

**SOME SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE
DYNAMICS AND COPING WITH
POVERTY IN RURAL AND URBAN SUDAN**

Research Report 0423

Section One

The Research Problem and Empirical Methods: An Introduction

This research deals with poverty in the Sudan during the period 1990-2000. It attempts to focus on some social, economic and political dimensions of the process of poverty. It deals with concepts of poverty, causes of poverty, approaches to poverty reduction within the general context of the evolution of thinking on poverty. This section outlines the research questions and issues to be dealt with in the rest of the report and maps out the empirical and conceptual methodologies that have been adopted.

1.1. The Research Problem and Questions.

Considering some of the theoretical issues relating to the definitions and measurements of poverty in general and to the Sudanese context in particular, one of the main relevant issues that emerges and seem to be of importance to this proposed study is that poverty is held to have different meanings and connotations by three different poverty-related actors:

- i. government whose economic policies (directly and indirectly) affect poverty and the poor plus government bodies whose activities are oriented to deal with poverty;
- ii. international development institutions and NGOs working in the field of poverty alleviation; and,
- iii. the poor sections of the population themselves. As the grave problem of poverty is intensifying over time, different responses to cope with it have been adopted by these three different sets of actors;

Within an increasingly changing global and national economic, political, social and cultural context, and taking some examples of sections of some urban and rural Sudanese society (in Kordofan, Gezira and Khartoum), this proposed research attempts to investigate how poverty as a process has been accelerated not only by structural adjustment policy (and this has been done by Ali's recent work) but as a result of direct and indirect socio economic policies that have influenced the security, stability, productive activities, real incomes and opportunities of the majority rural and urban population. How poverty is conceived and responded to by the three main actors involved;

- i. the government which effects policies that allocate and reallocate resources that directly and indirectly affects poverty;
- ii. international development institutions and NGOs which are involved in poverty alleviation actions through poverty alleviation projects and programs; and,
- iii. the poor sections of the population themselves who are affected by the accelerating process of poverty and who have been pursuing different mechanisms to cope with poverty. What responses, adjustments and strategies that have been adopted by the three main actors to deal with poverty, what means they used to alleviate it, with what degree of effectiveness, what constraints they encountered in these attempts and why poverty persists despite attempts at its alleviation. Are constraints to poverty alleviation inherent in overall government policies socioeconomic and political policies that influence the performance of the economy, the allocation and reallocation of economic resources, the internal socio economic and political setup and the forms of interaction with the international environment within which the country and the economy operate, or are constraints inherent, when poverty alleviation projects are examined, inherent in the conceptions and accordingly in the actions based on them? Are constraints inherent in the means adopted to achieve poverty alleviation or in all these factors and forces combined and to what degrees?

Surveying the literature on countries of conditions similar to Sudan's, and with the research questions in mind, insight from comparative country case studies would be extracted and used to illuminate the issues being raised on poverty in the Sudan. Within this conceptual framework, supported and enhanced by comparative country case studies, the research also deals with another set of questions: In what ways have the rural poor been affected by government policies in general and those adopted towards the rural and agricultural sector in particular? How the rapidly deteriorating living conditions and the process of slipping into poverty have been conceived by the different sections of the affected population both rural and urban? How do they cope with their poverty conditions and what means and mechanisms they have adopted, with what opportunities of success in the absence of effective state

policy to help them surmount their difficulties? To what extent have they been successful and what difficulties and constraints they face in their attempts to deal with their poverty and what outside help they may need to enable them succeed in their own efforts to cope with or escape from poverty.

1.2. Research Focus

This research would focus on two main issues:

First, after reviewing the literature and the adoption, for Sudan, of an appropriate definition of the concept of poverty and the criteria for its measurement at the empirical level, government impact on the process of poverty in terms of individuals getting in and out of poverty and the change in the degree to which it has been deepened over time as a result of government policies would be examined in detail. Related to this, the conceptions of poverty held by the three actors involved (government departments involved in poverty alleviation, UNOs and NGOs and the poor), actions and strategies based on those conceptions aimed at alleviating poverty and the factors and forces constraining success would also be investigated.

Second, this proposed research would also deal with the conceptions of the poor sections of the population (both urban and rural) of what it means to them to be poor, how this conception has changed over time plus their explanation of their poverty situation, with the aim of making a profile of what the poor do to cope with their poverty-related difficulties, the constraints they face, and what do they consider the most appropriate form of help to be offered to them in addition to their own self-help coping efforts, that could facilitate their exit from poverty conditions.

1.3. The Research Tentative Propositions and Suggestions:

In view of the research problem and questions stated above, the following preliminary propositions would be used as a guide to data collection and the analysis of poverty as a process under the changing Sudanese socio-economic conditions predominantly influenced by recent government policy that has significantly affected the county's socioeconomic and political conditions. Subject to empirical evidence to be collected in the process of the research, *initially* the following tentative suggestions could be advanced:

i) that government economic policy of increased direct and direct taxation, deficit financing which contributed to inflation, the lifting of subsidies, liberalization without adequate institutional controls (e.g., corruption, economic concessions to supporters), increased government spending mainly on the military and security machine and on an enlarged government bureaucracy, reduced spending on social services (health, education and water delivery facilities), plus the inability of the poor to influence decision-making process to serve their interests have all led to the accentuation and the acceleration of the process and magnitude of poverty (see Attachment No.2);

ii) that government policy based on allocative and reallocative strategy geared to favor political clients and supporters (through concessions, credit allocations, empowering them through control over profit-making activities -mostly non-productive- and tighten their grip on almost all other aspects of social and political life), together with the heavy extractions from agriculture and the rural sector, the erosion of the purchasing power of the urban employed, the increase in the number of the unemployed, the increase in the number of the drought and war-displaced, have all increased inequalities in the in the distribution of wealth, power and productive resources. These changes have contributed to significant shifts in the poverty positions of different social groups, enlarged the sections of the poor and intensified the severity of poverty and the feeling of deprivation among the poor (for more on inequalities see Attachment. No.3) ;

iii) that the erosion of the purchasing power and the drastic drop in the real incomes of the majority of the population, (consequent of government huge spending on the war and inflation) have gradually led to the disintegration of redistributive anti-poverty reciprocal community, kin and family relations and eroded the ability of the poor to deal with poverty, while this in turn has stimulated a process of individualization and social differentiation based on money, wealth and luxury consumption behavior that intensified the sense of deprivation among the poor. In the countryside this has been made more worse by government heavy taxation, levies and fees on agriculture which crippled the ability of the

better off to invest in the promotion of agricultural activities that could generate employment opportunities and income for the unemployed poor;

iv) that while government economic policies during the last ten year period have accelerated the process of poverty and exerted great pressure on indigenous mutual support mechanisms (support of and from relatives, friends and neighbors) which used, in the past, to ease the stress of those in need, no effective mechanisms for poverty alleviation have been created as a substitute, and those affected are left to suffer on their own; with no effective government or communal support mechanisms; thus aggravating the severity and impact of poverty;

v) that although the perception of the poor or of poverty in the Sudanese context, has at its core the inability to meet "minimal living requirements" plus the loss active social life, however, because of the inability to participate in the community, the general feeling of powerlessness that prevailed during the last few years and the break up of traditional mutual support mechanisms, the conception of poverty has shifted to mean almost mere physical survival;

vi) that in the attempt to deal with poverty and survive, the poor sections of the population have adopted different coping mechanisms that entailed change of attitudes, habits and a break with well-established traditions, (involving some anticipated differences in adaptations between urban and rural poor reflecting differences in their socio economic and political conditions) but still they are all faced with constraints and difficulties that hamper their coping efforts; and,

vii) that UNOs and NGOs which have shown an increasing concern over the problem of poverty in Sudan during the last few years, their actions have been relatively effective in improving the conditions of the poor through income generating activities, health improvement and training programs and projects, however, these organizations' poverty alleviation success is limited by a number of socio economic, political and other constraints.

1.4. The Objectives of the Research

After formulating a working definition of poverty and a set of criteria appropriate for its measurement in the Sudanese rural and urban contexts and by taking some different sections of Sudanese society, this proposed research intends to achieve the following modest objectives:

1.4.1. To investigate the perceptions of poverty and its measurement held by the three major influential actors; i) the state, ii) international development institutions; and, iii) NGOs and how their policies and actions based on those same conceptions have affected the poor and influenced the process of poverty;

1.4.2. To describe and document the extent to which strategies and actions undertaken by the three actors to alleviate poverty have been successful and evaluate their performance; with the aim of identifying constraints for future success in poverty alleviation;

1.4.3. To show the differential impact of government economic policy on some different selected sections of the Sudanese population (both rural and urban in the three regions of Kordofan, Gezira and Khartoum) and show the extent to which the policy has accelerated the process, magnitude and incidence of poverty, during the last ten years;

1.4.4. To provide a profile of some different sections of rural and urban poor, how their economic and social conditions have worsened, the criteria they use for the deterioration of their conditions and the economic and social adaptations and mechanisms they have been pursuing using their own knowledge, resilience, available resources and opportunities to deal with their economic and social hardships; and,

1.4.5. To provide some realistic guidelines for urban and rural poverty alleviation, in the Sudanese situation, based on the poor's own coping with poverty and the identification of the poor themselves of what needs to be done to improve their economic and social conditions.

1.5. Policy Relevance

1.5.1. Within the theoretical framework to be developed in the process of the research, the impact of government policy on deepening, increasing the magnitude and accelerating the process of poverty

would be examined and analyzed. Analysis of conceptions and actual adverse government policy implications for the poor would contribute to policy adjustment and reformulation for long term poverty alleviation-oriented strategy; .

1.5.2. The *specific actions* taken by government, some NGOs' and UNOs' projects designed for the poor would be examined together with the outcome of those policies and actions in terms of poverty alleviation successes and failures with the aim of identifying constraints to improve on, short term, actions to deal with poverty; and,

1.5.3. The identification of actions and activities pursued by the poor themselves to cope with poverty which could provide a basis to build upon for the formulation of a much appropriate long term poverty alleviation-oriented policy in which the initiative of the poor, their views and local knowledge would be incorporated. This could serve as broad guidelines for an anti-poverty policy, which is not only based on the participation of the poor themselves but also on some economic actions and activities, which they have already adopted in response to poverty. While in social and political terms this would mean improving the conditions of the poor, in economic terms these activities if incorporated in national policy making would contribute to stimulate economic activities and improve the performance of the national economy as a whole.

1.6. The Methods of Data collection

The realization that the formulation of the research problem of this research has been broad has come rather late. The research problem covers wide ranging poverty related issues and so is the data collection which has relied on five sources using multiple data collection methods.

First secondary material: and this mainly includes published material that covers books and articles. Also electronically published articles, reports and papers are accessed using the World Wide Web. Most of the secondary data is used in the writing up of the theoretical part of the research that deals with the definitions of poverty, its measurement, its causes and the quantitative and qualitative approaches to poverty research and methods of data collection. Secondary material from books and articles is also collected and used in the writing up of the sections dealing with Government, NGOs and International Organizations conceptions of poverty and actions to deal with it.

Second, primary material including unpublished reports, raw statistical data from internal governmental files is collected and used in the writing up of sections on the causes of poverty in Sudan and government actions to combat poverty. Unpublished reports as primary sources of data are used as the main sources for the writing of the section on NGOs, (mainly Oxfam's and SCF's case studies) examining their poverty reduction actions in Sudan.

Third, primary material generated from some resource persons using informal interviews with officials, when there are no other sources of information, is also collected. The writing up of the section on IFAD's action to combat rural poverty in Sudan largely, in part, relied on this source of information as well as unpublished reports and data from the Internet.

Fourth, primary data using informal open-ended unstructured interviews with community leaders is a major source of data for this research. One of the main objectives of this research is show the definitions of poverty, its causes, mechanisms to deal with it, constraints and suggestions for the most effective actions to deal with it as viewed by the poor themselves. Subsequently the participatory approach to poverty is adopted taking community leaders as the main source of information. To offset the lack of quantification as one of the disadvantages of the participatory approach the notes taken in informal interviews with community has been coded and quantified. Moreover, and to give further credibility to data collected from community leaders a formal questionnaire for small samples were administered to different categories of the poor in different locations of Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira; covering rural and urban areas. This was anticipated to show similarities as well as differentiated definitions and causes of poverty, coping mechanisms with poverty, constraints and suggestions for effective poverty reduction actions, among the poor, corresponding to differences in categories and locations. A detailed note on the participatory approach and the attempt to quantify qualitative information is necessary.

1.7. The Participatory Approach to Data Collection

Relying on the literature on the qualitative participatory and the quantitative approaches to data collection and poverty assessment and analysis, the attempt in this research is to adopt both; making use and searching the potential such a combination offers for the understanding of rural and urban poverty in Sudan. The combination of both approaches is combined in a number of steps described in the following pages.

The participatory method is used first to collect information on a number of poverty related issues by using informal open-ended unstructured interviews with community leaders, and some other resource persons in the more than 50 local communities covering rural, urban marginal and urban original areas in Sudan. Interviews of community leaders have also locationally been dispersed in Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira with the objective of identifying how differences in location and specific local conditions impact on some of the poverty issues under investigation. Two or three community leaders in one community are interviewed, individually or sometimes in a group of more than three leaders; depending on their availability and whether conditions permit having them together in a group.

Other resource person members of local communities have included some teachers, shopkeepers, flourmill owners, medical assistants and butchers. Interviewing these could take two forms depending on the conditions and the case. One is to consider them as community leaders and conduct an interview with them primarily to generate information about the community using interview guidelines prepared for community leaders. The second is to conduct an interview with them to generate information about the community in connection with the economic activities, which they pursue, i.e., in relation to commodities or services that they provide to the community. There are situations in which one and the same resource person is interviewed as a community leader and also about the community particularly in relation to the economic activity they pursue to give information on particular aspects of the poverty of community members. This is most likely to be so in the case of teachers and medical assistants in rural areas and marginal urban areas. Across local communities interviewing such resource persons to generate information that relates to their economic activities and the community, few interviews were sufficient when it is realized that the information is repetitive. That is when different resource persons of the same category in different communities generate the same information such as teachers stating the same information on the deterioration of schools and education, fees, drop out of children. As such repetition authenticates the information generated from a few resource persons of the same category, the credibility of the information is sufficiently enhanced and there is no need to conduct further interviews along the same lines with the same category of resource persons.

1.8. Participatory Approach Qualitative Information:

The choice of community leaders and informal open-ended interviews

Community leaders normally live in communities and are well informed about the community, community members and the change both have undergone over the years. In the local communities, community leaders are normally tied to the community and have lived amongst its members for a long time. They are knowledgeable about the community not only by virtue of being members of the community and living in it for long period of time but they are also concerned about community problems and they are in most cases involved in community organizations serving community needs. The danger that community leaders might give information representing their or other allied interests was very much in mind before the start of the fieldwork. The nature of the information they are required to give partly guards against this expected misgiving. Community leaders have to about community problems and issues facing the whole community and its members as a group and not as individuals. In the guidelines to interviews with community leaders the intention has been to ask questions or conduct a discussion to generate information about the community, community conditions, community organizations and their own views on a number of issues related to the poverty of the community and its members.

The perception that community leaders might be representing other allied interests proved untrue. There was a perception, at the beginning, that community leaders (particularly members of Peoples' Committees) might be government supporters and that their reluctance to be critical might not be of help in collecting objective data. This perception proved untrue and almost most leaders, though

members of government-created and supported Peoples' Committees were if not critical very objective and balanced. Peoples' Committees members and leaders, expected to be government supporters who would disguise problems, gave facts and facts were critical of government policies at all levels. Later the reason for this unexpected surprise that at the lower local level government policies do have support even among Peoples' Committee leaders. But the reason they still remain in peoples' committees is that, as leaders of the community, this is the only option to serve their communities. In the absence of other grassroots organizations, which are all dissolved and banned by the government since the beginning of the 1990s, the only way to promote their communities' interests is to work the sole officially formed and supported grassroots organizations; peoples' committees which the government has created.

The kind of information community leaders have to give is about others and not themselves. They have to tell different types of information

1. The socioeconomic conditions of Community members (different points in time, past and present)
2. Community perceptions of poverty (the general dominant perceptions at different points in time, past and present)
3. Community development and services in the community
4. Community problems, causes of problems and suggestion for solutions to community problems
5. Community organizations, community initiatives, community participation and whether they were community initiatives to halt community deterioration (community poverty) and if not why.

This is a very general and brief summary of the kind of information that at the beginning community leaders were expected to provide and actually did provide. It could easily be noticed that the kind of information community leaders generate is wide ranging on this topic and the community and the members of the community as a group. Community leaders gain such deep knowledge through their presence in the community and the experience that they gain from involvement in community affairs and community organizations. Community leaders also gain knowledge about community members as a group from being in daily contact and interaction with them. Such information could not be gained on such a large number of local communities other than conducting informal interviews with community leaders as resource persons.

With this conception, community leaders with their presence, role and experience in community matters, are perceived to have amassed over the years a wealth of information on their local communities. Such data could have been important, useful and acceptable reliable sources of information for research on local communities, had community leaders put them on paper as reports or memoirs. In the absence of written documents containing community leaders' experience and knowledge, information has to be extracted from them on their local communities and on members of their communities.

