

THE PRACTICE OF PAYING LOBOLA (KULOBOLA) AND THE TUMBUKA CULTURE: THE LINK BETWEEN KULOBOLA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL PRACTICES OF TUMBUKA SOCIETY OF LUNDAZI, 1924-64

Kenneth A. Chirwa

Research Scholar, Lundazi Day Secondary School, P.O. Box 530038, Lundazi, Eastern Province, Zambia

Received: 08 Sep 2021

Accepted: 25 Sep 2021

Published: 27 Sep 2021

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the link between kulobola and the transformation of cultural practices of Tumbuka society of Lundazi during colonial period. Using qualitative and quantitative data, the article explores how kulobola facilitated the transformation of Tumbuka cultural practices. It demonstrates how the introduction of kulobola improved access (or enrolment), retention and literacy levels among female folk. It also shows how kulobola helped the Tumbuka to either reduce or completely get rid of their negative cultural practices such as divorce, early marriages and male preference that impinged on female socio-economic ventures such as education in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. In addition, the article highlights how kulobola became instrumental in the transformation of Tumbuka society from exogamous society to endogamous society. Furthermore, the article demonstrates how kulobola intensified Tumbuka cultural practices such as bonus wife, elopement and cousin marriages. Finally, the article shows how kulobola made the Tumbuka adopt bicultural identity.

KEYWORDS: *Kulobola, Tumbuka Cultural Transformations, Marriage Practices, Patrilineal System, Girl Child Education*

INTRODUCTION

Tumbuka society of Lundazi district of eastern province of Zambia is one of the societies whose cultural practices had undergone several transformations between 1924 and 1964. Several factors accounted for this and kulobola is one of them. Data reveals that scholars wrongly use lobola and kulobola interchangeably when referring to the latter. For example, Phiri (2000: 46) indicates that in Mzimba district of northern Malawi the Ngoni introduced the custom and word kulobola (kulowola) which in books and newspapers is referred to by the verb lobola. Ashraf (2015: 11) says lobola is a positive cultural practice. Data also confirms that even recent scholars such as Moono (2020) have continued with this tendency of using the two terms interchangeably. However, according to Tumbuka tradition, the two are not the same. They have different meanings.

Kulobola is a customary marriage practice of the Tumbuka of central Africa. It is the practice of paying lobola. It legally binds marriage contract. According to Tumbuka culture, marriage is treated as a contract between the bridegroom and his family on one hand and the bride and her family on the other hand (Nyirenda, 1981: 26). Moono (2020: 39) claims that kulobola provides formal recognition for marital relationships including protecting the wives against abuse. It makes a woman an official wife and seals a woman's status as a worthy woman in the eyes of all. Ashraf (2015: 11); Evans-

Pritchard (1931: 36); Posel (2011: 1) and Chondoka (2007: 198) argue that kulobola is not meant for the purchase of a woman but to seal a marriage. Besides legalising marriage, kulobola transfers offspring from the wife's family to the husband's family.

Lobola (bride wealth or bride price) is a payment for marriage. It is a payment usually in the form of cattle or cash which the bridegroom's family makes to the bride's family shortly before the marriage. Lobola is one of the essential requirements of Tumbuka marriages in Zambia under customary law marriages. It functions as a legal proof of Tumbuka marriage. Customarily, without lobola there is no marriage. What is there is *ulebi* or *chigololo* (adultery). For example, an article entitled 'No bride price, no marriage' written by Mugala read in parts as follows:

"A local court has dismissed a divorce petition by a man after it was established that he did not pay bride price.

Lole Banda, of George Township [Lusaka], had sued his wife, Chila Namunyola, 34, for divorce based on an alleged confession by another man that she had an extra-marital affair with him.

In her ruling, Magistrate Harriet Mulenga dismissed the claim saying there was no proof of marriage because Banda did not pay bride price [lobola]"¹.

It is clear from this court case issue that traditionally where there is no lobola there is no marriage in Tumbuka society. Therefore, Lobola legitimatises marriage as it confirms the cultural symbolism of accepting the groom and the bride into each other's family.

