

THE APPLICATION OF BRITISH INDIRECT RULE IN THE KUMBA DIVISION: A DECOLONIAL ASSESSMENT 1916-1961

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts an evaluation of British administration in Kumba Division during the periods of the Mandate and Trusteeship. The adoption of the policy of indirect rule was intended to involve the people in the administration of their division with a view to quicken their development in all spheres of human endeavour. The study shows that while this was a lofty idea, it never operated in the interest of the people as there was total neglect in the provision of basic social services like health and education. This accounted for the relatively underdeveloped nature of the division before and after independence despite the fact that Kumba Division was one of the wealthiest divisions. I have used archival materials and some secondary sources to establish this analysis.

INTRODUCTION

As contemporary Africans trying to understand the long-term significance of current events in Africa with the whirlwind pace of change, the layers of colonialism, the fragmentations of cultures and the multiplicity of administrative systems, we have a concern not only to understand how the contemporary situations have come to be¹, but also the need to explore such fundamental issues that justified their being. The encounter between Africa and Europe became imperial and colonial in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries². This contact and the subsequent subjugation of Africa to colonial rule was fuelled by the developments in the Age of Enlightenment.³ Apart from officialising the European invasion of foreign territories⁴,

¹ J.F.A., Ajayi, *The educational Process and historiography in Contemporary Africa: Background Paper*, UNESCO, *The General History of Africa: Studies and Documents 9; The educational process and historiography in Africa*; Paris: UNESCO, 1985, p.11

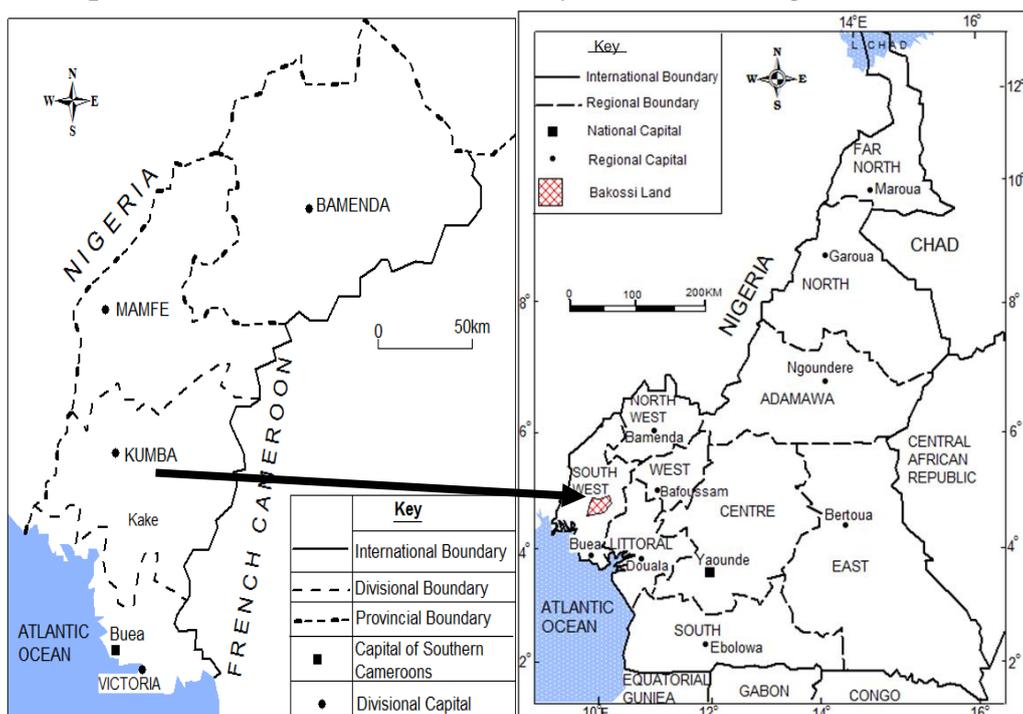
² F.R. Sulaiman, 'Internationalization in Education: The British Colonial Policies on Education in Nigeria 1882-1926', *Journal of Sociological Research*, 3:2, 2012, pp.84-101

³ F.X., Noble, B.S Straus,, D.J Osheim,, K.B Neuschel,, W.B Cohen,, & D.D Roberts,, *Western Civilization: The Continuing Experience*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1994, p.775

⁴R. Kitchin, and N.J., Tate, *Conducting research in human geography: theory, methodology and practice*, Harlow, UK: Pearson, 2000, p.16

enlightenment intimated that colonialism was not for Europe's self-aggrandizement, but a humanitarian challenge to give out a taste of western civilization to all people⁵. However, Decolonial and postcolonial sheds of epistemology do not agree that colonialism led to humanitarianism and development in African territories and this micro analysis of the impact of the British administration in the Kumba Division of the Southern Cameroons is therefore undertaken as a way of justifying this position.

