

# **DE-AGRARIANISATION AND RURAL EMPLOYMENT NETWORK**

Afrika-Studiecentrum, Leiden  
Institute of Resource Assessment, Dar es Salaam

## **Changing Village Land, Labour and Livelihoods: Rungwe and Kyela Districts, Tanzania**

**Davis Mwamfupe**

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Copies may be ordered from:  
Afrika-Studiecentrum  
P.O. Box 9555  
2300 RB Leiden  
The Netherlands  
Fax 31-71-527-3344  
Email: [asc@fsw.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:asc@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)





## Preface

This working paper provides research findings emanating from the De-Agrarianisation and Rural Employment (DARE) Research Programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by the Afrika-Studiecentrum in conjunction with African research teams from institutions in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania and South Africa. We wish to acknowledge the encouragement of Hans Slot of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the editorial skills of Ann Reeves for providing vital back-up for the work of the programme's research teams.

Despite Sub-Saharan Africa's agrarian image, the rural peasant population is diminishing in relative size and significance. From a multi-disciplinary perspective, the DARE programme has sought to dissect the process of change, drawing attention to the new labour patterns and unfolding rural-urban relations now taking place. The programme research theme consists of four sub-themes: economic dynamics, spatial mobility and settlement patterns, social identity adaptations and gender transformations.

The objectives of the DARE programme have been to:

- 1) compare and contrast the process of de-agrarianisation in various rural areas of Africa in terms of an economic activity reorientation, occupational adjustment, social identification, and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly peasant modes of livelihood;
- 2) examine how risks on rural household production and exchange influence the extent and nature of non-agricultural activities in rural economies;
- 3) explore the inter-relationship between agriculture and the service sector in African economies; and
- 4) publish and disseminate the research findings to policy makers and scholars in Africa and elsewhere.

The Afrika-Studiecentrum's role has been to facilitate the formulation of country case-study research in various rural African localities by African researchers, to provide a discussion forum for work-in-progress, and to assist in the publication and dissemination of completed analyses of research findings.

The following study by Dr. Davis Mwamfupe of the Geography Department at the University of Dar es Salaam is the product of collaboration between the Institute of Resource Assessment and the Afrika-Studiecentrum. The specific objective of the research was to document the changing nature of land and labour allocation between different generations within rural households, with special emphasis on the evolution of non-agricultural labour activities.

The overall findings from the DARE programme are intended to provide insight into the processes of change which are moulding the livelihood prospects of African rural and urban dwellers of the next century. It is hoped that the knowledge gained may be useful for formulating more effective developmental policies to assist in short-circuiting Sub-Saharan Africa's current economic and political vulnerabilities.

Dr Deborah Fahy Bryceson  
DARE Programme Coordinator



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# **Changing Village Land, Labour and Livelihoods: Rungwe and Kyela Districts, Tanzania**

**Davis Mwamfupe  
Geography Department  
University of Dar es Salaam**

This paper presents the findings of a field study carried out in Rungwe and Kyela districts of Mbeya region as part of the Beyond the Shamba Research Project jointly undertaken by the Institute of Resource Assessment at the University of Dar es Salaam and the Afrika-Studiecentrum, University of Leiden. Rungwe and Kyela districts, located in south-western Tanzania and proximating to the Malawian and Zambian borders, have long been recognised for their great agricultural potential. Now, however, rural population densities have reached critical levels and villagers are experimenting with various non-agricultural activities alongside their agricultural work. The main objectives of the study were to examine the changing features of household control over resources such as land, labour and capital and to document the evolution of non-agricultural labour activities. Changing patterns of land and labour allocation between generations within rural households are explored in relation to these themes.

## **Background to the Study Districts**

Rungwe and Kyela originally formed the one district of Rungwe, covering nearly 4,728 square kilometres. It was subdivided into seven divisions: Unyakyusa, Ukukwe, Pakati, Bundali, Bulambya, Busokelo and Ntebela. Later, Rungwe district was subdivided into two. Unyakyusa and Ntebela divisions formed the present Kyela district and the rest formed Rungwe district. Physiographically the two districts are very distinct. Almost the whole of the district of Kyela consists of a lowland plain averaging 500 metres above sea level. Rungwe district by contrast is made up of a highland area (averaging 2500 metres) which finally rises into Rungwe Mountain, the third highest mountain in the country.

The two districts are well served by an all-weather tarmac road to the neighbouring country of Malawi. This road has boosted the economic growth of the two districts by stimulating local and cross-border trade.

During the 1988 population census the two districts had a total population of 406,607 (Rungwe 271,516, Kyela 135,091). In 1957 the two districts had a population of 271,287 which was largely concentrated in the eastern half of the district where volcanic soils supported a wide range of crops. In 1967 the population had increased to 359,971 (Luning and Sterkenburg 1970). On the basis of the 1967 population census, the population density was 83.8 per square kilometres (excluding forest reserves), compared with 11.6 per cent for

the region and 13.4 per cent for Tanzania as a whole (ibid). This is a clear indication that as early as the 1960s Rungwe and Kyela districts were areas with some of the highest population densities in the country.

### ***Ethnic Composition of the Population***

The largest tribal group in Rungwe and Kyela districts is the Nyakyusa who form nearly 95 per cent of the population. Only in the southern tip, along the shores of Lake Nyasa is there a small tribe called the Kisi. In Rungwe, there are also the Safwa who live in the northern parts of the district bordering Mbeya district.

### ***Economy***

Agriculture is the main economic activity of the people in Rungwe and Kyela districts. The main export crops produced in the two districts are coffee, tea and cardamom. Other crops such as rice, bananas, beans and maize are produced on small-scale peasant farms for local consumption.

There are a few privately-owned tea plantations and several tea-processing factories in Rungwe district. The Katumba and Mwakaleli tea factories are owned by the Tanzania Tea Authority (TTA) and the Musekela, Chivanjee, and Mwasoni factories are owned by private companies.

Trading in agricultural produce is also an economic activity which has been gaining in importance in recent years. A sizeable proportion of the population, particularly women, are engaged in trading rice and bananas. It is becoming such an important business that bananas are increasingly being grown for sale rather than for consumption, particularly in areas along the main tarmac road.

Fishing is another income-generating activity along the shores of Lake Nyasa. Fish is traded locally and virtually none is sold outside Kyela district. Along the same shores, the Kisi are engaged in pottery as their main economic activity.

Alongside crop cultivation people keep some livestock, particularly cattle and pigs. Until the 1970s the average number of livestock units was 2 - 3 per farm household, and cattle were kept for dowries and (ceremonial) home consumption (Luning and Sterkenburg 1971). With the growing scarcity of land and an increasing need for cash, there has been a significant change in the methods and reasons for keeping these animals, particularly cattle. Improved breeds of dairy cattle are being kept which are stall-fed due to the scarcity of grazing land.

Industrial activities in the two districts are minimal. Coal is mined on the banks of the Kiwira river in the Ilima hills in Rungwe district and from the Kyejo hills east of Tukuyu township. It is used in the few industries within the region as well as in neighbouring Iringa region.



### ***Agrarian History***

Rungwe and Kyela districts are richly endowed with many soil types and wide fluctuations both in rainfall and altitude, a heterogeneity of environments which allows a variety of crops: rice, tea, coffee, pyrethrum, maize, cocoa, cardamom, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, yams, groundnuts and citrus fruits. Tea was introduced as a cash crop for smallholder farmers in 1962. Coffee, oil palms, cashew nuts and cocoa were introduced by the colonial Ministry of Agriculture after the Second World War in order to provide diversification in the area's agricultural economy which was lopsidedly based on rice growing (Geisberger 1966).

