

Impact of Batwa Settlement Patterns on Their Social Economic Development: A Case Study of Kisoro Municipality

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Abstract: *The study aimed at establishing the impact of Batwa settlement patterns on their social economic development in Kisoro Municipality. The study was guided by objectives which included; to assess the causes of Batwa settlement patterns in Kisoro Municipality, to investigate the challenges faced by Batwa community in Kisoro Municipality and to identify strategies to the challenges faced by Batwa and enhance social economic development in Kisoro Municipality. A case study research design was used by adopting qualitative and participatory approach methods. A sample size of twenty eight respondents was selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection was done using focus group discussions and interviews. Findings of the study indicated that Batwa faced a lot of challenges such as landlessness and women were at the center of different forms of violations compared to men, although both genders are experiencing some level of vulnerability and challenges such as racism, discrimination and human rights violations. Different institutions such as NGOs, churches and individual Batwa organizations (UOBDU) tried to solve the challenge of the landlessness Batwa face but there are still more needed to implement and protect their land rights as other ethnic groups in Uganda. The study recommended that there is need for mass sensitization throughout Batwa communities and for men to accept that a woman getting into higher positions of leadership is not a cultural degradation but rather an opportunity for all Batwa strong people who can advocate for their rights rather than outsiders fighting for them. The issue of resettling Batwa done by different stakeholders was an effort to improve their situation, but it is not solving it because the given lands have no legal documents that confirm the Batwa's of their ownership. In cases of conflicts between the Batwa over land, it became hard to settle such disputes without documents of ownership showing clear land boundaries. Most of the projects set by NGOs required land set up, and without land their implementation was hindered. However, such projects should also promote Batwa's cultures such that their cherished traditional identity is maintained rather than projects that aim to change them to be like the dominant societies. Therefore, for proper sustainability of such projects, Batwa must be consulted on what they feel is good for their community other than imposing on them a project which might not be of their interest.*

Keywords: Settlement Patterns; Social Economic Development, Batwa

INTRODUCTION

This study established the impact of Batwa settlement patterns on their social economic development in Kisoro Municipality. It assessed the causes of Batwa settlement patterns in Kisoro Municipality, investigated the challenges faced by Batwa community in Kisoro Municipality and suggested strategies to the challenges faced by Batwa and enhance social economic development in Kisoro Municipality.

Background to the Study

Batwa were forest-dwelling hunters-gatherers, living and practicing their cultural and economic way of life in the high mountainous forest areas around Lake Kivu and Lake Edward in Uganda and the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. Their main subsistence activities were fruit gathering, hunting, pottery, weaving baskets, harvesting honey, collecting herbs that were a source of income and practicing music and dance for recreational purposes. Traditionally, Batwa had three types of houses; caves, "omuririmbo" and "ichuro" in which the caves and "omuririmbo" were their main houses. Ichuro were used for resting and storing food including meat, honey, beans and sorghum. Today the Batwa number is approximately 6,700 living within the present state boundaries of Uganda, mainly in the southwest region (IWGIA 2016). A report about cultural assessment in October 2013 from Fauna and Flora International states that their principal language is Rutwa with Rukiga and Rufumbira being the minority in a community dominated by Bakiga and Bafumbira respectively.

Currently, they are no longer able to live only as hunters and gatherers, but they practice agriculture and live as squatters on other people's land after their eviction in 1991 from Bwindi and Mgahinga forests (IWGIA 2016). According to the data collected by The United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) in 2007, Batwa are found in six districts, including: Kabale, Kisoro, Ntungamo, Lwengo, Mbarara and Kanungu, located in the southwest part of the country. As a result of their exclusion from their ancestral forests and the loss of their traditional lifestyle, the majority of Batwa in Uganda suffer severe poverty, discrimination and socio-political exclusion from other ethnic groups. Unlike Batwa in Burundi, who have political representatives, there are no known Batwa holding positions of political responsibility in Uganda today (UOBDU, 2015).

It is generally accepted that the greatest challenge faced by the Batwa is limited or lack of land on which to settle and farm. Resettling the Batwa has therefore been a common intervention by a number of organisations concerned with their plight. These have met with mixed success, but the experience of the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) appears to have been particularly effective. BMCT was established in 1994 to foster the conservation of the biodiversity of the Mgahinga and Bwindi National Parks. The Trust therefore works with the surrounding communities, including Batwa communities, to integrate conservation and development outcomes. It procured 406 acres of land and settled 303 Batwa households in Rubanda, Kisoro and Kanungu districts. The BMCT's strategy is based on the belief that providing displaced Batwa with assets is an important way to foster their sense of self, since it is by owning productive assets such as land, a house and livestock, that the Batwa become valued in the eyes of the local communities. BMCT encourages the Batwa to identify their own desired piece of land in a neighbourhood of their choice to ensure that they appreciate the proposed land to be acquired. This must also be where they will co-exist peacefully with the sellers. The Batwa lead on the price negotiation process without the involvement of the Trust, thus often securing a lower price than the seller might agree on for an NGO.

To qualify for such land, and as agreed by both Batwa and the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust, one must be an existing squatter, have a family with children, be socially accepted within the community and be able and willing to participate in building a house on the allocated land. Community acceptance is measured for instance by acceptance to participate in the monthly "stretcher group meetings" (engozi), in community savings and loans associations (although this can be challenging because the Batwa may not have the necessary income to contribute to the groups' rotational savings scheme) and by the land owners' willingness to sell to the Mutwa concerned. Recognising the need to support the Batwa that have been resettled with other basic amenities, the land to be purchased is preferred not to be in some distant location, but within a reasonable distance from health facilities, a church ("to foster moral values") and a school where the beneficiary family will be encouraged and supported to educate their children. These conditions are meant to foster inter-ethnic linkages, mutual recognition and incentives to embrace development. To promote acceptance, BMCT encourages the local community to embrace the Batwa in their midst and to sell land to them. Although the government has supported the Batwa through providing them with shelter, most Batwa do not want to settle in these houses and their social economic conditions remain poor. It is against this background that this study was conducted to establish the impact of Batwa settlement patterns on their social economic development in Kisoro Municipality