Map 1. Kumba Division in Present day South West Region-Cameroon



Source: Adapted from the *Atlas of the United Republic of Cameroon* (Paris: Edition JeuneAfrique, 1980)

THE INTRODUCTION OF INDIRECT RULE IN SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

The German administration of *Kamerun* began in 1884 and ended in 1916 two years after the outbreak of the First World War which ended with the defeat of Germany by the Allied Powers (Britain and France). This led to the partition of the territory between Britain and France with France receiving four-fifths of the territory and Britain one-fifth. In 1922, the League of Nations gave Britain and France a charge which was again highlighted by the Trusteeship Council in 1946 to;

administer the territory in a manner to achieve the basic objectives of the international Trusteeship system as laid down in Article 76 of the UN Charter... to be responsible for the peace, order and good governance...promote the political,

⁵L.H., Brockway, *Science and colonial expansion: The role of the British royal botanic gardens*. London: Academic Press, 1979, p.187

economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the territory... extend a general system of elementary education designed to eliminate illiteracy and to facilitate vocational and cultural advancement of the population. *To similarly encourage secondary higher education and professional education with a view of guaranteeing self-determination for the territory's inhabitants*⁶

While France administered her sphere of the territory as a separate territory, Article 9 of the Mandate Agreement gave Britain the right to administer her own sphere of Cameroon as an integral part of Nigeria. Consequently the administrative legal and legislative procedures of the colony of Nigeria became applicable in the Cameroons under British Administration. A Nigerian Legislative Order-in-Council of 26th of June 1922 made this possible. Britain divided her sphere of the Cameroons into British Southern and British Northern Cameroons. Southern Cameroons was placed under the Lieutenant-Governor of the Southern Group of Provinces (Eastern after 1946) of Nigeria with a Resident in Buea as administrative head. The territory which had the status of a province in Nigeria was broken up into four divisions; Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda Divisions, each with a Divisional Officer who reported to the Resident in Buea.

The desire to administer the Cameroons as an integral part of Nigeria was motivated by the British colonial policy of limiting the cost of administration to the barest minimum in order not to saddle the British tax payer with additional responsibilities of financing more colonial administrations.⁷ To achieve this and still guarantee effective administration, the British adopted in Cameroon, the same administrative policy as in Nigeria called Indirect Rule. Proposed by Frederick Lugard following his experiences of the administrative prowess of Muslim traditional leaders in Northern Nigeria during his tenure there as Lieutenant Governor of the Northern region, this policy required the local traditional rulers to take charge of the day to day administration of their people while British officials merely served as supervisors.

To put indirect rule into practice, the traditional authorities were to operate what became known as Native Authorities or Native Administrations or local governments. The British put forward the argument that it was their desire to preserve indigenous culture, to bring administration closer to the people and to help the people help themselves. However, as mentioned above, this decision was also instigated by their need to reduce administrative

⁶ Excerpts of the Trusteeship Agreement for British Cameroons in T., Tazifor, 2003, p.165.

⁷ Joseph Ebune, *The Bakundu of Cameroon Yesterday and Today A Study in Tradition and Modernity* (Kansas City: Miraclaire Academic Publications, 2014), 74.

costs, to avoid blame for administrative lapses. It was not also unconnected to the fact that most young British men were unwilling to take up administrative posts in Africa. The 'harshness' of the region prompted them to use traditional authorities in administration.

In Cameroon Indirect rule was applied to the principal tribes of Buea, Victoria, Kumba, Bakossi, Bangwa, Bali, Bafut, Kom, Bum, Nso. The British set up Native Authorities in these areas with courts, treasuries, prisons, schools and councils where their chiefs and their traditionally appointed councilors exercised administrative powers under the supervisory role of the Divisional Officers. They took major administrative decisions, held court sessions and meted out punishment more or less according to modified native customs. Each Native Authority was also responsible for the provision of health and educational services, dealing with criminals and providing funds for the overall advancement of the area. The Divisional Officers as supervisory authority held regular meetings with Native Authorities.