1.9. Informal open-ended unstructured interviews

A questionnaire could have been prepared and administered to community leaders, but unstructured interviews as was conducted with community leaders using only guidelines on the issues relevant to the subject of the interview (see Annex I). The interview, which is conducted in a very informal manner, is considered more appropriate. There are no questions in prepared and asked in sequence to which community leaders have to give answers. The idea is to put forward an issue and leave the interviewee (the community leader) talk about it as much as he can and in the mean time notes are taken. This allows new issues which have not been part of the guidelines to come up in the discussion and further questions are asked if necessary to generate further information on the issue that comes up. Later new issues are incorporated into the guidelines to be discussed with other community leaders to generate similar information on other communities. Subsequently the information extracted from community leaders, on the different topics of the research on poverty in communities has developed as informal interviews with community leaders progressed. The method has allowed for new information that was not first considered, prior to the conduct of interviews, to come up. The new information or new issues, which are the surprises of informal interviews, are followed up in the

proceeding interviews building up new information on the issues of the research. When the information generated from interviewing different community leaders in different communities has become repetitive during the progress of the fieldwork, the reliability of the information is enhanced and credibility ascertained.

1.10. Assistants Conducting Informal Interviews

After drawing out the guidelines for interviews with community leaders, the principal researcher briefed four research assistants on the guidelines and the way in which informal interviews have to be conducted. The aim was to get assistants acquainted with the guidelines and after one or two trial under the supervision and observation of the principal research to make a choice of two to continue with the conduct of informal interviews. The success of the conduct of informal interviews in generating information more than what is set in interview guidelines needs a proper understanding of the topic of the research and the kind of information needed. This is necessary for the assistants to be able to formulate and shoot questions on the spot for more elaboration on issues that arise from the interview. New issues that need further details and follow up questions might not have been anticipated and included in the guidelines. The interviewer is expected to allow the interviewee to talk freely and intervene only when necessary. When the interviewee brings up some new issues the interviewer is expected to follow that up to generate more information by guiding the dialogue in directions that might not have been indicated by the guidelines meanwhile the research assistant takes notes. The guidelines are only to provide headings for the issues to be discussed. The selection of research assistants for this task has to be made very carefully.

After research assistants were briefed on the how to conduct the dialogue in a way that allows for more fresh information to be generated, the principal researcher also conducted some informal interviews with the presence of assistants. This was to demonstrate how to use the guidelines as guidelines and not as a formal questionnaire. Deviation from guidelines should be pursued without hesitation if that was necessary, but some order of issues has also to be maintained to facilitate coding the data at a later stage. Some informal interview trials were conducted in Omdurman and Khartoum with the assistant present. Later they were allowed to conduct some informal interviews, with the presence of the principal researcher. The notes assistants have taken during informal interviews they have conducted on their own were collected and reviewed to decide on the two assistants appropriate for the task.

Two interviewers each having an M.Sc Degree in Development were selected. The fieldwork started in Khartoum covering both urban marginal and urban areas and some rural areas in Khartoum. In the meantime the data collected is daily revised and the guidelines were modified to incorporate questions that generates further data along the lines of fresh data previous interviews with community leaders have generated. Some of the data would not be complete for some community leaders because some of the issues were incorporated at various stages as new arise and guidelines modified to incorporate the generation of newly arising issues. Thus some data on some aspects of poverty in our research would apply to some and not all community leaders.

Proceeding from training and modification of the guidelines stage and for more interviews with community leaders research assistants proceeded on their own in urban original and urban marginal areas in Greater Khartoum (including original and marginal urban areas in Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum Bahri). This was followed with a fieldtrip for one week to Gezira in which Medani, some rural areas were visited, and community leaders were interviewed. The outcome of the interviews revealed similar results to those obtained for marginal urban, original urban and rural areas in Khartoum. This was followed by a 3-week fieldwork trip to Kordofan where informal interviews with community leaders were conducted and formal questionnaires to individual households were filled in. (See details below). With the conduct of interviews in the Kordofan (including marginal urban and urban original and rural areas) field investigation with leaders were completed.

When informal interviews with community leaders started in July 2002 the number of leaders to be interviewed was left open. The number of community leaders and other resource persons was not precisely determined prior to the start of interviews but the number was not generally planned to be large. This is because resource persons and community leaders would not talk about themselves but about their communities. So leaders within the same community (around three leaders or more from

each community) are expected to generate the same information, with slight differences. Comparing and cross checking the information three leaders from the same community, consistent and reliable information on the community is formed. By interviewing other community leaders from similar communities (rural, urban marginal and urban original) some similarities in the information at the first stages of the interviewing could be observed. Interviews with different community leaders in different communities (Khartoum rural, urban original and urban marginal areas) were conducted simultaneously; One assistant conducting interviews with some community leaders in some communities and on another assistant conducting interviews with some other community leaders in some other location.

As the research deals with both urban and rural poverty, fieldwork investigation has to cover both rural and urban areas. The distinction between rural and urban is clear and straightforward. However, the initial information gathered from informal interviews and discussion with community leaders in some different parts of Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North have revealed that there are differences as well as some similarities with regard to the poverty issues covered by guidelines for the interviews. These differences, which also apply to the information cropping up during the conduct of the interview, are observed for urban areas proper and new extensions around the capital which the war and drought displaced inhabit. The latter started as squatters and some still are, and then latter legalized and the inhabitants have become legal urban residents. Because of these differences urban areas are categorized into urban original and urban marginal areas; with original urban areas comprising original urban areas and marginal urban areas referring to the new settlements now attached to urban centers to house war and drought-displaced. Information later gathered on urban areas in Gezira and later in Kordofan confirmed these differences and the justification for the categorization.

1.12. Categorization and Analysis of the Information (Quantification)

The rough notes collected from informally interviewing 120 leaders have been coded. This started by developing a questionnaire-like form (see Annex II attached) developed from looking thoroughly at both the guidelines of informal interviews for community leaders and the rough notes summarizing those informal interviews. The systematic sequence of interview information, despite the deviation sometimes to incorporate new information arising during discussion, helped in the formulation of a pre-coded questionnaire-like form for community leaders. But the coded answers have been derived from the most common answers community leaders have given in order to codify the rough answers community leaders have given into digits on a code sheet. This is a difficult and lengthy process but one of the research assistants has undertaken this task and eventually all rough information gathered from interviewing the 120 community leaders in more than 50 communities have been translated into digits and entered into a computer using SPSS program for analysis. Qualitative data is turned into quantitative information to produce frequency distribution and be ready for other forms of analysis. It is important to mention that most of the information community leaders generated is one issues the importance of which is highlighted by community leaders themselves. The researcher has only set the general outline of issues, but issues community leaders pinpointed are also incorporated.

1.13. Informal interviews with Community Leaders (Qualitative-Quantitative Information)

The information generated from interviewing community leaders is a qualitative information in which community leaders talk about the community and not about themselves. It is a local knowledge tapped from primary sources close to the community. Informal interviews aimed primarily at three objectives:

First, to tap the knowledge community leaders have of their communities;

Having set the general framework of the topic, through formulating guidelines, the second aim is to give community leaders, as much room as possible to talk more than listen and answer questions;

And the third aim, which is related to the previous one, is to allow for new information to be generated. Although some prior knowledge is important in formulating the guidelines, informal personal interviews were approached with an open mind to allow for the generation and incorporation of new knowledge and information.

Community leaders were primarily to talk about the community. Knowledge of local conditions and local communities acquired by living in communities and through observation and experience, community leaders are the most informed of their local communities and their problems. With regard to the poverty of community members, community leaders give information about them in their position as observers. Community members' economic activities, the change in the economic conditions of community members, the causes of the deterioration of the economic conditions of the community members, coping mechanisms developed to deal with poverty, constraints to coping mechanisms and mutual support mechanisms and similar other issues.

Community leaders also give information about the community, the development of perception about poverty in the community and current conceptions of poverty among community members. Information also includes change in conditions in community, the conditions of health, education and water provision services, community relations, and community initiatives to halt the deterioration in the services.

Subjective information

Some information is objective information, which could be generated by adopting participant observation method and information from community leaders. For example in marginal urban areas community leaders can tell you about sanitary conditions, problem of transport or community members economic activities (causal manual laborers and self-employment) and the researcher can also observe that himself.

Some other information generated from interviewing community leaders is subjective because it includes their ideas and views on certain issues.

1.14. General patterns and Regularities

Data generated from interviews with community leaders in urban marginal, urban original and rural areas in Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira has revealed general patterns or regularities. Some regularities or patterns apply to all categories of the poor in all areas (urban marginal, urban original and rural areas). Example of this, is that contrary to prior held perception of the erosion of mutual social support mechanisms as a result of the deterioration of economic conditions, is the persistence of mutual material community support in funeral and to a less extent in wedding occasions despite widespread poverty. Another example is the increase in prices of necessary consumer commodities as one of the main constraints to efforts to cope with poverty among all categories of the poor.

There are also patterns or regularities that could be observed to be common to a category of the poor (urban original, urban marginal or rural) despite differences in location. Example of this is the irregularity of work and cash income among the poor in marginal urban areas in Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira. In addition there are the more obvious pattern of the rural poor citing high taxation, the lack of credit and marketing combined with some other different factors related to location, as the main factors leading to rural poverty. Another is the problem of water for the poor in urban marginal areas despite them being part of urban centers, irrespective of location; i.e., whether in Kordofan, Gezira or Khartoum.

Specificity of the information

Also from the information gathered from community leaders and other resource persons, there are some differences that relate to location and the specific local conditions despite similarities among the poor in the same category in different locations. Example of this, is the agricultural decline as result, among other factors, of the shortage of water for farming for almost all rural communities. While in Kordofan it is the shortage of rainfall, in Gezira it is the depletion of irrigation network and in rural Khartoum as a result of water pumps being out of order because of disrepair. The problem of credit for the rural poor in all locations is another example; while for peasant farmers in Kordofan the problems is the lack of credit facilities, in Gezira where credit is available it is the insufficiency and untimely provision of credit. In rural Khartoum where credit is available the conditionality attached to credit and the terms of its allocation are the factors that bar farmers from accessing credit.

1.15. Some Location Specific Poverty Features

Still there are some specificities in connection to some poverty aspects that relate to the poor in particular location. One of the field surprises is to find that there are many among the poor in urban original areas in Dibagha (Medani-Gezira) and Radif (Obied-Kordofan) who pursue farming as an income generating activity. Also in rural Gezira (Habeba and Goz El Naga) and rural Khartoum (Fakki Hashim) there is quite a number of government employees, but not in rural Kordofan. One of specific aspects of poverty is the one that relates to the problem of rainwater drainage. The lack or the depletion of drainage system constitutes an environmental health hazard, in urban areas (both marginal and original) almost all locations with the exception of Kordofan due the difference in the soil composition. The sandy nature of the soil that absorbs rainwater there is no problem of drainage in both urban original and urban marginal areas.

1.2.1. Qualitative information as a basis for formal individual questionnaire

To enhance the reliability of qualitative information from community leaders, which is coded and quantified, a questionnaire for individual households has also been conducted. The individual questionnaire is a pre-coded formal set of questions to be asked and filled in, in face to face personal interviews. Information gathered from community leaders constituted the basis on which the pre-coded questionnaire is based. So the questions are and pre-coded answers are comprehensive and closely linked to the guidelines to informal interviews for community leaders and the information community leaders have provided covering the possibility of answers for poor in the three categories (urban marginal, urban original and rural poor). The interview questions have to be asked and answered by household heads and respondents included both and female heads of households.

1.2.2 Individual household Heads Interview (Formal Questionnaire)

The second phase of the fieldwork started by conducting the fieldwork for Kordofan in September 2002. The objective of the fieldwork in Kordofan is threefold:

First to complete informal interviews for community leaders in urban marginal, urban original and rural areas in Kordofan;

Second; to conduct the household small sample surveys administered for the three categories of the poor (rural, urban marginal and urban original); and,

Third, to collect some relevant data on Kordofan.

The principal researcher accompanied by three research assistants headed for El Obied in September 2002. Spending three weeks in El Obeid (while travelling to the countryside) all the three objectives have been fulfilled. More than 35 community leaders (in more than 12 communities) have been interviewed and the formal questionnaire to conduct small sample surveys to give quantitative support to the qualitative data collected from community leaders. In Kordofan we have conducted small sample surveys in El Obied-Radif (urban original), El Obied-Karima (urban marginal) in addition to Shigla and Maaia as rural areas. For the conduct of the small sample surveys in Kordofan interviewers have to be recruited and given the questionnaire and trained in how to conduct the questionnaire. After the completion of the survey for Kordofan, we returned to Khartoum and administered small sample surveys for some of the communities in rural, marginal, and original urban areas. Small samples of about 50 household heads have been selected for conducting the questionnaire representing rural, urban marginal and urban original areas in Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira. For Khartoum two urban marginal areas, one urban original and one rural have been selected with 50 household heads each have been selected. For Gezira we have selected one urban marginal, one urban original and two villages representing rural areas, also with around 50 household heads each and a similar choice is made for Kordofan. The selection is made to reflect the proportions of urban marginal, urban original and rural in Kordofan, Gezira and Khartoum. The total small samples of around 50 for Kordofan, Gezira and Khartoum are 150 for urban original, 200 urban marginal and 250 for rural areas.

The selection of the villages and quarters in cities is made on the basis on the extent to which they are representatives. To take rural areas first, the village chosen in Khartoum is along the Main Nile and representative of peasant farmers in Khartoum State, in which peasant farmers are found only along the Nile. In Kordofan the villages selected are also representative of villages in Kordofan. Perhaps

other villages, which are not selected because they are not accessible, are even more impoverished than the ones we have visited and in which we conducted our fieldwork. The Gezira has different forms of agricultural production, but dominated by the Gezira Scheme in which peasant farmers pursue agricultural production under almost uniform farming conditions. Urban original areas in all the cities of Khartoum, Medani and Kordofan that we have selected have been established during the colonial period, while urban marginal areas that house war and drought-displaced only recently sprang up; i.e., in the 1980s.

The data produced from the small samples is meant to provide qualitative support to the qualitative data extracted from community leaders.

Having all the questionnaire forms being filled in (for Gezira, Khartoum and Kordofan), then the questionnaire data had to be put down on a code sheet and entered into the computer by the end of November 2002. The data has been digitized and entered into forms and then entered into the computer using SPSS program. This took till May but in the mean time data extracted from community leaders' informal interviews has already been processed and the writing proceeded from January 2003 to December 2003. But in the mean time the correction and revision of data continued and the data produced from the small samples further supported the line of analysis based on informal interviews with community leaders.

1.3. Notes on the Villages and Urban Quarters (The Small Sample surveys)

1.3.1. Greater Kordofan: A general Introduction

Kordofan lies in West Central Sudan Savannah belt of the country between. Rainfall levels vary between 850mm in the South and gradually decreases Northward to reach around 85mm in the far North. The main economic activities of the population are rain-fed farming based on small-scale peasant agriculture and animal rearing. The main crops are durrah and millet for subsistence and groundnuts, sesame, and karkade. Gum Arabic, which is tapped from acacia Senegal, used to be a major source of cash for peasant farmers. El Obied, which is about 700 km South West of Khartoum, was the regional capital of Kordofan region before it has been divided into smaller three states. El Obied is now the capital of North Kordofan one of the three states into which the region has been divided and also the headquarters of Sheikan one of the four localities forming North Kordofan State. The region has recently been hit hard by drought leading to the erosion of economic activities. Animal grazing, farming and gum Arabic collection have all been affected and the region witnessed mass out-migration to other parts of the Sudan particularly the capital Khartoum.

1.3.2. Manaia Gurafti and Shigla (Rural Kordofan)

Both villages are situated West of El Obied about 80km and 50 km respectively. The population of each village is 800 in around about 150 households. The main economic activities of the population are peasant farming and almost most cultivate millet and durrah as subsistence crops and groundnut, sesame and karkade as cash crops. In addition peasant rear light livestock; goats and sheep for milk and to sell in time of need. In the past the collection of Gum Arabic from hashab (*acacia Senegal*) trees was a major source of cash but now as a result of deforestation and environmental degradation hashab tree have been lost. "All this bare land you now see had once been thick hashab forest. Now it has all gone", One old peasant farmer in Shigla said. Peasant farmers mainly rely on rain for cultivation and so recent reoccurrence of droughts have greatly affected the economy and the local communities.

Land is communally owned with the individual having the right of access according to customary rules governing access and use. The main rule conditioning individual access is continuous use with allowance for a period of fallow varying between 4 to 8 years depending on the conditions and the local community. Thus access to and individual use of land within the context of customary communal tenure is not a problem. The right of use could be inherited and transferred through subletting but not the sale of land. Thus peasants in the two villages could decide on the crops mix and dispose of the crops in the way they desired.

Peasants live in grass huts. The dwellings are randomly scattered and poor. The two villages have a problem of clean water provision. For both there is a water shortage and water is brought from long

distances using donkey driven carts. Some poor families that cannot purchase water, women and children and male members of the family bring water from long distances. There is also lack of health and educational facilities.