Statement of the Problem

During the early 1930's and later in the 90's, major evictions of the Batwa were carried out in Bwindi impenetrable forest and Mgahinga National Park. For thousands of years, the Batwa people lived peacefully in the dense forests found in these two national parks and survived by hunting and gathering fruit. Colonial rule by the British marked the beginning of the end for the Batwa reign in the forest. The colonial rulers and later governments of Uganda considered the Batwa to be poachers and saw an urgent need to protect the forests in Bwindi (Then known as Echuya) and Mgahinga – but more importantly the rare and endangered mountain Gorillas living therein. Batwa were forced to abandon their cultural heritage, customs and way of life to live in selected camps and settlements outside the two forests/parks in the Districts of Kanungu, Kabale and Kisoro. Despite great efforts by the government and several international and local organizations to help ensure a smooth transition to their new settlements, things haven't gone according to plan. The Batwa have never adapted to their new way of life and settlements. They have to deal with new diseases, drunkenness and chronic poverty which is something they had never experienced considering that the forests provided for their every need. While in the forest, they could go hunting, harvest honey or gather fruits. Now they have to practice bee keeping and other farming methods which they find difficult considering the rudimentary methods still used. It is against this background that the study was conducted to establish the impact of Batwa settlement on their social economic development in Kisoro Municipality.

Purpose of the Study

To establish the impact of Batwa settlement patterns on their social economic development in Kisoro Municipality.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the causes of Batwa settlement patterns in Kisoro Municipality
- ii. To investigate the challenges faced by Batwa community in Kisoro Municipality.
- iii. To suggest strategies to the challenges faced by Batwa and enhance social economic development in Kisoro Municipality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Causes of Batwa Settlement Pattern Uganda

Loss of their traditional lifestyle

Batwa were forest-dwelling hunters-gatherers, living and practicing their cultural and economic way of life in the high mountainous forest areas around Lake Kivu and Lake Edward in Uganda and the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. Their main subsistence activities were fruit gathering, hunting, pottery, weaving baskets, harvesting honey, collecting herbs that were a source of income and practicing music and dance for recreational purposes. As a result of their exclusion from their ancestral forests and the loss of their traditional lifestyle, the majority of Batwa in Uganda suffer severe poverty, discrimination and socio-political exclusion from other ethnic groups. Unlike Batwa in Burundi, who have political representatives, there are no known Batwa holding positions of political responsibility in Uganda today (UOBDU, 2015).

Traditionally, Batwa had three types of houses; caves, “omuririmbo” and “ichuro” in which the caves and “omuririmbo” were their main houses. Ichuro were used for resting and storing food including meat, honey, beans and sorghum. Today, the Batwa number is approximately 6,700 living within the present state boundaries of Uganda, mainly in the southwest region (IWGIA, 2016). A report about cultural assessment in October 2013 from Fauna and Flora International states that their principal language is Rutwa with Rukiga and Rufumbira being the minority in a community dominated by Bakiga and Bafumbira respectively.

Eviction

Currently, Batwa are no longer able to live only as hunters and gatherers, but they practice agriculture and live as squatters on other people’s land after their eviction in 1991 from Bwindi and Mgahinga forests (IWGIA, 2016). According to the data collected by The United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) in 2007, Batwa are found in six districts, including: Kabale, Kisoro, Ntungamo, Lwengo, Mbarara and Kanungu, located in the southwest part of the country.

According to the report from Working Group on Indigenous Population (WGIP) in 2005, Bwindi and Mgahinga forests became national parks for gorillas in 1991, enabling authorities to evict the Batwa definitively from the forest on grounds of being government’s protected land for nature conservation. These national parks are managed by the Ugandan government through Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust Fund (MBIFCT), which was changed to Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) in 1994 and funded by World Bank’s Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The overall objective of BMCT is the protection of the forests, also responsible for the Batwa component which specifically seeks to address their needs as they were particularly affected by the creation of the National Parks. The Government of Uganda was required to provide an indigenous peoples plan to ensure that there is participation and benefits of the Batwa to World Bank. It was approved and funded for four years in order to manage the created national parks; however, parks were created without consulting or seeking any consent of the Batwa as required by international law. A statement by a representative of the BMCT at the 5th World Bank Congress in 2003 confirms that the access to forest products in the National Parks was denied to Batwa creating hostility against the protected areas by local communities (UOBDU, 2015).

Restrictions and Prohibitions on Indigenous Land-use Activities in World Heritage Sites: Some protected natural areas are inscribed on the World Heritage list with tight restrictions imposed on indigenous land-use practices such as hunting, gathering, farming or animal husbandry. This violates indigenous peoples’ cultural and subsistence rights moreover, in some areas restrictions and prohibitions have come as a direct result of World Heritage status. Myrna Cunningham noted in her interview with the Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: In some cases, indigenous peoples are treated as threats to their own territories, especially in instances where management systems of these sites are imposed, based on Western norms and perspectives unrelated to their own governance systems. There are also instances where indigenous peoples have been pressured to leave or been forcibly removed following the establishment of World Heritage protected areas (UNESCO, 2012). Following Cunningham’s interview, Batwa indigenous people faced a similar incidence and were forcibly removed or pressured to leave following the establishment of the protected areas leaving them landless and “wanderers” in Uganda.

Colonialism

Uganda and Kenya were recognized within the British influence under the 1890 Anglo-German Agreement. The Imperial British East African Company (IBEACO) took control over Uganda from 1890 to 1894 (Morris and Read, 1966). The southwestern part of Uganda (where Batwa are) was then a part of Rwanda, and became part of present-day Uganda only in 1912. It is important to determine whether the attainment of territorial sovereignty by the colonial masters over geographical areas occupied by Batwa extinguished pre-existing rights in land. For instance, the case of Mabo and others vs Queensland was found in that: ‘a mere change in sovereignty does not extinguish native title to land’. Therefore, the British colonizers who defined the boundaries of Uganda and independence do not in and of themselves extinguish the pre-existing customary rights of Batwa to land.

In July 1890, the Anglo-German Agreement was signed between the British and the Kingdom of Buganda for the purpose of the British colonizers extending and consolidating their rule in Uganda. IBEACO representatives granted the Kabaka and his kingdom power and protection where IBEACO was in return for acknowledgment of the supremacy of the company (Cannon, 2015), meaning Buganda’s land was under full protection.