The constitutional framework of the system of Indirect Rule rested upon a number of ordinances. Under the 1916 Native Authority Ordinance, a chief or any other Native was recognized by the government to maintain order and to appoint native police to assist in this purpose. Native courts were controlled by the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914 and were composed of native judges who administered customary law while Native Treasuries based on the Native Revenue Ordinance were responsible for levying taxes, collecting revenue and determining how these were disbursed.⁸

The overall purpose of these Native Institutions was to guarantee the participation of the Cameroonian natives in the administrative machinery and ensure their political social and economic advancement. But the Decolonial line of thought that this paper represents argues that this was not the main objective of the British instituting the policy. Indirect rule was exploitative. I begin by discussing some of the areas in which the colonial authorities had the opportunity of developing the division despite the availability of funds used the policy of Indirect rule to perpetuate the underdevelopment of the division.

INDIRECT RULE IN KUMBA DIVISION: A DECOLONIAL ASSESSMENT

I discuss this within the perspective of the relationship between the colonial authorities and the chiefs of Kumba Division, educational access, health provision and revenue generation and use.

⁸ Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), 688.

The Treatment of chiefs (Native Authorities) within the Indirect Rule System of Colonial Administration

In May 1916, Native Authority Ordinance became applicable in British Southern Cameroons in 1922. The Ordinance defined a Native Authority as a Native Tribunal which means a judicial council or Native Court as established under the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914.⁹ In application of this Ordinance, Kumba Division was broken up into seven districts. These seven districts were designed as Native Court Areas which also became the first administrative subunits of the division. They were as represented on Table 1 below;

Table 1: Native Authority Areas (also called Districts) and their Heads (1924)

	Native Authority	District Head
1	Kumba	Melango
2	Bakossi	Ntoko Epie
3	Nninong	Makoge
4	Mbonge	Sakwe
5	Bakundu	Itie
6	Upper Balondo	Esaw
7	Lower Balondo	Namuango

Source: *File cd/1924/1 Kumba Division Annual Report, 1924*

By 1932, the number of Native Authorities areas or districts had increased to seventeen. There was so much confusion in the appellation and structure of the Native Authorities. This made it difficult for the Native authorities to ensure effective implementation of their duties. For instance in 1932, there were ten Native Courts, seven of which were designated as districts but were still being called Native Authorities. It was difficult to say exactly how many NAs were fully operational in the division. In 1939 it was reported that there were nineteen NAs in the division while in 1954 it was reported that there were only thirteen NAs in the territory.¹⁰

The implication of this was that it made it difficult for the Mandate Commission and the Trusteeship Council to follow up on the effectiveness of the activities or the evolution of the administrative machinery in the division. Secondly it implied that sometimes Native Authorities were dismissed and their areas federated into other native authorities without due regard for the prestige of the chief and the development of the area. After 1932, the Bakossi Native Authority which used to run eight Native Courts was amalgamated into four territorial

⁹ F.J.D. Lugard, Native Authority Ordinance No. XIV of May 16 1916, p.2 NAB

¹⁰ H.N. Ewane, Native Administration in Kumba Division 1922-1961: Impact on Socio-Economic Development. Unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Buea, Cameroon, 2008, p.58-9

courts to the chagrin and embarrassment of some of the Native Authorities who saw their powers and prestige reduced. This also brought tension between the various clans.¹¹

Kumba Division was one of the only divisions in the Cameroons Province where the Native Administration took a dramatically unstable system. This was so because throughout British Rule in the Cameroons, N.A in Kumba Division never took any definite shape perhaps because of varying interpretation of the term which allowed a wide latitude of implementation but most importantly because the colonial authorities never considered it appropriate to lay down an effective system. When asked by the Mandate Commission, the administering authorities responded that;

Native Administration is a term of wide application and may take different forms according to the stage of evolution to which any particular tribe or sub-tribe has attained. There is no single model to which all native administrations must be moulded, though there is one objective common to them all, namely to devise an administrative machine capable of being controlled directly by African rather than British hands.¹²

The British used this situation of disorder to carry out a kind of divide and rule in the division. The latitude to re-organize native authorities depended on the whims and caprices of the local British Divisional Officer who used this to their own gains. District heads who did not perform to their maximum in terms of being subservient to the administration were dismissed and their NAs incorporated into the neighbouring one.

