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# Historical Values and Colonial Export Policies of Oil Palm Produce in Colonial Times: Ekiti Land in Focus (1900-1939)

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the historical values and colonial export policies in regard to oil palm production among the Ekiti people within the colonial years of 1900 and 1939. Cultivation of oil palm serves as a means of livelihood for many rural families and indeed the farming culture of millions of people in the part of the country. The reference to oil palm as a crop of multiple value underscores its historical and economic importance among the people of south western Nigeria as far back as 1900s. The history of oil palm production in Africa dates back to pre-colonial periods and the commercialization of palm oil and palm kernel with the Europeans since the nineteenth century assert the strong economic importance of the product to the relationship that existed between Africans and Europeans. Hence, this research historicise and outline the basic colonial policies which drives the production of palm oil and palm kernel in the early years of 1900s as well as the hidden benefits of such policies either to the colony or metropolis. The work relies on both primary and secondary sources and employs both descriptive and analytic methods.

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# Historical Values and Colonial Export Policies of Oil Palm Produce in Colonial Times: Ekiti Land in Focus (1900-1939)

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the historical values and colonial export policies in regard to oil palm production among the Ekiti people within the colonial years of 1900 and 1939. Cultivation of oil palm serves as a means of livelihood for many rural families and indeed the farming culture of millions of people in the part of the country. The reference to oil palm as a crop of multiple value underscores its historical and economic importance among the people of south western Nigeria as far back as 1900s. The history of oil palm production in Africa dates back to pre-colonial periods and the commercialization of palm oil and palm kernel with the Europeans since the nineteenth century assert the strong economic importance of the product to the relationship that existed between Africans and Europeans. Hence, this research historicise and outline the basic colonial policies which drives the production of palm oil and palm kernel in the early years of 1900s as well as the hidden benefits of such policies either to the colony or metropolis. The work relies on both primary and secondary sources and employs both descriptive and analytic methods.*

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## II. INTRODUCTION

The oil palm is an indigenous plant not only to the people of Ekiti but also to all the people of tropical Africa. Before the establishment of British rule in the region, the people had established an economic system which revolved; to a minima

extent around the oil palm. The people had a financial system which made adequate provisions for their needs and their immediate neighbours. (Ajayi et al., 2017)

International trade in palm oil began at the turn of the nineteenth century, while that of palm kernels developed only after 1832. Palm oil became the principal cargo for slave ships after the abolition of the slave trade. The establishment of trade in palm oil from West Africa was mainly the result of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. As people in Europe began to take sanitation and hygiene seriously, demand for soap increased, resulting in the demand for vegetable oil suitable for soap manufacture and other technical uses. Tin-plating required technical oil for which palm oil was found suitable. In the early 1870s exports of palm oil from the Niger Delta were 25,000 to 30,000 tonnes per annum and by 1911 the British West African territories exported 87,000 tonnes. (Helleiner, 1966)

The export of palm kernels also began in 1832, and by 1911 British West Africa alone exported 157,000 tonnes of which about 75 percent came from Nigeria. Nigeria was the largest exporter until 1934 when Malaysia surpassed the country. Africa led the world in production, and export of palm oil throughout the first half of the twentieth century, led by Nigeria and Zaire. (N.A.I., 1923) By 1966, however. Malaysia and Indonesia had surpassed Africa total palm oil production. In the Oil Palm Review, published by the Tropical Development and Research Institute in the United Kingdom over 3 million tonnes of palm oil was produced by Malaysia alone in 1983, compared

with a total of about 1.3 million tonnes of African production. (Osadola, 2014) The quantity of palm plantations in Nigeria is one of the major reasons why the Europeans ventured into Africa in search of the materials needed to service the fast-growing industrial revolution in Europe.