The British colonizers used the indirect rule system of governance where they used the Buganda Kingdom as the nucleus to extend their influence to the rest of Uganda (Morris and Read, 2016). Therefore, all the laws and rules about land rights that were passed in Buganda would eventually have an impact on the whole country. However, the Batwa were directly left out of the laws concerning land rights systems because during this time, the Batwa were barely mentioned due to the fact that their area was under German control and this was done in 1894 after Uganda was declared a British protectorate.

After Uganda attained independence in 1962, the British colonizers declared Uganda an independent nation and people were separated from the neighbouring countries (Schroeder, 2015). In the view of these authorities, the colonial definition of the boundaries of Uganda and subsequent independence did not extinguish the pre-existing customary rights of the Batwa to land. The British's rule was that all communities could remain in possession of the land they occupied – but only if they proved 'cultivation and regular use'. The phrase 'regular use' is unlikely to include hunting and gathering, since cultivators had to be settled in one place for their land to be recognized as 'cultivated and/or regularly used' and therefore possibly owned. Being hunters and gatherers, the Batwa were affected by this rule concerning their land ownership as stated above about the interpretation of the phrase 'regular use'.

Following the autonomous powers and authority Uganda got from the British colonizers, it used such powers to develop any part of the country they wished. This led to the gazetting of Bwindi and Mgahinga forests as national parks and forest conservation areas, which meant that Batwa were restricted from accessing them. However, colonialists did not keep in mind that Africa as a continent had its own system of doing things that promoted harmony with all people and their identity. When they came to Africa, they seemed to have assumed that Africa was more backward than Europe, and thought what they came along with was the best for Africans (Huisman, 2015; Wa Thiong'o, 2014). This led to branding so many African activities as "satanic" and "backward". For example, all ethnic groups in Africa had their own way of worship and the same applies to the Batwa people. They had their cultural and religious belief: a myth they believed in that their king as a god, "Buuki" and was responsible for promoting their culture, traditions, wealth and defending the forest against encroachment by non-Batwa communities, who is now believed to disappear mysteriously when they were evicted from the forest (Fauna and Flora International 2013). This cultural belief was disputed by the colonialist who introduced Christianity in Uganda on the assumption of being satanic. For that reason, colonialists had to engage or consult Batwa people about their belief before imposing Christianity to avoid their religion from being looked down upon. Much as Africa needed to get in touch with the outside world for developmental purposes, but it is not true that all they brought was the best for Africa.

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Tourism

Due to the economic development through the tourism industry, the government of Uganda established national parks and conservation areas with large scale commercial enterprises such as mining, logging, commercial plantation, oil exploration, dam construction and others. They were evicted from Mgahinga and Bwindi's impenetrable forests where they lived since time immemorial in coexistence with the environment and in full reliance on these forests for economic and spiritual sustenance. These forests were turned into national parks in 1991 with Uganda's mountain gorillas as a tourism attraction, leading to the eviction of Batwa without their consent or giving them alternative land to live (IWGIA, 2016). Indigenous peoples have the right to benefit from their natural resources. There are some Batwa who got land from well-wishers and NGOs, but then failed to practice agriculture being that their traditional life was mainly as hunters and gatherers. A change to agricultural lifestyle affected them so much as they were not used to it, finding it hard and ending up having nothing to eat.

Creation of Conservation areas at the Expense of Batwa People

According to the report from Working Group on Indigenous Population (WGIP) in 2005, Bwindi and Mgahinga forests became national parks for gorillas in 1991, enabling authorities to evict the Batwa definitively from the forest on grounds of being government's protected land for nature conservation. These national parks are managed by the Ugandan government through Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust Fund (MBIFCT), which was changed to Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) in 1994 and funded by World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF). The overall objective of BMCT is the protection of the forests also responsible for the Batwa component which specifically seeks to address their needs as they were particularly affected by the creation of the National Parks. The Government of Uganda was required to provide an indigenous peoples plan to ensure that there is participation and benefits of the Batwa to World Bank. It was approved and funded for four years in order to manage the created national parks; however, parks were created without consulting or seeking any consent of the Batwa as required by international law. A statement by a representative of the BMCT at the 5th World Bank Congress in 2003

confirms that the access to forest products in the National Parks was denied to Batwa creating hostility against the protected areas by local communities (UOBDU, 2015).

Challenges faced by Batwa in their Settlement Areas

Limited access to education

Batwa people were left out during the colonial era, with no access to education and no development at all, based on the assumption that their traditions were “backward and un-civilized” by colonialists in Uganda. This led to the stereotyping, stigmatization and discrimination of Batwa, and the branding as “backward” and illiterate, which escalated the sense of racism between the Batwa and other ethnic groups in Uganda. This is a challenge mostly on the African continent in that international human rights bodies also know that indigenous women experience multiple forms of discrimination because of their gender and ethnicity (CEDAW, 2017; CERD, 2013). This makes indigenous women stand at the intersection of gender and racial inequality and for that matter it is vital to integrate a racial and gender perspective when analyzing indigenous women’s status in order to curb down the element of subordination at both levels of patriarchy and racism (Ertürk, 2015).

Gender based violence

In the patriarchy societies of which Batwa belong to in Uganda, men are traditionally placed in a higher position than women. Therefore, the Batwa men are at a more privileged level than the women since this supremacy is strengthened by their culture. This inequality is a product of Batwa culture as well as their marginalization. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women states that: “Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of full advancement of women, and violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into subordinate positions compared to men”. This paragraph highlights the challenges of women’s subordination to men which has affected the Batwa women not only from their husbands but also from the land owners where they live, facing all sorts of violations with the acceptance of being women. This implies that the subordination here is not only by indigenous men, it is also by the non-indigenous men, and further argued by indigenous feminists that indigenous communities have been subordinated by non-indigenous communities around them (Green, 2017) as with Batwa women in southwestern Uganda.

Vulnerability of Batwa

Due to the vulnerability of Batwa women are sexually assaulted and molested by the Batwa and non-Batwa for the sake of satisfying their sexual desires. Because traditionally their society puts men above women in all aspects such as decision-making and maintaining the land acquired, women end up becoming victims of such abuse.