Despite the importance of other crops, particularly the food crops today, the agrarian history of Rungwe district is to a large extent dominated by coffee growing. Over the last fifty years since its introduction it has transformed the economic life of the people in the district. Thanks to coffee they were able to build better houses, buy cars, and send their children to school. The first cooperative union in the then Southern Highlands (made up of what is now Mbeya, Iringa and part of Rukwa region) was that of coffee growers in Rungwe district.

### ***Historical Migratory Patterns***

The tradition of migration among the inhabitants of Rungwe and Kyela districts can be traced back to the 1930s (Luning and Sterkenburg 1971). Three historical migratory patterns are noted in the two districts. Initially in the pre-independence period the migratory pattern was marked by a flow of people to the south to Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa where they worked in the gold and copper mines. Other migrants moved within the country to Chunya for gold mining. This flow continued until independence in 1961. In the early years after independence, and due to a population increase, another wave of migrants surfaced.

Unlike the migratory pattern to the south which was male-dominated, this new wave of migration involved families. They moved to other areas of the region and outside Mbeya region seeking farmland. Their major destinations were Mbozi, for coffee farming, and the Usangu Plains where they started to grow rice and maize. However this migration was only seasonal and did not help alleviate the land scarcity problem. At the same time, another stream of migrants flocked from Mbeya region into urban areas searching for jobs, particularly to Dar es Salaam and later to regional centres. The recent out-migration from the two districts has, to a large extent, been prompted by the shortage of land in the area, as well as by the attractions of urban life.

Since land continues to be in short supply, people have turned to petty trade which involves travel outside their own regions although trading operations are still based in the villages within the district. This situation has been facilitated by better transportation systems in the region in general.

Villages in Rungwe and Kyela districts, as elsewhere in Tanzania, have been affected by the recent rural-urban migration. In these villages one can notice a set of 'push' and 'pull'

factors. One of the 'push factors' for out-migration has been the lack of employment opportunities in the villages which has encouraged youths in particular to migrate to urban areas in search of employment.

Second, rural life seems to offer few prospects for people who wish to set up their own business. Again, urban areas seem to provide a solution to this problem. In both villages, many of the youths interviewed had aspirations of moving to urban centres to establish their own trading businesses.

Third, the shortage of land was also mentioned as a 'push factor' in both villages. Few of the youths felt that agricultural activities, particularly banana growing, were financially worthwhile and, because of land shortages, it was necessary to find something else. A general reluctance by the youth to engage in agricultural activities was also observed and despite some youths owning land in the villages, there was still a strong desire to migrate. This has been attributed to the low returns from agricultural activities in recent years. The feeling among youths that their future does not lie in agricultural activities or in working the land anymore was encapsulated by one young man, Nasibu Bahati, aged 25, who remarked in Kyimo village:

My father had plenty of land and he farmed almost throughout his life, yet he died poor. Today, boys as young as 20 years have more money than my father accumulated in many years.

There seems to have been less migration to Mbeya town in recent years because the all-weather road makes it easy to commute on a daily basis. However, Dar es Salaam still remains the catchment area for these migrants. Those who do migrate long distances often return home more frequently now thanks to easy transport into the villages.

### ***Urbanisation***

Rungwe and Kyela districts are rural in character. Except for the two district administrative headquarters of Tukuyu and Kyela, the rest of the settlements consist of rural villages. Other settlements like Kiwira, Kyimo, Katumba, Ushirika and Usale, all of which lie along the Mbeya-Tanzania/Malawi border road, are growing into small townships, a situation prompted by booming trading activities. Other settlements are also growing into townships. These include Kandete (Mwakaleli) and Lwangwa in Rungwe district and Ipinda in Kyela district. All these townships have played a significant role in terms of being catchment points for rural migrants. Their growth has also been boosted by returnee migrants who have decided to settle in the centres instead of returning to their own rural villages. The major economic activity of the people in these growing centres is still agriculture although they are also centres for non-farm activities such as trading, bicycle repair, and others.

## **Kyimo and Ngonga Village Surveys**

Within the methodological framework of the Beyond the Shamba research project it was hypothesised that non-farm activities would be able to flourish better in villages with good transport connections. The two villages selected for the survey were chosen on the basis of their location on and off the road, Kyimo being an on-road village whereas Ngonga is situated well off the main road. The research methodology for this study is outlined in the Appendix and here it suffices to explain that during Phase I of the study survey questionnaires were administered to 640 and 680 individuals in Kyimo and Ngonga respectively to ascertain migration and work histories of the respondents. In Phase II a sub-sample of 32 people in each village was selected for in-depth interviewing about their working lives, asset accumulation/depletion and changing standard of living throughout their married lives. Nine families, representing poor, middle and well-to-do income strata were selected for open-ended interviews about their family's economic history.

### ***Village Location and Infrastructure***

#### ***Kyimo***

Kyimo village is located along the Tanzania-Malawi road about 10 kilometres north-west of Tukuyu town. It has an estimated area of 6 square kilometres and lies on the lower slopes of Mt Rungwe. Due to its altitude and proximity to Mt Rungwe, the village has a cool climate and receives a good deal of rainfall. The soils are mainly volcanic.

Kyimo village was founded in the 1940s by returnee labour migrants who had originally migrated to work in the South African and Zambian gold mines. The fame and prosperity that the village enjoys today is fairly recent and Kyimo village used to be overshadowed by Kiwira, a small trading centre north of this village on the Mbeya-Malawi road.

The rapid growth of Kyimo village is attributed to its strategic location. Kyimo village is also linked with other remote villages to its west following the upgrading of a road that connects it and Ileje district. These developments have boosted trading activities in the village. Second, the Prisons Department has established several social services in the village. These include a social hall, bar and restaurant, and a shop which have attracted people into the village. Third, in the nearby area there was a road construction camp (SOGEA) which provided a good market for food items produced in the village. Road construction provided employment opportunities for youths in the village and many acquired various technical skills (motor vehicle repairs, masonry, welding etc.) that they now apply in the village to earn a living. Kyimo village will soon grow into a small township because it acts as a hub providing services such as shopping, marketing of crops, transport, and milling machines for other nearby villages.

A number of social services which other villages in the district do not have are also available in Kyimo village. These include a dispensary, a primary school, a pharmacy shop, four tea-rooms, a guest house, a butcher, more than 10 shops, a small market and the

social/conference hall owned by the Prisons Department. The village also enjoys electricity and a system of piped water.

### *Ngonga*

Ngonga village is located about 10 kilometres south-west of Kyela town. It is a traditional village with almost all the people belonging to the Nyakyusa tribe. It started as a fishing and farming village on the northern shores of Lake Nyasa and in terms of structure and occupation has remained traditional with agriculture always being the main occupation of the people. Activities such as petty trading have only recently emerged.

Ngonga village has two primary schools. Itenya Primary School was established 1951 and has 320 pupils (173 boys and 157 girls) and Mota Primary School with 230 pupils (129 boys and 101 girls) opened in 1971. There is also one dispensary, set up in 1971, which provides services to other neighbouring villages as well. There are six small shops in which such consumer items as salt, soap and sugar are sold. These shops are overshadowed by the weekly Saturday market which draws people from all over the region as well as from Malawi. Other services available in the village include a milling machine, a pharmacy shop, village office, and a church.