The Ekiti people were among the various sub-ethnic groups that made up the Oyo Empire in the seventeenth century and also one of Ibadan's imperial subjects during the nineteenth century. A civil war called Ekiti-parapo eventually liberated the people from the domination of Ibadan warlords and Ajele, which eventually led to the signing of the treaty of protection with the Europeans that kick-started colonial rule.

The major significance of 1900 in the economic and political history of Nigeria cannot be undermined; it formed the official beginning of Colonial rule in Southern Nigeria, while 1939 marked the beginning of the Second World War. Hence, this research will cover the whole era of the First World War- 1914-1918 as well as the post-war era until the beginning of the Second World War in 1939.

## II. COLONIAL RULE AND OIL PALM INDUSTRY IN EKITI 1900-1939: A DISCOURSE

Palm trees grew wild in Ekiti just like other parts of South-Western Nigeria where its products had been of immense benefits to the indigenous people before the coming of the Europeans. Among the principal exports during Her contact with European, oil palm produce, notably palm oil, has the most extended history of export trade.

In the last two centuries before 1900, with the Industrial revolution going on in Europe, there was a high demand for oil which was used as a lubricant for the machines and for making soap and candles. According to Dike:

With the increasing population at the time of the Industrial Revolution in Britain came changes in social customs and industrial requirements. As British people began to take washing seriously, the demand for soap rose considerably, and palm oil was the chief constituent in the manufacture. The substitution of metal for wood machinery and the development of railways caused a steep rise in the use of oil as a lubricant. The existing sources of animal fats were only inadequate but sometimes unsuitable. West Africa palm oil was found to satisfy these needs. (Dike, 1956).

Palm kernel was also in high demands in Europe for its use in the manufacture of soap, margarine, candle and pharmaceutical products, while the residual cake as a valuable livestock feed. With this high demand for palm oil and kernels in Europe, their production and export also witnessed a steep rise. Between 1900 and 1960, the quantity of palm oil exported from Nigeria rose over five-fold from 85,624 tons in 1900 to 418,176 tons in 1960. The number of palm kernels produced in Nigeria was more than that of palm oil because while all the palm kernels produced were exported; it was only the surplus of palm oil that was exported as it was consumed locally. (Osadola, 2014).

## III. PRODUCTION AND EXPORT

*Table 1.1:* Quantity of Exports of palm products in Nigeria, 1900-1939

Year	Palm Kernels	Palm-Oil	Year	Palm-Kernels	Palm-Oil
1900	85,624	45,508	1916	161,439	67,422
1901	114,046	56,766	1917	185,998	74,619
1902	132,556	64,167	1918	205,167	86,425
1903	131,898	54,257	1919	216,913	100,967
1904	139,788	57,947	1920	207,010	84,856
1905	108,822	50,562	1921	153,354	52,771

Historical Values and Colonial Export Policies of Oil Palm Produce in Colonial Times: Ekiti Land in Focus (1900-1939)

1906	133,347	57,260	1922	178,723	87,609
1907	133,630	65,473	1923	223,172	99,439
1908	136,558	70,460	1924	252,847	127,083
1909	158,849	82,130	1925	272,925	128,113
1910	172,907	76,851	1926	249,100	113,267
1911	176,390	79,387	1927	257,206	113,240
1912	184,625	76,994	1928	246,638	127,111
1913	174,718	83,090	1929	251,477	131,845
1914	162,452	72,531	1930	260,022	135,801
1915	153,319	72,994	1931	254,454	118,179
1932	309,061	116,060	1936	386,145	162,778
1933	259,945	128,696	1937	337,749	145,718
1934	289,447	112,773	1938	312,048	110,243
1935	312,746	142,628	1939	299,943	121,042

Source: G.K. Helleiner, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and economic growth in Nigeria*, Illinois: Richard Irwin Inc., 1966. Table IV-A-8. pp. 506-507