Kulobola is an entrenched part of marriage in Tumbuka societies of central Africa. Traditionally, kulobola was done to compensate the woman's family for their daughter and to show gratitude on how they raised her. Phiri (2000: 4) claims that the purpose of kulobola was to compensate parents of the girl for the loss of service they suffered when their daughter left home to dwell with the husband where she was assisting her mother-in-law instead of her own mother. In pre-colonial Tumbuka society, kulobola did not require the payment of money. Alternatively, it was paid in form of cattle. The payment in monetary form was introduced during colonial rule. Traditionally, there was no set price or number of cows set for lobola. The amount of money or cattle depended on bride's family. The family of the bride considered a number of factors when charging lobola. These included virginity, behaviour and education level of their daughter.

Kulobola is one of the most significant cultural practices among the Tumbuka of Lundazi. It is not an original Tumbuka marriage practice. The term finds its origin in the Zulu and Xhosa languages². The Tumbuka adopted the practice from the Ngonis of Magodi and Phikamalaza who migrated from Mzimba district of northern Nyasaland (now Malawi) and encroached in the northern part of Lundazi district in the early 1890s. Chondoka (2007: 198) and Mushibwe (2007: 18) claim that kulobola system was intensified from 1898. The tradition of kulobola greatly impacted on Tumbuka cultural practices. However, this article does not argue that kulobola was the only factor which greatly impacted on Tumbuka culture. Instead, it demonstrates that kulobola facilitated several changes on Tumbuka cultural practices of Lundazi. It does so by investigating the link between kulobola and transformation of several Tumbuka cultural practices during colonial rule. To accomplish this task, the article is divided into three areas. The first area deals with kulobola and patrilineal

¹Mike Mugala, "No bride price, no marriage", *Zambia Daily Mail Limited*(7th February 2021), p. 2.

²Bill Scheidler (2010). "What the Bible says about Lobola". Available at www.churchleadershipresources.com>. Retrieved on 5th February, 2021, p. 2.

system. The next area focusses on kulobola and Tumbuka marriage practices. The last area discusses kulobola and girl child education in colonial Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

KULOBOLA AND PATRILINEAL SYSTEM

Mvula (1986: 56); Vail and White (1989: 153) and Mushibwe (2007: 17) claim that originally the Tumbuka of Lundazi, like other Tumbukas elsewhere in Zambia, were matrilineal and their marriages were matrilineal. Kulobola deeply entrenched patriarchy in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. This made the Tumbuka to incorporate patrilineal system in their old cultural practices. The incorporation of this new system made them to adopt bicultural identity. The Tumbuka of Lundazi were now made up of a mixture of patrilineal and matrilineal systems. Tumbuka chiefdoms had a choice to follow either matrilineal system or patrilineal system. Lundazi tour report of 1951 confirms that both Magodi and Phikamalaza chiefdoms followed patrilineal customs while Mphamba chiefdom followed the matrilineal succession of the old Tumbuka before they became Angonised³. The adoption of bicultural identity disturbed the peace that the Tumbuka enjoyed from time memorial. Divisions and disunity erupted in Tumbuka society of eastern Zambia. For the first time in their history, the Tumbuka of Lundazi witnessed a succession dispute in Mphamba chiefdom. After the death of Mphamba III, Green Zulu, there was a succession dispute between Ester Zulu, the daughter of the deceased chief and Morris Ndhlovu, the nephew of the late chief. This dispute divided the Tumbuka into two rival camps. One camp followed old matrilineal system which favoured Morris as an heir to Mphamba throne while the other camp, following the new patrilineal system, supported Ester. For months, there was confusion in Mphamba chiefdom. The problem was only sorted out using historical oral and written evidence. The evidence showed that Mphamba chieftainship had always been following matrilineal system since 1897 as the table below shows. This evidence was in favour of Morris Ndhlovu who has been chief Mphamba since 2008.

Table 1: Mphamba Chieftainship, 1897-2008

S/No	Name of Chief	Ascendance Order	Period of Rule	Relation to the Late Chief
1	Chifwiti Mphamba	First Mphamba	1897-1929	Nephew to Hanoko Mphamba
2	Bandawe Wajitundila Nyirenda	Second Mphamba	1929-1954	Nephew to Chifwiti Mphamba
3	Green Zulu	Third Mphamba	1954-2008	Nephew to Bandawe Nyirenda

Source: NAZ, sec 2/722, Lundazi tour report, 1951, pp. 105-106;

