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By

BABIKER, Ikhlas Mahmoud

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**Cottage Industries in Western Sudan with Special
Reference to Women Handicrafts**

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COTTAGE INDUSTRIES IN WESTERN SUDAN WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO WOMEN HANDICRAFTS

BY

IKHLAS MAHMOUD BABIKER

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TO the poor who strongly fight for survival
and dream for a better life.

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ABSTRACT

Cottage industry constitutes an important sector of the rural economy in the developing countries. In most of these countries, cottage industry uses locally available resources to provide rural households with some of their basic needs and contributes significantly to the household income. Rural development efforts have recently been directed to promoting cottage industry and other non-farming income generating activities, especially in the drought affected areas.

This study attempts to investigate cottage industry in El-Obeid Area, Northern Kordofan State. The study focuses on women industries and handicrafts such as food processing, pottery, textiles, leather works, and dom-palm leaves weaving. Special attention is given to the supply of raw materials, labour, productivity, and marketing of the products. In addition, the study examines some of the problems and constraints that hinder the promotion and development of cottage industry, and presents the role of women centers in overcoming some of these constraints.

The study is based on data collected from primary as well as secondary sources. A field survey has been conducted in the study area for the collection of primary data using questionnaire and interview methods. The survey sample consists of hundred

women selected from four villages in El-Obeid area. Additional data and supporting statistics have been collected from books, reports, and conference papers on small-scale industry.

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خلاصة

تتسم الدول النامية جميعها بتخلف وفقر المناطق الريفية نتيجة تركيز السياسات التنموية على المدن والمناطق الحضرية ، ويمثل تخلف المناطق الريفية للدول النامية أحد سمات الاقتصاد في تلك الدول . ويظهر ذلك جلياً في الفقر المروع وقلة الدخل والتدهور الواضح في الخدمات والفارق الكبير في مستوى المعيشة بين سكان المدن وسكان الريف ولا تخفى الآثار المترتبة على تلك الفوارق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والتي تنعكس على مسار التنمية الشاملة للدول النامية .

تحاول الدراسة معالجة إحدى القضايا الهامة التي تتعلق بالتنمية الاقتصادية والاجتماعية وتحاول تسليط الضوء على قطاع هام من قطاعات الصناعة والذي يلبي احتياجات مجموعات كبيرة من السكان في المناطق الريفية ويساهم بصورة فعالة في تنمية المناطق الريفية وتحسين المستوى المعيشي للمواطن في الريف السوداني .

تناقش الدراسة عدة موضوعات تتعلق بدور المشروعات المنزلية الصغيرة في الاقتصاد السوداني وإلى أي مدى تساهم المنشآت الصناعية الصغيرة والقروية في تنمية المناطق الريفية ومدى جدوى ذلك القطاع الصناعي والذي يشكل أحد الأعمدة الرئيسية في الاقتصاد الريفي . في تحقيق أهداف التنمية والنجاح في القضاء على مظاهر التخلف الاقتصادي والاجتماعي الذي يسيطر على الريف السوداني باعتبار ذلك القطاع الحيوي أحد دعائم الاقتصاد الريفي من خلال الدور الهام الذي يقوم به في تحسين دخل المواطن ودخول الأسرة في المناطق الريفية والمساهمة في وقف الهجرات المتواصلة في المناطق الريفية للمدن وما يترتب على تلك الهجرات من آثار سلبية على الصعيدين الاقتصادي والاجتماعي .

يتناول الفصل الاول أهمية الدراسة وأهدافها والمنهج المتبع فى الدراسة .
أما الفصل الثانى فيتناول أهمية الصناعات المنزلية الصغيرة كخيار تنموى يعتمد أساساً على التنمية المحلية الملائمة والمنسقة مع البناء الاجتماعى السائد فى المجتمع الريفى وتعمل على تحسين الأوضاع للمواطن فى الريف وتسهم فى الاستقرار الاقتصادى والاجتماعى للأسرة فى المناطق الريفية .

يستعرض الفصل الثالث الأنشطة المنزلية التى تمارسها النساء فى منطقة الدراسة والتى من خلالها تساهم المرأة مساهمة فعالة فى زيادة دخل الأسرة وتحسين مستوى معيشتها .

الجزء الاخير فى الدراسة يتناول المشاكل الاساسية والتى تعوق ترقية الصناعات المنزلية كما يتناول الملامح المستقبلية للصناعات المنزلية اذا وجدت اهتماماً حقيقياً فى ظل سياسات تنموية واضحة وتنسيق شامل بين المؤسسات التنموية المختلفة .

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

During the 1970s and 1980s the developing countries had witnessed acute deterioration in the standard of living of the people, high rates of inflation, increasing income inequality among the population and mounting problems of poverty and underdevelopment. These problems have become the main features characterizing the economies of the third world countries. The development strategies inherited by the developing countries from the colonial governments failed to create a balanced development because they were meant to serve the interests of the western countries and the elites in the developing countries and neglect the needs of the masses.

Recently most of the developing countries started to adopt rural development strategies in order to improve the standard of living of the population in the rural areas. Rural development strategies are designed to mobilize rural resources and potentialities and to absorb population energies in various projects to raise the incomes and welfare levels of rural people. On the other hand, industry is viewed as the most successful instrument for raising incomes of the population, and the adoption of rural industrial development strategy is considered vital for enhancing rural development, reducing income gap between the urban and rural people, mobilizing the rural resources and absorbing surplus

labour in the traditional sector. Since most of the rural industries are cottage industries, it becomes important that the adopted development strategies should encourage these industries and focus on promoting them to achieve economic development in the rural areas. The cottage industries and handicrafts could help generate income and employment for the wide spread surplus labour in the traditional sector. Further more, cottage industry is assumed to diversify the rural economy and improve the standard of living of the rural households and upgrade the economic and social conditions of the rural women because of the fact that most of the cottage industries and handicrafts are practiced by women. In his study on small industries in Asia and the Pacific Syed (1981) argued that small industries "supply dynamism and contribute competition within the economy, stimulate personal saving, promote agro-industrial linkages, improve rural welfare and generally raise the level of popular participation in the economy" (Syed, 1981: 24). Because the majority of the population in the developing countries live in rural areas, these countries must concentrate on development strategies that promote rural small industries in order to improve the incomes and livelihood of their masses.

Sudan is one of the developing countries and is characterized by a dependent malformed economic structures. The economy suffers from dualism which was the by-product of policies adopted

by the colonial and post-colonial governments. Those policies were biased and favoured the urban areas and the modern sector of the economy and have neglected the rural areas. As a result, inequalities between rural and urban areas of the Sudan, in terms of distribution of the national income and wealth, and also in terms of pattern of consumption of goods and services prevailed. Moreover, the rural areas experienced a state of absolute poverty which pushed large numbers of the rural dwellers to migrate to the cities and, as a result, suffer from urban unemployment. Recently, Sudan adopted some development strategies which attempted to improve the economic and social life of the rural population. These strategies concentrated on improving agricultural performance and investing in small rural industries and handicrafts to reduce the magnitude of the problems of poverty, unemployment and underemployment, and to raise the incomes of the people and improve their economic and social conditions.

On the other hand, studies which explain the role of cottage industries in the rural economy are vast and growing. Most of these studies focus on the examination of the causes and effects of underdevelopment on the welfare of people in these areas. Most of these studies attribute the economic backwardness to the negligence of the industrial sector in the LDCs which was caused by colonialism and colonial policies that created dependent economic

structures and killed off completely domestic industries. In his widely-read book, The Poverty of Nations, Murdoch (1980) showed how European colonialism suppressed the development of the local industry in Africa. He argued that:

"local handicrafts and industry decayed in Africa as they did in colonies every where. Economically Forced labour took men away from handicrafts industries, and Europeans brought with them cheap manufactured good such as textiles and farm implement that supplanted local products, the colonial government suppressed local African markets, and took capital out of African hands (in the form of tax) without replacing it. The result was a rapid decline of indigenous industry in the first few decades of the twentieth century, especially iron melting and the manufacture and production of textiles" (Murdoch, 1980: 83).

As stated above, Murdoch attributed underdevelopment of the African cottage industries to the import policies which provided better products for lower prices. He further stated that:

"The crucial structural development is the creation of many complementary linkages between different parts of the economy, based first on a dynamic agriculture - the export enclave suppressed precisely these crucial forces and processes. In the first place, it suppressed the demand from the mainly rural population from those goods that local handicrafts and cottage industry might have provided. In the absence of such demand and in the face of cheap manufactured goods from the Central Power, local handicrafts withered and disappeared. In the second place, there was no investment outside the enclave, profits were exported or reinvested there. Improvements in technology did not diffuse outwards to agriculture or to cottage industry, and no schooling was available to improve the skills of the mass of the population" (Murdoch, 1980: 91).