Besides that, the 1922 Ordinance under which the Native Authority scheme was extended to the Cameroons recognized chiefs or any other native to run an administration. In a smaller way they were to perform some of the duties which we now associate with rural or urban councils such as secondary road repair, establishment and maintenance of dispensaries and schools, and collection of taxes. But the local colonial authorities had a different perception of the role of Native Authorities other than what the legal/policy documents propagated. Their main interest was to see the Native Authorities administer justice on their people to secure a serene atmosphere for exploitation of resources to take place, rather than the administration of social services for the material welfare of the people¹³ with serious implications on the development of the native area.

¹¹ E.L. Ngalame, 1979, p.64

¹² File Ja/a 1933/1, Political Memorandum on Native Administration, 1933, p.4

¹³ E.L. Ngalame, 'The Evolution of Native Administration in Kumba Division 1916-1945: a Background Study.' Unpublished Postgraduate Diploma Thesis, University of Yaounde, 1979, p.47.

The Native Authorities, some of whom had been very highly revered people in the past, began to play so menial functions for the British colonial administration such as collecting taxes, reporting out-break of diseases, cases of adultery as well as the firing of dane-guns within their areas. They also had to construct rest-houses. According to Ngalame therefore, they were not only treated as errand boys, as real authority rested, not with them but with the local colonial administrators like D.Os and Residents. Ngalame holds that Native Authorities were not really autonomous: in theory, they were 'advised' and guided by the colonial administrators. This advice went beyond mere advice: it often meant control.¹⁴ Thus, the role of the chiefs in traditional administration became questionable as they became answerable to British colonial administration rather than upholding the traditions and customs of their people.

A significant issue with the Native Authorities is the fact that those who sometimes disagreed with the British colonial administrators or proved to be too intelligent were often abused, imprisoned or replaced. A particular point of reference is the chief (or district head of Bakossi) Fritz Ntoko Epie. Fritz Epie Ntoko was born into the royal family of Nyasoso. He became chief of Nyasoso in 1908 when he succeeded his elder brother. Under his administration, remarkable progress in all spheres was registered like the construction of Nyasoso-Ngusi-Mokole-Mungo road. He also created the Bakossi Cooperative Society which encouraged trade and agriculture in the area. In fact, it is the creation of the cooperative that laid the foundation for the growth of Tombel town. Ntoko also encouraged his people to adopt western values particularly education and Christianity. He built a magnificent palace for himself, a court house and a community hall for his people as early as 1925.

When the British arrived the Bakossi land in 1916, they met a very towering, influential but highly respected chief Ntoko. They appointed him the District Head, a position he used to unite Bakossi clans into one district, an idea that impressed the District Officer, F.B. Carr, who made him one of the judges of the Court of Appeal in Kumba,¹⁵ since he was a literate Chief. Within the space of one year, the British realized that Ntoko was not a 'yes sir' man. His refusal to be subservient earned him a prison sentence in 1917. Harry Vaux the new D.O of Kumba Division who succeeded F.B. Carr did not also appreciate Ntoko's pride and popularity amongst his people and quickly accused Ntoko of embezzling tax money worth a hundred and twenty-eight pounds.¹⁶ This led to his arrest in 1932 and eventually

¹⁴ Ngalame, 1979, p.48.

¹⁵ S.N Ejedepang-Koge, *District Head Fritz Ntoko Epie, Pioneer and Matyre of Modern Development in Bakossiland* (Yaounde: Buma Kor Publishers Ltd., 2013), 73.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

imprisonment in Kumba. He was found dead in his cell the morning following his detention¹⁷ and rumours amongst the Bakossi hold that Ntoko was eliminated by the British.

The same fate of ‘frightening the chiefs and forcing them to submit to the demands of the British officials’ befell R.N. Charley another Bakossi Chief in 1946. Charley was considered a threat to British administration because he never accepted those policies that did not benefit his people like excessive taxation and the recruitment of labour for public works without pay. This was a form of exploitation to him and the British had to fight back to ensure their control over his people. The disregard shown to the chiefs led to fear which ultimately brought about lack of initiative by the local rulers and reduced them to mere objects of British colonial rule. In the final analysis, rather than thinking of ways of improving their lot, fear, loss of self-confidence and being dependent on the British for all they needed to improve on themselves became the order of the day. This was also seen in the use of revenue collected in the division.

REVENUE COLLECTION AND USE

One of the preoccupations of the European powers in Africa was how to cover the cost of administration.¹⁸ For the British, the cost of administration had to be borne by the colonies themselves.¹⁹ By 1922, Kumba Division was served from Victoria Treasury. In the same year, a Native Treasury was created for each division following the passing of the Native Treasury Ordinance under the supervision of the Divisional Officers. Sources of revenue included court fines which ranged from 10-50 pounds and taxation. Taxes were levied on all taxable males and direct taxes accounted for almost 60-70% of N.A. revenue²⁰ as indicated on Table 2 below.