1.3.3. Karima-El Obied (Marginal Urban Kordofan)

Karima is an example of large squatter areas around El Obied inhabited by the drought and war displaced that inflated to the extent that they have now become larger than El Obied proper. Karima like most marginal areas around El Obied is made up of grass and straw huts. The dwellers are mostly from Kordofan rural areas hit by the drought but there are others who are from the Nuba Mountains and the South displaced by the war. Most of these now work as wage workers, casual laborers, self employed in the informal sector, petty traders and some still practice farming in agricultural land around El Obied combined with other irregular cash earning activities.

Because of the sandy soil structure, Karima has no problem of drainage during the rainy season or a problem of transport. Regular buses and minibuses link Karima with El Obied center. Despite being part of El Obied it has a problem of water shortage. There are hand pumps installed by Plan Sudan (NGO) but to most households water is delivered by donkey driven water carts in barrels on cash payment. Karima has a primary school for boys and girls but has neither dispensary nor a health center. The sick are taken to the city hospital or the health center of Kordofan University, Faculty of Medicine.

1.3.4. Radif -El Obied (urban Original Kordofan)

Radif is part of El Obied and situated in the Western part of it. It was established in the 1940 during the colonial period to settle soldiers, army officers and wageworkers. Now it is mainly inhabited by government employees, wageworkers, the self employed in the informal sector and petty traders.

Houses in Radif quarter are built of red and mud bricks. The dwellings are old and most are in state of disrepair. There are some paved roads but worn out and also in state of disrepair. Radif has piped water but water supply is not regular. The main water supply is pumped, after treatment, from an open water yard that collects rainwater. Treatment sometimes is not proper and contaminated water causes some water borne diseases.

Radif has schools for boys and girls. It has a health center but lacks equipment and drugs and deals only with minor cases. Serious cases are taken to the city hospital. There is no regular garbage collection service. There is a problem of environmental health and sanitation. The community once used to have a very effective consumer cooperative that helps members but not functioning at present. Community members have formed a society to provide material help to members on the occasions of funerals and weddings.

1.3.5. Gezira: General Introduction

The Gezira region is dominated by the widely known Gezira Scheme cotton plantation, which covers more 2 million feddans. The Gezira cotton scheme has a complex state owned and irrigation network. The whole area is divided into small plots of thirty feddans farmed in a rotation in which 10 feddans are allocated to cotton, 5 feddans to wheat and 5 feddans to groundnuts and durrah (2.5 feddans each). The government controls the land, the irrigation network and controls production process through an administrative body called the Sudan Gezira Board (SGB). Subsequently the government decides on the crop mix, the rotation and maintains control over the cotton and wheat produce.

The relationship that governs production is based on government letting the farm plots to the tenants whose main duty is to provide labor. The government provides the land and irrigation water in return for land and water charges. The SGB provides production inputs and supervises the production process in return for administrative fees. The government controls the cotton and the wheat crops and after the deduction of the cost of production (all agricultural inputs and the cost of mechanized agricultural operations) the balance is paid to the tenants. The tenants bear the costs and retain the crop or the returns of the groundnut and durrah crops but have to abide by the government decided crop mix and crop rotation.

1.3.6. Habeba-(Rural Gezira)

Habeba is situated in the Gezira Scheme in the middle between the Blue and White Nile. It is inhabited by around 3000 and has quite number of Gezira tenants. The main economic activity of the inhabitants is working on the Gezira scheme either as tenants or agricultural laborers. Some work in Khartoum, Medani and other cities in Gezira but a large number of migrants to Saudi Arabia.

Most of Habeba houses are built of mud and some of red bricks. The village is very near to the agricultural area and the main problem is that of insect transmitted diseases particularly malaria. The village looks poor, but has a school, a tube well to provide water and a dispensary that treats minor cases. Serious cases are taken to the hospital in Masid town on Khartoum Medani road. Being in central Gezira, the village is cut off completely during the rainy season. The dusty road to the main paved road linking Medani and Khartoum becomes impassable during the rainy season. Peasant farmers cannot market their products and cannot bring in provisions.

1.3.7. Goz El Naga-(Rural Gezira)

Goz El Naga lies in the Gezira State in the Gezira Scheme in Abu Gota Locality. The village is formed of a collection of laborers camps, by an administrative decision in 1988, form different Western and Central Sudan. Most of the population in Goz El Naga pursues farming as the major economic activity. Some work as tenants on the scheme, sub-tenants or agricultural laborers. Some few others work as salaried employees with the Gezira Board or the Irrigation Department, petty traders and some salaried employees in some other cities of the Sudan.

Migration outside the village is one major economic income earning activities. Migration has recently so important that remittance migrants send have become a major source of cash income for the village that even surpasses cash income from farming. Also an observable significant phenomenon is migration of whole families to other cities in Sudan; to Hassaheisa, Gebel Aulia and Khartoum as a result of the deterioration of economic activities and rural decline.

The village has two primary schools for boys, girls, and a secondary school established in 1995. It also has a health center built by private initiative in 2001 to treat minor cases of illness and serious cases transferred to hospitals. There is one deep well to provide water and in the absence of a pipe network for water distribution people get water by donkey driven cart on cash payment. Sometimes, when unable to pay for water, family members bring water in jenkins. Canal water is widely used in washing clothes and utensils. Water borne diseases such as malaria and schostomosaisis are widely spread among the population.

1.3.8. Dibagha-Medani (Urban Original Gezira)

It is one of the oldest quarters of Wad Medani city the capital of El Gezira State. It is situated in the northern part of Wad Medani within Northern Medani Locality. Dibagha is inhabited by around 9 thousand making up around 1280 families. Most houses are built of red bricks, but in general poor conditions and have not been repaired for a long time. The quarter has the main roads paved but worn out.

The major economic activities of the population are salaried employment in the public and the private sectors, wage workers, self-employment in the informal sector and petty traders. Few of the inhabitants have farm plots in the Gezira Scheme, either because they have rural origin or they were once employees in the scheme and managed to have farms. Most run their farms by sub-letting them to tenants. The phenomenon of internal migration or migration outside Sudan is widespread particularly among the youth. Most migrate either to Saudi Arabia or internally to Khartoum.

Dibagha has piped clean water, telephone lines and a health center where minor cases of illness are treated. Serious cases are taken to Wad Medani teaching hospital. There are a number of primary schools for boys and girls, one higher secondary school and some other private schools.

1.3.9. Darel Salam-(Marginal Urban Gezira)

Darel Salam is situated in Gezira West of the Blue Nile near Medani Khartoum road, very near to Gadid industrial area, is part of Masid locality in Northern Gezira. Drought migrants following the 1980s drought have established the village. The number of the inhabitants gradually increased to

reach 4000. The lands on which these drought displaced have built their poor mud dwellings have not been secured and they are still considered squatters. They live under the constant threat of being evicted from the land reflecting the vulnerability of the large number of the displaced in some areas around Khartoum and in many other parts of the country facing similar conditions. This village has been chosen mainly because the inhabitants are representative of the drought displaced migrants from Darfur who work as laborers both in agriculture and industry.

Most of the able-bodied both male and female work in agriculture as sub-tenants to the Gezira tenants as well as wage laborers in the industrial plants in Gedid. Some others work on red brick making during wintertime in Gedid, another group work as petty traders. Women and children work on privately owned farms nearby.

Darel Salam has no drinking water provision facility and get water from the nearby water pumps serving the farms near the village. The water, which is associated with the risk of contracting water borne diseases, is transported using donkey driven water barrel carts. The village has a mixed primary school built in 1997 through community contributions and levying fees on pupils. The school has no fence and some classes have not yet been completed because of inability to afford the cost. It also has a dispensary lacking drugs and primary health care facilities and only treats minor cases. Serious cases are taken to Masid or Khartoum Hospital. The village has no grassroots formal organizations other than the village peoples' committee, which is in charge of administrative duties but has some loose tribal associations. Darel Salam like many villages and quarters in which the drought and war-displaced reside has a host of problems. The most important of these is that the villagers have no security in land on which they built their houses and live under the constant threat of eviction. The lack of clean water provision facility is second main problem. The use of water from pumps irrigating farms as drinking water brings with it the contraction of water borne diseases. Poor sanitation and environmental health conditions is another characteristic features. There is no electricity and no transport facilities.

1.3.10. Fakki Hashim (Rural Khartoum)

Fakki Hashim is a village on the Eastern Bank of the Nile about 40 km North of Khartoum. The number of the population, claiming to descend from one grandfather, totals around 4000. It is situated very near to agricultural land and dwellings are built of bricks red and some others of mud bricks. The village is old and the streets are narrow.

Most able-bodied males work in agriculture as farmers on Fakki Hashim Scheme. Fakki Hashim scheme was originally established by a foreign investor in the 1950s for the production of Mango for export. Land was either purchased or rented from its original owners and large pumps were installed to irrigate around 100 feddans. Farmers were provided with water and other inputs and the produce is bought from farmers, to whom profit is cashed after the deduction of all costs. The Government nationalized the Scheme from its owner in the 1970s and subsequently the government assumed the position of its original owner assigning an administration to undertake administrative duties.

Most males work as farmers on the scheme, some others as agricultural laborers. Some also work as casual laborers, day laborers and there are some who work as government salaried employees in Khartoum. Given the problems of agriculture and difficulty of securing a decent living from working on it, the youth migrate to Saudi Arabia seeking better income and most send some remittance to families back home.

At present farmers cultivate fodder and get water from government owned and administered pumps. They have to provide for their inputs, which they mostly get on credit. Farmers recently switched from the cultivation of vegetables to fodder because it seeks higher prices in Khartoum market. They have tried to cultivate food crops for export to the Gulf in association with a private company but the initiative did not take off because they got no returns.

The main issue or problem facing the village community is the decline of agriculture. Pumps are not well maintained and frequent breakdown results in infrequent watering or lack of irrigation water altogether. Crop failure or the drops in yield levels and drop in cash income is the result that greatly affects living conditions. In addition, the major problems of agricultural production are the high cost of water and inputs, the lack of credit, low prices and low cash income. Farmers are willing to change

to high value food crops but the absence of marketing channels deprives them of better income opportunities.

The village has clean piped water and two mixed schools. Being very near to the agricultural land, the village suffers from mosquitoes, the combat of the insect is absent, and subsequently malaria is widespread. The village also has a health center but it lacks equipment and drugs. The former development committee has established all community facilities in the 1970s and 1980s, through self-help and village community members' material and labor contributions. At present there is a Peoples' Committee in charge of administrative duties and a charity association that provides help to community members in death and wedding occasions.

1.3.11. Hag Yousif-El Bashir (Khartoum Urban Marginal)

Hag Yousif is a village in the outskirts of Khartoum North on the Eastern Bank of the Blue Nile. The village has expanded tremendously to reach hundreds of thousands as a result of war and drought displaced pouring into the village during the 1980s and 1990s from the South, the Nuba Mountains and Darfur. The population of El Hag Yousif- Bashir neighborhood numbers around 4000 mostly from Nuba Mountains and Darfur.

Poor unplanned dwellings are built of mud and first they were squatters but recently legalized and have their land leased to them by the Government. There is no garbage collection and no rainwater drainage system. Environmental health is poor and there is no health center or dispensary.

Males, females as well as children seek work to earn cash to survive. The males work as self employed in the informal sector, wage laborers, petty traders and other casual jobs. Female work as wage laborers, domestic servants and self-employed in informal jobs. Children work as street vendors, shoe polishers, in water distribution and other marginal jobs. Some males and females work as agricultural laborers on surrounding agricultural land. Work is irregular, cash earnings are intermittent and low and unemployment is widespread.

Hag Yousif suffers from very poor services. There is no health facility, and the only primary mixed school has been established by an individual initiative of a teacher member of the community. Pupils are mostly grown up children aging 12 year old and above. The pupils have built the classes and the teachers are volunteers who receive some small subscription from pupils or their parents to support them. The school lacks seats and classes are very crowded indicating both the lack of schools and the desire of children to get education.

Effective community organizations are absent but the People' Committee is in charge of administrative tasks. There are some loose tribal associations linking these displaced to their home villages and bring tribal members together for mutual support in major crisis. Community feeling is loose as a result of people coming from different villages and of different tribal origins. There are no clear community associations to help members in cases of emergency and sudden shocks but networks of friends and work associates exist, and these could be of help in cases of emergency.

There are some hand pumps installed by one NGO and these are not sufficient. Donkey driven carts from bring water from the main tube well a little distance away. Environmental health is very poor and cases of malnutrition particularly among women and children could visibly widely be observed. Diseases of all forms are also widespread and in the absence of health facilities the sick are taken to Khartoum North Hospital.

1.3.12. Salama-Khartoum (Urban Marginal Khartoum State)

Salama is situated in the Southern outskirts of the Capital Khartoum. It is mainly inhabited by the drought and war displaced from the South, the Nuba Mountains as well as some rural migrants from Gezira. Salama is composed of two parts; the old Salama has been first established as squatter settlement in the early 1980s and another part attached to the old Salama established in the 1990s. The inhabitants of Salama proper have given legal status on their land and have got some form of security. The newly established squatter extension has now (October 2003) been evicted and huts and dwellings demolished. The fieldwork has been conducted in proper Salama one year earlier.

Almost all dwellings are constructed of mud bricks and look poor and awkwardly shaped but they do not look randomly scattered. The distribution of dwellings looks some how planned, but the streets are

dirty and like other displaced settlements the whole place and surroundings smell of poverty and misery. Also like other displaced males, females and children seek and do any work to earn cash income to survive. Most work in informal marginal jobs, as wage laborers, casual laborers, petty traders and some work on nearly agricultural land. Incomes are low and infrequent, jobs are irregular and unemployment is widespread.

There is no water supply system and donkey driven carts deliver water on cash payment. There is health center or dispensary and the sick are taken to Khartoum hospital. Environmental health is poor and there is no garbage collection service. The major problem is the problem of transport to Khartoum during the rainy season. Dwellers would not be able to reach their place of work or transport the sick because there are no paved road and no transport and so the Salama and similar displaced areas are completely cut off.

1.3.13. Buri El Mahas-Khartoum (Urban Original Khartoum)

Buri El Mahas is one Khartoum's oldest neighborhoods dating back to the colonial period. It is one neighborhood of a larger part of Khartoum called Brari¹. Situated to the west of the Blue Nile as it enters Khartoum, the collection of Brari neighborhoods forms one of the main parts of original Khartoum. Being originally as an old village, the original inhabitants of Buri El Mahas claim to belong to one grandfather. The original village has developed and expanded during the colonial and post-colonial period as more migrants settled in it with a population currently totaling around 12 thousands. The inhabitants are involved in diverse economic activities in the capital Khartoum. The largest group of the population works as employees in the private and public sector. Others work as merchants, traders, wagedworkers and not an insignificant group of retired employees and those forced to retire "for the public interest"².

One of the main characteristics of Buri El Mahas's appearance is the discrepancy in dwellings. Dwellings are heterogeneous and diverse. While most dwellings are mostly built of red bricks, some others are built of mud but the most significant is the scene of newly three-story luxury blocks scattered in between brick and mud houses. The main streets have only recently being repaired³. But the main characteristic feature is the marked differences in the type of houses. Those who have built expensive three-story luxury blocks are either families who have some migrating to Saudi Arabia or the Gulf, current NIF government loyalist and clients or either of the previous two purchasing a house from a poor original owner. A second observation of another characteristics feature is the partition of houses for rent to earn some cash income.

Buri El Mahas has good service facilities (but this does not necessarily mean good services). A charitable individual built a health center and there are primary schools for boys and girls in addition to two secondary schools for boys and girls. Parents' Councils pool in community resources to maintain the schools and keep them running. There is also a garbage collection service but carried out against a charge the People's Committee has levied on the inhabitants. There was once a drainage system but now blocked and it is in disrepair. Buri has an electricity supply but the inhabitants complain of frequent power cuts (at the time of the fieldwork in July 2002) and high electricity cost.

¹ Brari is the plural of a singular Buri, each part of the collection or group of neighborhoods takes the name Buri with another attached to distinguish it from others. For example many of these take the names of Buri El Mahas, Buri Draisa, Buri Lamab or Buri Sharief.

² This is a policy the present government has adopted in the early 1990s to dismiss opponents in the civil service and the public sector.

³ During the fieldwork in July 2002 the main streets were paved but worn out and in a state of disrepair.

Section Two

Poverty: Conceptualization, Measurement, Causes and Empirical Methodologies; A Quest for Effective Poverty Reduction

Introduction

During the last 10 years the old social problem of poverty has received renewed attention from scholars, politicians, NGOs and international development institutions. Although poverty is common to both developed and developing countries, international attention has focused on poverty reduction in developing countries in which over one billion live on less than one dollar a day. National governments in developing countries are pressurized to provide poverty reduction plans to facilitate international community's effort to put concern over poverty and its eradication into effect. Parallel to this mounting attention also the literature on poverty has witnessed an unprecedented upsurge resulting from wide ranging debates over the definition of poverty, its measurement and causes as well as methodologies of poverty research and poverty assessments. Expanding research publications and international development institutions' and NGOs' reports have all added to the growing literature on poverty and contributed much to the understanding and thinking on the problem with potential positive implications for effective future poverty reduction actions.