On the other hand, Chuta and Sethuraman(1984) emphasized the importance of the small industries for a developing economy, and illustrated the advantages of the small units particularly the

low cost of the small cottage industries. They emphasized the necessity of providing financial facilities in order to promote small projects. They argued that:

Most of the successful projects have some common characteristics that should be considered when designing new schemes. First, they have primarily provided working capital rather than the fixed capital that the focus of most lending scheme" (Chuta,E.and Sethuraman, 1984: 19).

Robert and Jennifer (1986) interpreted the strong linkages between agriculture and cottage industries and explained the dependency of the two sectors on each other in the third world countries. They stated that:

"Policies stanted against agricultural development lead not only to a stagnant agricultural sector, but also to stagnant demand for product of rural small manufactures" (Robert and Jennifer, 1986: 24).

Robert and Jennifer have also provided evidence on the size and contribution of the African industries. They found that industry is predominantly composed of small scale units which provide the main sources of employment. The study argues that:

"not only are the over whleming majority of industrial establishments small, but they account for the vast bulk of industrial employment. Small scale firms in countries with the required data generally account for two thirds or more of total industrial employment" (Robert and Jennifer, 1986: 27).

This study attempts to investigate the role and contribution of the cottage industries in diversifying the rural economy and its

effect on the welfare of the rural households. The study focuses on women industries and handicrafts such as food processing, pottery, textiles, leather works, and dom-palm leaves weaving. Specifically, the study intends to examine the following issues:

- (1) the contribution of cottage industry and handicrafts to the income of rural households,
- (2) the supply of raw materials, labour, and capital,
- (3) productivity and marketing of the final products,
- (4) the effects of cottage industry and handicrafts on the economic and social status of the rural women,
- (5) the problems and constraints that hinder the promotion and development of cottage industry and handicrafts,
- (6) the role of women centers and other local institutions in the sustainability and development of cottage industry and handicrafts.

Importance of the Study

In order to achieve a balanced development and healthy economic environment, development plans should be designed to serve the needs of the rural people in remote areas by improving the performance of the rural economy. This is exactly what a number of developing countries and the international agencies have been trying to do for quite a long time. This is simply because the

majority of the population in most of the developing countries live in rural areas. The development strategies of the last two decades have been oriented towards the development of the rural sector in order to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and increase their participation in the process of economic development. Those development strategies have initially concentrated on improving the performance of the agricultural sector. Recently, development strategies have given more consideration to the promotion of the small rural industries and handicrafts to diversify the rural economy, raise the incomes of the rural people, and improve their welfare. By so doing, these strategies are expected to contribute substantially to raising the income and employment levels of the rural women in Sudan. This will be reflected in more equality between income and sex groups and will reduce the disparity between rural and urban areas.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the contribution of cottage industries and handicrafts to the rural economy. Cottage industry and handicrafts constitute an important sector of the rural economy, particularly in the semi-arid regions of the Sudan where farming and animal raising involve high risk of drought and other environmental crises. This important sector of the rural economy has not been given enough attention in

research and development institutions. Only recently that the significance and importance of the sector in the development of rural areas, and its potential contribution to the national economy have been recognized. This study attempts to throw some light on the role of cottage industry in rural development. The study will make available valuable information on the types of cottage industries and handicrafts in the study area. These information could be used by rural development planners and research students with interest in rural areas.

Among other objectives, the study aims at presenting the contribution of women to the household income. It is well known that women constitute a considerable proportion of the rural labour force, especially in farming and animal raising. Women contribute significantly to household food self-sufficiency and income. This study deals with the cottage industries and handicrafts practiced by women and intends to show their contribution to the household income. By so doing, the study contributes to the understanding of the role of women in economic development.

Methodology

Data Collection

This study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary data were collected using questionnaire and formal

interviews (Appendix 1), supplemented by informal conversations and observations. The interviews were conducted by the researcher and one research assistant in March 1992. The study sample was drawn from four villages in El-Obeid District. The village are: Oriel which is considered as a major center for pottery; Umm Arada which is connected to oil processing; Abu Kharis known as a center for the dom-palm leaves weaving; and El-Bobaya which is known for the leather and artistic works. A total of 100 cottage industry practitioners were interviewed; 25 from each of the four villages. The interviews were conducted by the researcher and one research assistant, and included questions about different aspects of the industries studied such as the supply of raw materials, production, marketing, and problems that affect their productivity.

Other methods of data collection, beside the interviews, include direct observation and informal conversations. A number of households that practice cottage industry were selected for careful study by informal open-ended conversations and observation. Data collected by informal interviews and observation served as extension and cross-check for the formal survey data.

In addition to the primary survey data, secondary data were collected from published and unpublished sources, i.e. books, periodicals, reports, and conference papers. Secondary data were

collected from the Ministry of Industry in Khartoum, the Regional Ministry of Economic Planning in El-Obeid, and some of the NGOs operating in the study area.

Data Analysis

A qualitative, descriptive approach has been adopted in this study. Therefore, qualitative, descriptive, non-parametric statistical techniques were used to describe and analyse the data. The main statistical techniques used are frequency distributions and percentage comparisons. They were used to describe, compare and contrast data for the different types of industries studied.

The Study Area

The study focuses on cottage industries in Northern Kordofan namely the rural areas around El Obied. The area is characterized with a sandy soil and semi arid climate, the main economic activity of the population is the rainfed agriculture, and the main source of income for the people is from land use. On other hand, because of the weak potentialities and simple techniques used in agriculture, they cultivate small areas and therefore, the income earned from agricultural production is very small. In addition lack of potentials obliged many people to work in the large schemes owned by the migrants, Jellaba from the Northern and central

parts of the Sudan. Furthermore, the indigenous dwellers are subject to the exploitation of the capitalist migrant by employing them to work in their agriculture schemes with minimal wages. Also it was observed that there is a great difference in the standard of living between those migrants who live in El-Obied and the indigenous population who live in the rural extensions.

The poverty was increasing among the population since early 1980s due to the drought and desertification which has stricken the area. On the other hand, the area suffer lack of infra-structureal facilities and the population suffer many difficulties in transportation. In most cases the dwellers use their animals as means of transportation in their movements inside and outside their villages. In addition the population live in an absolute state of poverty. This is clear in the absence of healthy housing, since most of the people live in houses which are either composed of one or tow huts, Guttiyas or Durdur, and mud houses . Also suffer chronic problem in the dirnking water, there are many efforts by some of the voluntary agencies namely Unicef, attempt to solve the problem of water by construction of water pumps in the villlages. These efforts contributed to a large extent in solving the problem, but the area still suffer shortage of water. In addition the area suffer absence of health and educational services.

Further more ,the drought and desertification which has striken the area in 1980s have mounted problems of poverty, since the population have lost their main source of income due to the crop failures. The people were obliged either to involve in other economic activities to generate their incomes, or to migrate to urban centers and join the informal sector .Also It was observed that migration choice is strong among the males, who migrate to the large cities mainly El Obied, Kosti and Khartoum living behind the poor women and children.

On the other hand, there are two main reasons for the selection of this area. Firstly this area and - Western Sudan as a whole - is rich with most of those industries and handicrafts. Secondly Western Sudan in general had witnessed during the last two decades some environmental problems mainly the problem of drought and those problems resulted in a series of migration of the western dwellers to the large urban cities with serious impacts on both the indigenou as well as the national economy of the Sudan.

Organization of the Study:

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter One defines the the research problem, objectives, and importance of the study. The chapter also describes the study area, and discusses the

methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter Two examines the history of the cottage industry in the Sudan. Also this chapter presents the socio-economic effects of these industries and their impacts on the rural and national economy through their effects on employment and rural-urban migration.

The third chapter focusses on women industries and handicrafts such as food processing industry, pottery, textiles, etc. And the role they could play in upgrading the economic and social conditions of women and improving their welfare.

Chapter four examines the problems and constraints of cottage industries. It also focusses on the future prospects of the cottage industries and handicrafts and explains the importance and the role of government, NGOs and women associations in the development of this vital sector, it also presented the role of women centres and associations in the development of the rural woman.

Finally a general summary and conclusion presents the main and important arguments of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF COTTAGE INDUSTRY IN THE RURAL ECONOMY

Introduction:

The role of cottage industries and handicrafts in the local economy could not be ignored, since it contributes to the family income and poverty alleviation, this in addition to the fact that it could mobilize the local resources and diversify the economy. This chapter defines cottage industries and illustrates the development advantages of this essential sector and its socio economic effects, its role in raising the income of the family and improving the welfare of the household. Also its significant contribution in employment generation for the rural population particularly for the vulnerable groups i.e landless and women, and the link of this vital sector with the rural economy. On the other hand, this chapter presents the main problems and constraints that hinder the development of this sector.