The oil palm produce which was exported from Ekiti in the early part of colonial rule were those obtained from the palm trees that grew wild and luxuriantly in the forest. The number of palm products produced at this time depended mainly on the oil palm fruits harvested from the forest and the efforts which the people put in processing them – communities like Ado, Ikere, Aramoko, Iyin, Ikole, Ayede, Igede, Erinjiyan, Afao, Oye, Ifaki, Erinmope Agbado and Aisegba Ekiti were actively involved in the production of palm kernel in Ekiti. (Osadola, 2014) Although they also produce palm oil, it was mainly meant for consumption and not for exportation. The method of processing oil palm produce before the introduction of oil processing machine into Nigeria during the Second World War was the one which the people had known from the earliest time. Even when the machines were introduced, the people continued with their traditional method without much alteration.

The men did the climbing of the trees and cutting the palm fruits while the women processed the fruits to obtain oil and kernels. Processing began by first having the fruits cooked. The soft fruits were then poured into a large wooden vat which the women entered and began to mash them with their feet. When the fruits had been thoroughly mashed, water was poured on the mashed fruits in the vat to bring the oil to the top of the water while the nuts remained at the bottom of the tank.

The oil was then collected into a large pot and boiled over the fire until all the water had evaporated, leaving only the oil. The surface was then skimmed off, leaving impurities at the bottom of the pot. The oil was then boiled over the fire a second time until what was left was pure edible oil. The palm nuts, on the other hand, were collected and kept in the sun to dry before using strong objects or stones to crack them for removal of the kernels. (Ajayi, 2017)

The production of palm oil and kernels was carried out on a part-time basis in Ekiti. The men did the harvesting of palm fruits during their free period when there was nothing much to be done on their farmland. They used long ropes (Igba) to climb the trees to cut down the palm fruits. The fruits were then collected together and sold to the women or, in the case of married men given to their wives for processing. In cases where the wives of the men did the processing, the palm oil was sold and the proceeds given to the men while the women took possession of the palm nuts which they cracked and sold to produce buyers as compensation for their labour. (Osadola, 2014)

It is clear that palm oil production based on plantations has very considerable advantages over an industry based on natural Palmaris. In addition to higher oil yields per tree, processing in large plantation mills gives greater extraction efficiency, a better quality oil and-owing to

planned full-capacity operation lower processing costs than are obtainable under a peasant smallholder system. Despite these advantages, the colonial administration resisted the determined efforts of William Hesketh Lever in 1907, 1920, and 1925 to establish such plantations in Nigeria. (Dike, 1956) Lever was anxious to secure a raw material supply for the European soap industry. However, upholding the dual mandate" the colonial government was even more determined than the agricultural resources of the West African dependencies be developed "through the agency of their indigenous populations" and that as a "fundamental principle no non-native would be allowed freehold land rights. Efforts of the Nigerian government since the late 1950s to attract foreign investment into the plantation field have been frustrated by the heavy export tax involved in compulsory sales to the marketing board; indeed most of the 13,000 acres of palm oil plantation in the hands of expatriates are being replanted with rubber trees, a product not controlled by a marketing board. (Helleiner, 1966) Trade-in palm oil as an export commodity did not begin until 1923. Before this period, or from 1900 to the early 1920s, trade-in palm oil was mostly local, since palm oil was mainly used for local consumption. The Nigerian middlemen bought palm oil in Ekiti and other areas of Ondo Province like Ondo and Okitipupa town. Some middlemen also came from the Benin Province. These middlemen bought palm oil in 'kerosene tin, which is the largest measure sold, as there is nothing but carrier transport" to transport this in bigger containers. (Ajayi, 2017) The price for each kerosene tin varied from 5 shillings to 7 shillings, or "from £11 to £15 per ton". (Osadola, 2014) In the early 1930s, when the Ekiti farmers turned more attention to palm oil production, there was also an increase in the number of intermediaries who also made kerosene tins, as buying containers, very popular.

