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The Influence of Roman Catholic Church on the Sukuma Traditional Marriages in Magu District, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the examination of the evolution of the Sukuma marriage conduct in the traditional setting and the influence which the Roman Catholic Church exerted on the Sukuma traditional marriage practices. The different forms and procedures of traditional marriages practiced among the Sukuma before the introduction of Christianity in the nineteenth century are explored. Several studies had been conducted on how traditional marriage institutions among the Sukuma were sustained despite the penetration of Christianity. Others investigated on how Christianity of different denominations in general affected the Sukuma marriage practices. This study, therefore, focused on how the Roman Catholic Church influenced the Sukuma traditional marriage. Despite its strong roots in Magu district none of the studies investigated its influence on traditional marriage institutions. A historical research methodology was employed in which different historical sources both primary and secondary were visited. Secondary sources were collected through a review of documents from libraries and different resource centers. The bulky primary information was accessed from archival sources. The existing oral histories kept by local Sukuma historians were accessed by visiting their custodians. The data generated revealed that the coming of Roman Catholic Church and the subsequent introduction of Christianity among the Sukuma introduced Christian marriage which threatened the existence of Sukuma traditional marriages. Currently, many Sukuma goes for Christian marriage and traditional marriages are seen as old-fashioned. But the Roman Catholic Church destroyed these very veins of the Sukuma society. Consequently, the Sukuma society started losing grip of the attributes that consolidated the society as a single whole.

Keywords: Sukuma, Traditional Marriage, Missionaries, Christianity, Roman Catholic, Church.

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1. Introduction

The paper aimed at investigating the dynamics of traditional Sukuma marriage conduct between the 1950s and 1960s in Magu District. The first specific objective was to explore the nature of Sukuma traditional marriages before the Roman Catholic Church in Magu district. This section focused on some issues related to the historical background of the Sukuma as a social formation and their

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different forms of traditional marriage practices before Christianity. The second specific objective was to describe the Sukuma marriages after the establishment of Roman Catholic Church in Magu district. The third objective should be to explore the coming, spread and the effects of Catholic missionaries on Sukuma traditional marriage practices in Magu District.

2. Literature review

The spread of Christianity in Africa has to be placed within the context of colonial domination. This is for the reason that the colonial period facilitated the coming of a great number of missionaries and the gospels spreading, the economic infrastructure, political administration and especially the improved means of traveling and communication tremendously facilitated the evangelization.³ That is to say, it is an historical fact that Africa was evangelized through colonial machinery in the name of missionaries. The imperial power used ideological instruments to control the colonized people indirectly, ideological instrument make people accept the power of the ruling class and create people who were willing to be dominated,⁴ and religion which had a great influence on the lives of people was used by the colonialists in colonizing Africa.⁵

The Wasukuma of Magu District was colonized by the Germans from 1886 to 1918 and the British from 1919 to 1961.⁶ To make their administration smooth some mechanisms had to be deployed. It was stated that, 'the imperial power used the ideological instruments to make people accept the power of the ruling class and create people who were willing to be dominated.'⁷ By doing so the missionaries played the role of a mediator among the indigenous people and the colonial government. For example, Fr. David Clement one of the missionaries of Africa at Nyegezi was a mediator between the Sukuma and the colonialists.⁸ White Fathers Missionaries introduced several institutions including Christian marriages among the Wasukuma of Magu district with Sumve as the first parish erected in 1911 and Bujora parish established in 1953.

On the other hand Wasukuma of Magu district were due to given historical reasons capable of evolving a traditional marriage conduct before the coming of the Roman Catholic missionaries. These traditional marriage practices had very big contributions to the production and reproduction of the Sukuma society.⁹ However, the introduction of Christian marriages according to Kulumbete started affecting traditional marriage practices of Wasukuma including those of Magu District.¹⁰ Reference here is made to Christianity in its diversity of different denominations worldwide. However, different denominations have different perceptions of various issues including marriage.

Another study on the Sukuma traditional marriages was done by Athanasy Gregory. The study based on assessing the sustainability of the Sukuma marriage traditions in Magu district. From the study the major issues revealed were the two main forms of the Sukuma traditional marriages.¹¹ The author concluded that, regardless of the challenges the Sukuma marriage faced, the Sukuma traditional marriages to a large extent were still maintained. For example, kulunja was still honored and preferred by majority of the elders and to a less extent by the Sukuma youth.¹² This paper therefore anchored on an investigation of only Catholic Church in Magu District and the way it influenced the traditional marriage of the Sukuma an area which the previous researches did not address.

When the Roman Catholic missionaries first arrived at Bujora and then spread to the rest of the district they introduced Christianity, which among other things affected the existing traditional marriage practices. Christian marriage system encouraged conversion to Christianity among the

³ Dr. Etim E Okon, *Christian Mission and Colonial Rule in Africa* (University of Caliber, Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, 2014) 199

⁴ Seyed Mohammad Marandi and Reyhaneh Sadat Shadpour, *Christianity as an Ideological Instrument: A Postcolonial Reading of Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God* (University of Tehran, Iran, May, 2011) 48

⁵ Seyed Mohammad Marandi & Reyhaneh Sadat Shadpour, *ibid.* 49.

⁶ Victoria Gores, *The Influence of Roman Catholic Church on Sukuma Traditional Marriage in Magu District, 1950s to 2000s*, St. Augustine University of Tanzania, 2017, p.67

⁷ Seyed Mohammad Marandi & Reyhaneh Sadat Shadpour, *Christianity as an Ideological Instrument* (Iran, university of tehran, 2011) 49

⁸ Dr. Etim E Okon, *op.cit.*, 199

⁹ Mary Kalumbete, *The impact of Christianity on the Traditional Sukuma marriage, a case of Kwimba and Nyamagana Districts*, Mwanza (Dissertation, Master of Arts in History, St. Augustine University of Tanzania, 2011) p. 42

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pg. 83

¹¹ Athanasy Gregory, *Assessing Sustainability of the Sukuma Marriage Traditions in Magu District*. As quoted by Gores, *op.cit.* 45

¹² Athanasy Gregory, *The Sustainability of the Sukuma Marriage Traditions in Magu district*, (Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Degree of Masters of Arts in History at St. Augustine university of Tanzania, September 2015) 43

Sukuma. The findings further revealed that Catholic Christian missionaries transformed the Sukuma from some of the dreadful traditional values such as polygamous marriages and inheritance of widows.

3. Research methodology

The research methodology was primarily qualitative in nature. To give a historical insight and orientation the procedures of data collection are outlined thus. To generate historical data for the paper the study used both primary and secondary historical sources both written and oral. To make them historical the information collected were those that could trace the relationship between Roman Catholic Church and Sukuma traditional marriage from 1950s through 1960s, 1970s, 1980s to the 2000s. The oral information was obtained from the respondents who in one way or another were contemporary to the events. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and consultation with custodians of local histories as they appear in the subsequent footnotes.