This section reviews some selected literature on poverty conceptual issues and the various approaches to its definition, measurement, its underlying causes as well as empirical methodologies. The paper is divided into five sections of which the first, second and third sections deal with approaches to the definition and measurement of poverty and their implications for poverty reduction. While poverty definition and measurement have received sufficient research and discussion, comparatively the underlying causes of poverty have been under-researched. The fourth section reviews some of the literature on the causes of poverty covering issues of economic growth, inequality and poverty. The fifth section is devoted to empirical methodologies adopted in poverty research and poverty assessment covering the advantages as well the disadvantages of both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches to poverty research. This section winds up by concluding remarks in which what is drawn from reviewing the literature on poverty shows.

2.1 Absolute and relative Poverty: Some issues of Definition and Measurement

The precise meaning of poverty and the criteria for its detection and measurement, in terms of correspondence between the abstract concept and empirical reality, have been subjects of heated debates and controversy over the last few decades offering varied connotation of the concept and different indicators to approximate. Different groups of scholars have assigned the concept different meanings and what the concept embodies have evolved over time. For one group of scholars (Atkinson A.B, 1989:9-10; Webster A., 1989:17; Smith C, 1994:43) poverty is defined with reference to poor families categorized as those that do not have enough cash income to secure the minimum requirements of food, shelter and clothing. The concept of poverty in this sense is thus understood in terms of inability to meet the minimum biological needs necessary for an acceptable level of wellbeing translated in terms of minimum cash income necessary for their acquisition. A cut-off cash income figure necessary for the attainment of basic material needs is set as a measurement criteria of poverty; the poverty line, to separate the poor and non-poor in a society. It is also used to examine the extent to which poverty is prevalent in a society and categorize groups of the poor according to the depth and severity of poverty. This approach which emphasizes cash income in the definition and measurement of poverty offers an absolute or fixed conception of poverty but provides a measurement criteria, cash income, which is both easy to measure and to some extent 'objective'. Families with cash income falling below that cut off line are considered poor and targeted with safety nets, receiving public support to maintain the minimum cash income as a means of poverty reduction.

The definition of poverty in terms of cash income falling below a particular minimum level, taken in the Western context, does not capture reality for a number of inherent shortcomings. First, expenditure on needs often does not reflect family cash income. Families could spend more than the cash income they earn either through borrowing or by eroding savings thus while cash income may fluctuate over time consumption is kept fairly stable. Second, estimated minimum cash income that is

set to represent the poverty line is rarely revised to incorporate changes in consumption habits and new individual and household needs arising from socioeconomic and cultural changes in society. And third, in many cases the cash value of family needs is not always adjusted to keep pace with inflation and the rise in the prices of the necessary goods and commodities families purchase.

Subsequently other scholars (Anand S and Harris, 1994: 226-31) have suggested the use of expenditure estimates as proxy for consumption as a more adequate measure of cash income and poverty. But the use of expenditure criteria, as a proxy for cash income, is also fraught with difficulties. In the choice of a bundle of commodities necessary for subsistence and wellbeing, individual preferences, needs and consumption habits differ within and between families and prices also vary from location to the next, making the determination of the cash value of required minimum consumption necessary for wellbeing difficult or inaccurate⁴.

When applied in the case of less developed countries, the definition and measurement of the concept of poverty in terms of cash income insufficiency or other material equivalent to meet some basic material needs, faces even more additional problems. In many less developed countries, especially among rural communities, cash income earned could be reduced or increased through reciprocal inter-family and intra-family transfers and mutual support mechanisms thus making cash income extremely difficult to reflect actual consumption. Moreover, a significant part of the necessary means to sustain large sections of the population in less developed countries' countryside is met through domestic production; i.e., family production for domestic consumption. A large part of families' needs in developing countries, predominantly inhabited by rural cultivators, are met through households' own production without entering into the circuit of the market. In both cases; (satisfying some needs through inter-family and intra-family mutual support mechanisms or through domestic production), taking family cash income alone as a basis for the definition and measurement of poverty would be an insufficient measure reflecting the reality of poverty. In the first case where reciprocal relations are significant, the degree of preservation or disintegration reciprocal relations are important to take into account, in addition to cash income, to have a more realistic and better understanding of poverty. In the second case where only part of household needs are met through market transactions, domestic food production better be considered when assessing poverty than the mere adoption of cash income criteria.

But the major criticism leveled against the money metric approach to the definition and measurement of poverty is that the poverty line used to identify the poor from the non-poor in society cannot be set without considering the socioeconomic and political context within which the poor live. In other words, an absolute poverty line that disregards the standard of living of the non-poor in society is considered inadequate. The relative conception of poverty in which the standard of living of the poor measured in terms of deprivation of some *material attributes*⁵ (be it cash income, expenditure and consumption) relative to what other non-poor sections in the same society obtain of these attributes partly reflects this criticism. Thus the relative conception of poverty accepts the attributes of poverty as the inability to attain the minimal standard of living and the income indicator to measuring but differs with the absolute poverty conception on how to set the cutoff line between the poor and the non-poor. In the absolute conception of poverty a cutoff line could be fixed by approximating the money value necessary for the acquisition of the *minimal material requisites regarded*⁶ as necessary for a decent life. In the relative conception, the cut off line has to be determined in relation to the standard of living of the non-poor in society.

The proponents of the relative conception of poverty hold it that rather than having an absolute (fixed) poverty line, the cash income needed for the attainment of the minimal standard of living has to be defined in relations to the standard of living of other non-poor groups in society. The poverty line

⁴There are numerous more criticisms cited against the consumption, expenditure and calorie intake measurements of absolute poverty that need not be recited in detail here. For details see (Alternatives, Four approaches Cite the Website.

⁵One understands this to be different from social as well as political and cultural deprivations.

⁶The normative validity of who establishes or determines what is necessary for the minimal standard of living which in turn means who defines poverty and who sets the poverty has been questioned. If it has been the norm that somebody else be it a bureaucrat, a politician or some expert sets the poverty line, it would be more appropriate that the poor themselves who experience poverty define what it is and the criteria for measuring it.

according to the concept of relative poverty defined in this sense changes over time, as yesterdays' luxuries become today's necessities. It also changes from one country to another and even within a country differs from one location to the next. This has a number of implications major among which, is that setting a universal or national poverty line is extremely difficult if not impossible. Another implication is that policy action to reduce relative poverty necessitates the redistribution of income in society. The argument for the last point is that even with the increase in national income and the improvement of the material conditions of the poor on absolute poverty measures, their conditions would not improve if other non-poor groups still enjoy far better living conditions. To improve the conditions of the poor relative to the non-poor requires effecting a redistribution policy action in which income inequalities in society are reduced with the poor getting a larger share of the national income. Thus in the relative conception of poverty, unlike the absolute conception of poverty, the poverty line has to be readjusted and redefined according the prevailing economic conditions.

The quantitative or money-metric approach to poverty definition and measurement in all its variants whether using cash income, consumption expenditure or calorie intake as a measurement of poverty has been criticized on a number of grounds. One is its arbitrariness and the subjective judgement involved in deciding what constitutes the reasonable minimal standard of living necessary for wellbeing. Another criticism which is related to the first is the arbitrary nature of setting the cut-off income, expenditure or consumption level that separates the poor and non-poor; the poverty line. A third criticism is that wellbeing involves more than what could be measured by income, expenditure, consumption or calorie intake.

2.2. Relative Deprivations and Capability Approaches

With respect to the above criticism the quantitative aspects of cash income, consumption, expenditure and calorie intake are inadequate for defining and measuring human welfare and wellbeing. This rests on the more fundamental criticism that the cash income criteria as measure of poverty, i.e., in terms of cash income insufficiency to meet basic biological needs, neglects humans as social beings. Subsequently a much broader definition of the concept of poverty, which conceives poverty in terms of relative deprivations has been put forward. The relative deprivation conception of poverty takes into account a number of social and cultural considerations which in addition to basic needs (food, shelter and clothing), includes leisure activities, participation in social life and keeping up with the standards of an acceptable life in a particular society (Webster A, 1989:20). The definition of poverty in terms of relative deprivation helps surmount the difficulties associated with the conception of poverty in cash income terms. It covers, in addition to calculable cash income, qualitative non-calculable needs, the fulfillment of which is considered necessary by individuals, families and society as inseparable part of wellbeing.

Although superior to absolute and relative poverty conceived in quantitative terms nonetheless, the definition of poverty in terms of relative deprivation is fraught with difficulties. Wedderburn (1974:4) considers relative deprivation "in an objective sense to describe situations where people possess less of some desired attribute, be it income, favorable employment conditions or power, than do others" (Wedderburn, 1974:4). The relative deprivation definitions of poverty have the advantage of situating poverty within the broader socioeconomic and political context but the main difficulty is still that of measurement; i.e. how to measure social and political attributes that give rise to the feeling of deprivation. Also feelings of deprivation might relate more to the "desires", expectations and aspirations of those feeling them than to their objective conditions. However, the feeling of deprivation by those lacking certain attributes always arises in relation to those attributes being possessed by others and thus the feeling of deprivation by certain sections is associated with inequalities in societies.

With all attendant definitional and measurement problems, the strength of the definition of poverty as a relative concept, i.e., relative conditions of deprivation, lies in its incorporation of qualitative social and political needs as part of the necessary requirements for wellbeing in addition to material ones. The implication of the adoption of poverty as relative deprivations is that poverty could only be defined and measured within a particular socioeconomic, political and cultural context taking account of countries' and regions' different and specific social, political and cultural characteristics. This has implications for the examination of poverty within less developed countries whose societies are characterized by intricate

overlapping relationships between their differing socioeconomic, political and cultural value systems on the one hand and economic activities on the other.

Despite the difficulty of providing an answer to the critical questions relating to the definitions and precise measurement of poverty, an approximate definition which could bridge the gap between the absolute and relative definitions and the conception of poverty as relative deprivation, is Sen's human capability approach. It is much closer to the conception of poverty as relative deprivation, but extends beyond cash income to define poverty as failure of capabilities to perform certain functionings necessary for human welfare. The concept of capability represents a significant shift in Sen's thinking on poverty and food insecurity of direct and indirect entitlement failures (Sen 1981). While the concept of entitlement denotes human needs understood in material terms including cash income, the concept of capability is much broader to include socioeconomic and political needs as well as cultural ones. According to Sen the overall capability of an individual is constituted by a combination of requisites that includes simple requirements like being well fed and nourished as well as more complex and intricate social and political ones. The latter could include for instance achieving self-respect and having the ability to participate in civic and social life (Sen A.K, 1991). Sen identifies capabilities as both instrumental and intrinsic (e.g., income, education, health, human rights, civil rights etc) allow people to achieve functionings (the things they want to do) and beings (the state of existence they want to experience). (Hulme David et al, 2001:9). With the failure to perform these functionings, because of lack of capabilities individuals experience deprivation.

Sen's idea of capabilities points to a much broader definition of poverty. Capability expansion means enhancing and broadening the opportunities and freedom of choice to acquire these requisites and in a sense capability expansion involves a materially and spiritually gratifying life. Poverty, then, could conceptually be seen as capability failure. According to Sen, "the basic failure that poverty implies is one of having minimally adequate capabilities" (Sen, 1992:111) and accordingly "poverty is better seen in terms of capability failure than in terms of the failure to meet the 'basic needs' of specified commodities. (Sen, 1992:109). Accordingly Sen calls for the reorientation of poverty analysis from low incomes to insufficient basic capabilities. He maintains that, "the reorientation from an income-centered to capability-centered view gives us a better understanding of what is involved in the challenge of poverty" (Sen: 1992:151).

Sen's capability approach to poverty has had a tremendous influence on academics, international development institutions and recommendations for policy making. His work has effected a departure in poverty definitions, measurement, and maps out a general frame to look for causes of poverty. For one scholar, Sen "makes a strong argument that there are compelling reasons to define poverty in terms of lack of basic capabilities to avoid hunger, malnutrition and poor health, and to be adequately clothed, to partake in the life of the community, to feel safe and secure and so forth." (Sahn David E, 2001: 48). The conception of poverty as capability failure also looked attractive to academics focussing on poverty in the US where the quantitative measures of cash income, expenditure on consumption and calorie intake are the dominant instrumental conceptual and policy frameworks for targeting the poor with safety nets. In the US there are currently some advocating the capability approach arguing for the substitution of income generated by people own efforts for social welfare benefits and other public income transfers as means of combating poverty and enhancing people self-reliance and independence. The emphasis on individual responsibility "...implicitly rejects the basic income concept on which official poverty measure [in the US] rests. (Haveman R and Mullikin M, Undated: 11). Thus the adoption of capability enhancement for the US and other Western countries, instead of social safety nets system, is seen to be more consistent with Western culture and ideology. Capability enhancement emphasizes "the merits of individual independence (relative to reliance on government programs), the negative effects of government programs on individual behavior, and the desirability of a smaller social policy role of government"⁷. (Haveman R and Mullikin M, Undated: 11). However, there is an implicit recognition of the need for social safety nets but only for a small section of the poor population that could include the fragile elderly, the disabled and poor children. In understanding poverty and

⁷Social policy as the researcher understands in this context is active government role in supporting the poor through safety net programs.

underdevelopment the conception of poverty as capability failure could be seen to be more relevant to the countries of the South than the US and other industrial countries of the North.

Given the multi-dimensional character of poverty, and the fact that combinations of requisites necessary for greater opportunities and freedom of choice differ between individuals as well as between societies, capability failure at the empirical level allows for a differentiated approach that could deal with poverty and its causes. It could reveal the diverse and heterogeneous forms of poverty and causes at the individual, local as well as the regional levels. Differentiated conception of poverty based on capability failure helps in the formulation and prediction of economic policy differentiated poverty implications for different social groups, regions and localities and thus the reformulation of a better-suited anti-poverty and pro-poor policy. The poor own definition of poverty relating to their own objective different circumstances could be incorporated not only in the definition of poverty but in the formulation of different more realistic and relevant sustainable anti-poverty projects and programs.

To illustrate the point, in my own fieldwork in rural and urban Sudan in three areas (Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira) different factors are emphasized as major factors contributing to poverty. In rural Kordofan the drop in subsistence and cash crop production as a result of drought and pest attack plus the lack or scarcity of clean drinking water as the main factors leading to the deterioration of living conditions. In Gezira where state maintains control over irrigation and production it is the inability to decide on cropping and the selection of crops in response to the market. Additionally, the unavailability of irrigation water and poor roads to transport crops (the crops poor peasant farmers allowed to cultivate on smaller plots of land with little state intervention) to nearby markets are the major factors contributing to their poverty and deterioration of living conditions. The lack of credit, lack of access to production inputs and low producer prices are among the factors farmers in rural Khartoum identify as the main constraints that perpetuate their poverty conditions.

While other requisites are still important, expanding access to and freedom of choice from other opportunities follows from each of the three different priorities in each case. In the case of Gezira access to land and freedom of action to decide what to produce, means independence, freedom from state excessive surplus extractions, anticipated access to higher returns, better access to food, better health, other well being enhancing opportunities and greater participation in community and social life. For the poor of Kordofan, beside meeting a necessary survival requirements, availability of clean safe water means, improving health and avoiding fatal diseases, saving money spent on costly water to be spent on food and other requirements, saving the time spent on fetching water from distant water sources. Time saved could be spent in production and increased food and income plus improving the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable women and children⁸⁸. In rural Khartoum, access to credit and production inputs means increased productivity and increased production together with higher producer prices through having better marketing opportunities means improved income and improved living conditions.

However, in the three cases numerous and high government taxes and levies, lack or poor educational and health services are common constraints to improve their living conditions for all poor peasant farmers in rural Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira. Thus while national policy action is needed to reduce taxes and levies and improve health and educational services delivery, differentiated action for the rural areas in the three regions is required. For rural Kordofan the provision of clean water, drought resistant crop varieties and effective pest control; for Gezira the improvement of water delivery, lifting state control and the improvement of transport and marketing; and for rural Khartoum the provision of credit, agricultural inputs and the improvement of marketing channels.

2.3. The Poor, Poverty Conceptions and Poverty Reduction

It has been increasingly widely held that for a host of reasons, the poor own perceptions, views as well as knowledge have to be taken seriously and incorporated into research on poverty. This applies

⁸⁸ In the dry Sahel zone and some other regions of Africa; including Kordofan, water is a scarce resource and often a source of misery for the majority of the rural population. As it is a necessity for livelihood, available contaminated water is often a cause of water-borne diseases, consumes a large part of cash incomes, time and effort the burden of which is often shouldered by women and children who have to travel long distances to water yards to fetch water.

to the definition of poverty as well as how to go about reducing poverty. The justification for taking the definition of the poor of their own poverty conditions is best put by Ruggles (1990). She states:

After all poverty is a socially determined state, and in the end official threshold come down to what some collection of politicians and program administrators consider adequate level of resources to support a life in a particular community. It seems in many ways appropriate to ask members of the community directly what they consider a minimally adequate income level." (Ruggles Patricia, 1990:221-22
Quoted in Haveman R and Mullikin M, Undated: 15).