Kulobola also modified matrilineal and patrilineal systems of the Tumbuka of Lundazi. For instance, Mphamba chiefdom which maintained matrilineal system incorporated some concepts of patrilineal system. The chiefdom incorporated the payment of lobola contrary to the normal matrilineal society. Matrilineal societies did not practice the system of kulobola. The incorporation of kulobola made Mphamba chiefdom a special and unique matrilineal chiefdom. In the same vein, chiefdoms of Phikamalaza and Magodi which adopted Ngoni system of patrilineal incorporated some concepts of matrilineal system. The two chiefdoms emphasised on female preference instead of male preference. This is because kulobola made the Tumbuka girl child gain an economic value. This economic gain made parents in the two Tumbuka chiefdoms prefer a girl child. The parents began investing more in the girl child than a boy child. This occurrence was peculiar in a patrilineal society. This is because patrilineal societies believe in male preference. According to Mollel and Chong (2017: 120), a girl child was not a priority in patrilineal communities. The modification of both matrilineal and patrilineal systems brought identity crisis in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. The modification made it difficult to easily tell whether the chiefdom practiced matrilineal system or patrilineal system. Several identity related

³NAZ, sec 2/722, Lundazi tour report, 1951, p. 124.

questions arose in Tumbuka society. Examples of such questions include: *Is Mphamba chiefdom really matrilineal chiefdom? Or are chiefdoms of Magodi and Phikamalaza really practising patrilineal system?* These questions have remained unanswered up to date. They sometimes became a source of confusion in Tumbuka society especially where a chief die without leaving an heir as it was the case in Mphamba chiefdom in 2008.

In addition to modifying matrilineal and patrilineal systems, kulobola system changed societal traditional perception of a girl child in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Traditionally, the importance placed on a girl child depended on whether the society was matrilineal or patrilineal. Societies which followed matrilineal system valued a girl child while those practising patrilineal consider a girl child as of little or no value. This means that Mphamba chiefdom was expected to value a girl child while Magodi and Phikamalaza chiefdoms were expected to place little or no value on a girl child. But the adoption of kulobola system changed this expectation in Tumbuka land. The importance placed on a girl child did not now depend on whether the Tumbuka chiefdom followed matrilineal system or patrilineal system. Instead, it depended on whether the chiefdom practiced kulobola system or not. Kulobola made the Tumbuka girl child gain a high socio-economic status. Regardless of whether the Tumbuka chiefdom was matrilineal or patrilineal, a girl child was considered as a family strategic investment whose future returns were of greater value than those of a boy child. One of the respondents said, “A girl child is business and we all need money” and “for a girl child you benefit from charging lobola while a boy child’s support comes from him when you are old”. Kulobola made the Tumbuka girl child gain socio-economic value which in turn displaced the negative traditional perception of a girl child. In all Tumbuka chiefdoms a girl child was considered a hot cake. The boy child eventually became a forgotten child. Male preference was slowly replaced by a new cultural practice of female preference in Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

Finally, the system of kulobola transferred children from the mother line to the father line. Ansell (2001: 704); Chondoka (2001: 198) and Scheidler (2010: 2) confirm that children were now by tradition owned by the husband after paying lobola. The Tumbuka of Lundazi adopted this new marriage system. In this new marriage system, a woman was said to bear children for her husband and not for her brother as it was in the old Tumbuka marriage system. The ownership of children changed from the woman’s family to the husband’s family. The brother of the wife had no say in the upbringing of his sister’s children. This role was solely in the hands of the father of her children. Through payment of lobola, a Tumbuka man had now right over his children. The acceptance of the system of kulobola therefore established the husband and his extended family as the rightful owners of children. This was one of the main benefits that the Tumbuka men accrued from the practice of paying lobola. Transfer of ownership of children made the Tumbuka men to greatly invest in their children’s socio-economic ventures such as education. This explains why there were more institutions of learning in Tumbuka society where kulobola system was practiced than in Chewa land where the system of kulobola was not practiced. For example, in 1937, Tumbuka society of 5 895 children (3 036 boys and 2 859 girls) had 38 schools while Chewa land of 6 981 children (3 600 boys and 3 381 girls) had only 4 schools⁴. The opening of these schools increased enrolment levels for Tumbuka girls and boys.

KULOBOLA AND TUMBUKA MARRIAGES

Kulobola greatly affected traditional marriage practices in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Firstly, kulobola promoted endogamous marriages. Originally, only exogamous marriages were practiced in Tumbuka society Lundazi. Simson (1985:

⁴ NAZ, KST 3/1, Lundazi district notebook, Vol. III.

