge while promoting collaboration between modern institutions and local communities in safeguarding Tanzania's historical and cultural heritage.

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- [17] Bishop Dr. Jovitus Francis Mwijage, 61. Interviewed on 18th July 2025, at Centenary Pastoral Center (CPC).
- [18] Fr Nestory Kajuna, 93. Interviewed on 16th March 2025, at Katoma Parish.
- [19] Sr. Robert Kahwa, 88. Interviewed on 18th, March, 2025, at Kashozi-Bethania convent.
- [20] Mr. Aloys Kamugisha, 89. Interviewed on 12th, May, 2025, at Rwagati village.
- [21] Sr. Bernalda Kokulinganisa, 90. Interviewed on 21st May 2025 at Kashozi- Bethania, convent.
- [22] Fr. Henry Kobukale, 80. Interviewed on 14th March 2025, at Katoke Parish
- [23] Mr. Benedicto Mutakyamirwa, 89. Interviewed on 11th May 2025, at Kashozi-Kazinga.
- [24] Brandina Benedicto, 85. Interviewed on 11th May 2025, at Kashozi in Kazinga village
- [25] Mr. Alphonse Sembali, 79. Interviewed on 13th May 2025, at Bukoba town, Buyekera.
- [26] Mr. Jonas Kanyaruhanga, 80. Interviewed on 21st May 2025, at Kashozi village

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