Percentage of Direct Taxes Allotted to Native Authorities in 1938

Native Authority	Percentage
<u>Victoria Division</u>	
Victoria Area	60
Bakweri Area	60
Balong	70
<u>Kumba Division</u>	
The whole Division	60

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Victor T. LeVine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence* (Berkeley and Angeles: University of California Press, 1964),56.

¹⁹ A.E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in South Eastern Nigeria, 1891-1929* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1979), 207.

²⁰ Ibid.

<u>Mamfe Division</u>	
The whole Division	70
<u>Bamenda Division</u>	70

Source: *File No. 2187 Ba 1937/5, Cameroons Province: Notes for the League of Nations, 1937 (NAB).*

There is no indication of the criteria used in making these allocations but this was probably determined by the population of the areas. However, the taxes collected from these divisions between 1936 and 1938 show that the amount varied from year to year.

Tax Revenues for Cameroons Province 1936-1939

Division	1936	1937	1938
Victoria	£6,798	£6,982	£7,815
Kumba	£8,342	£7,368	£7,750
Mamfe	£4,068	£4,121	£4,064
Bamenda	£12,573	£12,877	£16,480

Source: *H.N Ewane, "Native Administration in Kumba Division, 1922 – 1961", 2008, 84.*

Customs duties, plantation taxes, liquor licences and timber exploitation dues were other sources of revenue but these never entered N.A. Treasuries. For example, the Mundame Customs posts carried out import and export transactions but the revenue collected from it was never accounted for. The same was the case with the revenue collected from Mbonge, Ndian and Bombe customs posts.²¹ Such incomes if accounted for would have swelled the revenue of the NAs of the areas and would have made more funds available for local development. In 1952, duties collected at Mundame Post amounted to £1,037, 5 shillings and 5 pence.²² Revenue was also collected from export commodities like cocoa, palm products, groundnuts, rubber, hides and timber, accounting for several thousand pounds in most Native Authority areas. These again did not constitute the revenue of the Native Authorities.

These are issues which research on the history of British colonialism in Cameroon has been grappling with over the years; the question of the financial viability of the region in terms of sustaining an indigenous administration and; the use of Native Authority revenue in the development of the area. The base for the arguments which worked negatively for the development of the division is that the British did not present the exact picture of the financial viability of the region to the supervisory authority; the Trusteeship Council and the Natives of Cameroon themselves. The territory was economically viable and the British siphoned the resources from the territory. From the introduction of British Administration of

²¹ Hansley Nangwenya Ewane, "Native Administration in Kumba Division, 1922 – 1961", M.A. Thesis in History, University of Buea, 2008, 84.

²² File No. 9/1929 Kumba Division, Annual Report, 1928, NAB.

the territory, there was hardly any time that a division ran into deficits. The financial laws gave the NAs the latitude to use its funds for its development and even send 50% of the sum collected to the colonial authorities. Below is a summary of the part of the NA revenue which was attributed to NA development excluding that which was not accounted for such as customs duties and which necessarily does not include the part sent to the colonial authorities. A comparison of this part of revenue and the expenditure demonstrate how financially viable the territory was which would have contributed to the rapid development of the area.

Table 3: Revenue Attributed to NAs of Kumba Division (1917-1961)

Year	Revenue	Expenditure
1917	5,201	4,870
1920	6,537	3,908
1925	6,584	4,112
1930	6600	3,030
1935	6744	3,544
1940	7397	4,001
1945	11,283	6,928
1950	43,309	12,592
1955	69,684	34,877
1961	124, 060	84,020

Source: *Compiled from Annual Reports for Kumba Division, NAB*

Records show that from 1917 to 1961, Kumba Division registered surpluses between 50% and 80% of the total revenue collected each year that were carried forward to the next financial year. These funds made Kumba Divisional Officer to open a deposit account at Barclays Banks D.C.O. in Victoria.²³ There were other proofs that the division was financially strong to support its development effort. In 1944, the division made a contribution to the War Relief Fund of £1,104 at a time when the Cameroon Youth League was seriously calling for the establishment of a secondary school in the division. The D.O. of Kumba noted that this was a gesture which reflected good spirit and the absence of economic and social hardship.²⁴

As further proof that the Division could support its development, the D.O. in 1959 wrote to the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Surveys in Buea that the sum of £30,000 in the Joint Colonial Fund be invested in the construction of roads in the division. This sum was the excess from the Kumba Native Authority estimates held on fixed deposits by the Barclays

²³ Cited by Ewane, "Native Administration", 91.