4) confirms that endogamous marriages were not allowed in Tumbuka land. One respondent in support claims that it was Mwinkho (a Taboo) for members of the same clan to marry each other. Instead, emphasis was placed upon marrying outside the clan. However, this changed when kulobola was introduced in Tumbuka society. With the introduction of kulobola, marriages within clans forced their way into Tumbuka society of Lundazi. The Tumbuka incorporated endogamous marriages because they did not want wealth to go outside the clan. They wanted to make sure that lobola (bride wealth) was evenly distributed within the clan. The introduction of endogamous marriages had several effects. Endogamous marriages led to the promotion of other marriage practices. For example, cousin marriages and bonus wives (Mbirigha) were encouraged. Phiri (2000: 48) confirm that cousin marriages were not very common in the olden Tumbuka society. They were only intensified when the practice of paying lobola was introduced. Bonus wives were also common after the introduction of kulobola. Whenever the family of the bride felt their son-in-law was either caring or planning to marry another wife from a different family they quickly gave him a sister or cousin of his wife as a bonus wife, locally called Mbirigha. Kulobola also intensified an illegal marriage practice locally known as kusomphola (elopement). Tumbuka men who could not manage to pay lobola opted to elope as the only resort. This kind of marriage practice was not common in pre-kulobola Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

According to oral tradition, the introduction of endogamous marriages led to several calamities in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. These calamities included famine and epidemics of the 1950s. Lundazi district notebook volume IV indicates that prior to and including 1956 Lundazi district, popularly known as Tumbuka land, had been a famine area. Lundazi district notebook volume II also highlights several trypanomiasis outbreaks in Tumbuka society of Lundazi from 1953 to 1956. These epidemic outbreaks led to a number of cattle deaths as table 2 on page 79 indicates. Many Tumbuka respondents argue that these calamities were necessitated by the introduction of endogamous marriages. They explain that this new marriage practice was abomination act as it was against their cultural beliefs and their God, Chiuta. They further explain that because of incorporating this taboo only the Tumbuka society was affected by these calamities. The Tumbuka argue that Chewa chiefdoms were spared since they were not part of this abomination act. They claim that their God initiated these calamities because he was not happy with the Tumbuka's decision to incorporate endogamy in their society. These respondents explained that these calamities only ended in 1956 after the Tumbuka appeased their God at Thakalavu, the Tumbuka national shrine of Lundazi.

Table 2: Typanomiasis Outbreaks in Tumbuka Society, 1953-1956

S/No.	Year of Occurrence	Chiefdoms Affected	Number of Cattle Encumbered	Number of Cattle Deaths
1	1953	Mphamba and Phikamalaza	730	0
2	1954	Magodi and Phikamalaza	1 201	59
3	1955	Mphamba, Magodi and Phikamalaza	1 644	28

Source: NAZ, KST 3/1, Lundazi District Notebook, Volume II

Secondly, the practice of paying lobola promoted normal marriages. Kulobola made girls become strategic investments whose future returns were of great value. Hence, parents perceived lobola as a future investment. When charging lobola parents could now calculate how much they spent on the education of their daughters. This scenario forced them to reserve their daughters for normal marriages so that they could fetch more cattle or money. Instead of marrying off their daughters at a tender age, parents began to focus on how to invest in the education of their female children so that they yield the much-needed returns from them. This reduced early marriages in Tumbuka society and in return normal

marriages were promoted. Consequently, more girls were educated in Tumbuka society of Lundazi as we shall see later.

Finally, the system of kulobola reduced divorce cases in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Initially, a spouse could lose her husband's affection if she only had girls⁵. In this early Tumbuka Society, girls had less or no socio-economic value. Traditionally, women's cultural role was to bear and take care of their children. Girls had no economic value which could attract parents to invest in them. But with the introduction of kulobola, this scenario was the thing of the past since lobola uplifted the socio-economic value of a girl child. As already discussed, lobola made the parents to prefer girls more than boys. With this female preference syndrome, spouses with only girls could no longer lose the affection of their husbands. Husbands began to love them just as they did to those with only boys. Husbands no longer easily think of divorcing their wives as was the case in the pre-kulobola Tumbuka society. In this way, kulobola strengthened marriage bond and eventually reduced divorce cases in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Kulobola also instilled fear of losing lobola in each spouse. Each spouse feared to lose lobola if he/she pressured for divorce without following laid down Tumbuka cultural procedures on divorce. This made each spouse become a sacrificial lamb. One respondent says the fear of losing lobola made men become tolerate even in situations where their wives committed adultery. Hence, abomination cases such as adultery could no longer warrant divorce in this new Tumbuka society. Adultery cases were now sorted out by paying a special reconciliatory goat locally called Muphepisko. After the family of the bride paid this goat to the family of the groom, the wife was declared as a purified woman. The husband accepted her as his wife and life went on as before. The fear of losing lobola also made women become tolerate and sacrificial even in situations where their husbands openly mistreated them. In these unacceptable circumstances, wives could not ask for divorce for fear of returning lobola to the family of their husbands. This scenario makes Mushibwe (200: 18) and Moono (2019: IV) argue that lobola was meant to buy a woman and condemn her to marital enslavement. The fear of losing lobola greatly reduced divorce occurrences. Kulobola therefore played a cardinal role in the reduction of divorce cases in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. It made divorce expensive and hence marriages became durable. In this way, kulobola becomes a positive cultural practice. The reduction of divorce cases was vital in the education of a Tumbuka child since it brought peace and stability in Tumbuka marriages of Lundazi. This favourable marriage environment made parents concentrate on the education of their children.