The poor own views differ widely from one country to another and within a country from one location to the next. For some it is the lack of employment, for others the insufficiency of cash income to meet basic needs and for many others lack of income generating activities and inability to have access to land. The poor definitions of poverty are related to direct experiences and the major sources of concern to maintain survival. Despite diversity material wellbeing emerges as an important factor. Concern over livelihoods the nature of which differ from one area to the next, however, a general pattern could be distinguished. Access to land and credit, extension services, problems of transporting produce to markets, availability and cost of inputs, high taxes, low cash returns for agricultural produce and availability of off-farm cash earning opportunities are common problems the rural poor face (Narayan Deepa et al, 2000: 46-53).

Employment opportunities, stability of cash income, consumer commodity prices and the diversification of cash income sources are the major concern for the urban poor. The lack of opportunity to work and earn cash income because of low skills, color, caste or ethnic group is the major source of inability to earn a living. Because of their poverty the poor cannot have access to formal credit (they cannot meet the conditionality of collateral to borrow) to start a small business or meet urgent cash needs. (Narayan Deepa et al, 2000:53-59). Sharp increase in commodity prices which leads to a drop in real incomes erodes urban wages and cash income of the urban dwellers and pushes them into even severe poverty. Both rural and urban poor state suffering from the lack, cost or poor quality of educational and health facilities. Despite attempt to diversify sources of cash income both the rural and urban poor lack the opportunities to make of the most abundant resource they have their labor.

The poor themselves tend to emphasize factors close to their everyday lives, and easy to understand, as defining characteristics of poverty. Of these factors, some stand out as most frequent responses: not enough to eat, low income, no land for agriculture, indebtedness, illness, poor general health or disability. (Somchai Jitsuchon, 2001).

Despite the difficulties associated with it the participatory approach, which considers the views of the poor, gives valuable insights into the local conditions. Detailed knowledge of local conditions is necessary for the design of effective location specific poverty reduction strategies. Getting information through the participatory approach at the lower local level where the views of the poor are considered, reveal the specificity of the local conditions relevant to poverty reduction strategies designed specifically to address some local aspects of poverty at the local level. Stretching the views of the poor to the constraints they face in their coping mechanisms, the solutions they perceive to their poverty conditions could be of more help in the design of comprehensive poverty reduction strategies encompassing local, national and international levels. However, whatever the views of the poor of the causes of poverty, the latter have to be sought in arenas that extend beyond the specific local context of the poor. Thus while the participatory approach is of great help in addressing certain local aspects of poverty at the micro lower levels, the causes of poverty at the macro level could not be revealed by the participatory approach.

2.4. Causes of Poverty and Poverty Reduction Policy Recommendations:

It is difficult in the cloudy debate over the definition and measurement of poverty to get some comprehensive understanding of the causes of poverty. Understanding the underlying causes of poverty, (and not simply its manifestations, assessment of its magnitude and depth) forms the primary appropriate foundation on the basis of the formulation of an effective anti-poverty policy and actions could be based and pursued. Causes of poverty are as complex as its definition and the selection of the criteria to use for its measurement. Poverty causes could be sought at different international, national,

regional, local community, family and individual levels and the matrix of combination of forces and mechanisms could also differ according to the socioeconomic, political, cultural and historical conditions. Subsequently the way these factors and forces interact and combine at different levels to result in particular forms of poverty differs in different countries, regions, and communities and among different ethnic groups. While the investigation of causes of poverty at all levels and the way they combine, intersect and interact to result in poverty could be taken as the bedrock on which anti-poverty action could be grounded, the definition of poverty itself (what is to be combated) is equally significant.

Whether taken at the local, national or international level, a particular definition of what constitutes poverty offers a set of policy actions to combat it that would be different if an alternative definition of poverty is adopted based on an implicit or explicit assumption of poverty causes. The material and biological minimum need conceptions of poverty measured in absolute money metric terms are implicitly closely related with the conception of development perceived as economic development and economic growth. Subsequently in developing countries the main factors behind poverty are understood as the impediments to economic growth and policy readjustment for an increased rate of economic growth is conceived to simultaneously lead to poverty reduction. In developed countries or countries that have achieved or maintained rapid economic growth poverty is seen to be a result of some sections of the population being left behind in the process and in this sense poverty is considered a residual or byproduct of economic growth and economic development. Safety nets and social support mechanisms, for instance, in the form of supplementary benefits, unemployment benefits and food support are adopted as tools of poverty reduction.

In this context the measurement of poverty using the absolute minimum cash income, expenditure on consumption and calorie intake of absolute poverty is, in very general terms, adopted to approximate the number of the poor in order to facilitate targeting poverty reduction. With this economic approach to the definition and diagnosis of the multidimensional poverty problem, the cures recommended are the acceleration of economic growth and the adoption of social support system to target dropouts. Social, political and cultural dimensions are thus rarely incorporated in defining poverty, the analysis of its causes and the recommendation of policy measures to combat it.

The quantitative conception of poverty, which concentrates on economic and material factors and equates economic wellbeing (improvement or increase in cash income) with well being and improvement in other aspects, is intimately connected to the conception of economic growth as synonymous with development. *The definition of poverty and the associated problems of poverty measurement* have subsequently attracted more of the attention of scholars, researchers and concerned agencies *than the root causes of poverty*. The need for knowledge about the incidence, depth and magnitude of poverty for effective poverty reduction actions; targeting, focussed attention on defining and measuring poverty to distinguish the poor, determine their size and the magnitude of their poverty. Thus while poverty and its measurement as a symptom of social, economic and political malaise has been at the center of research on poverty, the root causes of the malaise itself have not received the attention they warrant. In the words of one scholar:

The approaches to explaining poverty that have so far been produced by the social scientists are only incomplete. They do not provide any total explanation of poverty as a result of processes of social development, but concentrate on single aspects that contribute to poverty. In this respect, poverty research itself is in a state of absolute and (compared with other areas of development studies) relative poverty. (Hemmer Hans Rimbart, 1994:56).

A resolution to the problem of definition and measurement of what poverty means in terms of correspondence between abstract concept and reality is significant for the formulation of effective poverty reduction policies and actions. So are the methodologies to be adopted in data gathering and analysis. The clarifications of the definition, indicators for measurement and the conceptual frame for the analysis of the empirical data collected largely determine what is to be combated as poverty. However, whatever importance assigned to the issues of definition and measurement and whatever definition is adopted, the identification of causes is equally important and may be more important for effective poverty reduction actions. Von Hauff M (1994:43-44) highlights the importance of the

definition of poverty as well as the identification of its causes for framing coherent poverty reduction strategies:

"A prerequisite for a consistent combating of poverty, is a conceptual and empirical foundation, which has so far only been partially supplied. The question of how a consistent poverty-oriented policy should be formulated is ultimately dependent upon which concept of poverty is considered and which causes of poverty can be identified and analyzed... The problem of poverty must therefore be considered from various angles, in the context of which the structural causes of poverty can be identified and effective measures to combat poverty can be derived. Emphasis added." (Von Hauff M and Kruse B, 1994:43-44).

The most significant issues linked to the causes of poverty and tackled more in the literature than others are those of economic growth, inequality and income distribution. The failure to achieve or the success in the achievement of poverty reduction is linked to economic growth. Economic growth is seen as necessary for poverty reduction and there seems to be no breaking of the consensus, amongst scholars of all persuasions, that economic growth is a precondition for poverty reduction. But the issues of whether economic growth alone is sufficient for poverty reduction and whether an increased rate of economic growth, alone, automatically leads to poverty reduction remain controversial issues. Similarly, and associated with economic growth and poverty issues, are the questions of whether inequality necessarily accompanies economic growth, at what stages of economic growth and whether reduction of inequalities contributes to poverty reduction and economic growth have also remained a subject of a heated debate. One need not go into the details of these debates here. What is presented below are some selected conceptual insights that shed light on increasingly narrowing gaps in the theoretical stands with the broadening of the definition of poverty and a growing attention to the determinants and causes of poverty. The focus will be on economic growth, reduction of inequalities and macro policy readjustment for combating poverty.

Early during the previous decade the World Bank (1990) drew a distinction between poverty and inequality. "Whereas poverty is concerned with the absolute standard of living of a part of society-the poor- inequality refers to relative living standards across the whole society" (World Bank, 1990:26). This was in line with the strongly held definition of poverty in absolute terms "as the inability to attain minimal standard of living " (World Bank, 1990:26). But it has increasingly been realized that the minimal standard of living means more than just meeting the biological needs of food, shelter and clothing. Social, political as well as cultural needs defined within a specific social and cultural context are also regarded as requirements the attainment of which is necessary for well being.

As the multidimensional character of poverty have increasingly been recognized, social and political aspects have come to be considered as important as cash income in forming better knowledge of poverty in order to effectively combat it. Infant mortality rates, primary school enrollment, nutritional status, real wages and real agricultural producer prices (Barber B Conable, 1992:70) are some of the indicators that have increasingly been used in the measurement of poverty as well as the examination of how it is affected by government policy. According to a senior World Bank official lifting the burden of poverty from hundreds of millions means,

New freedom for them- freedom from hunger; from ignorance; from avoidable ill health; freedom to determine their own destinies; freedom to participate in growth and improvement- in short freedom for a future brighter than the past (Barber B Conable, 1992:70).

Unlike what has been dominant thinking around a decade ago, and as the conception of poverty has broadened, the causes of poverty and ultimately the necessary action to combat it have been sought in the socioeconomic and political structures and processes of society:

Poverty is not a personal phenomenon; it is a social status. As such its effects can be measured at the level of the individual, (but) its causes must be sought elsewhere in a number of closely interlinked socioeconomic processes. And from the point of poverty alleviation the processes of becoming are just as important as the state of being (IFAD, 1993:9)

Likewise poverty eradication have increasingly been sought in measures extending beyond economic policy reform to increase economic growth. Income distribution has been seen as a determinant of

poverty and an important factor to consider for poverty reduction. Aziz, (Aziz Sartaj, Undated: 4-5) quoting a senior World Bank official stating that "a growth rate which is equal or just above the rate of population growth will generally worsen poverty". In a similar fashion,

A growth rate, which is twice as large as the rate of population growth, will bring about a perceptible reduction in the level of poverty in countries in which income distribution is not so skewed. In countries in which income distribution is highly skewed, as in Brazil for example, GDP growth at a pace three times greater than the population increase will be required to make a significant dent in poverty (Aziz Sartaj: Undated: 5-6).

The links and interconnection between the level of inequality, growth and poverty has been increasingly recognized and appreciated. As there is almost unanimity that economic growth is necessary for poverty reduction, however, the extent to which economic growth could contribute to poverty reduction depends on socioeconomic inequalities and stable state institutions. Stable state institutions as well as the reduction in inequalities, in turn, contribute to sustained economic growth:

While economic growth is systematically associated with poverty reduction, the rate at which growth translates into lower poverty depends on the initial level of inequality in the distribution of income and how that distribution changes over time. Growth—and its effectiveness in reducing poverty—also depends on sound, stable governance. So confronting socioeconomic inequalities and building sound institutions can be both important for providing a socially sustainable basis for overall growth and for ensuring that poor people gain substantially from that growth. (World Bank, 2001:35)

In the debate over the relationship between economic growth, poverty and inequality, a strong trend in the literature on poverty has emerged advocating redistribution and reduced inequalities arguing that not only are such policies in line with economic growth but more importantly they constitute an enhancement to it. "The belief in the trade-off between equity and growth in both developed and developing economies is widely held. Recent evidence, however, indicates not only that the two are compatible but that they are mutually reinforcing". (Griffin, 2001:2)

Taking the example of land redistribution and the expansion of primary and secondary education and their positive impact on growth, Griffin K and Ickowitz A (1997) strongly put the case for the mutually enhancing relationships between equality of the distribution of economic resources, economic growth and poverty reduction. While it is strongly advocated that a more equitable distribution of economic resources contributes to economic growth, it is also argued that, "an egalitarian pattern of economic growth contributes more to human development than an inegalitarian pattern". (Griffin K, 1997:4, Quoted in Griffin K, and Ickowitz, 1997:6)

On the lengthy debate of whether inequalities are compatible or incompatible with economic growth and poverty reduction, Sobhan (2001) is of the view that, "the tired debate over the prioritization of growth as the route to poverty eradication should be put to rest". Rather than seeing increased economic growth leading to poverty reduction, he postulates that enhancing the capacity of the poor as producers, consumers as well as owners of wealth as "the most effective instrument of sustained economic growth".

Sobhan (2001) in general terms attributes the root causes of poverty to the poor lack of command over economic, social and political resources and the character of the social system that preserves these structures. He call for the reversal of macro-policy reformulation as basis for poverty alleviation:

[The] eradication of poverty should remain central to the design of macro-policy reform rather than an aftermath... The need for a macro-policy designed to eliminate poverty is premised on the argument that poverty originates in the structural features of society, which can only be addressed at the macro-level. Policy interventions designed to redesign structural sources of poverty brings into consideration issues of social, political as well as economic reform" (Sobhan, 2001:3).

Along similar line of reasoning, Norman Uphoff implicitly attributes the economic success of the East Asian 'Tigers'-Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore in achieving rapid economic growth to the poverty reducing policies their governments adopted. The capacity given to their populations through land reform, universal basic education, housing and primary health care policies have all made marked contributions to human development. And that while these policies have significantly

contributed to poverty eradication they simultaneously contributed to economic growth. (Uphoff: Norman, Undated: 5).

Research on poverty has witnessed a general but gradual shift in recent years from emphasis on definitions to exploring causes of poverty. This has not only been exemplified by high concern over the relationship between growth, inequality and poverty, but also by the importance assigned to many other structural socioeconomic, political and cultural factors that hamper the poor from leading their way out of poverty.

National economic development is central to poverty reduction. But poverty is an outcome of more than economic processes. It is an outcome of economic, social and political processes that interact with and reinforce each other in ways that can worsen or ease the deprivation poor people face every day. To attack poverty requires promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security with actions at the local, national and global levels, (WB, 2001:37)

Structural causes of both rural and urban poverty are numerous and differ according to the specific social, economic, political, geographic and demographic conditions that prevail in different countries. These factors function at the local, national and international levels, interrelate, and interact in complex ways to result in poverty. However, some general patterns of lack of access to productive assets, markets, human development and good governance have been singled out as major structural causes behind dire rural poverty conditions in less developed countries (Narayan Deepa et al, 2000, WB, 2001, Sobhan, 2001). Access to productive resources though a necessary enabling condition is not enough and a pro-poor policy that provides transport infrastructure access to information is as important to enable the poor to sell at favorable prices. For the rural poor also removing market distortions of products the poor produce, lifting the burden of heavy taxation, improving real agricultural prices as well as providing easy access to credit both for consumption and production are pro-poor policies the adoption of which entails addressing structural causes of rural poverty.

Human development is closely interconnected to good governance. Expenditure on and efficiency of health and educational services to enable the poor have access to good quality; less costly health and educational services apart from being ends in themselves are main factors that contribute to human development and human wellbeing. Human development is an objective in its own right as well as means to improve the poor main resource; labor, to enable them earn income and contribute to economic growth and economic development. In other words and using Sen's capability terminology, health and education are both 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' capabilities.

However, without the empowerment of the poor within the political system significant improvement in the poor access to assets, human development, security and influence could not be visualized. The marginalization of the poor within the power structure in society is one of the root causes of their poverty. The creation of an institutional framework within which the poor could be organized to make their voice heard and influence state policies and actions both at the community and national level is a necessary prerequisite for poverty eradication. Subsequently the restructuring of *macro policies* to serve the interest of the poor requires a shift in the political power balance in which the power position of the poor is reversed. This could lead to a reduction in inequalities, provide the poor with access to productive assets, the restructuring of public expenditure to provide for infrastructure, access to health, education and employment. Such policies would not only enable the poor and make significant contributions to poverty reduction, but also stimulate rapid economic growth while simultaneously promoting human development

With the recent increased attention to the interconnection and interaction of a multiplicity of economic, social and political factors and forces at the local community, regional, national and international levels in producing and sustaining poverty, the quest for an explanatory theory of poverty has grown. Despite this increased concern over causes an integrated comprehensive conceptual framework that explains the processes and mechanisms that produce and reproduce poverty remains lacking. According to Oyen

Theoretical knowledge about poverty processes is limited. Although everybody has his or her own theory about the causes of poverty, the scientific foundation of understanding poverty is still weak...At present it might be said that we know almost

enough about the poor ...[But we] know less about the processes leading to poverty and sustaining it. (Else Oyen, 2002:2-3)

Oyen points out the lack of attention, in poverty reduction and poverty alleviation efforts, to understanding the common causes of poverty and the way they interact. (Oyen, 2002:5) Oyen puts forward what he calls 'poverty producing agents or forces' and numerates many socioeconomic and political factors and forces at all levels as causes of poverty. His emphasis is on the political factor and conflict of interests, which according to Oyen might lead to intentional and unintentional creation of poverty. The political factor is important, particularly the role of the state in pursuing policies simultaneously provide opportunities for the poor and create an enabling environment to stimulate economic growth and development.