In terms of accessibility, Ngonga village is quite remote, although there is a small road that leads from Kyela town to the Tanzania-Malawi border. This road passes through Ngonga village and is passable throughout the year, though at times during the wet season some sections are difficult to negotiate. Except on Saturdays when the weekly market is held, there is an average of at least one vehicle per day passing through or going into the village. The most common means of transport in the village itself is the bicycle due to the flat terrain of Kyela district as a whole.

### ***Demographic Characteristics of Respondents***

Of the 640 people interviewed in Kyimo village, 78.1 per cent were males and 21.9 per cent were females. The youngest respondent was aged 16 years and the oldest was 85 years old, giving an average of 35 years. In Ngonga village 680 people were interviewed of whom 61.7 per cent were males and 38.3 per cent were females. The youngest respondent was 16 years old and the oldest was 75 years old (Table 1).

**Table 1: Age Category of Respondents (Percentage)**

Age Category (years)	Kyimo	Ngonga
Under 20	16.6	12.7
21 - 30	30.5	33.2
31 - 40	21.0	22.7
41 - 50	14.7	13.2
51 - 60	8.1	9.1
61 - 70	4.8	7.7
Over 71	4.3	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

The majority of the sample population in Kyimo village were born within the same village. Table 2 shows that nearly two-thirds (63.8 per cent) of the people interviewed were born in Kyimo village. Another 28.6 per cent were born in other villages in Rungwe district, and 5.2 per cent were born in other districts of Mbeya region. Only 1.4 per cent were born in other regions. The fact that 28.6 per cent were born in other villages of Rungwe district indicates that there has been some movement of people from neighbouring villages into Kyimo village. In Ngonga village about 81 per cent of the respondents were born within the village. Only 15.3 per cent were born in other villages in the same district. There have been fewer in-migrants from other districts as indicated by the figure of 1.4 per cent. Both villages, however, have respondents who were born in other countries which is explained by the close proximity of Malawi and Zambia to the villages.

**Table 2: Birth Place of Respondents**

Birth Place	Kyimo	Ngonga
Within the same village	63.8	80.6
Other village in same district	28.6	15.3
Other district in same region	5.2	1.4
Other region	1.4	2.3
Other country	1.0	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

As explained in the Appendix on research methodology, almost 50 per cent of all the people interviewed were heads of households as follows:

**Table 3: Relationship of Survey Respondents to Head of Household**

Relation with HH Head	Kyimo	Ngonga
Head of household	41.9	47.0
Wife	21.0	26.8
Son/daughter	31.4	24.0
Uncle	0.5	0.6
Father	2.4	1.1
Others	2.9	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

### ***Educational Characteristics of Respondents***

The majority (67.5 per cent) of the respondents in Kyimo village had upper primary school education. Another 9.5 per cent had completed between one to four classes of school education. About 8 per cent had received secondary education and only 14.8 per cent had not attended school at all (Table 4). Such levels of education, considered to be higher than the national average, may be explained by the presence of a missionary centre in the foothills of the Rungwe mountains. Rungwe secondary and primary schools are among the oldest schools in the region. There is also a carpentry training centre in the area which was established by the Moravian Church of Tanzania. These establishments have contributed to the relatively high educational levels among the people in this district.

Almost 5 per cent of respondents had not attended school in Kyimo compared with 8 per cent in Ngonga. Seventeen per cent of respondents in both villages had attended lower primary school. Almost an equal percentage (69.8 per cent for Ngonga and 67.5 per cent for Kyimo village) had gained some upper primary school education. Only 4.5 per cent of the respondents in Ngonga village had attended secondary school compared to 8.2 per cent in Kyimo village.

**Table 4: Percentage of Respondents by School Classes Attended**

Level	Kyimo	Ngonga
Never attended school	14.8	8.1
Lower primary (years 1 - 4)	9.5	17.6
Upper primary education (years 5 - 8)	67.5	69.8
Secondary education (years 9 - 14)	8.2	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

A gender imbalance with regard to primary school education is noted in Ngonga village. Unlike Kyimo village where almost equal numbers of females and males attended primary school, in Ngonga village 43.2 per cent of the males achieved this level compared to 26.6 per cent of the females (Table 5). The same is noted for secondary school education in which 3.6 per cent of the males compared to only 0.9 per cent of the females reached this level.

**Table 5: Level of Education by Gender**

Level of Education	Kyimo			Ngonga		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Never attended school	5.2	9.5	14.7	4.1	4.1	8.1
Lower primary school	6.7	2.9	9.53	10.8	6.8	17.6
Upper primary school	35.2	33.8	69.0	43.2	26.6	69.5
Secondary school	4.3	2.4	6.7	3.6	0.9	4.5

Source: Field Survey 1995

### ***Village Economic Activities***

#### ***Kyimo Village***

The people living in Kyimo village are engaged in income-generating activities such as agriculture, petty trading, livestock keeping (dairy cows), and carpentry and masonry. Of these activities, agriculture is the main occupation for the majority (88.1 per cent). The remaining 11.9 per cent list another economic activity as their main occupation.

The major agricultural activity is the production of cash and food crops. Important crops grown in the village include bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes, tubers, coffee, vegetables, tea, and sugar cane. With the exception of tea, these crops are grown in mixtures with coffee and bananas being the most important crops grown together. Other crops grown in this way include maize, cassava and yams. Such combinations are prompted by problems of land shortages.

A closer look at the crops grown in the village reveals a substantial concentration on food

crops rather than on traditional crops such as tea and coffee. Except for bananas which are grown by 35.4 per cent, the rest of the food crops are grown by more than half of the farmers (Table 6). This is a clear indication of food security measures being taken by smallholder farmers. On the other hand, the decline in tea and coffee growing could be explained by the inefficient marketing system of such crops in Tanzania.

**Table 6: Percentage of Respondents by Crops Grown in Kyimo Village**

Crop	Percentage
Maize	94.2
Sweet potatoes	58.4
Bananas	35.4
Vegetables	69.0
Beans	68.3
Coffee	38.7
Tea	41.3

Source: Beyond the Shamba, Mbeya Region Field Survey 1995

In densely populated areas such as in Rungwe and Kyela districts, land rights tend to move more towards individualisation although they are generally considered communal. This is particularly the case for people cultivating permanent crops such as tea and coffee. With land shortages becoming increasingly acute it can be expected that many young farmers will stop growing these crops. Table 7 supports this idea.

**Table 7: Coffee Growing by Age Category in Kyimo Village**

Age Category (years)	Growing	Not growing	Total
Under 20	3.8	10.8	14.5
21 - 30	8.6	19.9	28.5
31 - 40	10.8	11.8	22.6
41 - 50	7.5	8.6	16.1
51 - 60	3.2	5.9	9.1
61 - 70	2.7	1.6	4.3
Over 71	2.2	2.7	4.8
Total	38.7	61.3	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995



Like coffee, tea is mainly grown by older people. Although respondents in the age category of 16 - 40 years formed 65.1 per cent of the sample only 24.8 per cent grew tea (Table 8). Again tea growing seems less common among young people. It is a labour-intensive crop demanding labour input throughout the year. In recent years the crop has been facing general neglect due to delays in payments by the Tanzania Tea Authority (TTA). While this may have had no immediate significant effect it is likely to compound other existing problems such as land shortages.