Definition:

cottage industry usually refers to the sort of small industries that carried out in the home yard of the proprietor employing the household members. As in the Sudan most of rural households who

work in the traditional and agricultural sector practice cottage work as a secondary activity beside farming in order to increase their income to meet their needs.

The number of house holds practicing cottage industry has increased since 1980s particularly in the western part of the Sudan which was severely hit by the drought and soil degradation and as a result most of its population lost their main source of income and suffered from absolute poverty . Table 2.1 indicates that the number of the practitioners of cottage activities has recently increased since about 12% of them have joined the sector in short period for less than 2 years and 28% of the practitioners have joined the sector between 2-5 years.

Table 2.1 : Duration of Engagement in Cottage Industry

Duration of Engagement	Percentage
1-2 years	11
3-5 years	28
6-10 years	37
10 +	24

Source: Field survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

Table 2.2 shows that 90 percent of the study sample are females and that 67 percent of them are young women averaged between 15 and 35 years old.

Table 2.2: Age Group Of The Practitioners.

Age group	Percentage
15-25	18
26-35	49
36-45	20
45+	13

Source: Field Survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

So the growing number of the population who joined the cottage industry sector is attributed mainly to the phenomenon of drought that hit the area since early 1980s.

On the other hand, cottage industry which encompasses

beside food processing some handicrafts such as leather, pottery, textiles, needle work and palm-leaf weaving, has a long history in the Sudan. In a study of handicrafts in the Sudan, Bakhit and Foud stated that " the time of introduction of those handicrafts in the Sudanese societies was not fixed, but it was evident that those crafts were known to the people of the Sudan since the early times due to the distinguished geographical location of the Sudan and the influence of various civilizations of the Meroitic and old Egyptian civilizations on the Sudanese societies, this in addition to the vicinity of the Sudan to the Sahelian African culture which has an influential role in the Sudanese societies". (Bakhit & Ibrahim 1987, p.19). So as a result of the cultural diffusion in this part of the continent Sudanese societies were familiar with handicrafts. During the colonial era the Europeans tried to kill off local industries in Africa by importing cheap manufactures instead of that provided by the local handicrafts (Morduch, 1980, p.45) . Those attempts were successful to a large extent in the sense that the local demand was directed to the imported goods, but among the sedentary rural societies the handicrafts were continued to meet the demand of the poor in the village.

Concerning the handicrafts practiced by women at home such as needle work in the past has a social value particularly during the period when the education was confined merely for males. During that period every girl should have learned some

kind of hand work in order to spend her leisure time in a valuable work without consideration to the economic value . But recently during the 1980s and due to the drought and desertification cottage industry received great attention in the development plans as a source for income generation relied totally on local materials particularly for those who live in the drought stricken areas of the western Sudan. This attention was driven by the growing needs of living and the sharp reduction in the income of the population caused by crop failures since most of the people practice rain fed agriculture and depend upon its yield in their living. The survey which had been conducted in the study area indicated that the majority of practitioners of cottage industries were females who learned the work from their families and those who have no knowledge with home industries have started to join training centres to learn the work. Also it was indicated that almost the whole of women were not enthusiastic for working in a group outside the house and they prefer home work because they can work with out disrupting their house keeping duties.

Regional Specialization

With the growing of the sedentary societies in the Sudan and the need for the basic goods of the livelihood, has led to the

appearance of the small-scale industries and handicrafts as one of the strategies of self sufficiency. Also the appearance of the family as a production unit, in addition to the diffusion of the traditional techniques and expertise in the different communities has led to the growth of cottage industries to satisfy the needs of the local communities.

The phenomenon of the regional specialization that characterizes the small cottage industries and handicrafts has developed because of many environmental, cultural and natural factors interrelated with each other and led to the locational concentration of these industries in certain geographical areas. So it was noticed that in the Northern region and the riverian parts where the traditional agricultural societies prevailed, the industries of traditional tools used in agriculture are more concentrated in these parts of the country. On the other hand Western Sudan is famous for its traditional tanning and leather industries, this in addition to the carpet weaving industry which is connected with the nomads scattered in the area. Furthermore Eastern Sudan is reputable with mats produced from the dom-palm leaves, while in Southern Sudan wood carving predominates (Bakhit & Foud, Ibid p. 21). This regarding geographical concentration of the small cottage industries and handicrafts but at the same time and in order to satisfy the requirements of the daily life, the diffusion of the traditional techniques of handicrafts from one area to another

is inevitable particularly in the small communities in the remote rural villages where the low income consumers direct their demand to the local manufactured goods and this is the main factor behind the growth of this sector in the rural areas.

The Socio-Economic Effects of Cottage Industry:

The small cottage industry has a socio-economic significance, since it has a substantial contribution in solving unemployment problem particularly for those who fall in the dry and desertified zone, and also affects the phenomenon of rural-urban migration and displacement. The development advantages are many and the major advantage is that entry is not difficult in the sense that to establish an industrial unit, there is no need for huge capital. Firstly, the fixed capital, mainly the building which represents a large component of the capital, can be dropped out once the cottage enterprises do not use separate structure and the industrial unit in most cases is apart of the normal residence of the proprietor. Secondly, the working capital could be obtained through individual saving or loans from relatives and merchants.

On the other hand cottage industries utilize local resources and raw materials in production with very simple tools and none of those industries use any imported input during the process of production. Another advantage of this sector is that it improves

the incomes of the families and upgrades their livelihood.

The Role of Cottage Industry in Employment:

Cottage industry has a significant contribution in solving the problem of unemployment and under employment that characterize the rural labour force by providing employment opportunities for the rural population particularly for the disadvantaged groups i.e. landless and women. The majority of the surveyed practitioners are females and almost the whole production of pottery, palm-leaf weaving and artistic goods are produced by females. Also 71.4 percent of the producers in food processing and 80 percent in leather industries are females. Table 2.3 shows the ratio of the female labour force in the different cottage activities.

Table 2.3: The Percentage of Female Labour Force in Different Cottage Industries:

Type of Industry	Female	Male
Pottery	100	0
Palm-leaf & artistic goods	100	0
Food processing	71.4	38.6
Leather	80	20
The Whole Sector	90	18

Field survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

It is evident from the data presented that cottage industries sector has a potential of employment generation for females particularly for the unmarried girls who do not migrate outside the area due to social restrictions.

On the other hand cottage industry is suitable for the women headed families once the production takes place inside the house and they could work beside looking after their children. Further more ,cottage industries could help in reducing the dependency rate among the rural women since they generate considerable income for them .

Table 2.4: The social status of women in cottage industries:

Social status	Percentage
Unmarried	18
Married	72
Women headed families	62

Source: Field survey,Northern Kordofan,1992.

The survey which has been conducted in the area of the study indicated that most of industry practitioners are women and

the majority of them are those who bear the responsibility for family survival, either household heads or elder daughters who missed one or both of their parents and they became responsible of bringing up their younger brothers. Table (2.4) shows the social status of the women employed in the sector and explains that out of 90 percent of female labour force engaged in the different cottage industries, about 18 percent are unmarried. It was also observed that male out migration is significant in the area and the majority of them migrated to the urban centres mainly El-Obied and Omdurman and occupied inferior jobs with very poor and irregular incomes. There fore, the women receive very small remittances and so the economic and social burden of bringing up the children was falling upon them.

The Role of Cottage Industry in the Income of the Household:

In spite of the very low income that could be earned from marketing cottage industries products due to the poor financial potentialities allocated for the cottage industries, poor techniques and the low productivity of this sector, it contributes basically to the income of the rural family particularly during the period of drought when the income earned from agriculture was sharply declined and it became difficult to meet the needs of the livelihood. It is clear from table (2.5) that the contribution of the income earned from cottage industries production is substantial. They contribute almost 68 percent of the total income of the producers

in food processing industry, and the highest income is that obtained from oil pressing and dairy products. About 43 percent of the family income earned from marketing pottery products. Also income earned from marketing leather products contributes with 62 percent of the household income. But the lowest income is that obtained from the dom-palm leaves weaving industry and artistic goods due to the low productivity in the dom-palm leaves weaving industry and the low demand for the artistic goods, so the contribution is low approximately 27 percent of the income of the household.

Table 2.5: Percentage of Contribution of Cottage Industry in the Income of the Household:-

Type of Industry	Income earned from Marketing	Percentage
Pottery	10650	43
Palm-dom & artistic goods	1480	37
Food processing	34000	68
Leather	9300	62

Source: Field survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

There fore the income which could be obtained from cottage industries is extremely important for raising the income and well being of the households. Thus more attention should be given to this vital sector and its efficiency should be raised in order to improve the standard of living of the majority of the poor people in the rural sector.