Efforts were made to engage documents which were rich enough to shade some light on Roman Catholic Church and marriage in Magu District from 1950s to 2000s. Therefore this research benefited from Bujora Sukuma Museum and Archives which hosts much information about the history and culture of Wasukuma people. The National Archives of Tanzania and the online White Fathers archives furnished this research with valuable data on Roman Catholic Church and colonial epoch in Magu District. Parish records from Bukumbi, Kagunguli in Ukerewe, Kome in Mwanza, Sumve, Nyegezi and Bujora parishes provided information on activities of Roman Catholic missionaries and Christian marriage records. Different books, journal articles, dissertations and other documents on the Sukuma people and Roman Catholic Church were accessed in the library of Saint Augustine University of Tanzania, and different forms of traditional marriages. Other documents were obtained from the custody of personal libraries. These primary and secondary historical sources were very useful in making this paper to successfully be accomplished.

The data collected from archives, documentary review, parish records, oral testimonies and individual records were analyzed to produce a narrative on Sukuma marriage conduct before Christianity underlying different types of marriages among the Wasukuma. The data were used to present pre Christian developments by capturing practice of pre Christian marriage with a specific historical period, specific historical developments and dynamic nature of the Sukuma society. This analysis presented marriage conducts as human institutions that are dynamic and which manifested the historical transformation of the Sukuma society.

4. Description of the geographical area of the Sukuma people

Sukuma is the largest Tanzanian ethnic group occupying an area of about 19,000 square miles on the southern shore of Lake Victoria. Currently the Sukuma are found in the districts of Kwimba, Maswa, Mwanza, Geita and Shinyanga. The demographic dynamics of the Sukuma reveals a rapid and steady growth. In 1897 missionaries reported that 'today, this population is of great help to the Europeans; It is amongst them that almost all the porters are recruited, who seek all the objects of interchange for the interior.'¹³ Therefore the missionary also proved that the Sukuma was the largest ethnic group in Tanganyika. The 1957 census the Wasukuma counted for the largest group with 1,245,908 people and in 1967 the Sukuma numbered 1,529,917.¹⁴

The districts and regions inhabited by the Sukuma have increased in number and the boundaries become redefined.¹⁵ For example Magu became a district in 1974 breaking from Kwimba and Mwanza village.¹⁶ Geita became a region in March 2012 constituted from parts of Shinyanga, Mwanza and Kagera regions. Simiyu region was created in March 2012 from parts of Shinyanga region and Mwanza.¹⁷

The Sukuma were tall, strong, and hardworking; but of a nature more violent, good, cheerful, and hospitable.¹⁸ The Sukuma were patrilineal Bantu people. They were industrious sedentary farmers

¹³ White Fathers Archives, *Missionaries d' Afrique et Rapports Annuels, 1897-01-00.73-19,1,3 Les Basukuma*

¹⁴ Sufian Hemed Bukumura, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*; Lessons and Experiences from Among the Sukuma and the Nyamwezi of West Central Tanzania (Department of Administrative Studies, Institute of Development management, Mzumbe, Morogoro – Tanzania,1995) 2

¹⁵ Prof. Alfred Agwanda & Prof. Haidari Amani, op.cit. 3

¹⁶ Ofisiya Mkurugenzi Mtendajiwa Magu, "Wilaya ya Magu, Taarifa Fupi ya Mafanikio ya Miaka 50 ya Uhuru", Tarehe 12 Julai, 2011.

¹⁷ URT: Population and Housing Census, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance Dar es Salaam & Office of Chief Government Statistician (President's Office, Finance, Economy & Development Planning, Zanzibar, March 2013)

¹⁸ White Fathers Archives, op. cit.

with substantial numbers of livestock. Their main food crops were maize and millet with cassava as a reserve for periods of food shortage. Cattle and smaller stock were important to the Sukuma for carrying out legitimate marriages.¹⁹

Magu district was among the areas with high population of Wasukuma. The urban center is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups including Kerewe, Kara, Jita, Haya and Chaga. The Magu rural areas are predominantly inhabited by the Sukuma.²⁰ This was less than the district's population census of 2002 when the number was 416, 113. While the 2012 population census showed that Magu's population were 299,759. This less number was because the Kwimba district was split up in 2012 to form Busega district in new Simiyu region.²¹

The Sukuma settlement in what is now Magu district started in the 16th as part of Ntemi process of opening new settlements due to population pressure, scarcity of resources and attractiveness of the area of new settlement. It was also the time when the area began to be organized by hierarchical chiefdoms and not villages. The administrative hierarchy or system of the Sukuma was designed in such a way that the lowest level was the family of the clan, also known as the kaya.²² The smallest socio-political and economic unit among the Wasukuma was a family composed of husband, several wives and numerous children.²³ A congregation of several kayas gave rise to a village 'chalo'. For example, Ng'wanangwa administered a Chalo where by one or two hundred villages together formed an administrative unit called Budeji whose administrator was called chief 'Ntemi'.²⁴ In 1946 there was an attempt of uniting all Sukuma chiefdoms into a big Sukuma Federation.²⁵ At the time of abolition of chiefdoms in 1962 there were 52 Sukuma chiefdoms each with a royal leader 'Ntemi'.

Economically the family was a unit of production using family labor and the means of production especially land. In order to sustain the families and ensure the reproduction of the society, production of material goods was very crucial. Apart from the possession of land and tools of production the need for labor power was very important. For this reason, the Sukuma unit of production which was the family had to guarantee constant supply of labor. It was out of this historical reality which necessitated the Sukuma families to accord relative importance on marriage institution. The marriage institution was to produce labor force in the form of number of wives and the children produced out of those marriages. The Sukuma held the view that the more the wives in the family, the more the children in the family. Furthermore, the more the children in the family the more the amount of labor at the disposal of the family. Consequently, the more the abundance of labor in the family the more the production in the family.²⁶

Sukuma of Magu district had diversity of traditional religions. The concept of divine power among the mtemi chiefdoms put religion at the center of the Sukuma spiritual life. Traditional religion had contribution to the process of production and reproduction of the society. Religion justified the power of mtemi mystically through possession of regalias such as lion skins, horns, and ostrich feathers. Mtemi were believed to have both political and religious powers. These religious powers helped the mtemi to justify and exert his powers without fear of being questioned.