**Table 8: Tea Growing by Age Category in Kyimo Village**

Age Category (years)	Growing	Not growing	Total
Under 20	6.4	7.9	14.3
21 - 30	10.1	18.5	28.6
31 - 40	8.5	13.8	22.2
41 - 50	8.5	7.9	16.4
51 - 60	3.7	5.3	9.0
61 - 70	2.1	2.7	4.8
Over 71	2.1	2.7	4.8
Total	41.3	58.7	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

In addition to crop cultivation, people in Kyimo village keep some livestock albeit in small numbers. These animals include mostly cattle, goats and pigs. Although on average each household has at least one cow, the range is from zero to fifteen. Cattle appear to be the most common livestock kept in the village. Over one quarter (27 per cent) kept one or two cows and 6.8 per cent of the farmers kept one or two goats, and another 25.6 per cent of the farmers kept one or two pigs. The cattle in the village are both of the local (traditional) breed as well as the improved stock. This village is under the Small-Scale Dairy Development Project (SSDDP) which assists farmers with extension services.

Although the number of cattle in the village is very small compared with villages in agro-pastoral zones, for example Mwanza and Shinyanga regions, they are a symbol of wealth. In a study conducted by Besha (1992), a wealthy person in Kyimo village was one who owned 3-4 local cattle, or 1-2 dairy cattle in addition to other properties such as a shop, and two or more acres of a coffee farm.

Besides farming, people in Kyimo village also engage in a variety of non-farm activities. These include carpentry, weaving, knitting, drum making, shoe repairs, hair saloon, pulling carts, meat shops (butchery), shopkeeping, brewing, ironsmithing, kiosk/tea-room, food stalls, midwifery, bicycle repair, electronics, and traditional healing. Both the number and types of non-farm activities reflect the advantages of accessibility that this village enjoys with

respect to the district (Tukuyu) and regional (Mbeya) towns.

### *Ngonga*

The economic activities in the village are to a large extent affected by the climate and soil conditions, as well as their proximity to the Tanzania-Malawi border. The climate of the village is influenced by its low altitude and Lake Nyasa. Like most parts of Kyela district, Ngonga village is about 500 metres above sea level and has a humid tropical climate with mean daily temperatures of 25°C. In the wet season, temperatures range from 25°C to 32°C and in the dry season they range from 14°C to 25°C. The average annual precipitation is about 2,500 mm with much of this falling between November and June.

The soils in Ngonga village as described by Rombulow-Pearce and Kamasho (1982) are predominantly fluvial and poorly drained with a high clay content. Since the village is on the flood plain, the nature of the subsoil is influenced by frequent seasonal fluctuations of ground water levels. According to the villagers, these soils are fairly fertile, though soil fertility is declining fast because of the absence of a fallow period and low fertiliser input.

The main economic activities of the people in Ngonga village are farming, fishing and small-scale petty trading. Of these activities, crop cultivation is the most important both in terms of occupation and as a source of food. The farms are small, ranging from less than 0.5 acres to 8 acres. Farmland occupies about 1,250 hectares with an average farm size of 5 hectares. Most are rice farms since rice is the main food and cash crop in the area. It is grown by 98.2 per cent of the people. Using the Kyela district average, about 44 per cent of household land is allocated to rice. Other crops are grown, for example bananas, cassava, sweet potatoes, cocoa, beans, groundnuts, oil palms, cashew nuts, mangoes and citrus fruits. Unlike these other crops which are grown on mixed stands, rice is cultivated as a monocrop and its land requirement is significant.

**Table 9: Crop Production by Survey Respondents in Ngonga Village**

Crop	% of Survey Respondents
Rice	98.2
Maize	95.1
Cassava	89.2
Irish potatoes	7.2
Sweet potatoes	85.6
Groundnuts	15.8
Bananas	6.8
Beans	11.7
Cocoa	47.8
Vegetables	8.6
Cardamom	4.5

Source: Field Survey 1995

Cocoa is a relatively recent crop in Ngonga village and Kyela district in general. Whereas coffee production is not popular among youths in Ngonga, cocoa is grown by a relatively higher percentage of youths aged between 16 - 30 years.

**Table 10: Cocoa Growing by Age Category in Ngonga Village**

Age Category (years)	Growing	Not growing	Total
Under 20	5.5	7.3	12.7
21 - 30	15.9	17.3	33.2
31 - 40	10.5	12.3	22.7
41 - 50	5.9	7.3	13.2
51 - 60	2.7	2.7	5.5
61 - 70	6.4	5.0	11.4
Over 71	0.9	0.5	1.4
Total	47.7	52.3	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

Despite the growth in petty trading, an overwhelming majority of the people in Ngonga village still depend on agriculture for their livelihood. For example, 99.5 per cent of the people mention agricultural activities as their main occupation. There is less diversification of economic activities in Ngonga village than in Kyimo village in Rungwe district.

The livestock in Ngonga village in 1995 included cattle (1,600), pigs (2,100), sheep (24), goats (30) and poultry (6,300). These are indigenous types and it is estimated that they produce some 3,650 tonnes of manure per annum which is used on farms. The animals are kept primarily for food and cash. Like agriculture, the livestock sector is facing a serious problem of scarcity of grazing land. As a result there has been a rapid decline in numbers of livestock, and although efforts have been made by extension officers to encourage farmers to keep the improved breeds of cattle, it seems that there has been little success so far. The people's preference is still for the local breed. According to one farmer, the traditional breed of cattle is more resistant to weather and diseases, but needs a wider area of grazing.

### ***Diminishing Agricultural Prospects***

Farming activities in Tanzania rely mostly on land and labour as the main factors in production. An over-reliance on these factors is necessitated by the low level of agricultural technology which is further compounded by low levels of capital investment. Thus, land and labour as factors of production play an important role in the economic life of farmers. The farmers in Rungwe and Kyela districts voiced their concern over the problems of supply of land and labour and, needless to say, capital for their agricultural activities.

Farmers in both villages identified land, labour and capital as missing factors in agricultural production in their respective villages. Farmers in Kyimo village acknowledged the need for capital in agricultural production. The majority (85.8 per cent) mentioned capital to be one of the missing factors of production. Invariably, all respondents in Kyimo village said capital was not present. In Ngonga village about 97 per cent of the respondents said they had no capital to improve their economic activities.

In Kyimo village, land was identified as a missing factor of production by 75 per cent of the respondents (Table 11). The problem of land was even more acute in Ngonga village where 90 per cent of the respondents said land was a missing factor of production (Table 12).

**Table 11: Missing Factors of Production in Kyimo Village**

	Land	Labour	Capital
Seen as a problem	75	70	86
Not seen as a problem	25	30	14
Total	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey 1995

**Table 12: Missing Factors of Production in Ngonga Village**

	Land	Labour	Capital
Seen as a problem	90.1	41.7	85.0
Not seen as a problem	9.9	58.3	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

Three-quarters of the farmers in Kyimo village felt that land was scarce in their village. This problem seems more serious in Ngonga village where 80 per cent of the respondents said they were facing the problem of a shortage of land. Other farmers (17.3 per cent) in Kyimo village and (16.2 per cent) in Ngonga village argued that soil fertility was declining. Regarding the first point, other farmers (9.7 per cent in Kyimo village and 2.16 per cent in Ngonga village) noted the problem of accessibility to land in the village (Table 13). The traditional inheritance rules favour male offspring in inheriting property, especially land. Furthermore, not all males inherit land as it is usually the oldest male in the family who receives more land. The problem of land was summed up by one farmer who commented that: 'The little land we have has also lost fertility'. Indeed, it is more than the physical size of the land which is problematic, its quality and accessibility present major problems in agricultural production.