Ethnic Neglect

According to Kefa (2016), the effects of Batwa settlement on social economic development were fueled by a variety of factors that range from political economic and social factors. Politically, it dates far back during colonialism in Uganda. Briefly, Uganda became a British protectorate in 1894 and gained independence on the 9th of October, 1962 from the British. The British colonizers used divide and rule policy which helped them to keep their subjects weaker and eliminated the creation of tensions among the various tribes in Uganda by creating a form of nationhood and common identity amongst the different ethnic groups of Uganda (Kefa, 2016). However, Batwa (Pygmies, as they were formerly referred to) were neglected on claims of being hostile yet they were protecting their culture.

Deprivation of land right

The Batwa communities are well aware that they were deprived of their land rights and access rights by the international community and the Government of Uganda through the creation of MBIFNP. They view their ever-worsening plight as a continuous indictment not only on the Government of Uganda but also on the international community who have benefited from the establishment of the National Park. To that extent, their pursuit of restitution and compensation from whatever fora that may be available is not only a legitimate rights agenda but also an act of self-empowerment.

Strategies for solving Challenges of Faced by Batwa in Kisoro District

Purchase Land for Batwa

The major player in resettling the Batwa has been the Mgahinga Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust (MBIFCT). MBIFCT has a programme, which specifically seeks to address the needs of the Batwa. It is under this programme that land was bought for the Batwa. The first phase of Trust land purchase for Batwa communities began in 1999. At that time, 69.7 acres of land was bought and distributed to 38 Batwa households, constituting less than 10% of those needing land. A total of 326 acres of land have since then been bought for the Batwa and distributed in fractions of 1.5 acres to each household. Such an amount is hardly enough to carry out agriculture. MBIFCT has made significant progress in resettling the Batwa, the land titles remain with the Trust

until such time the Trustees feel transfer of title to the Batwa would be appropriate. However, no criterion has been given to determine the appropriate time. This raises serious questions of security of tenure for the Batwa (Kenrick, 2015). Secondly, according to the MBIFCT Administrator, while the trust is cognizant of the plight of the Batwa as the original inhabitants of the forest, the Trust is kin and careful not to alienate other impoverished communities by overemphasizing the Batwa issue. Indeed, in 1996 when the trust funds were limited, the programme targeting the Batwa was suspended.

Other organizations that have bought land are the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) a religious organization. ADRA initially worked with the Batwa in Bundibugyo in 1994 on a resettlement programme that was cut short due to lack of funding. In December 2004, ADRA bought 88 acres of land for 85 Batwa families in Rubuguri and Mutorere parishes in Kisoro district. Under this arrangement, each family got one acre of land. However, the legal title to this land has not yet been transferred to the Batwa families though they are currently using the land as their own.

In addition, Kinkizi Diocese of Church of Uganda established a resettlement at Kitariro, North of Bwindi forest in 1992. The Diocese procured five acres of land which now provides a living place for 80 Batwa, a church, a school and a small clinic. In Kanungu district two missionaries (Dr. Scott and Mrs. Carol Kellermann) had previously bought 15 acres of land for Batwa resettlement where about ten households have been resettled. In January 2005, they bought another 100 acres near Bwindi forest for the Batwa. The land is yet to be surveyed and allocated to the beneficiary Batwa households. Unlike ADRA and MBIFCT who hold the title in trust for the Batwa communities, the Kellermans pass on the title to the Batwa who sign using their thumbs. Consequently, although the various Batwa communities have been resettled to a great extent, the issue of lack of security of tenure in respect to ADRA and MBIFCT is still a problem in the resettlement scheme and will need to be addressed.

Another drawback in the resettlement programmes has been that in some areas, the Batwa refused to settle on the lands bought for them. They explained to the researchers that the land was not good for agriculture. A case in point is Mukungu parish in Kisoro where the community refused to move to the land bought for them, save for only one family.

Education

Another area of intervention has been in the education sector with several attempts to raise the literacy levels of the Batwa. Several church-based organizations and individuals have supported the costs of Batwa children's education. As of 2004, there were approximately seven Batwa students attending secondary school, and approximately 600 in primary school.⁴⁷ Because of the external support being received, it is expected that the number of Batwa students enrolled at the secondary school level will increase to an average of 20 per year. It is worth noting that Batwa children are known to be bright and perform well in class.

Attending functional adult literacy training programmes

A significant number of Batwa are also increasingly attending functional adult literacy training programmes and are performing well. For example with the support of the Ministry of Gender and Social Development and funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), ADRA started a Functional Adult Literacy program in Kisoro district in which 350 of the 9000 learners in the two-year program were Batwa. In addition, ADRA funded the construction of Mabuyemeru Primary School in Kisoro for Batwa children. ADRA is also engaged in training and supporting Batwa in alternative subsistence livelihoods, such as on-farm activities and fishery. As a result of these trainings the Batwa are increasingly adopting a more settled life and engaging in productive activities like agriculture and small-scale trade. Whereas this represents a positive trend in the lives of the Batwa, the big challenge remains finding sponsors for the Batwa students to enroll in secondary schools since most of their parents still cannot afford to pay school fees (Tumushabe, Bainomugisha, 2014).

Agriculture

In many developing countries agriculture is a significant source of food for citizens and a means of livelihood for most disabled and other vulnerable members. Raising agricultural productivity is an important policy goal for concerned governments and development agencies. Investments in agriculture by people with disabilities has reduced poverty and stimulated economic growth and development (Kuku, Ajibola, & Saweda, 2011). According to IFAD (2013), good agricultural performance was very important in reducing poverty and hunger rates among people with disabilities in the more successful countries. Agricultural growth also has a high poverty reduction pay-off than non-agricultural growth or investments (World Bank, 2016).

Agricultural products are fruits – mangoes, pawpaws, water melons; maize, cow peas, beans, pigeon peas and lentils, livestock keeping, and dairy farming (ibid). The Kamba are most famous for their basket-weaving, which are traditionally weaved from sisal. Sixty percent of the rural population live below the poverty line (ibid).