Wasukuma who believed in traditional religion worshiped God as the Supreme Being and creator of the universe. The practice of Sukuma traditional religion did not take place in a structure like church or mosque. Instead prayers were said among the family in the compound and were directed to the creator God in hopes of good rainfall and prosperity. Those practicing Sukuma traditional religion also honored the external spirits of deceased ancestors. When a person died, many believed that their spirits continued on live in another realm. The deceased person who lived exemplary life became an ancestor. The Sukuma indigenous religion had no written documents, but its beliefs were expressed in

¹⁹ Frans Wijzen & Ralph Tanner, *Seeking a Good Life-Religion and Society in Usukuma Tanzania*, (Nairobi, Pauline's Publications Africa, 2000)9

²⁰ Frans Jozef and Servaas Wijzen, *op.cit.*53

²¹ URT: Census Report 2012, National Bureau of Statistics

²² Lubasa, F.S.M, *The Bagalu Dancing Troupes and the Bagika Medicine Men of Sukuma Land: Their Genesis* (Mwanza: Butimba Teachers College,1998) 1

²³ S. AtienoOdhiambo, T.I Ouso & J. F M Williams, *A History of East Africa*, (Longman Group limited, London, 1977) 130

²⁴ Lubasa, *op.cit.* 1

²⁵ TNA: Minutes of Sukuma Chiefs Federation Meetings from 1946 followed by subsequent years until 1962 when J.K. Nyerere abolished chiefdoms.

²⁶ Mabula Mayunga, JumaMkalikali and Neema Michael, Interviewees

various myths, poems, proverbs, songs and prayers. Their prayers were not stylized but flowed spontaneously from the innermost depth of the heart, expressing their own emotions and feelings.²⁷

5. The Sukuma pre-Christian marriage institutions in Magu district

Marriage has been defined as a legal or formal recognized union of a man and a woman as partners in a relationship in the bid to establish a family.²⁸ Marriage has also been defined as a union between a man and a woman such that any children born within the union are regarded as the legitimate offspring of the parents.²⁹ According to Marriage Act 1970 section 9 as define marriage as a voluntary union of man and woman intended to last for their joint lives; therefore, there could be no temporary marriage.³⁰

According to the Sukuma tradition, marriage was not something that could be rushed into, but it was necessary to be handled slowly and with great care. Only at the end of personal and family inquiries, when one had satisfied oneself that the proposed marriage was feasible, then it could be discussed face to face with the other side. It was also the whole family and clan concerned on the Sukuma traditional marriage. All the negotiations and procedures necessary for making a true marriage were the concern of the whole family.³¹

The Sukuma traditional marriage practices in Magu district have been changing over time due to changes in every aspect of life: such as technology, independence, evolution in thinking and introduction of Christianity. Therefore, the practices of the Sukuma traditional marriages have constantly been changing accordingly.

In the pre-colonial era, Magu district did not have any formal schools except for short period of initiations. The youth of that time were instructed and prepared for adult life by listening and doing the values, history and morals of the society. Some of the old people remained attached to them while the youth have adapted to new forms of Christian life in society. Many youths in Usukuma had become copyists of new cultures.³² They blame their parents as being old fashioned and ignorant. This study was done by focusing in the selection of marriage partner, the payment of bride wealth and how to conduct the actual wedding ceremony.³³ The study revealed that the youth are against the traditional marriages. Many likes the church marriages that are practiced in modern ways.

In terms of marriage 'kutola' among Sukuma of Magu, variety forms of marriage were identified. These variety of marriages fall into two main categories, some with bride wealth and some without.³⁴ In both cases the wife was known as 'nke' in Sukuma and the husband as 'ngoshi'.³⁵

Historically, the Sukuma of Magu did not have bride wealth on their process of marriage so that to make the marriage legal. The term bride wealth was introduced by the whites who came in as the colonialists during the 19th century. The colonialists misinterpreted what was known as Njigu that was practiced by the Sukuma. Njigu was the punishment according to the Sukuma tradition that was given to a person who killed. This was done before the introduction of courts by the colonialists in the 19th century. When a Sukuma person killed another person, intentionally or accidentally he or she was obliged to pay Njigu. Njigu was paid in form of cattle, ten cows for a woman and eight cows for a man. This punishment was also given to a man who married a woman by bad luck died. He had to pay ten cows to his wife's family as a compensation for the loss of their daughter.³⁶

This continued to happen up to when the Sukuma elders agreed on another way the Sukuma man could pay njiku before he married a woman. This was because many women who got married died mostly when they were giving birth. One of the factors for their death during the birth time was that, many women got married when they were young thus their reproduction system was not strong

²⁷ Frans Jozef and Servaas Wijsen, op.cit. 9

²⁸ P.B. Horton & L.C. Hunt, *Sociology* (United States of America: Mc Graw Hill Inc, 1976)

²⁹ O.T.Odetola & A, Ademola, *Sociology: an Introductory African Context* (Macmillan Education limited Publishers, London & Basingstoke 1985) 109

³⁰ URT: Tanzania Marriage Act

³¹ Alloys Balina, Antony Mayala& Justin M Mabula, op.cit. iv.

³² Alloys Balina, Antony Mayala& Justin M Mabula, ibid. v

³³ Alloys Balina, Antony Mayala& Justin M Mabula, ibid, v-vi

³⁴ G.R Abrahams, *The Peoples of Greater Unyamwezi, Tanzania* (Nyamwezi, Sukuma, Sumbwa, Kimbu, Konongo), (London: International African institute, 1967) 44-48

³⁵ G. R. Abrahams. ibid.44

³⁶ Fr. Charles W. Bundu, 67 years, Chaplain at Saint Augustine University of Tanzania – Mwanza, since 2012. Interviewee

enough for her to give birth safely. This was a big challenge as during the pre-colonial times technology was low. Women gave their birth at home with the help of the elder women. Thus, many women died when they were giving birth. For these reasons the elders decided that a man who wanted to marry had to pay njiku to a woman's family before he took her to live with her. Thus, that became the new way of marrying to the Sukuma as man had to pay ten cows in order to marry a woman. From that point the traditional Sukuma marriage was considered to be legal after the payment of the number of cows agreed between the two families of the couple to be married.

Another term to be made clear was 'the white pocket' as it was the reason that made the number of cows for bride wealth to rise. The number of cows rose from ten cows up to even fifty, sixty, eighty or even more during the pre - colonial times in Tanganyika among the Sukuma. This was introduced by the chiefs who showed interest to the Sukuma brown girls. The chiefs offered a lot of cows to the Sukuma brown girl's parents so that they could take them as their wives. This made people to start seeing the brown girls as they were unique in their community.³⁷

The chiefs even used their power to get the girl they wanted without their own or their parents' consent. People respected their leaders thus they could not refuse when the chief have decided to marry a certain girl. For example, on the public Sukuma dance, 'mbina' chief could like a girl thus his people could throw beads on the girl's neck. This expressed that she had been chosen by the chief to be his wife. She was taken directly to the chief's house and her parents were informed about that. Later cows were sent to the girl's family to legalize the marriage. This continued up to the time when Tanganyika attained its independence in 1961.³⁸

The work of the chiefs started to be interrupted during the colonial times. During the German (1860 - 1916) and British (1916 - 1961) colonial periods the traditional mode of succession since the first Sukuma chief Sanga was interrupted to help secure support for colonial policies. The German colonial government often placed Akidas or non-indigenous in power. On the other hand, the coming of the British created the Sukuma federation of chiefdoms which brought together the Sukuma chiefs to discuss the government policy in Malaya.³⁹ It was a way to neutralize the power of the royal ministers against colonial policies.