Effects on The Rural Urban Migration:

In western Sudan, the phenomenon of displacement which the area has witnessed during the last decade, has taken place as a result of the severe drought which in turn, has led to crop failure and therefore, the population lost their main source of living and they were obliged to migrate to urban centres to find other means for survival. Therefore, these factors have led to the appearance of the phenomenon of the shanty towns around the large cities.

The influx of the rural migrants to the urban centers caused serious economic and social problems, most of those migrants and displaced have been transferred from a productive sector and added to the unproductive sector of the population of the towns. Either by becoming a part of the urban unemployment or involved in inferior activities in the informal sector with serious impacts on both economic and social levels.

Concerning the effects of the cottage industries on the internal migration, this sector if it were promoted, could have an influential role in minimizing the rural urban migration and could have a great effects on the phenomenon of displacement of the rural dwellers who were severely affected by the drought and lost thier main source of employment and income. But the small cottage industries could provide them - within a comperhensive development strategy and efficient exploitation of the rural resources - employment apportunities in their home place and guarantee considerable income for them .Therefore reduce rural employment and minimize the migration of the rural population to the central Sudan and the capital and avoid the economic and social problems following that displacement. Table (2.6) below demonstrates that the majority of the surveyed practitioners prefer living in their home place and refuse the notion of migration to the urban areas, and the minority approximately about 7 percent justified their desire to migrate as a result of the harsh living conditions in their home place.

Table 2.6: Migration Preference among the Producers

Type of Industry	Yes	No
Pottery	7	93
Palm & artistic	0	100
Food processing	6	94
Leather	5	95
The whole sector	7	93

Source: Field survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

An important fact that should be mentioned here is that a large proportion of the respondents in our survey indicated that they prefer to live in their villages than moving to the town. This is mainly due to the significant differences in the life style between rural and urban areas. Rural life is characterized by strong social ties, values, and norms which are, to some extent, weak in the urban areas. In most cases, rural dwellers are obliged to leave their home villages and join urban societies due to the limited resources and potentialities which could not absorb the surplus labour force within the economic and development policies prevailed in the area mainly the agricultural policies and also absence of sound management and allocation of resources. In addition, rural-urban migration is induced by the chronic problems of water, healthy housing and the lack of necessary educational and health services. Therefore because of those problems, the internal migration curve will move up by the same high and regular proportion.

In conclusion it is obvious from the survey findings, that cottage industries sector has a vital and effective role in the economic and social stability of the rural households, in the sense that the income earned from marketing cottage industries products contributes basically to the family income. It is also could absorb a large segment of the population in the drought affected areas and provide them with employment opportunities at their home

place and therefore ,contributes in reducing the rate of migration of the rural dwellers to urban centres.

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CHAPTER THREE
WOMEN INDUSTRIES AND HANDICRAFTS

Introduction:

Usually in the past cottage industry is linked with handicrafts practiced by women at home particularly needle work, but recently the number of female members of house holds who are involved in cottage industry has increased particularly in western Sudan, due to the sharp decline in their incomes because of the crop failures and it became insufficient to meet the growing costs of livelihood, for the fact that women in western Sudan bear a great part of the responsibility of the family because the male out migration is significant in the area. In addition to the home duties and land use they practice some sort of home industry to improve the income of their families in order to meet the requirements of living. So this chapter presents the different cottage industries practiced by the kordofanian women and attempts to examine the different methods of production of each industry and illustrates the problems and constraints the producers suffer during the production process. Also the chapter illustrates the techniques and technology used in production, the productivity and the problems that the producers suffer in each industry. This chapter presents

explicitly the most popular products produced by women and utilize the palm-dom leaves and plastic materials, leather products, Pottery, food processing and the problems associated with the production process. The data utilized in this chapter was derived mainly from the field work which had been conducted in the area of the study in 1992 and concentrated on the main centres of the cottage industries under the study namely Oriel, Omarada, Abukhrais and Elbobia.

Women Industries And Handicrafts:

The major and most famous handicrafts of women in northern Kordofan are the dom-palm leaves plaiting such as baskets, Guffas, mats, Burush, and bartals. Also the artistic decorative goods occupy an important place within handicrafts. The needle work such as sewing and proidering are also known to the Kordofanian women since along period of time. Recently the leather work such as bags and shoes was introduced in the women handicrafts through the training courses run by women centres and youth training centres.

The production of these products in most cases depends on the demand owing to the bad marketing system and the low incomes of the crafts women which would not enable them to buy raw materials in large quantities.

The dom-palm leaves industries:

Regarding the plaiting of the dom-plam leave, there are many various commodities produced by the crafts women in the western area of the Sudan, but the most important one which has a wide reputation in the whole parts of the Sudan is the bartal that produced from coloured straw or Hankug and used for covering the food.

The most important characteristics of the women handicrafts is that they utilize the local materials such as the saaf or the Hunkung which is utilized in plaiting. The Hankug is brought from the Nuba mountains and during the recent years the supply was affected by the security situation in the area i.e. the rebellion of certain tribes in thee area of the Nubian mountains which considered as the main source of the materials. The colour for the saaf leave is obtained from the markets. On the other hand the supply of materials in the dom-palm industry,as well as other industries, is affected by the lack of capital would not enable the craftswomen to buy the raw materials large quantities in times of good prices . For this reason they subject to the price and supply fluctuations. Further more lack of capital caused many craftswomen to leave the work. During the survey which had been conducted in the area of the study , it was observed that many of the craftswomen who was involved in the industry were obliged to

leave the work and become traders, in the sense that they buy the products from the producers in the village and take it to the market in El-obied. Also in most cases those women pay for the producers after the marketing of the production. further more many of the craftswomen were obliged to borrow the capital - sometimes in kind of materials- from the merchants who manipulate them and extract high profits i.e the traders earn indirect interest rates by inflating the prices since the village population come from one tribe , and due to the strong social ties, the traders could not add an interest rate on the loan.

On the other hand, the craftswomen use very simple tools and techniques in production. The tools in most cases are manufactured by the crafts women themseleves. Cosequently, the productivity in plaiting is very low. For instance, the plaiting of a burish needs approximately about fifteen days and the baskets,Guffas, need about three or four days . Also the craftswomen work beside doing their home dutiesand with the assitence of their daughters or sisters,and they are not employ anybody out side the family. As a result, the income earned from marketing the products is very low and disallow them , to either promote or expand their work. Since agreat proprtion of the income earned is used in living expenses. Also it was observed that, the demand is low because of the low purchasing power of the consumers,which affected by their low

incomes. Also many craftswomen -in interviews conducted with them during the survey- explained that before the drought the demand was affected to a large extent by the harvest, in cases of good harvest the demand is high because of the high purchasing power of the consumers. And the opposite is found to be the case in bad harvest. Further more, the craftswomen attributed the recent marketing situation to the low incomes of the consumers as a result of the crop failures.

Usually for marketing their products, the craftswomen take the production to the market in Elobied town . Sometimes, due to the high transportation cost, the producers sell the production to the traders at their home villages in low prices. Further more, the income earned from the dom-palm production is low . For instance, the highest price for the bartal , tebug, is 250 sudanese pound, the price of the burish and heggala is 175 and 250 pound. Also the price for the baskets, Guffas, is very low , it ranges between 25 and 40 pound .

On the other hand , the lack of technology and the simple tools used in the production have an influence on the productivity of the craftswomen and the quality of the production since they use traditional methods in plaiting of the dom-palm leaves.

Leather and Plastic Industries:

The leather work is different from other women handicrafts because it is carried out in the youth training centres and women centres at El-obeid and El-bobyia. This because the instruments needed during the production process are provided by those centres , since the economic situation of the crafts women disallow them to possess such instruments . Regarding the supply , the tanned leather is supplied bythe women training centre at El-bobyia and the youth traing centre at El-obied, since the production of the leather commodities is inside the centre. Those centres provide the leather for the producers on monthly installments but the supply of materials is fluctuated owing to the burearcrtic financial procedures and this affect the production. Also the price of leather is high and the supply is subject to fluctuations because of the drought and the extrmination of the animals. The shortage of the materials raise the prices and increase the production cost, and this inturn increase the the prices of the commodities. The craftswomen who are involved in leather work are few because the production is usually takes place in the women training centres and no woman could work at home. This for the reason that ,the centre provides the instruments

needed during production process. this in addition to the facilities in the supply of raw materials and marketing.