**Table 13: Land as a Missing Factor of Production**

Reasons	Kyimo	Ngonga
Scarcity of land	73.1	80.0
Declining soil fertility	17.3	16.2
Farm fragmentation among children	9.7	2.2
Others	-	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

Another missing factor of production that 70 per cent of respondents in Kyimo village mentioned was labour. Table 14 shows that in Ngonga village 41.7 per cent said labour was a problem. Of those who mentioned labour to be a problem in Kyimo village 40 per cent said it was due to old age. There seems to be a breakdown in the traditional value placed on working parties. Everybody is busy with his/her own work. This is reflected in Table 14 which indicates that 22.5 per cent of the respondents in Kyimo village argued that labour was a missing factor of production because of lack of cooperation among relatives. Fewer people (1 per cent) in Ngonga village acknowledged this problem. 'Children are now self-reliant' was

identified as one of the explanations for the shortage of labour. People are turning away from agricultural work to other income-generating activities. School children used to help parents in farm work, but today it appears more important that they attend school (5 per cent) as well as involving themselves in petty commodity trading within their villages. One village elder said: 'School children used to assist in farm work after school hours, but today they dislike agriculture and are increasingly being drawn into trading activities'.

**Table 14: Labour as a Missing Factor of Production**

Factors	Kyimo	Ngonga
Due to old age	40.0	47.7
No oxen for ploughing	27.5	18.2
Poor health	2.5	19.3
Children now self-reliant	2.5	-
Children in school	5.0	-
No cooperation from relatives	22.5	1.1
Others	-	13.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

As in other Third World farming communities, land and labour remain the most important factors of agricultural production to such an extent that once they are missing, farmers find themselves locked in a vicious cycle of poverty. With little land to work on, very little is realised, and hence little or no capital is accumulated. With little or no capital to substitute for the labour shortage, again little is produced.

The local economy, at least at the household level, was until the late 1980s centred on the production of coffee, tea, rice and later bananas. Agriculture has been an important economic activity which provided food for the household. Cash income for building houses, education and other necessities came from agricultural activities. Thus, an economically successful household was one which had good harvests of traditional crops such as tea, coffee and rice. With this came social status.

The land on which these important crops were grown became an valuable asset, which partly explains the strict adherence to inheritance rules among family members. But as the population continued to grow, land became scarcer and people had to move out in search of other economic activities. Those who migrated continued to finance agricultural activities through cash remittances and in this way agriculture has continued to dominate the local economy of many households in these two districts.

Formerly, there were relatively few activities other than farming which were significant in the household economy although for some families cash remittances from migrants provided

an important contribution to household income. Such remittances were usually in the form of cash and material goods especially consumer goods like sugar, salt and soap.

Of late, agriculture has been facing deep-seated problems. Due to inflation and the subsequent rise in the price of farm inputs, the costs of production are high. Crops are not as profitable as they used to be a few years ago and there has been a general decline in local economies due to falling agriculture. The growth of a wide range of crops as a strategy to diversify the economy has not taken away the uncertainty. For many farmers, agriculture, and in particular production for the state-controlled markets, is risky.

At the same time trade liberalisation has contributed to an increase in the price of many consumer items that used to be obtained through the sale of agricultural products. As a result there has been a need to seek alternative sources of cash income. Trade liberalisation appears to have accelerated the withdrawal of labour from agricultural production but not to have provided displaced farmers with urban livelihood options. Instead, there is a marked tendency for people to shift to non-farm activities within the village.

### **Changing Household Composition and Structure**

Throughout history, the Nyakyusa household structure has been well known for its large size and by its inclusion of extended members of the family. In this patrimonial society the household was usually headed by the husband and made up of a husband and wife, their children and other members of the extended family, i.e. the parents of the reproductive couple (especially when they are too old to work and live by themselves), adopted children and other close relatives. A Nyakyusa household usually had as many as eight or even ten members living together. Polygamy helped to contribute to the size of these households. When one of the wives died or was divorced, her children were automatically brought up by the surviving wife.

Large households were considered to be an asset, particularly in the provision of labour, on which the local economy heavily depended. The lack of centralised chiefdoms, as was the case with the Hehe, Sukuma and Nyamwezi, contributed to the strong clan ties. Members within the clan maintained very close links as evidenced in the taking of joint decisions regarding the amount of dowry to be paid to a clan member's daughter, the sharing of the dowry, and the ways in which members helped one another during labour bottlenecks in farming. It was on the basis of maintaining strong clan ties that the rules of Nyakyusa inheritance were anchored. Upon the death of one family member, the rest of the clan would not want to see the disintegration of the deceased's family. This structure was maintained by the fact that almost all members depended on agricultural activities as an occupation and a major source of food and cash income. The very nature of the economy helped to keep families together.

In recent decades a gradual change has taken place in Nyakyusa household structure, which is undermining the strength of the extended family. With the disappearance of various

inheritance rules (inheriting widows for example) an increase in the proportion of female-headed households has emerged. It is not unusual now to find smaller households of four to six members comprising husband and wife together with their own children. This is further supported by the general view of interviewees who prefer smaller households that are easier to manage.

Both internal and external forces have necessitated these changes. Under conditions of growing land scarcity, household farms can no longer sustain large numbers of people, which has resulted in the out-migration of adult children. This process has been further facilitated by opportunities in non-farm activities which are mushrooming in both rural and urban areas.

In conjunction with observed changes in household structure, several tendencies are emerging in rural work conditions. First, there has been a decline in the importance of agricultural activities as the main provider of cash income. This has been caused partly by a rise in the costs of production which have in turn resulted in the reduced productivity of agricultural crops. Second, with the increase in population, land has become scarce and its continuous use without replenishment has contributed to a decline in soil fertility. Third, the integration of the local economy based on agriculture into the world economy has had adverse effects on the agricultural sector. A combination of all these factors makes agriculture no longer the binding force for households that it once was.

In seeking alternative means of survival, many household members are now engaging in non-farm activities. With the emergence of more types of economic activities, there has been a further change in the structure of the household. Essentially one notes an increasing trend towards individualistic tendencies.

## **Non-Farm Activities**

### ***Changing Incidence and Types of Non-Farm Activities***

Non-farm activities (NFAs) in the study villages and certainly elsewhere in the two districts have existed alongside agricultural activities for a long time. Many non-farm activities of the past were provided to the community as a service. Only a few individuals if any pursued non-farm activities as an occupation in their own right. Farming activities were the main source of livelihood for the majority of the population. However, with the expanding cash economy, other activities have developed to take advantage of the cash flows generated through agriculture and remittances in these villages.

Non-farm activities in Kyela and Rungwe districts have existed alongside agricultural activities for a long time. In Rungwe district for example, Hekken and van Velzen (1970) noted that a large proportion of the population around Kyimo village was working on the neighbouring tea plantations, while a number found employment as officials or in trade. Together, these households formed 37 per cent of the total. In most cases these people were also part-time farmers.