Creation of self-help projects

Self-help projects create employment opportunities which are important in poverty reduction. To address the limited employment opportunities among disabled women, women form groups and establish their income generating projects including piggery farming,

poultry farming among others to contribute to increased incomes and reduce poverty situations. Through training women in income generating projects such as piggery, poultry and goat rearing among others increase and develop the skills of the poor thus improving their socio-economic welfare (Johnson, 2015). The implementation of self-help group can generate opportunities for the rural poor so that they can involve in diverse self-employment activities. The women self-help projects is nothing but an effective tool for providing self-sustaining occupations to the rural disabled poor women with an effective delivery micro credit system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A case study research design was used by adopting qualitative and participatory approach methods. The qualitative strategy gives room and the possibility to study in-depth issues that are related to questions of “how and why” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2005). These were used flexibly to supplement, complement and counter one another as each method had its own strengths and shortcomings. This field research design was used because the topic researched required a wealth of data about people and their experiences rather than aggregated classifications, categories and characteristics of the issues in question. Qualitative research is research involving detailed, verbal descriptions of characteristics, cases, settings, people or systems obtained by interacting with, interviewing and observing the subjects.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Kisoro district in Southwestern Uganda, a district with a number of evicted Batwa from Mgahinga forest which is their ancestral home land. I interacted with different respondents, Batwa and non-Batwa from four villages namely the Mperwa, Mabuye, Meru and Mikingo Villages. I was also able to visit the Kisoro District Headquarters, UOBDU head offices, Kisoro Church of Uganda Diocese and the Baptist church head offices (Pentecostal church).

Study Population

The study targeted a population of 48 respondents who included 1 Resident District Commissioner, 2 religious leaders, 5 NGOs’ directors and 40 Batwa). Residents District Commissioner was used in this study because he helps in the implementation of government programmes meant to support Batwa. Religious leaders and NGOs’ directors were used because they provide support in form of basic needs to Batwa.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

With sampling techniques, I used purposive, simple random sampling. I purposively selected some of my informants, with a main focus on obtaining rich data to answer my questions about the study. These included Resident district Commissioner, religious leaders and NGOs’ directors whom I categorized as key informants. Then, I used simple random sampling techniques to select Batwa household members. Lastly was convenient sampling which is based on the accessibility, willingness and availability of informants to avail information (Tagoe, 2009). My sample size was 28 respondents who included 1 Resident District Commissioner, 2 religious leaders, 5 NGOs’ directors and 19 members of Batwa Community).

Sample Size Distribution

Category of respondents	Study population	Sample size	Sampling techniques
Resident District Commissioner	1	1	Purposive sample
Religious leaders	2	2	Purposive sample
NGO directors	6	6	Purposive sample
Batwa households	40	19	Simple random sampling
Total	48	28	

Data Collection Methods

This study was mainly qualitative as this strategy gives room and possibility to study in-depth issues which are related to questions of “how and why” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). It was based on a “case study” of Batwa from Southwestern Uganda. Due to the nature of this study, I was compelled to adopt both primary and secondary data sources. Primary source data was directly sourced

from informants through Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and life stories/narratives. The secondary sources were mainly the internet, journal articles, reports, books and online library materials with other additional data collection methods such as photographs, recordings and field notes in order to achieve the desired objectives.

Interviews

Data was collected using face-to-face interviews. The purpose of a qualitative interview is to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanation (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). In this case, this research tool helped me to gain greater understanding of the issues about gendered impacts of landlessness on indigenous peoples in Uganda with a case study of Batwa in Southwestern Uganda, focusing mainly on women who are the most vulnerable and affected by this challenge. I conducted some interviews with guiding questions noted on an interview guide. Interviews were used because they help in collecting first hand data important for the study.

Focus Group Discussions (FDGs)

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a group discussion of approximately 10 - 20 persons guided by a facilitator, during which group members talk freely and spontaneously about a topic in question. A FGD is a qualitative method and its purpose is to obtain in-depth information on concepts, perceptions and ideas of a group. It aims to be more than a question and answer interaction with the idea that group members discuss the topic among themselves, with guidance from the facilitator. I employed this method to acquire information from Batwa as they are shy about having a one on one discussion and like working and living together. Batwa were grouped in two Focus Groups and focus group discussions were conducted with them with the help of the researcher as a moderator in order to elicit data from them. Focus group Discussions were used because respondents feel free to share any information about themselves in a group and easily open up compared to interviews. It was out of their consent that they agreed to film them, record them and even take their photos and agreed to be used in this research.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Causes of Batwa Settlement Patterns

Uganda's tourism industry

Due to the economic development through the tourism industry, the government of Uganda established national parks and conservation areas with large scale commercial enterprises such as mining, logging, commercial plantation, oil exploration, dam construction and others. They were evicted from Mgahinga and Bwindi's impenetrable forests where they lived since time immemorial in coexistence with the environment and in full reliance on these forests for economic and spiritual sustenance. These forests were turned into national parks in 1991 with Uganda's mountain gorillas as a tourism attraction, leading to the eviction of Batwa without their consent or giving them alternative land to live (IWGIA, 2016). Indigenous peoples have the right to benefit from their natural resources. The denial to access such natural resources rendered Batwa poor thus leading to their exploitation as discussed.

In addition to above, the deputy RDC of Kisoro cited the problem of poverty in Kisoro as a district and being one of the major challenges the district faces during my interview with him.

He specifically cited Batwa being more affected by poverty.

In his words, he said;

As a district, we are having a lot of problems such as unemployment, health, security and education. The government is handling one by one and at the moment security, education and health are covered. However, there is a problem of unemployment and this is not only in the Kisoro district but is almost country wide. As much as the government has tried to solve that problem through the introduction of National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and the creation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCO) to enable people borrow money with a low interest rate and start up income generating activities. But the Batwa are in abject poverty and cannot get loans, so they end up selling their lands cheaply and end up landless. Being semi-illiterate, some don't even understand the agreements they are signing (putting a thumb print on) and you find that the land taken is not equivalent to the money given.

So we resorted to not allowing any person to buy their land unless he has gone through government institutions or NGOs that advocate for Batwa's rights to help them from being cheated when it comes to paper work authentication.