On the other hand, the productivity in leather industries is high compared to other women industries. The craftswomen produce one or two units in one day. But irregularity in the supply of raw materials affect the size of production, since sometimes they stop the work for long periods oftenly , reach one or two months, and this may happen two or three times during the year. On the other hand, it was observed that the high productivity which characterized leather industries is attributed to the kind of technology used in production. This confirms the importance of the appropriate technology in the development of the handicrafts. Also the kind of technology and techniques used affect the quality of leather products. It was observed that leather production is characterised by high quality and the leather commodities produced by the craftswomen in Western sudan mainly bags and shoes has awide reputation in the whole country. further more, the high price for the local leather products caused by the high cost of production affect the demand for those products and increase the competition of the imported ones. Also the competition of the imported goods affect the productivity in the sense that, the low demand for the leather commodities obliges the producers to reduce the production. This because the poor producers have to market their products soon after the production to get the

needed capital for further production. For this reason, retailer system is mainly to be found in leather trade. The training centres provide some marketing facilities, but they are limited and not enough to solve the problems associated with marketing. But inspite of the difficulties associated with the leather industries, it represents an important employment and income source and contributes with about 62 percent of the total family income.

On the other hand the artistic decorative goods such as plastic bassas, flowers and what is called Mushlieb, that utilize plastic materials were recently introduced through women centres and youth training centres at El-bobyia and El-obied. The plastic materials are not produced in Kordofan, they obtained from outside the area, therefore, there is irregularity in supply and the price is very high. For this reason, the production of such goods is confined to certain consumers and in most cases they produce according to the demand , since it is considered as a luxurious goods that demanded by the rich segment of the population. An important fact here is that, the artistic plastic production is practiced by the young females who learn the work through training courses run by the women centres, unlike other cottage industries where the practitioners learn the work within the family cycle.

As mentioned before, in plastic decorative industry , the

crafts women produce according to the demand due to the high cost of production. Because those poor women are in short of money and their small capital would not enable them to produce large quantities and subject to market hazards. Furthermore, the continuity of such artistic work depends on the creativity and innovative potentials of the craftswomen to produce attractive goods.

More of the above, the price of the decorative goods is high in comparison with other cottage industries, it sometimes reach more than 1000 pounds for one unit. It was observed from the survey which had been conducted in the area of the study, that inspite of the low productivity in plastic production compared to the dom-palm leaves weaving, they contribute by the same ratio to the family income and estimated with 37 percent of the total family income. This is because of the high prices of the plastic decorative goods. For this reason, some specialists who concerned with the development of women handicrafts suggest the substitution of some traditional women handicrafts with other economic activities to generate their incomes.

Pottery Production

In fact pottery instruments are used in most of the Sudanese households in their daily life in different ways, and until very

recently, pottery products played an important in the house . But some of these products disappeared and replaced by imported ones particularly in urban areas. In rural areas the pottery equipments are still wide spread in different forms . The most popular kinds that still produced and used in the rural house holds are:-

Water Pots: The water pots ,Zir, are used in both urban and rural house holds for the storage and cooling of water. The water pots have more or less the same shape that is found all over the Sudan and it differs from those used in southern Egypt and Eastern Africa in that it has no handle and very short neck.(Deltlev,1972:43). It is 50-90 cm high and holds between 8-20 litres and some times large size holds about 50 litres. There are two distinguished forms, the black and wide and the red and comparatively small one, these is only little variations.

Cooking Pot: The cooking pot, the Duraya or the tajun used for cooking but this pot is not wide spread since most of the households use the alminum pot instead and very few rural households use it. It takes around shape and the hight about 7-10 cm.

Coffe Pot: Coffee pot has the same shape all over the Sudan. It has aglobluer shape with a tall neck and handle and usually has a red colour.

Incense Pot: (Mahbabir) used for incense burning , there are some variations in the shape .

Flower bassas: The production of the bassas from pottery usually takes place in urban centres because the high demand by urban households.

Usually the production takes place inside the family house by the women during the dry season to generate income for the family to supplement the income from agriculture to meet the requirements of living because the agricultural productivity is low owing to the traditional technology adopted. Almost all the producers are women who are bearing the responsibility of their families and they are assisted by their daughters or sisters. They rarely employ any body outside the family circle due to the individual nature of the work and the low demand for the pottery products attributed to the low income of the rural population. Most of the products are marketed in EIObeid town, the main market for pottery. There are many difficulties in the work since the materials are brought from long distances and the producers walk for long distances to get the wood required for firing the pots. Some times, they spend the whole day walking to access wood resources. On the other hand, it was observed that the majority of the producers are young women with different ages between 15 and 35

years old. Also the majority of the producers are family heads women. But it was observed that, despite they are young, the craftswomen who are involved in pottery production, are complaining from the difficult nature of the work and they explain that they were obliged to do such hard work because they need additional income to feed their families due to the low income from agriculture. Also they appear desire to leave the work and join another easier one.

The materials used in modelling a pot is clay which is the main material, husks and animal dung. They get the clay from the valleys or (fullas) and they gather the husks or the buttab from the winnowing place (madaq) the clay is usually mixed with the husks and they pour water and leave it for some time in order to get wet. To model the pot, the potter takes some clay and mix it with husks, then she beats many times on a piece of mat or sack, (shawal) that is placed over a shallow depression. Initially the potter beats the lump of clay with a pestle (daggaga), as she beats it and turns it round, the clay takes on a rounded shape. The potter continues to add clay each time and during the process of modelling she sprinkles dung on it. After a while and when the pot takes a globular form she then substitutes the dagaga with a sindla, when the pot form reach the neck, then she stops the work and then takes water from a bowl near her and start burnishing

the surfaces of the pot and then she leaves it to dry. After that the neck is formed by making coils round the end of the pot and the number of the coils depend on the size of the pot. The last process is the firing of the pots which is done by putting the pots altogether and makes a hut or (guttiyya) of grass to cover it, or by firing the pot in a kitir which is a simple shallow of about 1-2 meters in a diameter, and about half and using cattle dung or straw and this method of firing is mostly prevailing since the first one is needed for the arrangement in cases of great production. After that the decoration of pot would be done where it desired.

In this junction it is important to mention the fact that firing is accomplished for the whole pottery products except the drums which are to be left to get dry under the sun heat before adding the cydical leather form.

Further more, the lack of technology and the simple tools used in production have an influence on the productivity of the craftswomen and the quality of production since they use traditional methods in pots making. Therefore, the simple techniques used in production affect the productivity of the potters. The woman start the work from the morning till evening

and does not work the productivity is low and usually the women spend at least one day to make a pot. Also in production of the large water jars ,Zir, the woman spent two or three days to make a Zir. Rarely some producers make one or two pot per day because they find great assistance from their family members. On the other hand, pottery production takes place through out the year except during the rainy season when the producers go to the fields to work in agriculture. Also the producers are obliged to leave the work from time to time because of shortage of raw materials mainly shortage of water which is needed during the production process, since the area suffer from serious problem in water. Therefore, fluctuations of supply of raw materials affect the size of production. Further more, the high cost of transportation of the products from the village to the market in El Obied, and the low prices for pottery products affect the income earned from pottery production. For instanc, in order to transport water jars from Oriel village to Abu-Jahal market at El Obied, the producers pay 10 pounds for each one, while the highest price for the water pot is 50 pounds, and some times the price decreases to 25 pound for the pot. On the other hand, the income which could be obtained from pottry products estimated with about 10650 Sudanese pound per year. Furthermore, despite the low income earned from pottry production, it contributes basicly, approximately 43 percent to the family income.

More of the above, it was observed that migration reference among the potters is high compared to practitioners of other cottage industries, and about 6.7 of the potters have a great desire to migrate to urban centres and they justify that with the difficult nature of the work.

Food Processing:

Sudanese society has known many traditional ways for processing food to be used for different purposes, and methods for keeping food materials for long time to be used in time of scarcity. The majority of house wives and house keepers know how to process vegetables to be used during the year and every woman learn those methods from her mother and grand mother i.e the learning is through the family in which the little girl learns the method by watching and assisting her mother during the production.

Food processing industry is mainly tied with women since they prepare the food for the family. There are many kinds of food processing that prevailed in the rural areas of the Sudan such as the making of tomato paste and the drying of the Okra into another kind known locally as waika. Also the dairy products industry is considered as one of the major industries in the area since animal husbandary is one of the main activities of the

population. This in addition to some other local foods processed from the natural vegetation in the surrounding areas mainly the kawal and kambo and considered as popular foods that favoured by the indiginous population.

Tomato paste is made by women using traditional methods of processing . The producers who at the same time are farmers cultivate the tomato in the rainy season and process it into tomato paste using very simple traditional method by cutting the pieces into slices and leave those slices under the sun heat to dry and then are gathered for marketing. Some producers have another different method in which they winnow the dry tomato and add some oil to get red and prepared for marketing in powder form. Another group of producers put the tomato slices on fire and add some salt and oil and there fore could be kept for use in that wet form for quite long period and this process takes between some hours in the case of the cooked tomato paste and two or three days in the case of the dry tomato.