When Tanganyika attained its independence, the chiefdoms ended as their responsibilities had to be done by the government officials. Therefore, as the chiefdoms ended they even lost their powers in the community. This consequently led to the chiefs to lose their respect on the white pocket. Thus, all of the Sukuma men saw that it was their time to benefit from the white pocket. Thus, the idea of the brown girls was imported to the mind of the Sukuma men. The brown girls became more wanted than the black girls. Hence the number of cows started to be high when the man was marrying a girl. The payment of bride wealth became part of the Sukuma life on the process of marrying.⁴⁰ Therefore, the bride wealth marriage became known as kulunja in Sukuma and the term denoting bride wealth was nsabo which is the ordinary word for bride wealth.

6. Procedures of conducting the Sukuma traditional marriages

The Sukuma traditional marriage followed the following procedures. On courtship; the boy would search a girl of his choice whenever he had the chance. Parents of the boy and a girl were informed. Meanwhile the boy, with the other members of his family would make a very close inquiry about the girl and her family. Usually this was done very secretly. The inquiries which were made based on the clan, taboo, whether there was any history of disease; epilepsy or leprosy and also their popularity with their neighbors and the whole village. When the parents suggested a girl to whom they thought would be a good wife, the boy's duty was to study his parents' choice for him.⁴¹

Before 1960s many Sukuma parents selected girls for their sons to marry.⁴² Generally, a Sukuma child would respect the wishes of his parents but a boy was not obliged to accept a wife. After these

³⁷ Fr. Charles Bundu, *ibid.*

³⁸ Fr. Charles Bundu, *ibid.*

³⁹ TNA:Minutes of Sukuma Chiefs Federation Meetings from 1946 followed by subsequent years until 1962 when J.K.Nyerere abolished chiefdoms.

⁴⁰ Fr. Charles Bundu, *op.cit*

⁴¹ Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, *op.cit.*2

⁴² Mr. Joshua Masunga, Interviewee

investigations, have been carried out and everything had been found satisfactory, the visits to a girl's home were arranged.⁴³ Guests for marriage would go to a neighboring home where the girl would come to meet them. The boy's friend had to take the lead all the way from home to the girl's family. On their arrival, there was a girl or woman who welcomed them into a small house called maji. This house was exclusively for the boys of a family, married or single. All the talks about marriage took place in this house.⁴⁴

The girl would be informed about the guests and she would be informed about the guests and she too would come to meet the guests with one of her friends. After the talk the girl with her friend would escort the guests on their way back home. If it happens that the guests were escorted for a short distance, this was an indication that the girl does not think much of the guests and it was doubtful that the girl was going to marry him. On the other hand, if the girl escorted them for a long distance this then was a clear sign that the girl was ready to marry him.⁴⁵

He then took one or two male friends to visit the girl at her home and discuss about marriage. Usually a number of such visits were necessary before the girl after consultation with a grandmother or other friendly kinswoman, agreed to the proposal.⁴⁶ If the girl refuses the suit negotiations normally had to start afresh elsewhere. This was done after the second visit to a girl's home, at this time the man to marry, nunja had to do all the talking to his wife to be. The girl had to give her consent. A boy had to prove to his father that he is ready to marry by building a home correctly without any assistance. This house had to be used by the married couple after the marriage ceremony.⁴⁷ After reaching a consent, the nunja would tell the girl's father that he has chosen a definite day to send the group of old men from the nunjasfamily who had to bring the formal information to the girl's family that the nunjas family was ready to proceed with the question of bride wealth.⁴⁸

Agreement over bride wealth; when a girl agreed to marry, the parents of the couple were informed. Negotiations about bride wealth would begin. Two male neighbors of the young man's father visited the girls home as his agents 'Bakombe' of her father. These agents acted on instructions from the father whom they represented. Several visits might be made before agreement could be reached.⁴⁹ According to Sukuma customary marriage, bride wealth negotiations were done at the house of the girl's father. The two fathers had to be there during the negotiations.⁵⁰ Before 1971 when agreement over the bride wealth had been reached it was a custom to inspect and take the cattle the same day. Those who went to fetch the cattle were welcomed by the women with shouts of joy and meal was served to them. The hosts and the visitors ate separately. Elders of the village were present as witnesses.⁵¹ After the meal a stool was put before the door of the main house and each of those who came to fetch the bride wealth has to sit on it. The house wife rubs butter on their foreheads and on top of their heads; indicating how important the transfer of the bride wealth was for the two families.⁵²

Before 1980s most Sukuma had many cows. A family could have up to one thousand cows. Thus, many Sukuma could not have any problems on agreeing about the bride wealth. On this ground the visit occurred sometime once and the agreement was made. This was contrary to what was happening from 1990s to 2000s. Due to the increase of population and climate change the numbers of cows kept by the Sukuma have decreased. Thus, the visits for the agreement over bride wealth have increased up to five or more. so that to come up with the agreement on the amount of bride of bride wealth.⁵³

Bride wealth, be it cattle, money or merely symbolic becomes only a material sign which officially manifests unanimous consent of two families that they have agreed to and accepted the marriage which is being established by their children (Bana). It is the building of relationship (Busanji)

43 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, op.cit.2

44 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid. 3

45 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid.2-3

46 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid.11

47 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid, 11

48 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid, 4

49 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid,11

50 Pelt P. V, Bantu Custom in Mainland Tanzania (T.M.P. Printing Department Tabora, Tanzania,1971)154

51 Pelt, idid.155

52 Pelt, ibid. 151

53 Nkwimba Kuzenza, interviewee

and the public manifestation of the unanimous consent for the parents that at least in anticipation, an ever present and permanent factor in all forms of Sukuma marriage.⁵⁴

Once the bride wealth had been agreed the father of the bride gave a feast for the people on the groom's side. The arrangements were made about the collection of the bride wealth. The day for the collection of bride wealth by the girls' people was agreed.⁵⁵ On this day people celebrated by cooking a lot of foods, eating and dancing. Now days' people just eat normal foods as many people complains that the life have changed: life have become problematic; no foods and cows like before the 1980s due to the changing economy.⁵⁶