2.5. Poverty Research and Poverty Assessments: Issues of Methodology

As the interrelated issues of definition, measurement and causes of poverty have been subjects of lengthy debates, the choice of selecting among methods of data collection associated with them have also been debatable. Differences aside, the choice of methodology of data collection is closely related to the conception of poverty held and the criteria (indicators) to detect and measure it in reality. Various methods of data collection and analysis have evolved within the two broad approaches of data collection; the quantitative and the qualitative approaches. However, the adoption of either of the two approaches follows the conception of poverty being adopted.

The approach to poverty understood in material terms has developed indicators for the identification and measurement of poverty in terms of cash income, expenditure, consumption and calorie intake. It is widely held that material approaches "... permit precise measurement and comparisons over time and between regions". (David Hume David et al, 2001:6) In the measurement of poverty the money metric approaches adopt household surveys and census data as methods of data collection. It pursues scientific standard statistical procedures to make national inferences and generalizations to arrive at approximations of the incidence level, the depth and the degree of severity of poverty in society. Despite the subjectivity involved in deciding on the basic minimum of these material needs, the process and the quantitative data generated are objective once the criteria and indicators for measurement are set.

The degree and magnitude of poverty and the differentiation of the poor into different groups with reference to severity and depth of poverty on the basis of the data being collected in accordance to the criteria of measurement being set. Thus the method generates aggregate information could be obtained not only on the incidence of poverty but also on the different categories of the poor grouped according to the different degrees of their poverty. The quantitative method could also yield time series, indicate trends and assign figures to trends and thus more attractive to policy makers. (Chambers Robert, 2001:22).

Thus despite criticism that the metric approaches is subjective at the core with regard to the basis on which objective data is collected, however, all social sciences are subjective in a way or another and to varying degrees. However, it is not unreasonable to judge money metric approach quantitative methodology as objective. For once the conception is clearly defined, the measurement criteria is set and the methodology pursued to collect data to approximate the concept in terms of correspondence between abstract concept and reality is clearly described, the process then becomes scientific and objective. The objectivity of the quantitative approach to poverty analysis is not only exemplified in the scientific steps it pursues but further enhanced by detachment from value judgement in the stages of data collection and data analysis.

The quantitative method has been criticized for missing out a lot on the attributes of poverty and for neglecting the non-material requisites of human welfare. Taking cash income as the sole criteria of measuring poverty, the critics hold it, does not capture what is involved in human wellbeing and ill being.

We should recognize the impossibility of gauging economic wellbeing (or standard of living) by a single variable. Various indicators have been used; incomes, consumption, access to basic human needs, life expectancy, literacy and so on. All have their place. (Gary S Fields, 1999:2).

Wellbeing in the money metric approaches is explained in terms of meeting material needs and ill-being is perceived as the inability to meet minimum material needs whose value could be set and quantified in money terms. Martin Ravallion mapped out the problems of standard poverty measurement techniques in the quantitative tradition:

The first such problem is the *identification problem* of how to weight aspects of individual welfare not revealed by market behavior...The second problem is the referencing problem of determining the reference of welfare above which one is deemed to be poor-the poverty line in welfare space, which must anchor the money-metric poverty line.... Addressing the identification and referencing problems requires information that is not found in conventional objective socioeconomic survey data for representative samples of households. Sample surveys restricted to the standard 'objective' data have been found to be of limited use for measurement and policy. (Martin Ravallion, 2001:39).

Grasp of the causes of poverty at all levels is a necessary prerequisite for policy recommendations at all levels and effective anti-poverty action has to be firmly grounded on adequate understanding of the multidimensional character of poverty. With emphasis on measuring poverty understood in money metric terms, the quantitative approaches to poverty, offer but little in terms of policy recommendations. A scholar belonging to the quantitative tradition casts doubt over whether reliance on one-sided econometric approaches alone could uncover poverty causes. (Bourguignon Francois, 2001:44-46) But on the other hand, he holds the reservation that the too much details of actual living conditions of the poor and the community they live in, which the qualitative approach provides, may hide the logic of poverty trap mechanisms by introducing some confusion between causes and effects". (Bourguignon Francois, 2001:45) However, the qualitative approach to information gathering has increasingly gained significance and has been widely used in poverty research along with the evolution of the conception of poverty and the expansion of research on it.

1.6.The Qualitative Approaches to Poverty

As the definition of poverty and its attributes has been broadened and its multidimensional character appreciated so are the areas of research which poverty research covers in terms of definition, measurement and causes to which poverty could be attributed. The qualitative approach or the contextual method of data collection is associated with the capability and poor participation approaches to poverty definition and analysis and partly evolved out of the criticism leveled against the money metric approaches and the quantitative method associated with them.

When we move to measuring poverty in terms of capabilities we thus begin to bridge the quantitative and qualitative methods divide, and simultaneously address some of the weaknesses of the quantitative methods.... Measurements of functionings or capabilities are generally associated with individuals, not households. Thus with these measures we begin to gain insight into intra-household issues that are often neglected with (*sic*) traditional quantitative poverty assessments (Sahn David E, 2001:48).

Consequently, instead of just dealing with income consumption or expenditure recommendations are becoming broader and more inclusive. One of the major advantages of the qualitative approach to poverty research is thus its inclusiveness and coverage of the different dimensions of poverty. Moreover the use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews reveals information and opens up areas of knowledge about poverty that would not be revealed by formal questionnaires adopted in surveys. Open-ended questions "underscored issues the importance of which...had not previously [been] appreciated" when an initial poverty appraisal was carried out and that made it possible "to explore matters tough to frame precisely through traditional survey instruments" (Barrett Chris, 2001:57).

The qualitative approaches using the qualitative method deal with causes, mechanisms and processes generating poverty. The detection or the understanding of causes and processes and mechanisms generating and regenerating poverty are what is required for the formulation of effective anti-poverty policy:

"For the qualitative analysis of poverty it is much less a matter of descriptions and analysis than ascertaining and analyzing processes and mechanisms which cause and reproduce poverty. This [is] the focal point of qualitative research on poverty, which should ultimately provide the necessary basis for the planning and formulation of a consistent poverty reduction policy. (Von Hauff M and Kruse B, 1994:54).

Unlike all other approaches, the qualitative approach incorporates the experience and knowledge of the poor, for the benefit of whom anti-poverty policy action is to be designed, and gives them a chance to contribute to formulating anti-poverty action. This could be regarded to have two positive implications; one is that the poor are empowered by being given a venue of influence on anti poverty policy and second, increasing the potential effectiveness of anti-poverty action by basing it on information and analysis more relevant to local conditions. However, the adoption of the qualitative approach would be of use more for the design of projects and programs implemented at the local level, the effectiveness of which is sensitive to thorough knowledge of local conditions, than macro policy design.

With all the advantages it has over the quantitative method, the qualitative approach has many difficulties and shortcomings. The qualitative approach lacking clear criteria to start with, apart from the broad conceptual framework, allows information to unfold in the field and permits surprises which might counter commonly held perceptions, is more susceptible to value judgement and subjectivity of both researcher and the researched. This would influence the quality of data, analysis and the conclusions and subsequently the policy recommendations. On this issue of subjectivity it is not very much different from the quantitative approach. But it could justifiably be stated that the susceptibility to subjectivity is greater when adopting the qualitative approach, as value judgement may be present in the proceeding stages of data categorization, interpretation and analysis. For the quantitative approach susceptibility to value judgement could be said to be limited only to the initial stages of definition and the selection of criteria for the detection and measurement of poverty.

But the main problem the qualitative method faces is that of measurement and quantification. While income, expenditure and consumption could be quantified and precisely measured, qualitative poverty attributes such capabilities, and freedom of choice and vulnerability could not be easily measured and quantified. Moreover, the more dimensions are incorporated into the definition of poverty the more the measurement problem becomes difficult and complicated. (Von Hauff and Kruse, 1994:45). Human development index that the UNDP has developed on the basis of Sen's ideas, to measure capability attainment or failure, takes only national aggregates and does not take households or individuals. Indicators to measure individual capabilities have yet to be developed. But if dealing with the specificity of the local conditions and revealing much about it is one of the qualitative approach most significant advantages, then the usefulness or the necessity of developing measurable qualitative indicators to apply to all conditions becomes doubtful. However, general patterns or regularities across different local conditions could emerge from using the qualitative approach that could be attained or ascertained if the quantitative approach is adopted for one and the same population.

With reference to another version of the quantitative approach to poverty exemplified by the Voices of the Poor Study, Norman Uphoff points out some of the potential shortcomings of the qualitative method. These include, i) whether those interviewed representative; ii) how different aspects of the poor be summarized; iii) whether an idea of severity and magnitude of personal poverty could be formed; iv) how trends could be identified; v) whether the number of the poor is increasing or declining; and, vi) whether their poverty is getting deeper. (Uphoff Norman, 2001:34).

Nonetheless, it has now widely been recognized that the qualitative approaches, which appropriately deal with the multidimensional character of poverty, offer useful insights into a full range of deprivations that constitute poverty and give the poor a voice in an important issue that primarily concerns them. However the major drawback of the qualitative methods remains and that is the " lack [of] the precision and comparability of income consumption measures." (Hulme David et al, 2001:6)

However, the choice of a particular research method or a combination of research methods could not be made at random. It is the nature of the topic and the relevant information required in a particular investigation that set the parameters for the decision to choose among different or combination of research methods. "The choice between different research methods should depend upon what one is trying to find out" (David Silverman, 2001:25). Partly then the choice of the research methods to be adopted in a particular poverty investigation relates the definition of poverty adopted, the assumed causes of poverty on which the research focuses and the level at which poverty is investigated. If for instance minimum cash income is adopted as a definition to determine the incidence and the depth of poverty in a particular society, the quantitative method have to be adopted. While if poverty is defined

in terms of capability failure a combination of both the quantitative and the qualitative methods needs to be adopted to approximate poverty in terms of failure of capabilities both those that could be quantified like income and other non-quantifiable capabilities like vulnerability. Indicators to approximate qualitative capabilities could also be developed and incorporated in surveys for vulnerability. Indicators such as disability, region of residence, gender, class and caste, whether having a permanent or a casual job, the frequency of falling ill, the seasonality of income, whether cash income fluctuates, whether having social support networks of relatives and friends all depending on the local conditions could be incorporated into surveys.

2.7. Concluding Remarks

The literature on the definition of poverty, the indicators to measure it and its causes have evolved over time corresponding to the increasing attention the problem of poverty has attracted in recent years accompanying socioeconomic and political changes and developments. The quantitative approaches dominated thinking on and policy action to deal with poverty in the 1960s throughout the 1970 and 1980s and the focus had been on lack of minimum cash income to maintain a minimal acceptable standard of living. Money metric criteria had been used as the sole poverty measure to determine the poverty line in order to differentiate the poor from the non-poor to facilitate targeting. The capability approach, which emphasizes the multidimensional character of poverty, has become widely accepted since the 1990s. Poverty in this conception is understood in terms of failure of capabilities, which include in addition to cash income qualitative attributes such as education, skills, health, security and freedoms. Thus poverty as a concept could have multiple attributes some of which are material in nature that could be measured and quantified (cash income, consumption, calorie intake) and others that are non-material (capabilities, vulnerability and freedom), which are difficult to measure and quantify.

The quantitative conception of poverty, which solely concentrates on economic and material factors and equates cash income with well being, is intimately connected with the conception of economic growth as synonymous with development. In this conception poverty is seen mainly as outcome of lack or slow rate of economic growth. Since economic growth is conceived to lead to poverty reduction the causes of poverty are subsequently implicitly regarded as economic impediments or constraints to economic growth. Policy recommendations for poverty reduction are thus basically centered on removing obstacles to an accelerated rate of economic growth. An increase in the rate of economic growth of a country whose poverty incidence is high is perceived to simultaneously result in raising cash income for a large section of the poor above the absolute minimum cash and thus reduce poverty incidence. Another policy recommendation that follows from the quantitative approach is the adoption of safety nets to support the poor who are regarded as residual or a byproduct of increased economic growth. Implicit in this is that in the process of economic growth a group or a section of poor population might be created or remains unaffected by economic growth. As safety nets are seen as the appropriate instruments to deal with the poor, the magnitude of poverty and the percentage of poor in society have become important for effective targeting of anti-poverty action.

The literature on poverty reveals that poverty could be investigated at the individual, household, community, spatial (regional, local, urban, rural) national and international levels and could be investigated as a transitory (temporary result of short-term shocks) or chronic resulting from a secular long term trend. The investigation could look into the degree, extent and severity of poverty to identify the ultra poor (the poorest of the poor). There is an emerging consensus that poverty has many dimensions, material as well as non-material. The multiple dimensions or attributes could be present within one the same unit of analysis (an individual, a household, a community, a region or a country). A combination of attributes could be abstracted as poverty. The severity of poverty could partly be measured by the degree to which multiple dimensions are present. Sets of combinations of attributes of what represents poverty as an abstract concept differ according to theoretical frameworks and in reality differ according to different complex socioeconomic and political circumstances for whatever definition of poverty is taken or for a given definition of poverty.

The concept of poverty is characterized by fluidity by having different meanings and connotations at the conceptual level and differences of what precisely to be captured in reality as poverty given differences in socioeconomic and political contexts. Subsequently the development of measurement

indicators of whether it exists and the degree to which it is prevalent in a society could not be fixed and universally adopted. There is relativity of measurement indicators not for different conception of poverty but within each conception of poverty. Relativity over time and space makes the issue of measurement more complicated. Indicators to measure poverty devised on the basis of one conception vary over time. If for example the minimum standard of living varies over time, cash income to approximate it also has to vary not just as a result of change of what composes the minimal standard of living but also because of changes in prices and income levels over space.

The literature on poverty also reveals that poverty is a multidimensional socioeconomic phenomenon and could be defined and given different attributes by different scholars, governments and the poor. These definitions vary from the extreme quantitative definitions of cash income, consumption, and calorie intake to the broader qualitative definitions of capabilities, deprivation livelihood failures and security. Differences in the definition of poverty reflect differences in disciplinary perspectives, the value judgement in the case of scholars and researchers, the political interests involved in the case of governments and differences of the specific physical, socio-cultural and political constraints in the case of the poor. Differences in the definition of what poverty means result in differences in the choice of indicators and measurement criteria to detect poverty, implicit or explicit causes of poverty and recommendations to pursue policy actions to combat it. Accordingly the choice of one definition has implications for what to be measured and how, implicit or explicit assumption of causes, what appropriate actions to be pursued and the outcome of poverty impact assessment. While knowledge on poverty understood in quantitative attributes measured in terms of cash income, expenditure, consumption and calorie intake, could be measured and quantified, indicators to measure poverty meaning capability, opportunities, empowerment and livelihoods are not clear and still to be refined. Although some policy recommendations to combat poverty at the national level could be outlined, these are rather diffuse and lack the clarity of those based on the quantitative approach. But perhaps this lack of clarity could be considered an advantage rather than a disadvantage in that different conditions in different countries and regions necessitate the adoption of different anti-poverty policies and actions to deal with local conditions rather than universal ones. But still some issues, constraints and limitations could be universal in character but with different specific local manifestations; e.g., lack of assets taking the local manifestation of landlessness, lack of implements and tools, livestock and finance capital assets according to the context.

Traditions and statistical procedures of carrying out household and other surveys that measure income, expenditure consumption, and calorie intake yield quantifiable numerical data with some adjustment allowing for local conditions. On the other hand wellbeing, ill being and the failure of capabilities, livelihoods, opportunities, isolation and exclusion are only recently recognized and adopted in the identification of poverty. Because of their qualitative nature they could not be easily captured and measured. What constitutes well being for instance is not measurable like income and expenditure. It is more susceptible to value judgement and the specificity of local conditions than what constitutes a minimal level of income or consumption necessary for an acceptable life (the later is also subject to value judgement).

There are as much disagreements about the causes of poverty as about its definition and measurement in reality. Causes to which poverty is attributed differ from individual abilities and disabilities, demographic factors, economic factors to environmental, cultural factors and social and political relations. As a complex phenomenon it is difficult to attribute poverty to one factor. It seems that the kind of causes a research could come up with as explanations of poverty depend on a number of factors. Among these are the conception of poverty adopted, the level at which poverty is examined, and the focus of the research, the specific socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the population being researched, the disciplinary orientation of the research and above all the value judgement of the researcher. Combinations of different sets of interpretations are thus a result of this influx of conceptions, differences in socioeconomic and cultural contexts as well as variations in both theoretical and data collection methodologies.

Defined in terms of capability failure and the failure to perform functionings, research on the causes of poverty could extend beyond economic growth to investigate an infinite matrix of causes that hamper individuals and limit their freedoms and choice opportunities to pursue a materially and spiritually satisfying life. The causes could be investigated at the individual, family, and community, national and

international levels. Causes could be a combination of socioeconomic, political cultural, demographic, environmental, ethnic, and locational) that interact to result in poverty. Based on different interpretation of the causes of poverty, different recommendations of how to combat, alleviate and finally eradicate it are put forward. These also vary from safety nets, the reformulation of economic policy, active state social policy to the restructuring of power relations at the household (gender relations and birth control), local national and international levels to empower the poor and give them a voice.