Similar to this is the drying of the okra to be processed into the so called waika either by cutting the okra into slices or leaving them at their original form and add some ashe to keep the original colour and protect the product against the pests, and leave them under the sun heat or open air to dry and then to be prepared for marketing, some of the producers winnow the dry

okra for sale in a powder form. The process takes approximately about eight or ten days.

Usually the dring of Okra takes place during the rainy season becuase the poor producers process the small quantities which they cultivate in their small farms and the lack of capital would not enable them to buy additional quantities of Okra to increase the production. There fore, the productivity is very low and limited to the rainy season. On the other hand, the price of the dry Okra, waika decrease during the rainy season and increase during summer . For this reason, usually the producers store their production for sale in small quantities through out the year. But the majority are obliged to sell their production at any price because they need money to meet the requirements of living.

Dairy Products:

The dairy products industry mainly the butter churning has been known to western woman since early times and the butter of the western Sudan has a reputation in whole country. The dairy products industry is practiced by the Kordofanian women in order to improve their family income particularly after the severe drought which has stricken the area with serious economic impacts. The women used to churn butter from the milk that obtained from the cows of the family and sell the production for earning some

money in order to meet the requirements of living. Butter churning is usually the work of the house wife who in most times assisted by their daughters. The making of the butter is through the strong churning of the milk in a leather vessel used particularly for the butter churning (Bukhsa) and the process takes usually about three or four days, and in case of old vessel, the process takes only one day.

On the other hand, the production of cheese was introduced recently when some of the voluntary agencies—through the women centres—have organized some programmes for learning the women simple methods of cheese making.

The main problem of this work is the reduction in the amount of the milk due to the extrmination of the cattle because of the drought and this inturn reduces the amount of milk for the production. This is in addition to the chronic problem of getting milk in Summer because of the shortage of water in that season which affects the amount of milk, for this reason, the women are obliged to stop the work. Instead some women sell the store butter in good prices, since the prices increased during summer due to decrease in supply. Further more, the good supply of milk during the rainy season encourages the women to increase their production. The women produce in average one or two litres per week, and some times it may reach three litres per week. Also

because of the long time that needed to process butter and the hard work of churning butter the women are unable to produce more than this amount, inspite of the big quantities of milk available to the producers. On the other hand, the prices of butter decrease during the rainy season, it some times reach 200 pound for one litre, while the price reach to 600 pound for a litre in summer. For this reason, almost all the producers try to store their production for marketing in summer. Further more, inspite of the low income earned from butter production - and food processing in general - it is still considered the highest one compared to other cottage activities and it is etimated with 34000 pound per year and contributes with 66 percent to the family income.

Oil Pressing:

The oil pressing industry is the only home industry that practiced by men, the production follow traditional techniques and the edible oil produced by traditional presser using an animal (camel) in moving the heavy presser, the productivity of the presser is very low approximately about 20-22 litre per day. Some producers produce only about two litres per day due to the shortage of supply owing to the lack of capital that is needed to buy the sesame in big amounts. The low

productivity discourage the producers to employ labours for the work and they depend on the assistance of their family members or some times get labour from their relatives. Lack of capital is a crucial factor that constraints the expansion of the production and employment of more labour, since the poor pressers have no money to buy big amounts of sesame and they are subjected to manipulation of the merchants who monopolize the crop and sell the sesame to the pressers in high prices. Also there are many other difficulties in the work. In the first place the work depends on the crop production fluctuations. For instance in the bad season the amount of the sesame decreased and this reduce the production of the oil. This is addition to the difficulties of transportation of the crop to the production place and the transportation of the oil to the town for marketing. On the other hand, weakness and illness of the animals which considered as principal component of the presser machine exacerbates the problem. Other problems connected with the bureacratic procedures such as the tax and the licence of the machine can not be undermined. But the main problem the producer of oil pressing suffer is the competition of the other edible oil, inspite of the high quality of that produce by traditional presser, mainly that distrubited by the relief agencies work in the area. This is because of the high price of the sesame oil due to the high cost of production. Further more, in most cases the pressers sell their production at their home place to women from the village. The

women distribute the production in the neighbour villages and El Obied market. On the other hand, the high cost of production reduces the profit and therefore, the income earned from marketing the edible oil. Also irregularity of production, due to fluctuations in the supply of sesame, affects the size of production. For this, the income earned from edible oil is approximately equivalent to that obtained from other food, it ranges between 30000 and 34000 pounds per year.

For marketing of the products, the producers have to take the production to the market in the town and they are faced with many difficulties in transporting the production since there are no infra-structural facilities in the area and they either loaded with the products and walk for some times more than two hours or pay high charges for the transportation and the payment in most cases will be after the marketing of the production since the poor producers usually have no money to pay in time. Simultaneously the high utility charge of the transportation increases the cost of the production and there-by reduces the profits and some times lead to the loss. For example, in pottery production, the producer usually pay a charge for every pot at about 35% of the price. On the other hand, the demand is low attributed to the low incomes of the consumers and this in turn obliges the producers to reduce the prices some times, because they need money immediately to feed their families. Also the producers sell the whole production

to the merchants on credit and this influence the capital needed for the production as in the case of the oil processing when the producers sell the surplus amount that remained after the satisfaction of the local demand to the merchants in the town.

In conclusion the important point is that cottage industries constitute an essential sector improving the economic and social conditions of the rural women, particularly women headed families, it was observed that they work under severe conditions and suffer many problems during the production and those problems affect the quality, productivity and therefore, the income earned from marketing cottage industries products. Further more, despite the difficulties associated with the work, cottage industries play an effective role in improvement of the economic and social conditions of the rural population.

CHAPTER FOUR
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Introduction

The people of northern kordofan are mainly farmers who depend basically on rainfed agriculture, to produce their food demands in the subsistence farming system. After the drought and famine disasters of the 1980s the people have lost their main source of livelihood. As a result of losing their principal source of income and employment, the secondary activities of handicrafts and home based industries have become the main activities so as to generate their incomes in order to meet the growing needs of the livelihood. Therefore, the number of the small and home industry practitioners has increased since 1983 when the crop failure, drought and famine took place despite the difficulties of production. The first section of this chapter attempts to highlight the problems and constraints that inhibit the expansion of cottage industries. On the other hand, part two of this chapter focuses on the future prospects of this sector and presents the role of governmental institutions and development agencies in the development of this vital sector.

Problems And Constraints Of Cottage Industries:

In Sudan there are a lot of problems confronting the small cottage industries in the demand as well as the supply side, and this sector had been suffering from negligence of the official authorities for a long time. Recently some of the national and international institutions started to pay special attention to that sector in an attempt to highlight the obstacles that constrained the development of this sector to be able to contribute in the social and economic welfare of the society.

Concerning the supply side, problems of working capital, supply of raw materials, technology and skills are the basic problems prevailing in this sector. Table (4.1) shows the major problems in the supply side, the table indicates that approximately 54% of the practitioners in cottage industries facing problem in the working capital and almost 33% of the producers have a problem in getting the materials needed for the production.

Table 4.1: Major Problems in the Supply Side.

Problems	Percentage
Materials	33
Capital	54
Transportation	13

Source: Field Survey, northern Kordofan, 1992.

The table demonstrates that lack of capital and inavailability of materials are the main obstacles that inhibit the development of this sector. The important fact is that lack of the working capital is the most crucial problem facing the majority of workers involved in cottage industries sector, because the individuals who practice cottage industries are those belong to the poor segment of the society who use very simple technology and simple instruments of production. The majority of the workers are unable to possess the tools needed during the production process, and for this reason many producers in cottage industry particularly leather and textile industries prefer working in workshops. Table (4.2) below demonstrates that lack of capital represents approximately 90% of the problem that confronting the workers in leather industry, and 95% of the producers of the dom-palm leaves weaving and artistic goods facing serious problem in the working capital.

Table 4.2: Percentage of Respondents who Reported that Lack of Capital is Their Main Constraint

Type of Industry	Percentage
Pottery	5.8
palm-dom	95
Leather	90
Food Processing	8.6

Source:Field survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

On the other hand capital factor has no great importance in pottery and food processing industries compared to the availability of raw materials as it is clear from the above table it represents only 5.8 percent in pottery production and 8.6 percent in food processing since the materials are obtained from the surrounding nature in pottery production and depends on the agricultural products which the producers cultivate during the rainy season.