Poverty is at its peak to the extent that some Batwa cannot afford to construct permanent houses on the land donated to them. For instance, the land in Mikingo village which was donated to Batwa by the church of Uganda has both permanent and temporary structures. I was reliably informed by the Diocesan secretary that the church constructed the permanent structure, because of the poverty Batwa face, they sold off windows, doors and iron sheets in order to get money. The church buys new iron sheets and doors

and they still sell them so the problem keeps re-occurring. When the new ones to come to the land, they have to construct temporary structures made of Taplin, papyrus and polythene materials because they do not have money. Below are the two photographs showing the state of life the Batwa in Mikigo village.

The above structures were under renovation by the Kisoro church of Uganda diocese which built these houses and the doors, windows and iron sheets sold off by Batwa.

A change in Batwa's traditional lifestyles

There are some Batwa who got land from well-wishers and NGOs, but then failed to practice agriculture being that their traditional life was mainly as hunters and gatherers. A change to agricultural lifestyle affected them so much as they were not used to it, finding it hard and ending up having nothing to eat.

This resulted in looking for a person to buy their land in order to get money for food which resulted in money vanishing in no time and the sellers ending up landless. In order to solve this problem, the deputy RDC and the diocesan secretary told me that they do not give Batwa land titles for the given land or any legal document about their land ownership in order to prevent them from selling their land. There is no way one can buy land without any legal document ascertaining ownership of the seller as it is one of Uganda's regulations for selling land to have proof of ownership which must be either a lease certificate or land title. Therefore, with this strategy there is hope for lessening the chances of Batwa being conned of money or underpaid the equivalent amount to the size of land taken.

Challenges of Batwa in their Settlement Patterns

Batwa are affected in numerous ways both socially and economically.

Economic challenges (Labour exploitation)

Due to landlessness, Batwa resorted to providing cheap labour to people with land such as farming, grazing animals and doing domestic work in exchange of a plot to construct a hut to stay. They are exploited by the majority ethnic groups, given little money just to buy few basic necessities such as food and clothing as a result of not having any other alternative means of survival. This domination and discrimination which is intertwined with social identities and oppression (Crenshaw, 2017) is as a result of having no land to practice their traditional way of living. It is a big challenge to Batwa themselves but they have no alternative means of income hence accepting little pay as my male informants in a focus group discussion in Mperwa village narrated:

The most painful thing is that we are given little money yet we do a lot of work for the rich. We dig, look after their animals but the money they pay us is not equivalent to the work we provide. We know that we are underpaid but for the sake of our children's survival we agree to do it for the little money. If the government had given us land the energy we put in digging for other people, we would do it for ourselves and live a happy life. Despite all the services we offer to these landlords, if one of us dies we are never allowed to bury on their land and we only have to run to UOBDU or to the churches and ask for a burial space.

Social effects (Women's sexual harassments)

There are several consequences of landlessness Batwa women face. Being care takers, mothers of children and wives, the consequences of landlessness affects them more by sexual harassment which is rampant among them. For example, one of the stories directly connected to my research topic was about Muhindo. She lives in Mperwa village and was sexually abused and impregnated as a result of squatting on someone's land. She delivered a fatherless baby because she was uncertain of who the real father was because she was sexually abused by many men for a long time. Her story was Rutwa and I used Stuart to translate since I could not speak Rutwa language.

Other challenges

Psychological challenges

Some Batwa are psychologically traumatized due to misunderstandings they feel from the owners where they are squatting. They have become wanderers moving from place to place and are chased off the land any time or any day while those who secured land may have it taken away from them by force. This does not only affect them psychologically but also it does affect them physically. They find difficulty in getting another place for settlement; at times they are given a lot of restrictions which are unbearable. For instance, if one dies they are not allowed to bury the dead on the land they are given yet their grave yards might have been taken by the person who grabbed their land.

A direct case in this example was about a family that was deprived of their rights over their land on which they had lived since 1960. It was grabbed by a rich tycoon on the assumption that this family was poor and could not develop this land, local government statute in the district demands. Land is considered to belong to the local government, which expects people to develop it. Those who cannot develop it are vulnerable to having it taken, or "grabbed" by people with more resources and capable of developing it. However, the

occupant must legally be compensated before vacating – but only if he or she poses legal documents showing proof of ownership. It is unfortunate that the amount of compensation is stipulated on the negotiation and bargain power of the parties, and this leaves most Batwa being cheated, receiving compensations that are not equivalent to the value of the land. In some cases they are not being compensated at all, because most Batwa are extremely poor and lack any legal documents ascertaining ownership of the land. In one case that I found, Mr. Rwubaka John (amutwa), being poor and lacking any legal documents to show proof of ownership, lost his to a rich tycoon without compensation. John Rwubaka's daughter in Kisoro town took courage to narrate to me the life of the entire family in going through in Rutwa as her mother and her young sister could not hold back tears. It required a translator since I could not speak Rutwa language and she could not speak my native language of English.

Batwa have a problem of rich people grabbing their land by force. Sometimes they pay them little money that cannot help them sustain their lives or is not even equivalent to the land taken. Some people just take it by force by coming with fake documents, claiming the land belongs to them and Batwa are sent away without any compensation. All this is a result of Batwa not having proper land titles on which they can base their claim. As UOBDU, we try to follow such cases and sometime look for lawyers to help those who are evicted but it is not easy and it's a long process.

Through interviews and listening to such live stories, I was able to understand the effects of landlessness on Batwa. This implies that indigenous land rights are not well implemented or protected in the case of Batwa in Southwestern Uganda. With the concept of narrative and narratively, we are able to understand and make sense of the social world (Clark, Kjørholt and Moss, 2015). Narratives focus on actions and events with detailed personal experiences that makes one understand the world and the place where such actions took place through active participation. Through narratives, people are able to recall, recruit and review their lives, valuing them as expert witnesses rather than mere sources of data (Atkinson, 2014).

Loss of Batwa's traditional culture

As discussed in the background chapter above, historically Batwa were forest-dwelling hunters-gatherers, living and practicing their cultural and economic way of life in the high mountainous forest areas. Their eviction did not only lead to being landless, but it led to new adoption of their way of living where they are now practicing agriculture as a source of livelihood. It has further led to the adaption of languages for the ethnic groups where they live in order to survive. As women are the custodians of everything related to a child's upbringing in most African societies, children directly copy activities, behaviors, and languages from their mother because they spend most of their time with them when their fathers go to other activities like hunting. As a result of Batwa women speaking languages of the societies they stay with and work for, the children automatically pick up the same languages, losing of their culture. This is a major concern for the Batwa as one of my old informants in a FGD says:

We are very concerned about our culture. I really feel bad that our children are copying other cultures because they cannot freely practice ours in the communities more dominated by other people... I feel sad when my grandchildren cannot fully express themselves in Rutwa. I feel like I am a bad grandfather and I feel our hands and ideas are tied. We were able to practice and keep our culture but the government issue of taking our ancestral land has ruined our culture and in a few years' time our culture shall be no more.