Many Ekiti farmers also acquired these kerosene tins in quantity to store palm oil which had earlier been stored traditionally in their clay pots (*Ikoko* or *usa*). (Osadola, 2014) The farmers' wives and

children used to transport, on their heads, tins of palm oil from the farm to the town. The tins of palm oil were sold to the middlemen who usually stored them in their shops before being transported by motor vehicles to the evacuation centres in Ado, Ikoro, Omuo and Ikere where they were sold to some European firms like Messrs Mac Neil Scot Ltd and Messrs Mac Liver. (NAI, 1923)

Since the 1920s, informed observers have unceasingly predicted the imminent loss of Nigeria's native industry by efficient plantation producers. In the pre-war period, the Dutch plantations in Indonesia were going to ring the death knell on Nigeria's indigenous sector. "The West African producers felt, for the first time, the pressure of competition which was growing at an astonishing and menacing speed. It was no longer a spirit of greed but one of fear, which dominated the discussion". Starting from scratch in the early 1920s, in little more than a decade Indonesia had overtaken Nigeria as the world's leading exporter; however, after the war and the removal of the Dutch, expansion was replaced by decline and stagnation. In the post-war years, Belgian and British plantations in the Congo (concessions granted to Lever in 1911) showed similarly rapid growth. (Olodi, 2014).

#### IV. COLONIAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

The colonial administration, however, did not rest content with just preserving the native system. It set out to increase the technical efficiency of indigenous production, and thereby its competitiveness in the world market by introducing reforms on two fronts-palm grove rehabilitation and improved processing techniques. Although it is the processing aspect which is the subject of our inquiry, for a full understanding of the problems involved it is necessary to review, if only briefly, the essential developments on the agricultural side.

When the British finally penetrated the hinterland of the Yoruba-land, the exploitation of oil palms was paramount in her imperial motives. Of all the

principal export commodities during the colonial period, palm oil and palm kernel have the longest histories being some of the earliest commodities exported from present-day Nigeria. (Ajayi et al., 2017) Palm produce became important in the second half of the nineteenth century with the abolition of the slave trade, the inauguration of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, and the development of the railway which required palm oil as a lubricant. Moreover so, palm oil was used for "the manufacturing of soap, candles, margarine, and as cooking fat". (Osadola, 2014) The use of palm oil in Europe increased with time. The residue of palm- kernel was fed to livestock, while palm oil itself was used for the manufacturing of pharmaceutical products. (Oloidi, 2014)

Between 1865 and 1910, the export of palm produce doubled from West Africa as Nigeria took the lead. (Oloidi, 2014) By 1900, palm produce constitutes 89% of Nigeria's total export. (Stillard, 1938) But this trend began to decline with the emergence and export of other products including rubber and cocoa. Nigeria's lead in the palm produces export trade was further threatened with the growth of plantation in Sumatra, Malaya, and Belgian Congo. By the 1920s, these countries have begun to export high-quality palm oil. (Helleiner, 1966)

Understandably this threat to British economic interest in the world market for palm produce was readily checked through several colonial policies. Central to these policies was the aim of maximally exploiting the natural and human resource of Nigeria for the of securing: profitably trade to Britain. (Ajayi et al., 2017) This, the colonial administration hoped to achieve not by radically destroying the existing indigenous production methods, but, through the modification of such. 'Furthermore, there was the need for government to encourage the introduction of demonstration plantations, and the use of hand presses and crushing mills tor boosting the quality of extracted oil

Before the establishment of British colonial administration among the Ekiti people of South-Western Nigeria, the people had established an economic system which made not only fairly adequate provisions for their needs but also those of their immediate neighbours such as the Ebira, Ijesa and Ondo. The principal economic activity of the people was farming and collecting widely grown palm nut from which oil and kernel were extracted. (Osadola, 2014)