The availability of raw materials is also another problem inhibiting the growth of this sector, most of the industries suffer from the limited supply of the raw materials and most of them depend on the rainy season particularly the agro-industries and the food processing which rely on the agricultural products and influenced to a large extent with the success or failure of certain crops that utilized as materials for some industries as in the case of the oil pressing industry which utilizes the sesame crop to produce edible oil. Approximately all the food processing industries in western Sudan depend on the success of the rainy season because of the production of the tomato paste and most of the popular kinds of food in western Sudan which constitute the major and most favourable substances in the diet of the people in affected by the amount of the rainfall . The dairy products are influenced by the amount of milk which increase during the rainy season and decrease during the rest of the year due to the amount of water and herbs available during the rainy season and

require movements for along distances during summer. The availability of the materials also affected by the backward transportation system and many times the production come to a halt because the materials were not available locally and require the procurement of materials from a distant supplier, so the difficulty in obtaining a steady supply of raw materials stand as stumbling block in the functioning of cottage industries.

The low level of technology posed another problem, it was noticed that proprietors of cottage industries come from very poor economic background and very low income, therefore, it is difficult to possess new and appropriate instruments and they use very traditional tools. On the other hand, the government provides import facilities for the large industrial sector to import the equipment at reasonable price and neglect the small cottage sector. Also the low level of technical skill of the producers due to the absence of formal education and training programmes that organized for the home work practitioners and they learn the work through the traditional apprenticeship system in which the crafts man learn the industry in side the family.

Generally the marketing system in the Sudan and the countries alike is very under developed . In the Sudan marketing is considered as a leading constraint in the demand side owing to the absence of the local markets in the village where the production takes place because cottage industries in the area of

the study is characterized by some sort of specialization in the sense that each village produces one or two kinds of industries, Oriel for instance is specialized in pottery production, Abu Khrias specialized in palm-dom leaves weaving and El-Bobyia is specialized in artistic goods. So in order to sell their products, the producers had to send them to the market of the town namely Abu Gahal market at El-Obied, Kasgail and the small weekly markets, and this in turn increases the cost of production due to the lack of infra-structural facilities in the rural areas and therefore, high utility charge. To tackle the problem of transportation and avoid the high utility charge, some producers sell their products to the middle men who extract high rates of profit. Also in order to minimize the cost they usually use their animals as means for transportation or take the products on their heads and walk for a long distances and some times they spend more than two or three hours to reach the market at the town. The distribution of cottage industries products is clear in the following table

Table 9: Distribution of Cottage Industries Products

Type of Industry	At Market	Traders	At home
Pottery	100	0	0
Palm&artisticgoods	60	15	5
Leather	60	0	40
FoodProcessing	54	6	40

Source: Field Survey, Northern Kordofan, 1992.

Further more, the sluggish demand for the products of the cottage industries sector represents serious obstacle in the development of this sector once the low demand discourage the expansion of the small enterprises. The survey which had been conducted in the area of the study indicated that the main cause of the low demand for cottage industries products is the low income of the consumers, and almost 65 percent of the surveyed producers attributed the low demand for the products of this sector to the low income of the people, and 26 percent of the practitioners related that to the quality of the products and the competition from the large sector and imported commodities and very few approximately 9 percent attributed the low demand to the high prices of the products mainly the leather commodities.

So the important fact is that, the small cottage industries are usually tied with the poor societies where the consumers' incomes are very low and do not permit the demand curve of cottage industrial products to move upward, since the basic needs of living erode a great proportion of the incomes of the people. The seasonality of demand for the home industry products is another factor that hinder the growth of this sector in the sense that during certain periods within the year the people increase their demand for certain products as in the case of pottery, in which the demand for the products increases in summer because the need for water jars, Zir . This is in contrast in winter when the demand is very low and the producers usually obliged to scatter in the

streets for selling their products. Also the demand curve for leather products move upward on the occasions of religious feasts and at the time of the school opening at the beginning of the academic year when the demand for the leather products such as leather bags and shoes increase.

Further more, the people during the rainy season cut down their demand for the industrial products and allocate more of their available financial resources to agriculture because farming is considered the main activity and source income. At the same time most of the agricultural crops represent raw materials for food processing industry. During the rainy season the theory of supply and demand is not functioning in the sense that the prices for certain products may increase in spite of the low demand due to the scarcity of supply because the producers give up their home work and concentrate their efforts on the land use.

Regarding the elasticity of demand for cottage manufactures, the demand for the home work products increases by the same ratio of increase in the incomes of the consumers. Some people argue that as the consumers' income increase they shift their demand for the products manufactured by the modern sector, but the opposite is found to be the case in such poor societies since the incremental change in the incomes of the rural population is eroded by the regular series of inflation. On the other hand, the local traditional industries were not threatened by any competition

from the large -scale products or imported manufactures except in the oil pressing industry where the edible oil produced by the large sector and that distributed by the relief agencies work in the area stand as the major competing commodities for the oil processing industry. Also the imported leather products compete against the leather commodities produced by the small cottage sector inspite of the good quality of the local products due to the high prices of the local products compared to the imported ones. Also the brain washed consumers who are in confident in the local small industry shift their demand to the imported goods.

Future Prospects Of Cottage Industry:

The importance of small and cottage industries also emerges from the role it could play in effecting the influx of migrants and displaced to the urban centres by providing an alternative employment opportunities and income sources. So the development strategies should have taken care of the importance of this sector by providing the facilities that allow the expansion of the industry, mainly credit and loan facilities , since lack of capital stands as main the obstacle that hinder the growth of this sector because the majority of the practitioners come from a very poor economic background. In addition they were hardly hit by the drought and famine disasters of the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, more attention should be given to the projects that generate their

incomes. Also financial facilities should be provided in order to solve the capital problem which represents the major constraint inhibiting the growth of the cottage industries sector, by allocating rotating loans for the people in the sense that every one should have access to credit facilities. Further more , access to credit is more problematic for women since most of those women are illiterate and there fore un aware of the advantages of the credit facilities allocated by the development institutions. This in addition to the fact that most of the female produceres were discouraged to take the risk of credit facilities provided by the funding institutions which subject to many complicated procedures and takes long time, in addition to some sort of considerable guarantee demanded by the funding insititutions and they tend to borrow from relatives and neighbours. On the other hand, the funding itself does not work efficiently and the funding institutions concentrates on the agriculture sector in the area through the Jubraka system. Also most of the voluntary agencies work in the area confine their activities to the technical assistance and provision of services such as water pumps to solve the chronic water problem . For example the International Organization "CARE" has a huge project of water storage for the drought season and planned to construct huge water store (Hafir) with local labour force through the Food-For-Work system by giving them beans and millet for their work instead of money.

The youth training centres established by the Ministry of

Youth and Sports and the women centres established by the Ministry of Agriculture as a part of the programme of the rural woman development for the promotion and training of women skills, contribute to the some extent in solving the problems of raw materials and instruments needed during the production process by providing the producers with raw materials and allow them to pay the price after the marketing of the products. Also the women use the instruments and machines of the centres during the production process because most of those destitute women could not possess such instruments and up to the time when this research was conducted there was no funding institution work in the area and the problem of lack of capital still represents the main constraint to the expansion of this sector.

The Role Of The Government In The Development Of The Cottage Industries:

The important fact in the context of the development of the cottage industries as a strategy for alleviation of poverty in the area is the coordination and cooperation between the specialized government institutions, International development agencies work in the area, and the population to undertake sound plans and successful programmes to achieve development objectives. But the surprising fact observed is the complete absence of a specialized governmental institution in the area such as the Industrial Bank and the Ministry of Industry which supposed to organize through

the department of small-scale industries a comprehensive programme for the promotion of the small and cottage industries sector in the area instead of concentration on the small sector in the capital and the other urban areas of the Sudan. Also the Industrial Bank in order to contribute to the solution of the problem of capital in the cottage industries sector , should have established small branches in the rural areas to finance the small projects.

The government through the department of small-scale industries and in cooperation with the Industrial Bank and the voluntary agencies work in the area should have established a fund of rotating loans to provide credit facilities and organize education programmes to enlighten the dwellers and teach them the methods of dealing with the funding question through the limited resources, as an attempt to solve the capital problem which stands as a bottle neck for the development of the cottage industries.

Women Centres

The development of the cottage industries as an anti-poverty programme for the vulnerable groups i.e. the women, require establishment of women associations and training centres, so the government should establish more women centres and youth training centres and improve the existing ones. Also expand their

benefits to include both women work inside the centre and those work at home, since most of the rural women discourage the collective work out side the house and prefer working individually or with the assistance of their family members at home since they could work without disrupting their house chores.

In order to function efficiently, those centres should have certain consultancy team for the provision of consultancy services such as the study of feasibility of the projects, technical assistance and assist the producers to get funds for their projects and provide them with advices for administrating the funds.