Collection of the bride wealth, *kukwa*; this was the stage in the traditional Sukuma procedure of contracting a true and solid marriage. When properly performed, *kukwa*, by virtue of the traditional rites and rituals was a solemn action by which the sum of the bride wealth was given to the parents of the bride. Bride wealth in this sense was also a solemn occasion whereby the families of both bride and groom became officially united. They met at this stage with the purpose of building and solidifying their newly created relationship, *busanji*.⁵⁷ It was at this solemn occasion that parents found it suitable to express publicly their unanimous consent to marriage.⁵⁸

Beside the uniting function, bride wealth was also the customary process by which bride wealth acquired the value of being a legal form of marriage. Thus, bride wealth be it cattle, money or merely symbolic, became only a material sign which officially manifested the unanimous consent of two families that they had agreed to and accepted the marriage that had been established by their children, *bana*.⁵⁹

On this occasion, the delegation from the girls' side visited the boys' father on the appointed day. The actual bride wealth cattle or other goods were chosen. After this has been completed the visitors were feasted and they then returned home.⁶⁰ After they agree on the bride wealth there was a cerebation that was prepared by the bride's family on the day to receive the bride wealth. This cerebation was called *Bukombe*.

As bride wealth was taken very serious, the day the bride wealth received the festival meal was prepared, *Bukombe*. The festival meal was shared by both the families of the bride and the groom. This was done in order to declare officially and publicly that the girl was now engaged to a particular young man. This was done in order to express the degree of intimacy in their relationship called *busanji*. At this occasion the community represented by elders and the two families concerned, get an opportunity to instruct the young couple that marriage was the most serious step in life. It involved joyful and at times, bitter misunderstandings.⁶¹

Bride wealth is still today an essential factor for a marriage to be really true and solid before the community. Moreover, it was because of this permanent factor bride wealth acquired the following functional values.⁶² Thus the payment of bride wealth among the Sukuma was associated with the following roles. The functions of the bride wealth affect both the parents and the children that were born from that union. The roles of bride wealth were explained as follows:

First, bride wealth became a legal element which legitimized children born from that marriage as the Sukuma were one of the patrilineal society. According to the Sukuma matrilineal norms and customs, children belong to the father's family lineage. Second, bride wealth became a power and force which helped to ensure and guaranteed somehow the stability of marriage; making it a relationship of love between man and woman who possessed the responsibility of continuing society and extending the family lineage. Bride wealth also provided a link that connected the various degrees of relationship within the extended family group, clan. Third, bride wealth besides being a thank offering it was also considered as an indemnity which paid for the loss of their children to the bride's family. It was always expected that the bride's brother, if there was any in her family would use the

54 Aloyse Balima, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, op.cit. 11

55 R.G Abrahams, op.cit. 73-74

56 Mabula Mayunga, interviewee.

57 Aloyse Balima, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, op.cit. 10

58 Aloyse Balima, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid. 10

59 Aloyse Balima, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid.10

60 R.G Abrahams, op.cit. 73-74

61 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, op.cit. 11

62 Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, ibid. 10-11

bride wealth, brought by her sister to marry and bear children for his family. Finally, bride wealth had a religious significance; some of it was offered in a cultic manner, to the ancestors. This was due to the attested traditional belief that the departed were in close association with the living. They were also interested in every detail that happened on earth.⁶³

After the bride wealth, has been given out there were still important stages in a Sukuma marriage. The first stage concerned the marriage ceremony and celebrations that took place at the family of the bride. The ceremony had a lot of meaning to the Sukuma; it was to honor the parents; the groom was acquainted with the parents and relatives of his family; lastly, the bride's family got the opportunity of fulfilling their right to check the consummation of the marriage.⁶⁴

The second stage, the groom stayed with his wife's parents or relatives for a certain period, this was known as kuhedekwa in Sukuma. This was a time of experimentation for the couple. First the husband looked closely into the behavior of his wife in order to prove that he was not deceived when he, with his family, was making an investigation about her behavior and that of her family before marriage. on the other hand, the wife also studied her husband if he was able to look after her material needs. Most important was that the wife's parents made a deep and long probation of the groom. They tried to know if he could work to support their daughter when he had a family.⁶⁵

Second, they had to know if he was polite. If the husband was untrustworthy during this time, his parents in law would continue to instruct and brought him into the right path. The wife also was given serious instructions in all matters concerning marriage. Now that she had a husband, she had the right to ask her mother about the problems she would meet during her marriage and the solution for them. She was told that marriage was not a paradise. When she met with difficulties, the solution was not a divorce, rather she should try to adapt herself to her husband's wishes. She had already learned much of this through the practical example of her parents; how they behaved towards each other in times of disappointments. She was reminded of her responsibilities toward her husband.⁶⁶

Lastly, the bride after the wedding had to make an official visit to her husband's family. This trip was meant for introducing herself officially to this family of which she was a member. During this visit she was supposed to behave very well, the family of her husband looked upon her; first as one who was responsible for their son. Moreover, the bride was looked upon as a mother to be of children who, by customary law, would be members of her husband's family and not hers alone. The impression she gave them on this trip was an indication of either a good or bad future for their son.⁶⁷

The wedding; what may be called the actual wedding ceremony that took place at the girl's home and lasted about three days. The representatives of both sides of the couple had to be present. Anyone who happened to attend was liberally feasted. There were also much dancing and singing. The main event was the arrival of the young man (the marrying man) with a group of friends. A ceremonial meal was eaten by the bride and groom. The meal was eaten either alone or in the company of an older Kin's woman of the bride. This was the important ceremony in which the bride and groom received public blessings and reproaches of their parents.⁶⁸

This is contrary to some other parts of the world, for example most newly married couple in the United States of America prefers to establish their own residency away from control and security of their parents. The author kept on stating that, in most of pre - industrial African societies, the newly married couple continued to live with the husband's. In this case the newly married couples continue to be dependent on their parents and their decision making must take the parents into account.⁶⁹ Therefore, there were some reasons that explain why a Sukuma man after marrying should stay at his wife's home. According to the Sukuma, this was done in order to give them enough time to prepare for their independent life and the girls' parents could get enough time to know if their son in law could take care of their daughter.

⁶³ Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, *ibid.* 12

⁶⁴ Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, *ibid.* 32

⁶⁵ Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, *ibid.* 32-33

⁶⁶ Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, *ibid.* 33

⁶⁷ Aloyse Balina, Antony Mayala, and Justine Mabula, *ibid.* 33

⁶⁸ R.G Abrahams, *op.cit.* 73-74

⁶⁹ J.E. Farley, *Sociology*, (Pentice – Hall, Inc, United States of America ,1990) 379

7. The forms of the Sukuma traditional marriages

Bride wealth form of marriage was practiced before 1950s and it is still practiced. The husband in bride wealth marriage obtained both uxorial and genetical rights over his wife and children of such marriage normally inherited their fathers' property. The father had the right to receive any bride wealth which had to be paid upon the marriage of his daughter. He also had the obligation to provide for at least the first marriage of his sons if he has available resources though other relatives may help in this.