KULOBOLA AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

Kulobola played an important role in the education of a girl child in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Firstly, the system of paying lobola improved girl child access and enrolment. Initially, when kulobola was introduced in Tumbuka society in the late 1890s, the local people showed little or no interest in the education of a girl child. This is because they could not clearly see the relationship between kulobola and the girl child education. In these early times, the Tumbuka parents cherished early marriages so as to earn lobola. Some even withdrew their daughters from schools and married them off so that they acquire lobola. These early marriages negatively affected the girl child access and retention in education. This made girls enrolment in schools to drastically drop. At this point, kulobola became a stumbling block to the girl child education. This scenario makes Muchibwe (2007) and Sennott (2021) argue that lobola curtailed females' freedom to pursue education. However, the situation slowly changed as parents saw the link between kulobola and the girl child education. Tumbuka parents now realised that lobola depended largely on the education of the girl child. This realisation made them consider the education of a girl child as a strategic investment. Thus, kulobola became a pull factor in the

⁵Boston Soko (2014), *Vimbuza: The Healing Dance* (Blantyre: Mzui press), p. 87.

education of girls. It provided a greater incentive for Tumbuka parents to invest in their daughters' education. Parents began to care about the education of their daughters. They made huge investments in the girls' education. These investment ventures increased girls' access to education and eventually improved girls' enrolment levels in schools of Tumbuka society as the table below shows.

Table 3: 1953 Enrolment Levels in some Selected Schools of Tumbuka and Chewa Chiefdoms

S/No.	School	Chiefdom	Ethnic Group	Education Level	Enrolment Figures			Enrolment Percentage (%)	
					Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys
1	Chasefu	Magodi	Tumbuka	Standard V	16	24	40	40	60
2	Lumezi	Zumwanda	Chewa	Standard V	1	34	35	2.9	97.1
3	Mphamba	Magodi	Tumbuka	Sub A-standard II	75	101	176	43	57
4	Zumwanda	Zumwanda	Chewa	Sub A-standard II	13	93	106	12	88

Source: NAZ, sec 2/724, Lundazi Tour Report, 1953, p. 246

Table 3 above clearly shows that enrolment levels of girls at both lower and upper levels of education sector in Tumbuka society (a kulobola community) were higher than those in Chewa society (a non kulobola community). This confirms that kulobola had an upper hand in the improvement of girl child enrolment and access in Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

Kulobola also improved retention for a girl child. This is because parents perceived kulobola as a future income generating activity. At this time the amount of lobola depended largely on the level of education of a girl. This means that girls who had attained higher levels of education fetched more cattle or money. It also implies that when negotiating lobola parents calculated how much was spent on the education of a girl child. This scenario encouraged parents to greatly invest in the education of their daughters. Girls were now reserved for normal marriages so that they could fetch more cattle or money. This reduced early marriages and dropout rates among school going girls in Tumbuka society. This in turn improved retention in schools for girl children. Table 3 above indicates that more girls were retained in Tumbuka society (kulobola community) than in Chewa society (non-kulobola community). For example, at standard V level, Chasefu school of Magodi chiefdom in Tumbuka land had 16 girls out of a total pupil population of 40 while Lumezi School in chief Zumwanda of Chewa society had only 1 girl out of a class population of 35. In terms of girls' retention rate, Chasefu of Tumbuka society stood at 40% whereas Lumezi of Chewa society stood at 2.9%. This clearly confirms that the practice of paying lobola had a great impact on the retention of girls in schools. Kulobola became an incentive for parents to retain their daughters in schools. One Tumbuka female respondent, Avine Mbili Mseteka of Kaseka village in chief Magodi, confirms that the system of kulobola greatly helped her to ascend to higher levels of education in Tumbuka society. She explains that her parents, Aviti Mirriam Nyirenda and Gibson Modikai Mseteka, in their quest to have more lobola, allowed her and other sisters to progress academically. Lundazi district notebook volume II confirms that Avine Mseteka became the first Lundazi girl ever to go forward to secondary education at Chipembi girls' secondary school in today's Chisamba district in central province of Zambia in 1954. Avine completed her junior secondary education in 1955. After completing her form II, she became a primary school teacher in Petauke district of eastern Zambia.