Another young man added on the point of cultural loss, he said that:

The worst side of these evictions in addition to the loss of our culture is the intermarriage. Some of the Batwa girls have been assimilated into the Bafumbira and picked up their culture, (marry them meaning they are having Bafumbira children other than Batwa children). Another problem we face is about those who are sponsored by some NGOs to go to school, some are shying away from saying they are Batwa yet they would be the ones to fight for our rights because some of us are not educated. They end up calling themselves Bafumbira or others Bakiga, and drop our culture. That is the most hurting thing and I am sure if we were given land, let's say a village, we would not be having such problems.

Early marriages

The problem of early marriages is rampant among Batwa girls due to idleness as a result of not being in school and lack of jobs. As Batwa do not have permanent homes, they keep moving from place to place, and it has affected their education in a way that children cannot settle in a school for a long time. This led to children, especially girls, getting tired of being in school on the assumption that they are too old for the class. The last resort is marriage which does not only put their lives in danger but also the lives of the children they bare because they are not being old enough to take care of the family or have children. This led to the increase in both the maternal and infant mortality rate. Following the interview I had with Alice a Mutwa (the education secretary in UOBDU), she emphasized the cause of the above challenge is lack of permanent land for the Batwa. She cited different organizations such as CARE, UOBDU, the church (Baptist, Seventh day Adventist and the Church of Uganda) have tried to sponsor Batwa at different levels of education. Unfortunately these organizations, at times, never achieve their goal due to constant unplanned relocations of Batwa to other villages which are at times far away from the schools the children have been attending, hence dropping out of school at an early age.

Strategies for solving challenges faced by Batwa in Kisoro District

Social Contributions

Owning land is one of the most prestigious and vital things to many ethnic groups in Uganda. Land is a source of wealth, it is where most of the people's lives depend through farming, hunting, medicinal, worship and gathering. Being deprived of ownership of land is the most depressing and unjust impact one ever gets. Therefore, denying Batwa the right to their ancestral land did not only affect them psychologically, but it affected them even physically, providing a lot of challenges that might lead to the extinction of these indigenous people. As a result of the "would be likelihood" mentioned, different institutions have come up to contribution towards solving the problem of landlessness among Batwa people in southwestern Uganda as Winfred UOBDU, the land rights officer shared with me in the interview I had with her below:

UOBDU as an NGO, we have tried to make sure that we have community sensitization in all districts where Batwa live. The sensitization helps the Batwa to be accepted in the communities they live in as Batwa and appreciating their culture. There is a big problem they face of cultural difference where their culture is under-looked by other ethnic groups where they live. As an NGO that advocates for their rights, we feel it's our obligation to have sensitization programs that will reduce or stop this social discrimination.

We have also gone further to work with other institutions that have the same vision and objectives as us like CARE international, Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) by supporting social empowerment, welfare and equal participation by Batwa and non-Batwan in community management. For example, in 2015, BMCT held thematic workshops for 17 resettled households covering areas such as rights, genders issues, conflict resolutions, sanitation and hygiene.

From the above interview, I assume that the extreme poverty of Batwa, is the main cause of excessive use of alcohol maybe as a means of consolidation and relief of the stress they have as a result of being landless. I was informed by women during FGDs that men (husbands) mistreat women (wives) with the assumption of being the head leaders in any family. Batwa men's ego has led to continued domestic and gender based violence hindering Batwa's household development. Batwa women in particular have been exposed to different forms of physical violence. For instance, women told me that they are never involved in central household decisions. In most cases that is where the fighting erupts, the wife gets hurt and all household items destroyed.

Following the discussion I had with Henry (the community officer UOBDU), the demanding consequences of domestic violence between Batwa men and women were equally targeted and fully explained in gender and conflict resolution workshops conducted by BMCT. The purpose of these workshops was to enable the Batwa to understand the gender roles and provide tools where husband and wife can work as one team to improve the income and welfare of their families. These workshops also included anger management training techniques which greatly reduced the incidences of domestic violence among the Batwa as testified by Nduchire one of my informants.

I used to go drinking with my husband. After getting drunk, we would start fighting at the bar and at home we would fight using pangas. In most cases we injured ourselves and the following day we did not have anything in the house. This made us live in poverty as the money we could earn was used to buy alcohol. Now we no longer fight after the trainings from UOBDU and BMCT workshops because we understood that alcohol and fighting is bad and we no longer drink alcohol.

Christian organizations have contributed a lot towards the social welfare of the Batwa. They have provided them with shelter, food, love and land. These church organizations include the Baptist church, Seventh day Adventist church and the church of Uganda. I realized that the major principle these church organizations is love as the diocesan secretary of the church of Uganda said:

Love is the major and vital principle as the church we use towards Batwa people. They have gone through a lot and are discriminated in all forms which led to losing their self-esteem and at times becoming violent with other people. It was the late Bishop Ernest Sharita who came up with the idea of buying them land, provide shelter and food for them when they were evicted from the forest they were staying in 1991. The church bought land just behind the district headquarters and resettled them. They had their own challenges, used to practice incest, were illiterate so the church took those who wanted to study in school while those who did not were given vocational skills like carpentry. As a way of taming them because they used to be very violent, the church preached to them the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and many converted to Christianity. With time, violence reduced, incest stopped and some are able to get jobs using the vocational skill they have. However, we still have a challenge of alcoholism which is the major cause of violence among themselves and other people in the surrounding communities...

Pastor George of the Baptist church had the same explanation. He summed up Batwa's issues into three which are in relation to other people, creation of awareness and love which he said is the major principle for their transformation as he says below:

I started working with the Batwa in 2012 after realizing that they are being discriminated against in the current districts they are in now. The Baptist church bought them land, built them houses, gave them food and integrated them with the community by bringing them to church and letting them share the same seats with other people in the church despite the hygienic conditions they were in. As a result of our good relations with them and other people, we were able to win their trust and we convinced them to integrate them with people in different villages. At the moment the Baptist church has relocated 15 homes scattered in different villages such as Nabande, Kanyabugu, Kyahi in Rutare and Mushamba.