In recent years the scale and types of non-farm activities have changed in terms of purpose



of operation, scale, number, allocation of labour, and the proportion of households engaged in non-farm activities. Due to the growing cash economy in rural areas people feel they need extra sources of cash income besides agriculture. As a result of changes in economic policies, they cannot wholly depend on agriculture as a source of cash income despite its increased commercialisation. Villagers who were engaged in non-farm activities such as traditional healing and midwifery by providing services to the community have now commercialised them. As a result of these changes, the proportion of households engaged in non-farm activities has also increased to the extent that every household in the two villages is engaged in some sort of non-farm activity.

There are various types of non-farm activities in the two districts which fall into three broad categories: those dealing with production, those providing services, and those which deal mostly with the exchange process.

Category	Types of Non-Farm Activity
Productive	carpentry, weaving, knitting, ironsmithing, brewing (local beer)
Commercial Exchange	shopkeeping, meat shops, food stalls, kiosks/tea-rooms
Services	pharmacy, midwifery, bicycle repair, electronics, traditional healing, shoe repair, hair saloon, cart-pulling, tailoring

Source: Field Survey 1995

Some non-farm activities such as petty commodity trading have been established recently as a result of the trade liberalisation policies. In Ngonga village, trading activities between Tanzania and Malawi have been on the increase. A few people retrenched from urban areas have invested in non-farm activities in Kyimo village.

The growing importance of non-farm activities in the two villages has led to an increased division of labour to the extent that for some households these have become their full-time occupations. Despite the changing incidence of non-farm activities, the majority of villagers in Rungwe and Kyela districts still have agriculture as their main economic activity and occupation.

### ***Significance of Non-Farm Activities***

Scarcity of land due to high population density, and inheritance rules forbidding women from inheriting land are the two most important factors which have forced people into non-farm

activities. Most of the women and young males complained of the difficulties in obtaining land in the villages. With no land on which to grow crops, most youths resort to non-farm activities. Surprisingly, very few of these youths wanted to farm even if land was available. This means that lack of access to land is by no means the major reason. Perhaps it is true that most of these youths want 'quick money' and they believe that agriculture cannot provide it. In recent years the performance of agriculture in virtually the whole country has been very disappointing. Most farmers in the study villages feel that production costs for their crops have risen beyond the reach of an ordinary farmer. With inflation, farmers benefit very little from the sale of their crops. This situation has tended to affect more those areas growing traditional cash crops (tea and coffee) which cannot be easily replaced with more profitable ones. Mr Mwakatumbula of Kyimo village commented: 'From the 1940s until the 1960s coffee and tea gave us *all* the money we needed for school fees, building houses, and even to buy cars and sugar. Today, money from these crops is not even enough to buy food items.'

Various reasons for involvement in non-farm activities were given by respondents in both Kyimo and Ngonga villages. These reasons ranged from those related to income generation to occupational interests. Besides scarcity of land and the poor performance of agriculture, there is a whole range of factors some of which are not at all related to problems in the agricultural sector. For example, some respondents argued that they have an interest in certain activities, others said they wanted to be self-employed, yet others claimed that they had experience in these activities. These are people who actually practice agriculture as their main economic activity. The reasons given for involvement in non-farm activities include:

- Help in raising cash income
- Income from farming is not enough
- Inherited from parents
- Does not like farming
- Wants to be self-employed
- Has experience in the activity
- Land for cultivation is not enough
- Uses free time from agriculture
- There is a good market in the village
- Has an interest in the activity
- Helps finance agriculture
- Cannot farm due to illness

### ***Education and Training***

Rungwe and Kyela districts used to be important sources for migrant labour during the colonial period when people left to work in the Chunya gold mines and even went to South Africa and Zimbabwe to work in the mines. Other migrant labourers were employed on Mbozi coffee

farms and in Tabora working on tobacco farms. Apart from these migrants others later went onto the Usangu Plains to start farming there.

This migration pattern contributed to the growth of non-farm activities in the two districts. The migrants gained certain skills while working outside the district which they used to establish non-farm activities upon their return. These included, for example, carpentry, brick laying and mechanical works. A number of respondents in Kyimo village attributed their skills to the kinds of work they had undertaken outside their home villages. The other way in which these migrations have contributed to the growth of non-farm activities is through remittances. It is difficult to quantify but several people interviewed used cash remittances to establish non-farm activities.

The majority of the operators of village enterprises now have primary school education and very few have secondary school education or any sort of on-the-job training. This reflects the generally low educational level of the area. Most operators felt that the nature of the activities they were doing did not demand high-level skills. It was further argued that these activities were very seasonal and that they were small-scale activities that did not need any investment in training. Nevertheless, some other operators felt they needed more skills for the kind of work they were doing. This was mostly the case with carpenters. Many people in Kyimo village who are doing carpentry acquired their skills from the trade school set up by the Germans near the Rungwe Mission.

**Table 15: Education of NFA Operators**

Level of Education	Percentage
Primary school	73.9
Secondary school	8.7
Formal training	17.4
Total	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

**Table 16: Hired Labour in Non-Farm Activities**

No. of Hired Labourers	Percentage
0	74.0
1	17.4
2	4.3
3	4.3
Total	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

### *Duration and Scale of Non-Farm Activities*

The length of time that non-farm activities operate in the two districts differs significantly depending on the scale of the operation and the age of the operators/owners. Those activities which are service-oriented like carpentry, traditional healing and midwifery tend to last longer because their operators have accumulated experience over the years and these activities provide their source of livelihood. However, other activities are seasonal and at times compete for labour with activities like farming.

Many other non-farm activities have a duration of one to three years, or even less. These tend to be owned by the younger generation and the reasons for their short life span are several. First, most of these activities are small-scale and decline with a fall in capital. Second, some of the non-farm activities are facing competition for markets within the localities. Third, these non-farm activities may also be affected when their owners change residence. This is the case for most youths who are yet to establish a permanent residence. Fourth, some activities are established as stepping stones to other more profitable ones. When owners have accumulated enough capital they tend to abandon them in favour of other activities.

The majority of village enterprises in both villages are operated by their owners. Hired labour is almost non-existent except in a few specialised activities like operating a milling machine, running a tea-room or restaurant, and carpentry. The reason is that most of these activities are small-scale operations established with very little capital input. They are therefore basically household enterprises.

### *Local Factors Contributing to the Growth of Non-Farm Activities*

The location of the study villages has contributed immensely to the growth of NFAs although they have very different locational advantages. Kyimo village in Rungwe district is a roadside village and enjoys quite good transport facilities. It is accessible both to the district headquarters as well as Mbeya town. This has allowed people to commute to both places and has tended to stimulate the development of non-agricultural activities particularly trading activities. Travelling has been made relatively simple. It takes only one hour for a bus to get to

Mbeya and an hour to get to the Malawi-Tanzania border. Trading activities (mainly in consumer items) seem to have benefited most. Another all-weather upgraded road connects the village with Ileje district to the west allowing Kyimo to enjoy its accessibility.

Kyimo village is surrounded by an agriculturally productive hinterland. The village acts as a collecting or marketing centre for various agricultural produce. This situation has boosted the economy of the area and as such has brought about the need to diversify from agriculture in order to provide services to the surrounding villages. In more recent years the establishment of a social hall, bar and restaurant by the Prisons Department has attracted people from neighbouring villages thus creating a demand for goods and services available in the village.