Between 1900 and 1920, kernels were used mainly for domestic purposes. This was because the crop had not attracted external buyers. Unlike palm oil which was very complicated and challenging to produce, kernels were cheaper to produce though with some physical effort. Besides, it was an agricultural activity that involved, or was opened to, both the young and the old. What the production needed was patience, painstaking search for kernel nuts in the bush underneath wild palm trees; in the case where kernel nuts were not obtained from palm oil local factories. The production also needed painstaking cracking of the nuts one by one to extract the kernels. These were the production activities which nearly all the Ekiti children grew up with. By 1938, however, it was clear that, because of the continued high demand, kernels had become a steady source of economic satisfaction, particularly to the poor farmers. Chief Anibaba has also made this situation more explicit:

Could you believe that because of only 2 pence, demanded handwork in school some children were forced to stop their primary education permanently? This was in the 1920s, and even during our time, the same thing happened. Because some parents could not afford this additional 2 pence to the annual fees (about 5 shillings) already paid for each child. But kernels saved the situation for many children and parents. All the parents did was to tell the children to go and pick kernel nuts for two days in the farm and crack for sale at the nearest produce stores. For these two days of the job, a child could make

up to 6 pence or more. There was always this ready market for kernels. (Oloidi, 2014)

However, in the late 1920s, the interest in kernel production increased in many Ekiti towns. Kernel shops or produce stores where weighting and buying kernels took place also increased, along with agents of some European firms in Ondo Province. By 1923, the drive for Ekiti kernels as the exportable crop had seriously begun. And by 1925, the European firm, Messrs MacNeil Scott Ltd., with the help of their Ekiti and Okitipupa “native middlemen”, had started taking their purchases to Lagos through Koko Port ‘by canoe or launch’. (Osadola, 2014)

In 1927, after many years of experimental breeding, the Department of Agriculture began to distribute free selected seedlings to farmers for the establishment of cultivated palm plantation groves, the experimental station for oil palm seedlings was opened at Okitipupa. (Osadola, 2014) In 1935 the Cultivated Palm Ordinance provided a financial incentive to farmers to undertake such planting by way of a rebate of the export duty. However, by 1938 only 5,530 farmers out of nearly one million had planted these seedlings, 9, 213 acres in all. (Oloidi, 2014)

## V. LIMITATIONS AND SHORT-COMINGS

There were many reasons for this disappointing performance. Principal among these were plot fragmentation and land tenure complications, difficult to administer and inadequate financial incentives periodic shortages of seedling supplies, the absence of significant price differentials for higher quality oil, and fear that the government would eventually impose a tax on the planted trees as it had done in some cocoa districts. (Scott, 1946) While Professor Hancock has stressed inadequate agricultural extension efforts. (Hancock, 1942) Richenda Scott points out the then as yet unsolved technical problems:

Over 3,000 acres of palm groves have been planted under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture, but no one has proved a complete success. A severe falling off

in yield occurs after the ninth or tenth year, while even peak years have shown yields much below those of the Far Eastern plantations. The cultivated palm tends to exhaust the fertility of the soil more rapidly than the wild palm growing under natural conditions, for in the bush or dense palm grove the non-bearing palms and other trees provide essential plant nutrients, which they draw from the subsoil and from which the palms in bearing benefit. This supply is lacking in the carefully spaced palm groves of 60 trees to the acre. (Scott, 1946)

The Cambridge History of Africa noted that palm oil ‘had replaced slaves as the main export from West Africa supplying material for soap, lubricants and lighter fuel to distant markets. The kernel was also used in the form of margarine, but by 1928 Nigeria’s position in the world export market for palm products was deteriorating. David Meredith noted that by 1922, palm products accounted for 57% of Nigeria’s domestic exports compared to 92% in 1909--1913, in part because of increased competition from other countries. (Meredith, 1984) The situation would worsen. In 1928 Nigeria exported 128,000 tons, and its three main rivals, Malaya, Dutch East Indies and the Belgian Congo exported 45,500 between them. In 1938, Nigeria exported 110,000 tons, while the other countries now exported 344,000 tons. (Times Newspaper, 1945)