If the multidimensionality of poverty is taken as a basis, it would quite reasonable to adopt an approach that no one definition or a set of definitions captures all dimensions. All definitions have a contribution to offer; not only in terms of conception but also in terms of multiple different policy actions they recommend for adoption to combat poverty. The multiplicity of poverty attributes (or dimensions) in all its degrees from mere poverty to chronic or ultra poverty calls for the use of a combination of definitions. Consequently each definition which emphasize certain dimensions develops an analysis and an advanced understanding of a certain dimension or set of dimensions and recommends policy action to deal with that particular dimension which is a subject of emphasis. Dropping some attributes of poverty could in some cases of poverty definitions be a matter of difference in emphasis rather than substance.

Indicators to approximate capability, livelihoods, security, and vulnerability could not be universal like minimum cash income. One of the main advantages of the qualitative method, perhaps, lies in its success of uncovering the diversity and heterogeneity of forms of economic, social and political pointers or indicators of capability failure corresponding to the diversity of specific local conditions. Taking the multidimensional character of poverty into account it is difficult to have a universal measurement of poverty in any objective sense and a differentiated approach that aims at outlining differentiated and combined anti-poverty policy packages, in which both the qualitative and quantitative approaches are used seems to be necessary. The quantitative approach could provide indications to the formulation of national and international actions for poverty reduction dealing with cash income and consumption. On the other hand the qualitative approach could make a contribution of detailing location specific poverty attributes and causes that correspond to the specific socioeconomic and cultural conditions at the community, local and regional levels that could not be uncovered by the quantitative approaches. As such the qualitative approach's contribution does not only address the multidimensional poverty attributes but also make poverty reduction actions more effective in terms of relevance.

Different definitions of and approaches to poverty research are not necessarily mutually exclusive and for effective reduction of the multi-attributes of poverty need to be regarded as complementing rather than substituting each other. Similarly, the data collection methodologies in the quantitative and qualitative traditions used in poverty research could be seen as mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive. The recognition of the elements of strength as well as those of weakness of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches is the starting point for improving on both as well as establishing complementarity between them. In some suggestions complementarity could take the form of developing and incorporating indicators for the collection of qualitative data in surveys and/or alternatively the samples used for the qualitative data could be stretched or enlarged to be more representative of the population under investigation.

Section Three

Some Political and Economic Aspects of Poverty Creation in Sudan 1990-2000⁹

Introduction:

With its vast natural and manpower resources Sudan is still considered one of the least developed and poorest countries. About a fifty-year period since its independence in 1956, has not just been a failure in terms of development effort, but a period of regression in many respects. In one respect poverty measured in terms of household income has progressively increased since the country has had its own national anthem. The period of the 1990s has been exceptional in the scale, rapidity and depth with which poverty has overwhelmed and devastated the majority of the Sudanese population. It is a period during which the NIF took over power and effected numerous economic and political measures, one of the consequences of which is the spread of poverty on such large scale.

Poverty is a very complex phenomenon and cannot simply be reduced to one cause or a number of causes. Causes of poverty have social, cultural, environmental, and demographic as well as economic and political dimensions. The multiple and intricate causes of poverty function, interact and overlap at different levels in different combinations of different magnitude governed by different socio-cultural, political, economic, environmental and historical contexts. These complex factors, forces and mechanisms also interact, with differing degrees, at the different international, national, regional, community, household and individual levels to result in poverty.

This paper deals with *some* economic and political factors and forces functioning at the national level that have significantly contributed to such widespread poverty in the Sudan in the 1990s. Although some analysts and scholars mainly blame the self imposed adoption of structural adjustment program, *this paper argues that it is the interrelated political and economic aspects of government policy and not simply structural adjustment that has to be blamed for the dramatic increase in poverty in the 1990s.* This in way means that some aspects of the self-imposed structural adjustment should not be considered when investigating increased poverty in Sudan, but that government policy has to be seen as the primary cause leading to over 90% incidence of poverty. I) Massive non-productive use of scarce resources; ii) the escalation of the war in the South that has been a drain on the country's scarce resources; iii) the displaced and impoverishment of millions of Sudanese; iv) inflation that eroded real urban and rural incomes; v) heavy resource extraction from the productive sectors without reinvestment to maintain their productive capacity; vi) increased unemployment; and, the sharpening of inequalities are just some aspects of government policy that constitute the underlying causes behind widespread and deepening poverty.

The paper is presented in six sections¹⁰. The first section is to set the political context within which the policies of the 1990s have been adopted. The second and the third sections deal with government non-productive expenditure compared to expenditure on the productive and services sectors to highlight the impact of reallocation and misallocation of scarce resources on poverty. The waste of scarce resources in relation to the war in the South and its negative impact on the Sudanese specially those in the South who suffered large-scale displacement, are emphasized. Government policies towards agriculture and how they impacted on the agricultural sector to result in increased rural

⁹ The researcher would like to express deep gratitude to the ERF for the extension of financial assistance to conduct research on rural and urban poverty in Sudan. This has made the data collection for the writing up of this paper and two others to come soon possible. He is also indebted to many who have aided in carrying out the fieldwork and in facilitating access to data. The assistance of Miss Ilham Duleib El Mahdi, Mr. Khalid Salih and Mr. Mohamed Yagoub who have helped in data gathering both in the field and from different relevant sources and libraries has to be specially acknowledged.

¹⁰ This paper mainly relies on primary and secondary material. It uses data that is unpublished such as relevant government departments' reports, unpublished articles and workshop papers which have been an important source of information. Most available data; particularly statistics have not been tabulated formed in the way it is needed for the paper. So data is sometimes pieced together from different sources and sometimes adjusted for the purpose of the argument. Statistics are sometimes inconsistent and the ones on the budget in particular are often different due to the disguise of some expenditure items and also the difference between approved and actual allocations. Overall the statistics are not *very* reliable but they serve the purpose of the paper. Differences do not distort the general trend statistics indicate.

poverty are dealt with in the fourth section. The fifth section deals with urban poverty and how it has mainly been a result of government policy that eroded real incomes and resulted in increased unemployment. The rapid increase in inequalities and poverty in the 1990s are set for examination in the sixth section. The paper winds up with conclusions and policy recommendations.

3.1. The Political Context of Economic Policy: 1990-2000

The way the NIF has attempted to gradually establish and tighten control over the economy and other aspects of social, political and cultural life in Sudan during the 1990s is a subject for a separate documentation and analysis. However, in this context it is important to briefly map out the underlying current of thinking that marked the general orientation of government policy that was in the Sudan during the 1990s leading to large scale poverty. Although it is difficult at present to have access to sufficient data on some aspects of policy, for those who lived in Sudan in the 1990's, witnessed and closely watched this policy unfold, its objectives and consequences are not unclear for the keen observer to see. However, systematic treatment that situates policy and poverty into the socioeconomic and political context is necessary for understanding developments in poverty in the Sudan in the 1990s. This paper is a modest attempt to undertake this task as a starting point for further analysis. Much of the data under current conditions is very hard to get and available data is sometimes incomplete.

One main features of the new NIF government policy during the 1990s is to strengthen its economic and political position. Thus economic policies, and other administrative, social as well political aspects of policy, are pursued not for mere economic rationale but mainly engineered to weaken potential opponents and enhance the NIF economic and political power base. Representing one small section of the Sudanese population the NIF government took various measures to preserve its grip over power. To weaken political opponents, potential or real, the NIF has attempted to demolish their economic and political support base. Investment opportunities and credit allocation facilities have been granted to supporters and allies and denied to opponents¹¹. Concessions such as exemption from custom duties¹², subsidies, financial support and exclusive grant of licenses to political supporters were some of the measures adopted to forcefully establish an elaborate NIF economic base. To dominate the economy, politics and all aspects of social and political life, opponents and those not considered allies to the NIF's government have been forced out of the market. Some examples could illustrate this. One is the grant of licenses for exchange bureaus to supporters to trade in dollars at a time when it was prohibited for others¹³. It is one aspect of a policy, as stated by one of the government's advocates who later turned into a prominent critic, based on demolishing the power base of the traditional parties and establishing a government's one in its place¹⁴.

A similar pattern of policy has been followed in the civil service. Government potential opponents in large numbers in ministries, public corporations and other state bodies were purged and randomly dismissed with no charge except not being an NIF supporter. In the words of El Afandi, who was a government supporter and later turned into a prominent critic, "those who replaced them were young, lacking experience; their sole qualifications is loyalty"¹⁵. The impact of this policy together with the erosion of real incomes, as a result of high rate of inflation, has been devastating on the civil service and the performance of the economy in general. Experienced qualified personnel who form the core of Sudan's "human capital" flew out of the country in an unprecedented scale. The services sectors suffering both under funding and the flight of human capital; particularly health and education, have been hit hard. Resource reallocation has been one of the main factors behind the deterioration of living conditions and services.

¹¹Salim A Salim, The Road to the State: An Analysis of the Sudanese Case, (in Arabic), Amapresse, Paris, 1999, p. 218-221.

¹²Personal Informal Interview with a former qualified, experienced high-ranking custom official who has been forced into early retirement. He used to have a position towards the grant of exceptional custom concessions.

¹³Adam A, M, The State and Society in Sudan, (in Arabic), Darel Hikma, London, 1997, p.74-77.

¹⁴El Afandi A, Revolution and Political Reform in Sudan, (in Arabic), Muntada Ibn Rushd, London, 1995, pp. 96-112.

¹⁵Ibid., p.165.

3.2. Non Productive Government Expenditure and Scarce Resource Waste

One of the main characteristics of government spending in the 1990s is the allocation of the largest share or part of the country's resources to running the bureaucracy and the security machine and the low priority assigned to the productive and the services sectors. In almost all budgets expenditure on salaries and the cost of running the bureaucracy, the security machine and the military, amounts to between 75 and 80% of budget expenditure. In 1997 Chapter I and Chapter II (composed of salaries and wages plus running cost) amounted to 88.4% and adding the financial resources allocated to maintaining regional bureaucracies and client political bodies (Chapter III) the total adds up to 92.2%. The development budget only received the remaining 7.8%. The pattern of non-productive expenditure of 80% share of total government spending continued for the rest of the 1990s. (See Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Public Expenditure (Public Budget) For the Period 1997-2000

Year	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Expdt.	%	Expdt.	%	Expdt.	%	Expdt.	%
Chapter I	46522	36%	66179	36.4%	87970	38.3%	109953	36.7%
Chapter II	66771	52.4%	81445	47.5%	95643	41.6%	108705	39.2%
Chapter III	4783	3.8%	9857	5.7%	12804	5.6%	21755	7.9%
Chapter IV	10058	7.8%	17980	10.4%	33447	14.5%	36579	13.2%
T Budget	127441	100%	172362	100%	229865	100%	276994	100%

Legend:

Chapter I: Salaries and Wages of Public Employees and Workers

Chapter II: Running Cost

Chapter III: Centralized Items including States' Support and Expenditure on Emergencies

Chapter IV: Development Expenditure

Source: Worked out from Data and Explanatory Memos for Annual Budgets, Computer Printout, The Ministry of National Economy, Khartoum

Government resources generated from over taxing the productive sectors; namely the agricultural sector, are non-productively used. Massive non-productive expenditure for which overtaxing the agricultural sector has not been sufficient and increasingly government has resorted to domestic borrowing (deficit financing) that has not been matched by a proportionate increase in the productive capacity and production. Heavy taxation has hampered the agricultural sector from realizing its productive potential and significantly contributed to the acceleration of poverty in the countryside, while heavy taxation and other aspects of government policy curbed the industrial sector, unemployment and contributed to urban poverty. Most plants, private and public during the 1990s either halted production altogether or functioned at less than half designed capacity; restricting job opportunities and the supply of manufactured goods. Deficit financing during the 1990s, on the other hand, was the main contributor to the erosion of real incomes in both urban areas and the countryside. This has further accelerated the progressive process of rural and urban poverty.

The largest expenditure allocations are made to the military and the bureaucracy. The productive and the services sectors received the least share in resource allocations. In addition to being the largest item of expenditure in almost all budgets during the period of 1990-2000, actual expenditure on the military and the security machine are always far more than what statistics show¹⁶. However, on the basis of available statistics expenditure on the military and security has been exceptionally high and increased steadily over the years. The share of the military in the public budget increased from 11.5% of the public budget in 1995 to 19.5% in 1997 and to 28.8% for the year 2000. The intensification of the war in the South, the threat to Sudan's borders, the worsening relations with almost all neighbors, widespread inter-tribal conflicts and internal oppression all have given defense and security top priority in budget financial allocations. Expenditure on political institutions; i.e., the so-called sovereign institutions has also been high and progressively increased over the years.

¹⁶In 1997 Chapter IV has been set for Development Expenditure instead of Chapter III and the Centralized Items to replace it as Chapter III. Chapter III is set for states' support and to cover unspecified expenditure including the military and security. An informal personal interview with a high-ranking Ministry of Finance and National Economy official, Khartoum, June 2003.

Table 2: Share of Some sectors in the Annual Budget for the Period 1992-2000 in Million SD

AP. BUD FOR FISC. YR.	92/93	93/94	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total Public Budg.	12231	23370	35721	95510	130603	186018	240834	250834
M of Defense	2000	3000	4000	14584	25500	41362	61077	723304
As a % of T Budg.	16.4%	12.8%	11.5%	15.2%	19.5%	22.2%	25.3%	28.8%
M of Health	26	69.5	67	121	125	2068	2185	3285
As a % of T Budg.	0.2%	0.29%	0.18%	0.12%	0.096%	0.094%	.094%	1.3%
M of Education	50	14	15	18	20	80	98	NA
As a % of T Budg.	0.04%	0.06%	0.04%	0.18%	0.15%	0.43%	0.40%	NA
Ministry of Agric.	NA	929	1334	1066	1636	1745	2072	4069
As a % of T Budg.	NA	3.97%	3.7%	1.1%	1.25%	0.93%	0.86%	1.6%
Sover. Nstitutions	NA	422	618	3680	NA	8755	12018	15275
As a % of T Budg.	NA	1.8%	1.7%	3.85%	NA	4.7%	4.99%	6.09%

Legend: NA = Not Available

Source: Worked out from The Republic of Sudan, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000 and Computer Printout Material the Ministry of National Economy, Khartoum.

The rapid increase in non-productive expenditure has been effected at the expense of the productive sectors, expenditure on necessary health and educational services and at the expense of inflation that eroded real incomes. (See Table 2). Examining Table 2, expenditure on defense in the 1993 budget is 76 times the expenditure on health and 35 times the expenditure on health and education together. Expenditure on the so-called sovereign institutions¹⁷ was four times as much as the expenditure on health and almost twice as much as expenditure on health and education put together. Financial resource allocations to agriculture as a productive sector declined sharply from 3.97% of total budget expenditure in 1993/1994 to 1.1% in 1996 and to only 0.86% in 1999. While expenditure on agriculture dropped, expenditure on the military, the bureaucracy and sovereign institutions increased. Resource allocation to non-productive activities sharply increased at the expense of reducing already meager resources allocated to productive expenditure even further. For instance allocations to agriculture in 1995 was twice as much as the expenditure on sovereign institutions, but by 1998 expenditure on sovereign institutions was five times as much as allocations to agriculture and about four times in 2000.

In contrast expenditure on the productive and services sectors declined steadily. Allocations to health services dropped from 0.2% of the 1992 budget to only 0.18%, 0.096% and 0.094% for fiscal years of 1995, 1997 and 1999 consecutively. Allocation to education remained in the region of 0.4%, during the 1990s, despite the rapid expansion of basic, secondary and higher education. Annual and rapid increase in education with almost constant budget allocations implies a decline in quality and the inability to provide basic and elementary prerequisites for schools. Teachers' salaries dropped and in most cases not paid for months and subsequently teachers either migrated or abandoned the profession altogether. The cost of running schools has been shifted onto already impoverished parents by levying fees on pupils and students. The quality of education has sharply declined because of shortage of federal funds. The payment of fees imposed by schools is beyond the capacity of most poor urban and rural families, whose children dropped out of school both because of the inability to pay fees and the need for children to work to earn cash and contribute to their poor family subsistence. Thus as poverty has increased and intensified during the 1990s, the government effected drastic cuts in expenditure on health and education, the impact of which is to be shouldered by the poor. This has added more stress to the dire conditions in which the majority of the Sudanese rural and urban population started to experience by the 1990s.

Similarly expenditure cuts on health has led to the deterioration of health services; particularly for the poor sections of the population whose health and living conditions have worsened. Cuts in financial resources have affected spending on health staff, on hospitals and the provision of drugs. Instead of an almost free health service to all sections of the population, by the beginning of the 1990s fees have been imposed on all for even the most elementary health service hospitals could offer. In addition to

¹⁷ These mainly include the Ministry of foreign Affairs, the Judiciary, the Republican Palace, the National Assembly and other similar political institutions.

health being of poor quality, the imposition of payment of fees for access to health service barred impoverished families from access to treatment or having access to it at the expense of forgoing other necessities.

Priority assigned to the military, at the expense of the productive and services sectors, is partly dictated by the civil war in the South on which expenditure amounts to an average of more than one million US \$ a day. Thus government policy of intensifying the war in the South has not only led to the waste of scarce resources generated at the expense of crippling the economy and production but also contributed in some other ways to the acceleration of poverty both in the South and the North.