Besides improving girl child access and retention in education, kulobola system improved literacy levels among girls in Tumbuka society. In comparison with Chewa society, the literate rates of girls were higher in Tumbuka society than in Chewa society as table 4 on page 82 tabulates. The table shows that out of 2 756 Tumbuka girls, 244 were literate while out of 6 821 Chewa girls, only 70 were literate. This entails that the literate rate for girls in Tumbuka society stood at

9% while that of girls in Chewa society stood at 1%. Kulobola definitely reduced the figures of illiteracy among the female folk in Tumbuka society. It broke the cycle of poverty since more women accessed available job opportunities after acquiring formal or western education. This eventually reduced chances of women depending on men. The reduction of female dependence syndrome gave Tumbuka women of Lundazi a chance to freely participate in the socio-economic activities of their society. This increased the socio-economic status of women in Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

Table 4: Female Literacy Levels in Tumbuka and Chewa Societies of Lundazi, 1953

S/No.	Chiefdom	Total Population of Girls	Number of Literate Girls	Literate Rate
1	Tumbuka	2 756	244	9%
2	Chewa	6821	70	1%

Source: NAZ, sec 2/724, Lundazi Tour Report, 1953, p. 246

Furthermore, kulobola played a vital role in the elimination of major harmful Tumbuka cultural practices that impinged on the education of a girl child. Kulobola changed Tumbuka traditional attitude towards girls' education. It made a girl child gain a high socio-economic status. Girls became a special target group. In their attempt to get lobola, parents began to give more attention to the education of girls. They removed their old traditional notion which depicted boys as breadwinners and a target group. There removal of this notion culminated in a shift of cultural practice among the Tumbuka of Lundazi. The practice of male preference gave way to female preference while the practice of early marriages gave way to normal marriages. The elimination of these harmful marriage practices positively impacted on the education of a girl child in Tumbuka society. It enabled more girls to access western education in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. This improved access, enrolment and retention of a Tumbuka girl child in education sector. It also improved literacy levels among Tumbuka women of Lundazi.

Finally, kulobola was instrumental in making Tumbuka society of Lundazi become one of the Zambian societies where education opportunities for women did not lag far behind that of men. Kulobola improved education standards of Tumbuka women of Lundazi. Women education levels drew closer to those of men. The education gender gap was narrowed. This was not the case in non kulobola societies of Lundazi. For example, according to table 5 on page 83, out of 609 pupils in Tumbuka society, 244 were girls while out of 370 pupils in Chewa society, only 70 were girls. This implies that 40% of pupil population in Tumbuka society were girls while only 19% of total pupil population in Chewa society were girls. This picture of access was not different from that of enrolment levels. For example, according to table 6 on page 83, in 1953, out of a Tumbuka girls' population of 2 786, 244 girls were enrolled whereas 365 out of a total population of 3 125 boys were enrolled. In comparison, in the same year in Chewa society of Lundazi, 70 girls out of a total girls' population of 8 366 were enrolled and 300 boys out of a total boys' population of 9 215 were enrolled. In terms of enrolment rates, in Tumbuka society, girls stood at 9% while boys stood at 12%. In Chewaland, enrolment rates were lower since girls stood at 1% while boys stood at 3%. This statistical data shows that education opportunities for Tumbuka women did not lag far behind those of Tumbuka men. It also shows that in non kulobola societies the educational opportunities for girls and boys lagged far behind those of the girls in kulobola societies. This clearly demonstrates that kulobola played a vital role in reducing the education gender gap in kulobola societies such as Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Kulobola definitely increased education and employment opportunities for Tumbuka women. It raised the socio-economic status of women in Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