²⁴ File No. 33 Vol II Ba 1943/3 Kumba Division Annual Report and League of Nations Report, 1944 NAB.

Banks.²⁵ Instead, the excess money in Kumba N.A. Deposit Account was transferred to the Joint Colonial Fund with implications that nothing would have come back to Kumba Division from it for development.²⁶

Even when the D.Os pointed out that in the division there was less social and economic development, the colonial administration still preferred to bank the surpluses. In a letter to the Commissioner of the Cameroons No. 1169/42 of April 1957, the D.O. of Kumba Division pointed out that for many years, very little development had taken place in the division.²⁷ In spite of this, the D.O. who was sent to Kumba two years later decided to invest the surpluses from Kumba N.A. account in the Colonial Fund in London. Investing the money from the colony in London suggests that money from the colonies constituted additional funds for the development of the metropole leaving the colonies unattended to. It is this that led Adu Boahen to note that:

Such, in short, was the nature of the colonial system. Its main raison d'être was the ruthless exploitation of the human and material resources of the African continent to the advantage of the owners and shareholders of expatriate companies and the metropolitan government and their manufacturing and industrial firms.²⁸

From this comment, we observe that it was not the interest of the colonised peoples that mattered but those of the colonisers. It is obvious then that the progress of the division materially and socially, was not the concern of the British contrary to their proclamations. All that they did was to deploy the financial returns to develop Britain.

THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

One of the highly upheld achievements of British colonialism in the Cameroons is their so called contribution in the civilization and development of the natives through the introduction of western education. Unfortunately when this is assessed against the background of the number schools opened in the various Native Authorities, the type of schools and the number of school age population that was expected to be in school, the figures are very disappointing. The first government school in the Division was the Government school Kumba Town and the Government School Nyasoso. Although these were government schools, they were placed

²⁵ File No. 9036/52 Kumba Division Native Authority Administration Estimates 1959/1960 NAB.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ File No. 6345/S 2LL/a 1957/1, Kumba Division Native Authority Estimates 1957/1958 NAB.

²⁸ Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 62.

under the financial auspices of the Native Authorities of the Division. There was also an opportunity for each NA to establish a junior elementary education to the tune of the fourth year of the primary school. This meant that Native Authorities spent double in the domain of education especially where the NA had an NA school and was still expected to partly finance the Nyasoso and Kumba government schools.

In 1923, there were already three NA schools in the Division (Nkiko-Elung), Masaka and Boa-Balundu which was later transferred to Lobe. By 1943, there were eight NA schools in the Division with enrolments as presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: N.A Schools enrolments compared with school going age population 1943

School	Enrolment	School age pop	% in school
Nyasoso	222	1200	18.5
Massaka	185	976	18.9
Kurume	117	865	13.5
Lipenja	155	874	13.1
Kombone	159	1010	15.7
Lobe	96	1100	8.7
Badum	86	712	12.1
Ndian	97	909	10.6

Source: *Compiled from Annual Reports for Kumba Division, 1943*

The figures demonstrate that the contribution of Native Authorities with regards to educational access was very low as most children who were to be in school were not registered. In the Kombone Native Authority area for example, there were only 159 children (15.7%) in its Standard II school while there was an estimated number 1010 children of school going age children in the area.²⁹ This means that 84.3% of school going age children were out of school. The situation was not different in the other areas. A significant issue which must also be highlighted is that NAs were charged with the award of scholarships into government schools and with the complete financial responsibility over its school system. In 1925, the authorities in Kumba reported that

In Kumba Division there is a scholarship system, under which the best pupils from the Native Administration schools are given quarters and are paid a maintenance allowance to support them at the Kumba Government School.³⁰

²⁹ File Ba/1943, Kumba Division Annual Report, 1943, p.65

³⁰ File Ba/1925/1, Cameroons, Report on the Administration of the Southern Cameroons to the League of Nations, NAB, p.44

Besides the budgetary allocations for education in the entire division reflected a colonial disinterest in this domain. Table 6 below shows the budgetary allocations for education vis-à-vis the entire budget from 1935-41;

Table 5: Budgetary Allocations for Education compared to the Annual Budget of Kumba Division 1935-1941