We identified their problem which was water and we came up with an idea of harvesting water from their houses when it rains. This water was used by the Batwa only, it was used by the whole community during the dry season and this created the awareness in the community that the

Batwa are no longer hostile neither illiterate as people used to think that they do not bathe. In the long run people started cooperating with them, they taught them how to dig, how to rear goats, sheep and cows. As we speak now they are living a transformed life in that they used to beg me and the visitors who would visit them but now they are the one who are giving me and my visitors' fruits, animals and food.

As a way of solving the problem of illiteracy, the church sponsors all their children, we buy them uniforms and books and when you find them at school you cannot identify a mutwa child and a non-mutwa child. So my appeal goes to all Ugandans and the government to show love to these people. Those thinking they are backward should change their perception towards them and help in any form to liberate them.

As a result of the involvement of different institutions, hygiene and sanitation greatly improved the health and self-esteem of Batwa. The resettled households have bathing shelters, drying racks, hand-washing facilities, and pit latrines. They have learned how to bathe and wash their cloths hence a reduction in sickness among Batwa and increased acceptance and respect from the neighboring communities as Dorotia testifies;

I used to not care about my clothes, whenever it would rain, they would become wet and I did not have soap or water to clean them when they were dirty. But now I wash them, hang them on the wire and my house is very clean. I also dress smartly like other women and am happy that am recognized and I attend church services without being discriminated...

Economic contributions

Economically, the mentioned organizations and individuals above (UOBDU, CARE, BMCT, Baptist, Adventists and Church of Uganda) have contributed tremendously towards solving the Batwa's landless challenges. A number of Batwa who adapted to agriculture received sheep, goats and different seeds of quality that led to good harvests. They were also able to get access to workshops about modern farming conducted by UOBDU and the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) through the Ugandan government. CARE further went on to use Village Saving and Loans Association (VSLA) as a methodology not only to empower the resettled Batwa economically but also as a way of integrating them in the surrounding communities. Through the formation of VSLA groups that consist of Batwa and non-Batwa, all members benefited from them by accessing loans that they used to improve their lives. It further helped in the reduction of social differences and prejudice that hindered the integration of the Batwa with other ethnic groups through weekly interactions.

VSLAs have promoted a saving culture among Batwa, and especially Batwa women who have taken up financial management and proved to be skilled at making investments which created alternative financial services in the rural areas of Kisoro district where micro-finance and banks do not exist. With the introduction of free livestock donations, there is a reduction in the conflict between wildlife authority and Batwa for hunting animals from the national parks as meat which is a major delicacy in their culture. They have an alternative of the animals that are rare whenever they want to eat meat as Jackson and an informant from Rushaga say;

I received one goat and two sheep from BMCT which gave birth to kids and lambs so, I now have 8 goats and 12 sheep. So, whenever I want to eat meat I slaughter one of them and it feels good that I no longer have to enter the national park illegally to hunt whenever I need meat.

Livestock rearing has several benefits such as providing proteins, selling of the animals which contributes to Batwa's economic income and creating employment opportunities as well as providing manure which improves the soil fertility hence better crop production.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Batwa are hunters and gatherers who are determined to protect their culture, preserve and promote it; however, their culture is on the verge of extinction due to their eviction from Mgahinga and Bwindi forest in 1991 by the government of Uganda to create national parks. This rendered them landless and restricted their access to ancestral land hence the hindrance from practicing their culture leading to its extinction. They are no longer able to live only as hunters and gatherers, but they practice agriculture and live as squatters on other people's land. This study has illustrated that Batwa have faced a lot of challenges as a result of being landless, and Batwa women are at the center of different forms of violations compared to men, although both genders are experiencing some level of vulnerability and challenges such as racism, discrimination and human rights violations. Different institutions such as NGOs, churches and individual Batwa organizations (UOBDU) have tried to solve the challenge of the landlessness Batwa face but there are still more needed to implement and protect their land rights as other ethnic groups in Uganda.

With this study, I hope to draw the attention of different stakeholders to understand the effect and causes of landlessness of indigenous peoples in Uganda. The involvement of different stakeholders, the international community, Ugandan government and civil societies in conjunction with Batwa organization (UOBDU) would be a stepping stone for the advocacy and implementation of Batwa land rights of indigenous peoples in Uganda.

Recommendations

Different issues concerning the well-being of the Batwa have been tackled by a number of agencies, individuals, government and academia. Such issues are political, social and economic but all center on the issue of discrimination. Among the Batwa's issues is the problem of landlessness. Different NGOs have advocated for their right to own land but are never successful. This problem created abject poverty among Batwa, and the government of Uganda created a platform for NGOs that assist Batwa to operate smoothly. However, such interventions are hindered because the Batwa lack land on which some projects can be implemented.

To curb this problem, there is need for mass sensitization throughout Batwa communities and for men to accept that a woman getting into higher positions of leadership is not a cultural degradation but rather an opportunity for all Batwa strong people who can advocate for their rights rather than outsiders fighting for them.

The issue of resettling Batwa done by different stakeholders is an effort to improve their situation, but it is not solving it because the given lands have no legal documents that confirm the Batwa's of their ownership. In cases of conflicts between the Batwa over land, it became hard to settle such disputes without documents of ownership showing clear land boundaries.

Most of the projects set by NGOs require land set up, and without land their implementation is hindered. However, such projects should also promote Batwa's cultures such that their cherished traditional identity is maintained rather than projects that aim to change them to be like the dominant societies. Therefore, for proper sustainability of such projects, Batwa must be consulted on what they feel is good for their community other than imposing on them a project which might not be of their interest.

Commendable work by different researchers in the field of research and advocacy on the general issues of Batwa people has been widely undertaken, and I wish more researchers would write more about the social, political and economic issues amongst Batwa women in particular. That research can help to better understand the issues affecting both Batwa men and women, so that better policies and programs that respect their culture and prevent discrimination against women can be put in place.

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