Sometimes on the bride wealth marriage, a man could have insufficient wealth for the bride wealth. If the girl's father agreed the man received the girl in a form of official concubinage. At this point no bride wealth was fixed until the lover acquired further property. This was happening rarely in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. In 1980s, 1990s and 2000s it occurs often due to the changing economy as people are struggling hard to earn their living. Thus, they prefer to introduce themselves to the girl's parents and give what they have while they keep on finding the wealth. This help the girl to be assured that marriage will take place and if another man goes to seek her hand in marriage the parents cannot agree. The remaining bride wealth was known as Magasa.⁷⁰

Kugumila type of marriage was a privilege of rich and important men in the society. It mainly differed from 'kulunja' in its preliminary procedures. Prospective husband or one of his followers if he was a chief would publicly throw a string of beads or cloth or skin over the head of the chosen girl. If her father accepted this and such acceptance was apparently usual, the procedure of an ordinary bride wealth marriage 'Kulunja' would then be followed from that point.⁷¹

This form of marriage occurred since the sixteenth century when the area began to be organized by hierarchical chiefdoms and not villages. In 1961 at independence the newly formed Tanzania government abolished the power of the chief and the Sukuma federation of chiefs. Though the colonialists started to infringe the power of chiefs, Mwalim Nyerere came to finish their authority in 1962. Through this period of extreme transformation many royal families did not relinquish their royal regalia even though the political conditions forced the objects literally underground where were destroyed by nature and the environment. Therefore, as this form of marriage was mostly practiced by the chiefs, it died consequently with the death of chiefdoms.⁷²

Kulehya, anon-bride wealth marriage was initiated by an elopement of the couple at night. In this form of marriage, the husband has no genetical rights and only limited uxorious ones over his wife. The children of such marriage may be taken by rights to live with their mothers' people when they are about eight years of age and rights and obligations with respect to bride wealth for their marriages devolve upon the mothers' brother or other matrilineal relatives responsible for their upbringings.⁷³ Children from the non-bride wealth marriage had somewhat inferior status to those born of bride wealth union. The men who have not paid bride price have no rights over his children.⁷⁴

Non-bride wealth union could normally be converted into bride wealth ones at a later stage. The people to recognize the right of the father or other patrilineal kins, father of the children of a non-bride wealth union could redeem them at any time. There was the necessity for the husband to make a payment called 'Ngwekwe' or 'Ngombeyakupeleja' to the wife's father or other guardian if she was living with at the time of marriage. More was required if they had female children. Ceremonial procedure was lacking in non-bride wealth marriages.⁷⁵

Kupumula form of Sukuma traditional marriage, the man having no cattle for bride wealth went to the girl's father to ask if he would be accepted into the house hold as the acknowledged lover of the girl with the intention of marrying her later. If the father agreed the position of the man was that of the glorified serf. No amount of bride wealth was fixed. Talks about it were postponed until the lover could get something to pay for the bride wealth. Where the daughter could fell in love with the poor man, the parents could easily agree if the daughter has been married before and divorced. Also, if the daughter was seeming to be barren, thus the man gained some kind of service as favor of the girl's family.⁷⁶

70 Mr. Masanja Maduhu, interviewee

71 R.G Abrahams, opt.cit.73-74

72 Mr. Richard Buluma, interviewee

73 R.G Abrahams,op.cit.44

74 Nchama Ntobi, interviewee

75 R.G Abrahams, op.cit. 75

76 H. Cory, op.cit.

Kugukilaform of marriage was often practiced when the courtiers wished to procure a wife for the chiefs. It was not customary for a chief to ask a girl to become his wife or invite a woman to live temporary in his residence. His consorts and his other wives would have very much resented such behavior. In case of a chief, the beads were replaced by a lion's skin. There was no question of comment by any one. The chief had to pay the bride wealth but no customary marriage ceremonies were performed. This form of marriage was mostly practiced by the chiefs. Thus, it ended in 1961 soon after Tanganyika attained her independence with the end of chiefdoms among the Sukuma.⁷⁷

Kwingila form of marriage was between a widow and a relative of her deceased husband. According to the Sukuma, a widow, nchilwa had to choose the man who had to inherit her from among the brothers of her deceased husband if there was any. If there was none from among the nearest kinsmen, the family council may sometimes agree to a widow choosing another of the deceased's relatives, but they will never agree to her choosing an outsider. Childless widow was inherited by one of the heirs but only by mutual consent. If she refuses to be inherited she was allowed to return to her family.

The ceremonies consisted ritually of cleansing the bead stand, even if the wife followed the relative into his own house.⁷⁸ This form of marriage was high up to the 1980s. Then from 1990s it rarely occurred because people started to be aware of dangerous diseases such as HIV/AIDs. Also, they viewed it as a humiliated form of marriage as many became educated. Even the elders who did not go to school, their children could stand for them. The church also provided some teaching that could not go hand in hand with this form of marriage.⁷⁹

Kumpamgeni form of Sukuma traditional marriage practice was opposite of kwingila form of marriage. Kumpamgeni form of marriage took place, if a wife died and she had an unmarried sister. Their father could decide to give this sister to the widower as a substitute for the deceased wife. In this kind of marriage, there was no actual wedding ceremony that could take place.⁸⁰ This is still happening in 2000s but it was very high in the 1970s. One of the respondent said that her sister died in December 2016 by car accident and she left two children. The family chose her to replace the dead to the husband. They said, this is good especially when a person died left children. It cannot affect children as they already knew her as their aunt before their mother died. It would be difficult for the children if the man married another wife from another family.⁸¹

Kukindikula form of marriage was practiced when two fathers made a mutual agreement regarding the future marriage of their minor children. They agree upon the total bride wealth but only a cow and a bull are paid immediately. If the children reach the marriageable age they were asked to make their own decision. The cattle were returned if they refused to marry each other.⁸² From 1980s the rate of occurrence on this form of marriage went low. This is because of the changes such as children are free in selecting their marriage partners due to the influence of the church and other factors such as education and globalization.⁸³

Kuhaha form of marriage was practiced in case of pressing a debt or in time of famine the father of the daughter pledges her against the loan of one or two herds of cattle. The girl remains with her parents but marriage is likely if the debt is not repaid. No coercion was exercised.⁸⁴ This form of marriage ended in the 1970s when the Sukuma started to be more aware of the church and other factors such as change of the world economy, globalization, feminist movements and education. Women also did not like it, as it humiliated them.⁸⁵

Polygamy was permitted by the Sukuma tradition. The aim was at having more wives as workforce to increase wealth. That is to say, the more the wives a man had, the more the workers and increased wealth. Such wealth, in turn attracted additional wives. Wealth and wives brought greater

⁷⁷ H. Cory, *ibid*

⁷⁸ H. Cory, *ibid*.