Year	Annual Budget	Education Budget	Percentage
1935	6674	499	7.5
1936	8267	480	5.9
1937	7922	476	6.0
1938	8333	487	5.9
1939	6774	361	5.3
1940	7462	454	6.1
1941	6928	365	5.2

Source: Compiled from Kumba Division Annual Reports 1935-41, NAB

The point to note here is that, allocating 5.2 % of the budget to education was a clear case of determination of the British to limit educational development of the territory. This is surprising for an administration which continuously had annual financial surpluses which were deposited in bank accounts and subsequently moved to the colonial treasuries. This is a clear indication of the profit maximization and exploitative tendencies of the colonial masters. The schools suffered from dilapidating temporal school infrastructures, non-availability of teaching resources and the inability to pay NA teacher's salaries.³¹ According to Aka, 'the history of education in the Southern Cameroons during the interwar years was a negative record of development and of the consequent underdevelopment of human resources.'³²

The negative attitude towards the development of education could be seen in the fact that apart from poorly financing the educational sector in the division, there were only two government schools in the territory which throughout the interwar years, did not even offer a complete primary school curriculum. The Kumba Government School could only train as high as Standard IV and candidates had to move to Buea to complete their primary education.³³ This accounted for high level of dropout and academic wastage in the Division and in the territory as a whole. In 1938 for example of the 47 pupils in Standard IV in Kumba government school, only three were passed to proceed to Standard V in the Buea Government

³¹ R.N Ndille, *Britain and Education in Cameroon*, 2014, p388

³² A.E, Aka, *The British Southern Cameroons, 1922-1960*, 2002, p.66

³³ R.N Ndille, 2014, p112

School.³⁴ What became of the rest is a matter of wonder. There was also no secondary school in the division until 1955 when the Catholics created St. Francis College in Kumba.³⁵

PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

The inadequacies noticed in the educational sector were also evidenced in the health sector. Under the Germans, no hospital was built in the division. Doctors from the Government Hospital Victoria visited the division consulting and treating cases which traditional doctors could not handle. They also vaccinated the people during epidemic outbreaks. The German government health policy in the territory was based on keeping indigenous workers and porters in the best physical health. This explains why hospitals were mostly located in areas like Victoria where there were German plantations.³⁶

In the early years of British rule, hospitals were opened in each division with a resident Medical Officer (MO). Between 1916 and 1922, J.O Itie was the only government medical staff in the division in the capacity as a wound dresser. Each NA was to appoint an NA dresser who assisted Itie in the area concerned. It was only in 1926 that a European MO was stationed in Kumba despite the fact that a small pox epidemic had ravaged the division in 1922.³⁷ Apart from the Kumba Government Hospital which was set up in 1926, the NAs opened dispensaries and trained its staff. While the government controlled the General Hospital in Kumba, the rural health services were managed by the NAs. By 1937, six NA dispensaries were functioning in Ndoi, Kumbe Balue, Toko, Marumba Mbonge, Massaka and Muambong. The colonial government established no other government hospital till independence. The NAs, remained the only health service providers in most of the division. Evidence of their work in 1939 is reflected in Table 6 below.

Table 6: NA Dispensary's Visits and Treatments

NA	Attendance	Treatment
Ndoi	27,649	2,730
Kumbe Balue	36,632	4,304
Toko	26,715	4,358
Marumba Mbonge	13,804	4,226
Massaka	8,338	731
Muambong	5182	580

Source: File Cd/1939/1 Kumba Division Annual and League of Nations Reports. Medical Office Returns, 1937-40, NAB.

³⁴ Ibid, p.383

³⁵ Ibid. p.245

³⁶ H.N Ewane, 2008, p.128

³⁷ Ibid, p.128.

The above figures show that quite a huge number of patients visited the various NA dispensaries in the division. However, the table also shows evidence of the NA dispensaries not being able to treat these cases. For instance, of the 13,804 persons who visited the Marumba Mbonge NA dispensary, only 4,226 (30%) were given a kind of treatment for their ailments. This is not unconnected to the poor British colonial policies in the area of pushing the responsibilities for local administration to the Native Authorities with limited budgets. According to Ewane, the colonial government paid relatively little attention to the development of health care facilities in the division. Like education, British health policy was one of *laissez-faire* and near neglect.³⁸ Throughout British occupation and administration, the government opened four hospitals in the entire Southern Cameroon; only one in each division. The divisional hospital located in Kumba had only one doctor at a time and even ran for some periods without one. The doctor-patient ratio which was 1:70,404³⁹ was so high that it can only be termed embarrassingly inadequate. In terms of revenue allocation for health services, the highest average was 6.8% of the annual budget as shown on Table 7 below.