Kyimo village, apart from being served by an all-weather road has a better infrastructure than Ngonga. The most important feature is electricity which has allowed the growth of electronic activities in the village including radio repairs and the operation of film/video shows. Motor mechanics are able to use electricity in their businesses although it is yet to be used for carpentry work.

In Ngonga village, those engaged in non-farm activities benefit from trading activities between Tanzania and Malawi. The weekly market draws people from the whole region and from across the border in Malawi. The villagers sell their local beer, food, some handicraft products and a far larger array of cheap Asian imports of cloth, toiletries and small tools.

During the months from July to October, there is less farm work in the district. This is the post-harvest period for rice and also the time that local dance competitions are held in the area. Again, such occasions draw large numbers of people, even from Malawi, and provide a good market for products and services offered by villagers in Ngonga. It is significant that in this village a substantial number of the non-farm activities are seasonal. Alongside the growth of this trade, other non-farm activities have developed too. Here, the main form of transport is the bicycle which has given rise to repair services as a form of income to some people. The market, which draws a huge crowd of people, also acts as a good vending point for goods produced in this village.

The growth of NFAs in the two districts has also been assisted by the large population which provides a market for whatever goods are produced in the area and the strong local economy. Most of the NFAs in the two districts are in one way or another connected with the agricultural sector, either as a source of capital, or as a fall-back activity. Several farmers in Kyimo said they had obtained their NFA capital from agriculture. Although the performance of the agricultural sector at a national level has not been good in recent years, particularly in traditional cash crops like tea and coffee, Mbeya region has had the advantage of having a wider range of crops which has cushioned the people from the poor national economic situation. While coffee and tea prices have decreased, bananas and more recently cocoa sales have expanded to take a prominent position in trade. This situation has boosted the growth of NFAs by providing capital for the establishment of further NFAs in the area.

Trade liberalisation and changes in economic policies have been important in the

establishment of non-farm activities in two ways. First, restrictions on trading have been lifted and the licensing of these activities made easier. This has been a boost for trading activities, but especially for small-scale ones. Items are now available on the market thus creating the need for cash to buy them. More important however, is the commercialisation of agriculture. Due to a rise in the price of farm inputs, incomes from agricultural goods have gone down and people have diversified into NFAs as an extra source of income. The monetisation of labour has also been important in recent years because the sale of agricultural labour has become part of the survival strategies of the people.

### **Occupational Preferences**

The majority of the respondents in the study villages are farmers who in one way or another depend on farming for their livelihood. In terms of preference, however, it is noted that villagers differ in their occupational preferences with the majority preferring to engage in a combination of agricultural activities and non-agricultural activities (in Kyimo village it was 70 per cent and 52 per cent in Ngonga village).

**Table 17: Occupational Preferences**

Occupational Preference	Kyimo	Ngonga
Agricultural and non-agricultural activities	70.0	52.3
Agricultural activities alone	25.0	37.9
Non-agricultural activities alone	5.0	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

Table 18 reveals that matters of family security are most important in the preference of both agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Another reason for the preference of both agricultural and non-agricultural activities was the prospect of gaining skills and income (12.8 per cent in Kyimo village and 5.8 per cent in Ngonga village). A combination of these activities was considered to offer a better future to 3.9 per cent and 11.54 per cent of the respondents in Kyimo and Ngonga villages respectively. Other reasons mentioned for the preference of a combination of activities include the need to increase capital for the family, self-reliance, and economic advancement. In Ngonga village, specialisation in either activity was considered as risking a livelihood.

**Table 18: Reasons for Preferring Both Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Activities**

Reason	Kyimo	Ngonga
Gain skills and income	12.8	5.8
Ensure family security	65.7	70.2
For a better future	3.9	11.5
Increase capital for family	6.9	1.0
For self-reliance	2.9	1.8
Economic advancement	5.9	1.0
Reduce cost of living		7.7
Other reasons	1.9	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

Twenty-five per cent of respondents in Kyimo compared with about 38 per cent in Ngonga village preferred to pursue agricultural activities alone (Table 19).

**Table 19: Reasons for Preference of Agricultural Activities Alone**

Reason	Kyimo	Ngonga
Most secure way of managing life	68.5	50.6
Too old to start NFA	8.2	6.2
No capital to start NFA	9.6	9.9
Does not have required skills	1.4	-
Does not like other activities	2.7	-
Most secure source of food	5.5	22.2
More used to agricultural activities	1.4	-
Other reasons	2.7	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 1995

There are several reasons why agricultural activities alone are preferred by a minority of villagers. More than half of the respondents (68 per cent) in both villages consider agricultural activities to be the most secure way of managing life. Related to this is the importance of agriculture in the provisioning of food. In Kyimo village, only 5.8 per cent of the respondents preferred agricultural activities because they offer a degree of food security. Other respondents in the same village preferred agricultural activities alone because either they were too old to establish non-agricultural activities (8 per cent) or had no capital for their establishment (10 per

cent) (Table 19). In Ngonga village, food security was identified as the second main reason for the preference of agricultural activities alone. However, only 6 per cent in Kyimo village believed that agriculture was the most secure source of food.

The other reason for the preference of agricultural activities alone relates to capital. Nearly 10 per cent of the respondents in both villages said they had no capital with which to establish NFAs. Other respondents, 8 per cent in Kyimo village and 6 per cent in Ngonga village, said they were too old to embark on NFAs. Many other reasons were given for the preference of agricultural activities alone. These include the lack of required skills to perform NFAs (1.4 per cent in Kyimo) and the dislike of NFAs (2.7 per cent). Other respondents (1.4 per cent) in Kyimo village said they were so used to agricultural activities that they wanted to specialise in them and not embark on new ways of generating income.

On average less than 4.2 per cent of the respondents in the two villages wanted to perform non-farm activities alone. The difference albeit small between the two villages could be explained by the fact that Kyimo has better transport communications and a better educated population than Ngonga. There are more people in the former village who believe they can successfully undertake non-farm activities alone.

In both villages a variety of reasons were given for the preference of NFAs alone. In Kyimo village about 29 per cent of this group felt they had enough experience in non-farm activities to secure a sufficient non-farm livelihood. In Ngonga village on the other hand, nearly 21 per cent attributed their preference to a shortage of farmland. Another 21 per cent were of the view that agriculture is not profitable at least as far as income generation is concerned.

### ***Non-Farm Activities and Social Status***

Both of these villages evolved as farming villages where an individual's social status was measured by success in agriculture. Among the older generation it has remained so. Social and economic achievements can be attributed to agriculture. Specialists like traditional healers, midwives, traditional dancers, and others specialising in handicrafts have gained respect for the *services* they have provided to the community.

Only a few successful operators of non-farm activities have gained respect. These are mostly people who own shops and milling machines. Otherwise operators of non-farm activities such as brewing or long-distance trading, particularly women, are caught in a moral dilemma. They are treated with less respect even though they may be making good profits as revealed in an interview with a 42-year-old woman in Kyimo.

I was married for 10 years to a man who had a good job in Mbeya town, and life was generally good. In 1990 he was retrenched and we had to come back to this village where we had built a small house. Life in the village became increasingly difficult because we did not have any source of income. Then I started some trading activities (selling bananas in the market) but I found this very difficult because I was not



used to it, and everyone was laughing at me. Later on I started making local beer but my husband and my parents were not happy with this business, therefore, I had to do it secretly through a friend.