⁷⁹ Mr. Masanja Maduhu, interviewee

⁸⁰ H. Cory, *op.cit*.

⁸¹ Misoji Mabula, interviewee

⁸² H. Cory, *op.cit*.

⁸³ Daniel Makungu, interviewee

⁸⁴ H. Cory, *op.cit*

⁸⁵ Mwasi Makubi, interviewee

prestige to house hold and head.⁸⁶ In agricultural areas, so to say in Sukuma, workers were needed; in that case women and children became cheap labor. Polygamy also enables a husband to take a second wife if a first wife is barren or is not able to give him a son. For a man to be polygamous he must be wealthy or have enough money to pay for the first wife as well as other additional wives as they contribute to the husband's wealth. Women's labor provided some of the funds that allowed the husband to take other wives. Thus, according to the Sukuma traditional marriage polygamy was permitted theoretically without limit, but few men had more than two wives and many had only one. Thus, before introducing Christian marriage the Sukuma people were practicing both monogamous and polygamous marriages.⁸⁷

Co wives were often jealous of each other over the husband, property and the relation with the husband's people. In this case sorcery was said to be common between them. Each tried to find the ways to be loved by the husband and his relatives. The husband should be very carefully to treat them all fairly. A variety of cooking arrangements were found, a common system being that the wife with whom the husband was sleeping should cook for him. Much depended on how well co wives could get on together. If relations between them became strained, a husband would adopt a fixed rotation for cooking and sleeping. In extreme conflict a husband would establish separate home steeds for them sometimes in different villages and he had to divide time between them.⁸⁸

8. Symbols that indicated the success of marriage to the Sukuma tradition

According to the Sukuma traditional marriages, there were different symbols that were used to express the success of the marriage. So, these symbols were of important use as people, particularly the relatives of the married couple. They needed to know if the marriage was successful or not. These symbols were expressed through different ways as follows;

Bride and bridegroom after their first night together came out of their house on the following morning; the bridegroom was dressed in the clothes of the bride and vice versa. This was a sign that their marriage has been consummated and of their will to stay together. This had to be witnessed by the relatives of both sides.⁸⁹ This has remained in the history of the Sukuma as it is not practiced in the 2000s. This is because of the transformation that has occurred among the Sukuma. People have started to forget the traditions due to modern ways of living such as attending to the church. Nowadays many people after wedding ceremonies goes to the hotels for what is called honeymoon. They don't go with their relatives, but they are just escorted by their friend then they are left there.⁹⁰

On the process of fixing the bride price the people do not speak of bulls or cows: a bull was called Lyela meaning a used hoe that was the half of the value of a cow. The cow was called Ijimu meaning a new hoe that have the value of two bulls.⁹¹ The Sukuma still consider this as the most important thing on the bride wealth in the 2000s. Even people who got married in 2017 with church wedding had to consider this on paying the bride wealth.⁹²

Also, the parents of the bride and bride groom exchanged no gifts except an arrow 'isonga' which the father of the bride groom gave to the party of the bride. This arrow symbolized the contract of marriage; a contract of fidelity between two families who would henceforward help one another against the common enemy. If the married girl died her family would say to the family of the accomplice that 'the arrow has hit us, it is not our common arrow therefore there was no marriage'.⁹³

The wife of the chief of the village came with a companion to the wedding feast. They brought a basket laden with flour. This was a symbol of the official recognition of the marriage. They waited until the flour was replaced by meat then they return home.⁹⁴ This is not happening now as it ended with the end of chiefdoms among the Sukuma in 1961, soon after independence.

⁸⁶ C.P. Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology*, (United States, Rondon House Inc., New York, 1987)193

⁸⁷ Fr. Richard Makungu, Bujora Parish.

⁸⁸ R.G Abrahams, *op.cit*, 52

⁸⁹ Fr. David Clement, *Unforgettable Souvenir of Father David Clement: Pioneer of Enculturation of Kisukuma*, Bujora parish, 1988.

⁹⁰ Veronica Samwel, interviewee

⁹¹ Fr. David Clement, *op.cit*.

⁹² Mwasi Makubi, Interviewee

⁹³ Fr. David Clement, *op.cit*

⁹⁴ Fr. David Clement, *ibid*

After the marriage, the father in law invited his daughter in law to his home. She came along accompanied by her friends. In the middle of the house the father in law put a chair for her to sit on. She sat down but closed her eyes as much as to say I am not used to it. As soon as she received a present she opened her eyes.⁹⁵

Divorce was common in both types of marriage but it was high to non-bride wealth union. This was because it was more freely entering into and more freely leaving than to those involving bride wealth. In this case, in non-bride wealth unions, divorce was normally accomplished simply by separations at the will of either party, although neighbors and kinsfolk may try to reconcile the couple. In bride wealth union, however the matter often goes before the chieftdom court which usually tries to bring about reconciliation. After the end of chieftdoms in Sukuma land in 1961, they could go the elders in their clan or village leaders. If either party was adamant, then the divorce would be ultimately being granted simply upon a claim of incompatibility but the court also recognizes certain reasons as automatically justifying a demand for divorce in Sukuma.

There were reasons that justified divorce in Sukuma men to women. These reasons were adultery by the wife, desertion by the wife, being struck by the wife, refusal of the wife to sleep with the husband, failure of the wife to carry out her house hold duties, procuring of an abortion by the wife and visits by her to native doctors without husband's permission.

There were also reasons that justified divorce of a Sukuma woman to a man. These reasons were: husband deserting the wife for a period of years without supporting her, if the husband seriously injured the wife, if the husband was impotent or given to perversion and finally if the husband generally failed to maintain her and her children properly.

On the other hand, there was a Sukuma proverb that supported the divorce among the Sukuma. The proverb states that, 'women are like duiker's dung' in Sukuma it is 'banakashimajiyampondo'. This means that women are as plentiful as a duiker's dung; so, if your wife misbehaves throw her out and find another one.⁹⁶ Thus, this influenced the Sukuma men to grant divorce to their wives hopping to get another wife.⁹⁷

In 1883 the White Fathers opened stations in Mwanza, the first mission center to be established was at Bukumbi. The second station was opened in 1895 at Kagunguli in Ukerewe. They continued to spread to different parts of the Sukuma land. In 1900 they built a station at Kome, 1907 in Mwanza, 1911 at Sumve , 1930 at Nyegezi and in 1953 at Bujora .⁹⁸ Thus, the Catholic missions are presently well distributed throughout different places of the Sukuma currently. Magu Deacon has seven parishes. These parishes are Bujora parish, Magu parish, Kahangala parish, Kabila parish, Kayenze parish, Nyanguge parish and Lugeye parish. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church has tried as much as possible to reach all areas as a part from the seven parishes there are more outstations Magu district. On the process of the Catholic Church to reach the different parts there was the need to change the Sukuma mind set towards traditional values and taboos, they empowered them with Christian knowledge, values and faith by evangelizing them. In order to make the teachings easy for the Sukuma there were some books that were written by the missionaries in Sukuma language. Inside the books there were some questions and answers that helped the Sukuma when they were taught. Some of the questions were, 'naniakakubumbaukutulamusi? Meaning 'who created you and brought you in the world?' The answers were, "Munguakanisumbautula" meaning God created us and brought us in the world.⁹⁹ There was a slight improvement in the number of catechists, and more cooperation from teachers, after school hours, giving of their free time to help the Father with catechism.