Lord Balfour of Inchrye, formerly Resident Minister in West Africa, blamed the decline on ‘out-of-date methods’ and suggested that education of the African grower is essential. Still, it is a high and lengthy task. (Julius, 1928) An article written by the Director of Agriculture in 1928 stated that the outstanding feature of the structure of society in Nigeria is the fact that all the farming is done by peasant farmers the smallest of smallholders The average farm consists of three acres of crop ‘The article again suggested that nearly 100,000 tons of oil are wasted annually owing to the inefficiency of the native methods of extraction’ further suggesting that it was evident that what Nigeria needs is



factories to buy the fruit from the native and extract the oil and kernels modern methods'. (Osadola, 2014)

While the government stipulated that expatriates should not own plantations in West Africa, increased colonial influence in 1928 - in the form of a direct adult male taxation-did lead to unrest. Fifty women were killed and another fifty injured after the British responded to female protests against injustices, deteriorating trade conditions and the alleged introduction of a women's tax. Susan Martin examined the so-called 'Women's Riot' of 1929 and assessed the conditions faced by Ngwa women during the 1920s, yet no sense of worker unrest is addressed. (Martins, 1988)

From 1910, the colonial administration began direct involvement in the oil palm industry in the Ekiti region as government policy started to unfold. British economic policy towards the oil palm industry in Ekiti land was influenced not only by the general agricultural policy of Britain in Nigeria but its overall goals and motivations for occupying Nigerian in general. British colonial economic policy up to 1945 was characterized by many agenda. Central to these was maximally exploiting the natural and human resources of Nigeria for the express purpose of securing profitable trade in the world market. (Oloidi, 2014) It was perhaps this motive that influenced the British colonial administration to place the exploitation of cash crops such as oil palm cocoa cotton groundnut and rubber topmost priority in her economic development programme in Nigeria.

The colonial government believed in achieving the development of cash crops not by radically destroying and or altering the people s existing indigenous production techniques. but "through the gradual modification of such" (Osadola, 2014) Modifications were to be effected through various ways First the colonial government tried to make aailable to the local farmers the kind of seedlings known to increase the yield Secondly, the colonial government also sought to improve the quality of the cash crops produced by the people.

The initiative for the modernization of the oil palm industry came from Sir William Lever of Lever Brothers Ltd who suggested the giants or concession of land to commercial firms for the establishment of palm plantations. But this proposal was rejected by the colonial government as well as home government and the commercial firms of the United Africa Company (UAC), and in particular; John Holt. Similarly, British public opinion led by E. D. Morel was vociferously opposed to the scheme. (Osadola, 2014) It was argued that the plantation system would disrupt the traditional land tenure system, which could lead to violent outburst and protests by indigenes who would be deprived of their land.

For the colonial government, such a prospect was anathema to efficient administration. Besides, it was contended that a thriving oil palm plantation would inevitably create a class of landless labourers who would be left unemployed if the plantation failed. Besides, the granting of freehold land to European firms would cause "endless legal and political problems for the colonial authorities'. (Osadola, 2014) Moreover, in the broader West Africa where Nigeria belonged, it was not sure that European owned oil palm plantations could be profitable without permanent government protection, assistance and subsidy a prospect which the colonial administration did not find appealing.

Many Nigerian nationalists also expressed opposition to the plantation initiative. For example, Dr C. C. Adeniyi Jones, member of the Nigeria legislative council, referred to the nucleus plantations proposal as the "thin end of a wedge", and asked, "Where, (if these plantations were to be in sparsely populated areas), their labour force would come from?". (Oloidi, 2014) It seemed to him that involuntary labour would likely be resorted to. Julius Ojo-Cole expressed a similar reservation, and he urges the Nigerian government to turn to the Nigerian farmers rather than the Liverpool chamber of commerce to develop the oil palm industry. If this suggestion were acceded to by the colonial government, it would have significantly redressed some of the

problems that emerge when pioneer oil mills were finally established in the region. (Ajayi et al., 2017)