On the other hand, an important point in the development of the cottage industries and handicrafts is the establishment of women associations and net works as those found in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and many other Asian and African countries for the pioneering role those associations play in the development of the rural women by enlighting them with advantages of the collective work and encouraging them to participate in the collective activities. This, in addition to the effective role they play in the adult education, health services and learning skills of instruments maintainence. Therefore, the expansion of women associations, training centres, and the cooperation between those women net works and the funding institutions to provide the facilities and incentives will be positive contribution in the development of this vital sector.

On the other hand, the availability of raw materials, the procurement of the materials particularly those from a distant supplier is necessary for the producers to produce regularly and here the women centres could play an important role, since they could contact directly with the main sources of materials and frustrate the role of the middle men who exploit the poor women and extract high profits. Also with the cooperation of the Ministry of Industry and the financial institutions, those centres could procure large quantities of raw materials to maintain continued supply, and in some cases the seasonal fluctuations in the prices facilitate the purchase of raw materials in large quantities at low price and therefore, reduce the cost of production for the poor producers.

Utilization of appropriate technology by providing modern instruments for production and organizing training courses for the best use of those instruments will have good effects on the production process which becomes more easy and save time and efforts, This, inturn will have a significant influence on women health and well being. Also training courses aiming to improve the skill levels will improve the quality of the production and encourage women to become more creative and innovative.

Finally, assistance should be provided to the rural woman for optimum utilization of appropriate technology in the home affairs by providing the instrument that facilitate the home work such as

the stove that use the bio-gas and solar energy. The British Intermediate Technology Organization has a good experiment in production and distribution of the stoves that use the solar energy in the area but the experiment is limited and so its role is insignificant. But the expansion in such projects reserve the wasting time and efforts that rural women spend in home duties and therefore, reduce the time pressure, increase their lesiure time and enable them to increase their production of cottage income generating activities.

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CONCLUSION

Recently the development experiences in most of the third world countries demonstrated the importance of cottage industries sector in development strategies. since it is considered as a successful survival strategy in the subsistence economy in areas where the subsistence economic policies predominate. This because of the significant contribution of cottage industries in improving the economic and social conditions of the people in rural areas. It is generating their incomes and providing employment opportunities for the surplus labour force since the agricultural policies that prevailing in such subsistence economies could not absorb the growing number of labour force in the rural areas.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of drought and desertification which affected many parts of the country particularly western areas has changed their economic and social life. This led the population who are mainly farmers to search for other ways of survival by expanding activities other than farming. These activities were practiced in the past as secondary activities as an alternative source of other permanent income. The other alternative is to migrate to urban areas and big cities to search for work in the informal sector. The survey which had been conducted in the area demonstrated that migration choice is clear among men groups who were obliged to migrate to urban towns to

join the informal sector. On other hand the opposite is found to be the case among women groups in which migration was discouraged due to their culture and the survey indicated that most of the women in the affected areas prefer to expand their cottage activities as a source for income generation to raise their incomes . This inspite of the many difficulties and problems associated with cottage industries, as a result of the negligence of cottage industries in the development policies and the concentration of the government strategies on the large scale sector. Because usually the practitioners of cottage industries are the poor who live in remote rural villages and un aware of the advantages of organizing together in groups to get social and political weight to influence the government decisions. Unlike the large modern sector which gains many facilities and concessions allocated by the government to the industrial sector. This has a direct impact on the performance of this sector, becuase in most cases the producers of cottage industries are the destitute poor women, and therefore, the poor financial potentialities allocated for this sector have a great effect on the productivity, since the changes in the input and output prices determine the production size. Also the poor consumers of cottage industries products affect the marketing and therefore, the income earned by the producers. This in addition to many problems those women suffer in getting the raw materials needed for the production which in most cases subject to price and supply fluctuations, capital shortage and exploitation of traders and therefore, very small

earning. On the other hand, the economic cottage activities of the Kordofanian women were ignored in the budget allocated for the local development programmes for quite along time and the women work with out financial or technical assistance from the local governments (Melak, 1993:5). This in addition to many problems which those women suffer during the production process and which could be summerized in six major problems, First , problems associated with capital to meet the cost of production . secondly problems related to availability of the various inputs needed during production process. Thirdly transportation difficulties posed another problem confronted the producers in the cottage industries sector since lack of infra-structural facilities influence both production decision and marketing decision . Therefore an efficient transportation system is needed year round because it affect the transportation of raw materials and the final production to the market place. On the other hand, the producers suffer real problem in marketing their products and generally there are two essential factors influence marketing process of production of the small cottage industries. The first one is that most of cottage industries are located in the remote villages and secondly they are highly concentrated geographically so it is difficult for the producers to distribute their products at the production place, so they either take the production to the market place in towns or subject to many intermediaries.

Furthermore, the availability of equipment and tools needed

for production represents serious problem in cottage industries since the possession of proper equipment is an obvious requirement for successful cottage project because the kind of tools used affects both quality and production size. So these are the main problems which the producers of cottage industries suffer and which stand as bottlenecks constrains the expansion of this sector.

On the other hand recently several studies which had been conducted by some voluntary agencies work in the area demonstrated the effectiveness of cottage industries as a survival strategy for the population of the rural areas, particularly for those who live in the drought and desertified areas and lost their employment and income sources. It is also successful instrument contribute to the economic and social stability for rural house holds by providing employment for the people at their home place and utilize local resources and indigenous technology.

The main out come of those studies was the establishment of the Rural woman Development Unit by the government in 1991 as a part of the central planning agency to achieve the main objectives of the national development strategy which has been formulated to concentrate on women projects that contribute to the resettlement and rehabilitation programmes in the area. This in addition to the projects that increase the incomes of the families and improve their well being. Another function of that unit is to

supervise and organize women development projects which have been undertaken by some voluntary agencies work in the area (M. Mahmoud & N. Mekhi, 1993 :8). Moreover , it was observed that the role of the unit in women development is insignificant due to the poor financial potentialities allocated by the government and for this reason it concentrates its activities in organizing - in cooperation with the youth training centres - training courses on handicrafts and providing some advisory services in child and mother care. It was also observed that usually those courses take place in towns where the youth traing centres and women centres are located, and in most cases the rural women in remote villages could not have an access to such programmes since it is difficult for them to go to towns where those courses take place. So in order to enable those women to get benefit of such training programmes feasible transportation system is necessary for them to attend those courses, also the development institutions should organize training programmes for the producers at their home place.

Therefore, generally more efforts are required to remove the main obstacles of cottage industries by providing more facilities such as financial facilities since grants and loans are necessary to offset some of the cost of the beeginning. Also feasible transport system is important becuase transportation is a crucial factor influence both cottage industries production and the development programmes in general. On the other hand the use

of appropriate technology to improve the quality and increase the productivity. And therefore, enables this sector to contribute effectively in the development as a survival strategy for the population in the affected zones.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Date..... Name of the Village.....

Name: _____ Tribe: _____

N. of Family members () Occupation:

Sort of industry : _____

* N. of household members who practice cottage industry ()

N. of males () N. of Females () Children ()

* Producer's level of education

(i) Primary (ii) Secondary (iii) non-educated

* How long have you been practising this work?

* How did you learn this work?

* Why do you work cottage industry? Because of :-

(i) Poverty, in order to raise the family income

(ii) No other alternative work

(iii) To occupy the leisure time

(iv) Other reasons

* Do you have any other activity?

Yes () No ()

* Does it represent the main activity, or a secondary one?

* If it is secondary activity, what is your main activity?

* Do you employ any other person?

Yes () No ()

* How do you get the labour force?

- (i) from the house hold members (iv) from neighbourhood
(ii) from relatives (v) from labour market
(iii) from tribe members

* How much you pay for him?

* How do you get the raw materials?

* Can you get the materials at any time through out the year?

* Do you have any problem in getting the materials?

* When do the materials prices increase, and when do they decrease?

* How do you get the capital?

(i) through saving

(ii) loans

(iii) Funding from NGOS

(iv) other sources

* How do you distribute the income you get from the work?

(i) It will be spend in liiving expenses

(ii) It will be reinuested in the industry

(iii) others.

* If you get the capital through loans,then you borrow from:

(i) Relatives.

(ii) Tribe members

(iii) Merchants

(iv) Banks.

* How do you pay back the loan?

* How long time you need to produce one unit of production?

* Describe in details the processes which the production pass through,and the instrument uses?

* How much does one unit of production cost?

* Which periods of the year do the prices of the products increase and decrease, why?

* How prices fluctuations affect your production?

* Do you prefer working individually or do you like working in a group?

* Do you prefer working at home?

If Yes illustrate Why _____

If NO. _____

* How do you distribute the products?

* What are you suggest for improving the Production

* Researcher's Observations