Table 5: Female Education Opportunities (Access) in Tumbuka and Chewa Societies of Lundazi, 1953

S/No.	Chiefdom	Pupil Population	Number of Girls	Girls Access Rate	Boys Access Levels
	Tumbuka	609	244	40%	60%
	Chewa	370	70	19%	81%

Source: NAZ, sec 2/724, Lundazi Tour Report, 1953, p. 246

Table 6: Pupil Enrolment Levels in Tumbuka and Chewa Societies of Lundazi

S/No.	Society	Total Girls' Population	Total Girls Enrolled	Girls Enrolment Rate	Total Boys' Population	Total Boys Enrolled	Boys Enrolment Rate
1	Tumbuka	2 786	244	8.8%	3 125	365	11.7%
2	Chewa	8 366	70	0.8%	9 215	300	3.3

Source: NAZ, sec 2/724, Lundazi Tour Report, 1953, p. 246;

C.W Tembo, "Peasants and resettlement schemes in Chama-Lundazi, 1954-1980" in

Ackson M Kanduza (Ed.) Socio-economic change in eastern Zambia: Pre-colonial to the

1980s (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia, 1992), p. 140

CONCLUSION

The article has demonstrated that the practice of paying lobola (kulobola) greatly impacted on Tumbuka cultural practices of Lundazi. Firstly, the article has shown that kulobola played a significant role in the transformation of marriage practices of Tumbuka society of Lundazi during the British colonial rule. As a result of incorporating the system of kulobola, Tumbuka cultural practices such as male preference, exogamy and early marriages were eliminated. In their place, new marriage practices such as female preference, endogamy and normal marriages were incorporated. In addition, as a result of incorporating kulobola system, divorce cases were reduced in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. This is because kulobola strengthened marriage bonds. Each spouse made sure that marriage lasted to avoid forfeiting or returning lobola. This made divorce expensive and this in turn made marriages in Tumbuka society of Lundazi durable. Kulobola made each couple become a sacrificial lamb and this was sometimes to an extent of one becoming a slave of the other. This explains why many gender activists have condemned the practice of kulobola and have described it as a repugnant cultural practice. The incorporation of kulobola system also intensified some Tumbuka cultural practices such as Mbirigha (Bonus wife), cousin marriages and kusomphola (elopement). Lastly, according to Tumbuka oral traditions, kulobola contributed greatly to the existence of the calamities of 1950s such as famine and trypanomiasis in Tumbuka society of Lundazi since it incorporated endogamous marriages.

Secondly, the article has highlighted that kulobola made the Tumbuka of Lundazi adopt bicultural identity. Besides their usual matrilineal system, the Tumbuka incorporated the Ngoni practice of patrilineal system. The Tumbuka chiefdoms were now divided into two, that is, those practising the old matrilineal system such as Mphamba and those practising the new matrilineal system such as Phikamalaza and Magodi. This means that the Tumbukaland was no longer one united society as before. The adoption of bicultural identity also brought identity crisis. This is because both patrilineal and matrilineal systems were modified. Each system incorporated some concepts of the other. For example, matrilineal system incorporated patrilineal concept of paying lobola while patrilineal system incorporated matrilineal concept of female preference. This made it difficult to tell whether a Tumbuka chiefdom really followed either patrilineal system or matrilineal system. This creation of identity crisis in turn brought confusion in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. This

confusion disturbed the peace that the Tumbuka enjoyed from time memorial. This confusion sometimes ended up into succession dispute in instances where the chief did leave an heir to the throne. This was the case with Mphamba chiefdom in 2008 after the death of Mphamba III, Green Zulu.

The article has also indicated that the system of kulobola changed the ownership of children born to a Tumbuka woman. Through the payment of lobola children were transferred from the mother line to the father line. The brother of the wife no longer had the right over the children of his sister as in the pre-Kulobola Tumbuka society. Instead, her husband had the right over her children. This transfer of ownership of children made the Tumbuka men to greatly invest in the socio-economic ventures of their children. This confirms why school enrolment rates in Tumbuka society (kulobola society) were higher than those of Chewa society (non kulobola society).