Table 7: Health Service Budgetary Allocations 1935-41

Year	Annual budget	Health Budget	percentage
1935	6,674	236	3.6
1936	8,267	234	2.9
1937	7,922	258	3.3
1938	8,333	659	6.8
1939	6,774	113	1.7
1940	7462	130	1.8
1941	6,928	111	1.6

Source: Compiled from Annual reports Kumba Division, 1935-1941, NAB

Table 7 demonstrates that despite the fact that there were endemic diseases in the division, the colonial allocations for health were very minimal. It also reveals that despite the availability of annual budgetary surpluses, there was no interest in improving health service delivery by increasing the allocations for health. There was a high prevalence rate of Malaria, small pox, chicken pox, measles, filarial, yaws, tuberculosis and leprosy in the division. Routine vaccinations conducted in the division in 1940 show that close to 8,000 children were affected with one of the above diseases.⁴⁰ The death rate remained very high especially in the rural areas. A medical report in 1938 shows that of the close to 13,000 patients who attended the six NA. Dispensaries, 8,000 were malaria infected. There were 511 identified

³⁸ H.N. Ewane, 2008, p.134

³⁹ File cd/1943/ Kumba Division Annual, 1943, p.40 NAB

⁴⁰ Forkussam, The Evolution of Health Services in Southern Cameroon, p.37

lepers in the division in 1938.⁴¹ The fact that the division generated a lot of revenue, and even had huge surpluses at the end of the year and the fact that there was hardly any improvement in the health service provision is a mark of intentionality of coloniality. This has also laid bare the sincerity of British humanitarianism in the Southern Cameroons.

Generally speaking, the reluctance to improve social service delivery in the division was contrary to the purported British humanitarian promise of ensuring the development and improvement of native conditions. This promise was simply a lip service and a ploy to cover their real intension of exploitation. In his book *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Frederick Lugard had argued that British colonial authorities had dual obligations; first, to their colonial peoples to develop them morally and materially and second, to assure the development of colonial resources for the benefit of the outside world. Regarding the second mandate Lugard insisted that;

The Mandate System thus viewed is not (a) mere sentimental expression of what is called ‘Humanitarian Conscience’ in regard to native races. It does not ignore the claims of the congested populations of Europe to share in the bounties of nature in the tropics, or just and proper claims of those who have spent capital and effort in development to reap their reward.⁴²

By this, Lugard was expressing the actual British colonial objective in Africa; that of the exploitation of African material and human resources. That is why he advocated a system of strict respect for the colonial administrative machinery hierarchy which guaranteed their usurpation and control of African kingly and chiefly authority and power; a process which entailed the reduction of defeated African chiefs into lowest-ranking colonial officials responsible for supervision of Africans as providers of cheap labour and taxpayers.⁴³ To ensure a strict application of this objective Lugard had instructed that;

There *are* no two sets of rulers – British and Native working either separately or in cooperation, but a single government in which the native chiefs have well-defined duties *within an* acknowledged system equally with British officials.⁴⁴

⁴¹ File cd/1938/1 Kumba Division Annual Report, NAB

⁴² F.D., Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. London: William Blackwood and Sons. 1925, p.151.

⁴³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p8

⁴⁴ Ibid.

For this paper therefore, I hold that, good as the policy of indirect rule might have seemed, the fact that the interests of the people were submerged to those of the British suggests that their mission was one of racial conquest, exploitation and domination. The system did not tolerate any form of equality between the British and the people of Kumba Division through their leaders or any selfless development initiative as the people found it difficult to develop their territory with the meagre NA funds while the majority was being siphoned by the British and ploughed back to the metropole.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted an evaluation of British administration in Kumba Division during the periods of the Mandate and Trusteeship. The adoption of the policy of indirect rule was intended to involve the people in the administration of their division with a view to quicken their development in all spheres of human endeavour. Evidence from revenue generation statistics show that Kumba Division was very financially viable but statistics of the provision of social services shows that very little of this funds was used for the development of the Division. This was also the case with their treatment of Native Authorities who became errand boys to the colonial administrators instead of pillars of the development of their areas. The study shows that while Indirect Rule policy was a lofty idea, it never operated in the interest of the people as there was total neglect in the provision of basic social services. This accounted for the relatively underdeveloped nature of the division before and after independence despite the fact that Kumba Division was one of the wealthiest divisions. I have used archival materials and some secondary sources to establish this analysis.

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