In 1994 we divorced and I am now living with our 4 children. My parents sympathise with me but they are not happy at all to see me in the beer business. They are devout Christians. But again I have to do it to assure a better life for my children.

The moral dilemma in which this woman finds herself is not a unique case. Many young girls state their intention not to venture into such business because their parents disapprove of it, but they soon change their minds when the pressing need for cash presents itself.

### **Conclusions**

1. There has been a change in the structure of non-farm activities in the two districts. Non-farm activities which were carried out as a service to the community have become commercialised.
2. Non-farm activities in Rungwe and Kyela districts have grown in number and, because of the wide and strong agricultural base in the area, agriculture remains very important in terms of providing capital and as a fall-back activity. Income realised from agricultural activities gives farmers strong purchasing power. Agriculture also provides items for sale such as bananas and maize.
3. The infrastructural and locational advantages are determining factors in the growth of non-farm activities in Mbeya region. Villages with facilities like electricity and easy accessibility to urban centres have more opportunities for developing a wider range of non-farm activities. Location is important in the development of all non-farm activities, but especially in trading.
4. The development of non-farm activities in Mbeya has been partly due to limited access to land. There are some members of the rural population (e.g. the youth) who have never been farmers in their own right because they have never owned land, so to them, involvement in non-farm activities is a necessity.
5. Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have contributed to the growth of non-farm activities by allowing people more freedom to perform a variety of activities. Licensing procedures for various trades are less strict than 10 years ago.
6. Although social status is more easily gained from being a farmer, successful operators of non-farm activities are acquiring the same status, i.e. non-farm activities are increasingly becoming recognised as a way of life and as income-generating activities.

7. Non-farm activities in Mbeya region are not undertaken only by poor households, for whom they become survival strategies. Relatively rich households also practice non-farm activities as a way of diversifying their livelihoods.
8. Migration waves over the years have contributed to the growth of non-farm activities in the study area in different ways. Some of the early out-migrants, especially those who went to the gold mines in South Africa and Zimbabwe, acquired experience which they later used in establishing non-farm activities when they returned to their home villages. Upon their return some 'returned to the land'. The recent out-migrants, who tend to be better educated and others looking for non-farm jobs in urban areas have contributed capital for the establishment of non-farm activities in their home villages. Capital acquired from these urban areas may not be enough to sustain a family, so it is brought to rural areas for investment in non-farm activities. Both types of migrants still regard their rural village as their 'home'.
10. Petty trading is seen as the most important NFA in the study areas by most respondents, providing a link between rural and urban areas. The trading items include crops and other consumer goods.
11. Most non-farm activities operated by the younger generation are short-lived because the operators have no capital or have not settled. These non-farm activities are established as stepping stones to other more profitable activities.
12. Relatively rich households with more access to capital seem to have more non-farm activities than poorer households.
13. The study confirms earlier research findings e.g. Kagubila (1993) that Nyakyusa women are growing economically stronger. This change has largely been due to their involvement in non-farm activities like trading bananas and making alcohol.
14. Despite the rapid growth of non-farm activities, agriculture is still the most important economic activity for the majority of the people in the study area.
15. Non-farm activities contribute to the household economy in terms of providing cash income, food and other necessities.
16. Non-farm activities in Rungwe and Kyela districts are growing into a service economy for the area.

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## **Appendix**

### **Village Research Methodology**

#### **Sample Villages**

After visiting 10 villages in each district, two villages were chosen according to the criterion set, one off-road and one on-road village. In Kyela district the villages visited were Lugombo, Mwaya, Ikolo, Ngonga, Makwale, Itenya, Bujonde, Itunge, Ngana and Talatala. The choice was difficult because during the time of the pilot study in April the area suffered heavy rainfall and some villages were not accessible and could not be considered for inclusion in the sample survey. Ngonga was chosen as a representative village because of its remoteness off the main road to Malawi.

In Rungwe district the 10 villages visited were Kikota, Ntokesya, Kyimo, Katabe, Syukula, Isange, Ndola, Masebe, Nditu, and Kanyebele. In this district Kyimo village, located along the Mbeya-Malawi road, was chosen for the study because it was on the main road to Malawi.

#### **Sample Size**

Early plans had targeted 800 respondents from each village. However due to logistical problems and time constraints it was not possible to interview as many people because the questionnaire was found to be longer than anticipated and so the sample size was reduced to 640 in Kyimo and 680 in Ngonga village. Such a sample was still considered representative enough to draw conclusions on the villages under study.

#### **Recruitment and Training of Enumerators**

Four research assistants were proposed for each village. However, circumstances forced a change in this plan.

In Kyimo village a total of seven assistants were initially recruited and of these, five were selected after a rigorous screening exercise. It took three days to train these assistants. Day 1 was used to collect background information on the assistants, especially their experience in soliciting information from people. Time was also spent explaining the background of the research work. Day 2 was spent explaining the questionnaire, question by question. On the third day each enumerator was given two questionnaires to administer. The choice of candidate was based on their performance, which was reflected in the trial questionnaires.

In Ngonga village of Kyela district it was not possible to get good enumerators, as had previously been hoped. Even choosing a few from among the many youth who thought this work offered a fortune was not an easy task. A compromise was then sought to employ eight enumerators for the work. Initially nine candidates volunteered for the job but one was not selected and even from this group it was not easy to choose the best. As in Kyimo village the

successful candidates were chosen according to their experience and performance with trial questionnaires.

### ***Enumerators' Experience***

Of the eight enumerators in Ngonga village, seven were secondary school leavers (Form 4) and, of these, five were primary school teachers and had some experience in administering questionnaires. Teachers were preferred to other groups because the nature of their work brings them into direct contact with people in the villages much more easily.

In Kyimo village there were better enumerators than in Ngonga. Out of the five enumerators, two were primary school teachers who had completed secondary school education and the remaining three had completed their Advanced Level Secondary School education (Form 6).

### **Methodological Problems**

This was to be a very difficult place to work. A number of methodological problems were encountered and the choice of two villages from two districts created some logistical problems. Having to deal with two district administrations was not easy, and a lot of valuable time was wasted in this area. The differences between the two villages were in many respects very striking and this is clearly reflected in the nature of the non-farm activities under study.

A study of this nature requires a vast amount of data and a sample of 800 people is large and difficult to administer. In retrospect, 400 respondents would have given the same results.

Concepts like household, income, and occupation were not very readily understood by many respondents. The concept of 'household' is difficult for a polygamous husband to comprehend and 'occupation' is often understood to mean only wage employment.

In Ngonga it was not easy to solicit information from many of the people, interviews were conducted with difficulty and often respondents abandoned the interview sessions whenever they felt inclined to do so. This was certainly the case with male respondents, but on the other hand, finding female respondents was difficult because many women were busy with farm work and there was also a general reluctance to speak voluntarily.

One other problem encountered halfway through the survey was that word had spread as to the type of information being asked and people seemed to have well-made answers ready in advance which did not always seem correct.

It had been planned that, within the sample, all household members aged 16 years and over would be interviewed during Phase I. This was difficult to achieve because in many cases heads of households (usually husbands) were not happy with the situation. At most they would allow their wives to be interviewed in their presence but they did not encourage interviews with other household members perhaps fearing that these members would give contradictory information. This explains the bias towards heads of households forming the majority of respondents.



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