Lastly, the article has revealed that kulobola had a positive bearing on girl child education in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Kulobola improved girls' access and retention in education sector. It reduced girls' dropout rates and women illiterate levels. This in turn improved girls' enrolment and women literate rates. Kulobola bridged the education gender gap in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. This is because the system of paying lobola increased female education opportunities in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. Kulobola made education opportunities for women not to lag far behind those of men since more Tumbuka women accessed western or formal education. This elite group of Tumbuka women got employed and were able to support their families. Thus, kulobola drastically reduced women poverty levels and dependence on men. It uplifted the socio-economic status of Tumbuka women of Lundazi.

In summary, kulobola was instrumental in the transformation of Tumbuka cultural practices of Lundazi. It cleaned up Tumbuka culture by getting rid of harmful cultural practices that impinged women's socio-economic ventures such as education. Kulobola gave female folk high status in Tumbuka society. In this way, kulobola was really a positive cultural practice of the Tumbuka of Lundazi. However, what should be clear from our discussion is that kulobola did not completely close the education gender gap. It left some gender gaps in education. Just as Kelly (1999: 47) claims, despite all attempts to improve female education, education opportunities of women still lagged behind those of men in Tumbuka society of Lundazi. In addition, when viewed from Christian and health mirrors, kulobola could be seen as a bad cultural practice since it promoted marriage practices such as cousin marriages, elopement and bonus marriages. But all these negative trends cannot outweigh the numerous positive effects that kulobola had on Tumbuka society. These positive effects make kulobola a real positive cultural practice of Tumbuka society of Lundazi.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Ansell, Nicola. 2001. *Because it's our culture: Negotiating the meaning of lobola in southern African secondary schools* *Journal of southern African studies* 27(4): 697-716.
2. Ashraf, Nava; Bau, Natalic and Voena, Alessandra. 2015. *Brideprice and female education*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
3. Chondoka, Y and Bota, F.F. 2007. *A history of the Tumbuka, from 1400 to 1900*. Lusaka: Academic press.
4. Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1931. *An alternative term for bride price*. *MAN* 31: 36-39.
5. Kelly, M.J. 1999. *The Origins and Development of Education in Zambia*. Lusaka: Image Publishers Limited.

6. Mollel, Neema Silas and Rev. Chong. 2017. *Socio-Cultural Constraints of Girls' Access to Education in Mtwara District, Tanzania. Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 20 (3): 108-125.
7. Moono, Patience Muumbe. 2019. *Lobola and gender-based violence: A case of married women in Lusaka's Kamanga Compound. MA Dissertation, University of Zambia.*
8. Moono, Patience Muumbe. 2020. *Lobola and gender-based violence among married women in Lusaka. Journal of Education, society and behavioural science* 33 (6): 38-47
9. Mushibwe, Catherine. 2007. *What are the effects of cultural traditions on the education of women: The study of the Tumbuka people of Zambia. Ph. D Thesis, University of Huddersfield.*
10. Mvula, Enock Timpunza. 1986. *Mngeniso performance: The articulation of Ngoni identity and unity. Folklore Forum* 19 (1): 51-69.
11. NAZ, KST 3/1. *Lundazi notebook, Vol. II, III and IV*
12. NAZ, sec 2/722. *Lundazi tour reports, 1951 and 1953*
13. Phiri, D.D. 2000. *History of the Tumbuka. Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Company Limited.*
14. Posel, Dorrit and Stephanie Rudwick. 2011. *Marriage and Ilobolo [Bridewealth] in Contemporary Zulu society. Working paper No. 60. December 2011. ISBN 978-1-86840-714-9*
15. Scheidler, Bill. 2010. *What the Bible says about Lobola. Available at www.churchleadershipresources.com>. Retrieved on 5th February, 2021.*
16. Sennott, Christie, Sangeetha Madhavan and Youngeun Nam. 2021. *Modernising marriage: Balancing the Bridewealth in rural South Africa. Qualitative Sociology* 44: 55-75.
17. Simson, Haward. 1985. *Zambia: A country study. Uppsala: SIDA.*
18. Soko, Boston. 2014. *Vimbuza: The Healing Dance. Blantyre: Mzui press.*
19. Tembo, C.W. 1992. *Peasants and resettlement schemes in Chama-Lundazi, 1954-1980. In: Socio-Economic Change in Eastern Zambia: Pre-Colonial to the 1980s, Ackson M Kanduza (ed.), pp. 131-166. Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia.*
20. Vail, Leroy and Landeg White. 1989. *Tribalism in the political history of Malawi. In: The creation of tribalism in southern Africa, Leroy Vail (ed.), pp. 152-184. California: University of California.*
21. *Zambia Daily Mail Limited.*