Aside from the opposition of Nigerian nationalists, and the local farmers, the failure of the plantation schemes elsewhere influenced the decision of the colonial government not to endorse the plan. The inability of plantation schemes in Sierra-Leone and the Gold coast (Ghana) where government opposition was not as pronounced as in Nigeria, must be regarded as a plausible explanation for the lukewarm attitude of the government to the scheme. These plantations failed because there were difficulties with regards to labour recruitment and diseases from neighbouring native trees. Thus, it first seemed that the administration was guided by antecedence. (NAI, 1923)

But in the face of mounting competition and pressure from the joint West Africa committees of the Liverpool, London and Manchester chamber of commerce, the secretary of state for the colonies organized a committee in 1923 to study the Nigerian palm sector, and make recommendations for its improvement. After an intensive survey of the industry, the committee supported the introduction of the plantation scheme and development of the palm groves. It also recommended the introduction of produce inspection to help regulate the quality of palm produce exported from Nigeria. (Osadola, 2014) Oil palm production in colonial times was characterized by economic changes which were introduced by the European merchants to gain wholly from the established legitimate commerce. (Falola and Ihonvbere, 1987)

Oil palm industry was a significant target of the European as a result of the need for its product to make soap and candles and for the eventual lubrication of the newly invented industrial machines in Europe. It is however vital that Africa, especially Nigeria, has a lot of palm plantation which explained the European interest in the country.

Between 1900-1939 the palm oil traders encountered an increase in price most especially in the northern part of the Ekiti division. The Ilorin traders are offering higher prices for palm kernels than the traders buying for export can afford to pay, and the result is that kernels are going North for the making of 'Adin' (Native Pomade). (Osadola, 2014) However, the oil palm industry in Ekiti during the colonial time was majorly restricted or limited to palm kernels exportation while the palm oil was left alone for local consumption. It was only in the Eastern part of Nigeria that both palm oil and palm kernels were subjected to rapid exportation.

Furthermore, European firms trade salt for kernels during this period in Ekiti District while bonuses of petrol were awarded to lorry owners who deliver over a specific target figure of kernels. Firms were instructed to also stipulate a precise production of kernels as a condition for delivery of particular goods to their agents and customers while the government also specifies a certain proportion of kernels to the cocoa which it is prepared to buy and firms to do the same with their buyers. (Osadola, 2014)

The people of Ekiti found that the cultivation of oil palm trees was undoubtedly going to have long-lasting economic benefits for them because of the dual products derivable from the trees. For one, the oil derived from the trees had a constant and steady local market, and secondly, palm kernel was very much in high demands in Europe. The farmers, therefore, relegated the production of food crops. Palm trees were capable of being inter-cropping with other food crops for some 'sears until the trees were fully grown to prevent other crops from growing underneath. This, therefore, means that one of the significant techniques- mixed cropping-which the people had practised from time was not disrupted by oil palm cultivation. (Osadola, 2014)

The steady supply of oil palm produce (oil and kernels) to the market in Ekiti was the result of the abundance of oil palm trees both in the forest and in the plantations. Although it is important to

note that, the export market made greater use of palm kernel than palm oil due to the consumption of the former by the indigenes. (Osadola, 2014).

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has been able to give a detailed examination of some colonial policies that affected the oil palm industry during the period of 1900- 1939, it is hence of the view that the major effort of the colonizers on the Oil Palm Industry is to enhance better production for export and not for the betterment of the people living in the various communities who were the local producers. The need for Palm oil and Kernels as a major raw material for the industrial growth in Europe is seen as the major factor that necessitated a full exploitation of the Oil palm industry by the European and the Ekiti people of the eastern Yoruba-land were also affected by the various policies put in place by the Europeans as they are also a major supplier of Palm Kernel for export.

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