Upon the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Magu district in 1953 many things in relation to Sukuma traditional marriage practices changed. The amount of bridewealth changed from between twenty cows and fifty in 1953 to ten cows in 1980s and further to five cows in 1990s. But the church leaders before they allowed a church marriage they first asked if bridewealth has been paid as the parents couples have agreed.¹⁰⁰ Christian teaching on bringing up children insisted much on parents

⁹⁵ Fr. David Clement, *ibid*

⁹⁶ African Way of Life Club, *Collection of Proverbs* (Kachebere Major Seminary, Malawi: 1969) 15

⁹⁷ SahaniMasumbuko, interviewee

⁹⁸ Kituo cha Kisomo cha Taifa, *Historia Fupi ya Mkoa wa Mwanza*: September 1986

⁹⁹ Fr. H. NgwanaGappa, M.M from Saint John, Bariadi, Lake Ida, Minnesota , 4th August 1998, 5

¹⁰⁰ Fr. Boneventura, interviewee

giving their children good Christian morals as the first school of Christian life. the aspect of equality and respect of women, this is something positive got from the missionaries.¹⁰¹ The number of people preferring monogamous marriage especially women kept on increasing from the 1950s. Catholic marriages assured them permanency in their marriage life and it stressed for life of a spouse. There was nothing highly protected or respected in the Christian marriage as freedom of conscience. Entering Christianity was the beginning of the advancement of women into more modern roles. The Roman Catholic Church changed the Sukuma marriage institution in Magu district from 1950s to 2000s.

9. Conclusion

Discussion gravitated around the significance the Sukuma accorded to marriage institution as means or engine of perpetuation of their lineages and the production and reproduction of the Sukuma society. There no bride wealth in the process of marriage before the colonialists occupied their land. There was njigu a type of punishment meted on a person who killed another person. Often Sukuma women died during delivery in most cases due to marrying at very young age. For a dead woman the husband had to pay njiku to the parents of the deceased woman. He had to pay ten cows to her wife's family as a compensation for the loss of their daughter.¹⁰² Since many women died during birth it was then decided that a man had to pay njiku to the woman's family before marriage. This practice led to the emergence of bride wealth among the Sukuma. Since then traditional marriage among the Sukuma was institutionalized by introducing formal procedures such as courtship, payment of bride wealth and ultimately the official marriage.

The institutionalization of Sukuma traditional marriage had enormous impact on the transformation of the Sukuma society before the missionaries came. Marriage institution consolidated solidarity among the traditional society and sustained the communal elements of life. Bride wealth was not translated as means to accumulate wealth rather as a symbol of unity between the two families, that of the bride and that of the bridegroom. Traditional marriage institution was instrumental in production and reproduction of the society. The encouragement of polygamous marriage system enabled the family to increase family labour consisting of several wives and their children. Consequently, increase of labour power meant an increase of material production and hence sustainable reproduction of the Sukuma society.

The coming of missionaries on the other hand further transformed the Sukuma society in diverse ways. Introduction of Christianity was received cautiously by the Sukuma who appeared very deeply detested some of the Catholic values. In marriage institution all Christian converts were prohibited to practice polygamous marriage. This was tantamount to reduce labour power and hence decrease in production. The practice of payment of dowry was also discouraged by the Roman Catholic missionaries to their converts. From the research findings based in parish records the data show that the number of the Roman Catholic marriage continued to increase from 1954 to 2000 among Sukuma of Magu district. This was occasioned by the increase of people who accepted Christianity among the Sukuma. While traditional marriage institution suffered there were some positive changes to the Sukuma society. The establishment of schools made children of Catholic convert access western education which helped them to improve their lives. Likewise, women position in the society was improved especially those who had acquired education. Even the attitude of men towards women started changing by treating their women as equal partners.

Therefore, from this paper it can be concluded thus, the Sukuma had their own forms of traditional marriages before the introduction of Christianity and Christian marriage on the mid of the nineteenth century. In this case, it is proper to say that the Sukuma in Magu district had their own forms of marriage before the establishment of the first Roman Catholic Church in 1953 at Bujora. These traditional marriages were kuhaha, kukindukula, kwingila, kugukila, kupumula, kulehya, kulelanda, kugumilaandkulunja. Polygamy and divorce were allowed in Sukuma traditional marriage and bride price was important in Sukuma traditional marriages. The coming of Christianity particularly the Roman Catholic Church in Usukuma tampered with the Sukuma traditions. Christian marriage tampered with

¹⁰¹ Anna Sahani, interviewee

¹⁰² Interview, Fr.Charles Bundu,opt.cit.

the Sukuma traditional marriages starting with polygamy, and the payment of bride price. Few Sukuma went for unadulterated traditional marriage from the time Christian marriages were introduced in Magu district. What many do is, to follow the procedures for traditional marriage such as the payment of bride wealth then later they go for a wedding at the Roman Catholic Church.

Policy implication of this paper can be deducted thus. The conclusion drawn from the paper provides an insight on the instrumentalist role of African traditional marriage practices and its attending traditional religion. Furthermore, as the debate on sustainable development goes on, discussion on the historicity of marriage institution is relevant for the Magu people particularly and the whole nation of Tanzania at large. This discussion is important because most of Tanzania's development problems are tied to the conservative nature of traditional institutions including traditional marriages.

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Interviews

- Anna Sahani, Daniel Makungu, interviewees
Fr. Boneventura, interviewee
Fr. Charles W. Bundu, 67 years, Chaplain at Saint Augustine University of Tanzania – Mwanza, since 2012.
MabulaMayunga, JumaMkalikali and Neema Michael, Interviewees
Misoji Mabula, interviewee
Mr. Masanja Maduhu, interviewees
Mr. Richard Buluma, interviewee
Mwasi Makubi, interviewee
Nchama Ntobi, interviewee
SahaniMasumbuko, interviewee
Veronica Samwel, interviewee