3.3. War, Displacement and the Aggravation of Poverty in Sudan's Urban and Rural Areas.

Massive displacement of large sections of the Sudanese population is strongly associated with government policy relating to three factors that constitute the root causes for people to abandon their homes and economic activities. These are the intensification of the civil war in the South, environmental degradation and the increased resurgence of inter-tribal conflicts that all disrupted community peace, security, the practice of normal economic activities and damaged livelihoods.

The civil war in the Southern part of the country has been accelerated since the present government took over office in 1989. Despite numerous rounds of talks to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict, this has so far remained more of a public relations effort than a real and genuine search for peace. For more than 14 years of negotiations, no peaceful settlement has yet been reached (July 2003) and in the meantime the devastation of the South, the economy and the Sudanese in the North has persisted and intensified as the civil war continues.

One consequence of the war, which is a direct result of government policy, is the increase in the number of the displaced Southern Sudanese moving into Northern cities; mainly Khartoum, on an unprecedented scale. Sources differ on the number of Southern Sudanese who left their homes because of the intensification of the war in the South. A United Nation's report on the Operation Lifeline Sudan put the number in the region of 4.2 millions¹⁸. Based on an estimate of the total number of the population of the Sudan of about 28 million in 1999, the figure of the Southern war-displaced represented about 15% of Sudan's total population. (See Table 3)

The depletion of the environment, for which government policies have partly to be blamed has negatively affected the environment is another cause for population dislocation and displacement mainly from the regions of Darfur and Kordofan in the West and the Red Sea region in the East. Agricultural policies that encouraged the expansion of large scale rain fed farming at the expense of clearing large tracts of forestland¹⁹ have caused great damage to the soil. The number of the displaced consequent of drought and low yield levels in peasant agriculture, in 1997, was estimated for the whole country to be slightly less than 3 millions. (See Table 3) The most drought-affected regions, i.e., having the largest share of drought-displaced, are those of Darfur and Kordofan which are already the most poverty-ridden and marginalized regions within the national context. Thus government policies have negatively affected the environment and the depletion of the natural resource base leading to impoverishment, destitution and poverty on large scale. Tension among tribes in Darfur region is partly a product of drought and partly a product of government policy that have aggravated inter-tribal tension and conflicts²⁰. Although there are no accurate figures on the number of people dislocated as a result of inter-tribal conflicts, those fleeing Darfur where inter-tribal conflicts frequently erupt is quite large.

¹⁸Banaga, S, The Displaced and Prospects for Peace, (in Arabic), Africa International University Press, Khartoum, 2001, p. 32.

¹⁹Mohamed Suliman, Sudan: Wars Over Resources and Identity, (in Arabic), Cambridge Academic Press, Cambridge, 2000; El Amin Khalid A, Drought, Adjustments in Economic Activities and Change in Land Use and land Tenure Forms in Darfur, Sudan, Centre for Development Studies, The University of Leeds, Consortium for political Emergencies Working Paper, No. 41.

²⁰Salih Mustafa, S., Tribal Conflict in Darfur: Causes, Consequences and Cures: A Study in Sociology and Empirical Social Anthropology, (in Arabic), Sudan Currency press, Khartoum, Undated; El Amin Khalid A, Some Environmental Consequences of Human responses to Drought in Sudan, Darfur Region, University of Khartoum, Development Studies and Research Center, Monograph Series No. 40, 1999.

Table 3: The Number of the Displaced in millions, by Reasons of Displacement And Region of Destination

REGION	SECUR.	%	DRT	%	TOTAL	%
Northern	0.08	1.17%	0.08	1.17%	0.16	2.35%
Gr. Khartoum	1.80	26.54%	---	---	1.80	26.54%
Central	0.32	4.71%	0.20	2.94%	0.52	7.66%
Eastern	---	---	0.60	8.84%	0.60	8.84%
Darfur	0.06	0.88%	0.80	11.64%	0.80	11.79%
Kordofan	0.07	1.03%	1.00	14.74%	1.07	15.78%
Bhr el Gazhal	0.41	6.04%	---	---	0.41	6.04%
Equatoria	0.80	11.79%	---	---	0.80	11.79%
Upper Nile	0.56	8.25%	---	---	0.56	8.25%
Total	4.10	60.47%	2.68	39.33%	6.78	100%

Source: Cited in Ahmed Taha Mohamed, 1997:15

Forced dislocation resulting from the civil war, environmental degradation and inter-tribal conflicts, all have led to the destitution of more than 6 million Sudanese. Almost all categories of the displaced lost their assets, means of survival and have had their livelihood collapsed and they have been forced to abandon their homes, farms and rural economic activities in search of security and means of survival. The number of those affected has been about 25% of the Sudanese population. Displacement has reduced this significant number of the Sudanese population to destitution and deprived them of the minimal means of survival.

Displacement and the associated poverty and destitution do not only affect the displaced but also add to worsening the conditions of the already impoverished urban areas in which the displaced seek refuge. There are variations in the estimates of the distribution of the displaced over the areas in which they have settled (the destination of the displaced). However, all sources agree that the largest number of the displaced of all categories has settled around Khartoum²¹ to constitute the core of capital's ever-increasing marginal urban areas. Uprooted from their rural homes and forced to live in an urban setting, most displaced lack the skills and experience to be able to find a job in the city. With the loss of assets, homes and farming, displacement set formerly food secure stable families, under conditions of food insecurity and vulnerability. If work opportunities were found at all, these are low-paid manual jobs. Thus the main difficulties the displaced face are loss of means of livelihood, unemployment in the urban environment and the irregularity of cash income. Reliance on cash only to purchase food and survive after the loss of subsistence and the supporting community exposes their vulnerability and places a too great burden for the displaced to able to cope with.²² Poor health, poor sanitation, lack of drinking water and assets to fall back upon in times of need are additional difficulties that further aggravate the displaced poverty conditions.

Although displacement affects all dislocated Southern Sudanese, but displacement affects women and children most, and pushes them into insecurity, poverty and vulnerability. The loss of males in combat or as a result of forced separation, shifts the responsibility of looking after the remaining destitute and broken families onto females. The remaining members are mostly children and fragile elderly. There are also different estimates of the percentage of female-headed households among the displaced population around Khartoum, and the percentage they put varies between 30% and 40% of all displaced families to be female-headed households. Women are forced to work hard to feed families. While all displaced are equally affected by the loss of assets and means livelihoods, women are particularly more affected by the loss of male members of the family and have to shoulder without material or moral means of support greater burden of poverty and destitution.

²¹ Ahmed Taha, Population Displacement and Poverty in Sudan. A paper presented for the Study Group of Poverty in Sudan, Sponsored by ILO and UNDP at the request of The Ministry of Social planning, Khartoum, 1997. Also see Banaga S, op.cit. and UNDP and Ministry of Social Planning, Sudan 1st National Human Development Report, (NHDR), Final Draft, Sustainable Human Development Department, 1998.

²² Targeting the displaced around Greater Khartoum has become the main activity of numerous national and mainly international NGO; providing relief assistance in the form of food, health services and sanitation

3.4. Agriculture: Heavy Extractions, Lack of Reinvestment and Rural Poverty

Apart from the civil war in the South, which has wasted resources, displaced and impoverished millions of Sudanese, government policy towards the economy in general and agriculture in particular has also aggravated poverty in Sudan's countryside. Although the economy registered some improvement in growth mainly driven by growth in the livestock sub sector, the agricultural sector in general suffered from government policy and so is the rural population whose majority have sunk into deeper poverty. (See Table 13)

Even increases in productivity in the so-called traditional rain-fed sector have been a result of factors that do not positively relate to government policies. One of these factors is increased investment and successful intervention some international organizations have made to boost productivity through programs directed towards small poor peasant farmers in the traditional rain-fed sub-sector, irrigated sub-sector and the livestock sub-sector. From 1985 to 1995 IFAD alone allocated more than USD135 million²³. Increases in productivity in the traditional rain-fed sub-sector are also partly a result of the increasing tendency of some better off peasant farmers to emerge among the peasantry investing some resources in agriculture. Although there are no detailed studies being carried out yet to make thorough documentation of this trend some reference to this phenomenon is made in some field studies on Kordofan and Darfur²⁴. The significance of this point is that it highlights that recent agricultural growth in Sudan is not a proxy for improved conditions of the majority of the Sudanese living in the countryside. On the contrary, in fact improved agricultural production and some improvement in agricultural productivity during the last 10 years disguise the deteriorating living conditions in the Sudanese countryside, partly a result of government policy towards the economy in general and the agricultural sector in particular.

For its vast cultivable land estimated in the region of 300 million feddans, Sudan could be considered an exception among most countries, in that agricultural land availability and access to it are not constraints to increased agricultural production. Rather it is the lack of capital, investment in infrastructure and the use of improved technologies that are the main constraints. Although these constraints are characteristic of all agricultural sub-sectors, they are particularly manifest and important for the peasant-farming sub-sector (the so-called traditional sub-sector) in which the majority of the Sudanese rural dwellers are involved. It is also the dominant economic activity in Sudan's most impoverished regions.

Access to credit on easy terms is one of the major constraints negatively influencing productivity, production and rural incomes in all agricultural sub-sectors during the last 10 years. Historically access to credit has been biased in favor of farmers in the so-called mechanized and the irrigated sub-sectors. This biased pattern of credit allocation in which the peasant sub-sector receives the least credit allocations still continues. (See Table 4). Throughout the 1990s the irrigated sub-sector received an average of 50% of all ABS credit allocations, the mechanized sub-sector more than 25% and only an average of 14% for the peasant-farming sub-sector. Although most of the rural population are involved in the traditional sub-sector (the peasant farming sub-sector), and the one that suffers most from the lack of capital and the use of improved technology, it has been most neglected and has received the least of credit allocations. In the absence of formal credit poor peasant farmers resort to informal credit "*shail*" with a very high interest rate that varies between 150%-200% under the compulsion to meet some production requisites and consumption needs. The resort to informal credit leads to high losses of cash income from cash crop returns to "*shail*" dealers. Reduction of poor peasant farmers' income by this magnitude has contributed to further impoverishment of poor peasant farmers and those who have not been poor being pushed into poverty.

²³IFAD, Working Paper II, Macro Economic Policies, in IFAD, Republic of the Sudan: Country Portfolio Review; Main Report and Working Papers Unpublished Report, 2001, p.iii.

²⁴El Amin Khalid A, op.cit., 1996; El Amin Khalid A, op.cit., 1999.

Table 4: ABS Credit by Sub-Sectors in Million SD for the Period 1993-2000

	Irrigated Sub-Sector		Mech. Farm. Sub-Sector		Traditional Sub-Sector	
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
1993*	6115	52%	2694	23%	1468	12%
1996	1727	43.6%	1031	40.1%	411	15.9%
1997	1822	44.6%	1696	41.5%	562	13.7%
1998	1346	43.8%	1433	46.7%	288	9.3%
1999	1915	60.3%	723	22.8%	533	16.8%
2000	1716	55.8%	819	22.8%	533	16.8%
Aver. %		50.0%		25.9%		14%

Source: Agricultural Bank of Sudan, Unpublished data, and *Agricultural Bank of Sudan, 1993:10.

While low priority assigned to the traditional agricultural sub-sector in credit allocation is a continuation of an already existing bias, government general credit policy during the last ten years has been characterized by a marked shift that has benefited neither farmers nor agriculture. In this context two aspects of government credit policy that have affected agriculture are important to emphasize. One is state withdrawal from financing publicly-owned agricultural enterprises which has left to rely on finance on commercial banks and the second is the restructuring and reformulation of credit allocation principles according the so-called Islamic form of financing²⁵. Both aspects of government credit policy deprived agriculture and the rural sector from badly needed capital resources and contributed to poverty in Sudan's countryside.

Despite priority given to the agricultural sector, in policy pronouncements at least, general government credit policy has also impacted negatively on state-owned agricultural schemes. By the 1990's government withdrew from financing publicly owned enterprises. Parastatals in charge of running agricultural enterprises have to rely on commercial banks to finance short-term agricultural operations and immediate running costs. Funding from the Bank of Sudan dropped from Ls 2000 million in 1990 to only Ls 700 million in 1999, while commercial Banks credit increased from Ls 1700 million in 1990 to Ls 4000 in 1995 and Ls 2800 million in 1999²⁶. Taken in US Dollar equivalent, Bank of Sudan lending to publicly owned corporations dropped from US \$ 166.6 million to only US\$ 280 thousands²⁷. Credit from commercial banks is meet running cost and resources to meet the cost of maintaining the productive infrastructure such as irrigation networks and agricultural equipment have been lacking and this influenced the performance of publicly owned agricultural schemes. Productivity dropped and so are peasant farmers' cash incomes; including the tenants of the Gezira scheme.

Credit allocation, made according to Islamic form of lending which all banks in Sudan have been pursuing since the beginning of the 1990s; including the agricultural Bank of Sudan, has made little contribution to facilitate poor peasant farmers' access to credit. Salam also contributed to the impoverishment of large sections of better off farmers. Salam, which is not dissimilar to *shail*, and the one form of credit poor small peasant farmers can have access to, levies an equivalent of more than 35% of the value of the crop²⁸ (35% interest rate). In addition to a too costly interest rate for poor peasant farmers and unlike the practice of *shail* dealers who take account of their peasant clients'

²⁵ There are various forms of lending according to these newly introduced lending principles, but the most important for farmers are *salam* and *murabaha*. *Salam* is similar to informal credit "*shail*" which is a forward selling of the crop to the Bank at a set price. The price is set considering the average price for the pervious year. The farmer delivers to the Bank a volume of the crop that equals the loan according to the set price. If the Bank's losses are more than the third of the loan the peasant farmer should bear the amount of loss over the third of the loan, but in case of excess profit the farmer gets nothing. This problem of setting the price between farmers and the Bank has not yet been resolved and the determination of the price has always been an issue of conflict between farmers and the Bank. Profit to the Bank from credit operations according to *salam* normally come to more than 34%. *Murabaha* is a form of credit extended to purchase equipment with the Bank setting a profit margin of around 18% of the loan to be paid in the form of deferred payment checks within one year. Abdel Bagi K and Hassan et al, Commercial Credit and the Appropriate Form of Financing the Agricultural Sector, Ministry of Agriculture Monthly Forum in Arabic (Unpublished Paper), Khartoum, 1997, pp.3-4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.3; and The Bank of Sudan, The Experience of Financing the 2000/2001 Agricultural Season, An Unpublished Report, (in Arabic) Department of Research and Credit, Bank of Sudan, Khartoum, 2000, p.2.

²⁷ These figures are reached using the exchange rate of 12 LS per 1 US \$ in 1990 and LS 2500 per 1 US \$ in 1999.

²⁸ Salam levies 35% interest rate.

conditions in cases of difficulties in repayment, in this form of Islamic credit, defaulters are taken to court to end up in jail. Thus despite dire need for cash credit, peasant farmers refrain from resorting to borrowing from the formal Islamic banking system for fear of being imprisoned in case of inability to repay the costly loan in full and on time²⁹.

Better off farmers mostly access credit through the murabaha form of credit to purchase agricultural machinery and equipment. The murabaha, beside the various conditions and criteria for its approval, is extended as a loan to purchase agricultural machinery³⁰. Although the interest rate of 18% levied on the loan is too high, however, the main problem with this form of credit for the farmer is whether the latter would be able to cover his account for the check to be drawn by the Bank on schedule. In case of failure the farmers is taken to court and in most cases the farmer has to sell assets including agricultural equipment to be able to repay the debt³¹. The inability to repay the loan is partly due to heavy taxation and the increase in the cost of production. As there are no available figures on the number of farmers running into debt Table 5 gives an indication of the magnitude of indebtedness and the scale on which farmers ran into trouble.

Compared to the past practice of the Agricultural Bank of Sudan of levying only 5-7% interest rate to be repaid over a five year period, the terms for credit extension according to the so called Islamic form of credit are too harsh even for better off farmers to meet. Interest rate is very high and a one-year period for repayment is too short for borrower farmers to repay the loan and many farmers defaulted and taken to court. Farmers in large numbers sold their agricultural equipment and other assets and many others went to jail. Imprisonment as a punishment for indebtedness made farmers abandon borrowing from banks altogether with negative impact on agriculture and agricultural production.

Table 5: Amount of Agricultural Credit Extended in (000) s Sudanese Dinars, Amount and Percentage of Unpaid Credit, Area Cultivated and Area Funded For Sesame and Durah, in Gadaref State* 1992-1997

AGR. SEAS.	AMOU CRED	AM. REPID	AM. UNPAD	% UNPD	AREA FIN/ FD	AREA CULV	SES. Y F/K	DURA SA/FED
92/93	218366	138934	79432	36%	4500000	5560000	2.4	3.4
93/94	168348	142057	26290	16%	3928915	5215000	1.5	2.3
94/95	356043	192303	163740	46%	2768268	5297000	1.8	2.3
95/96	297461	200903	96558	32%	1959932	5482300	2.8	1.8
96/97	1215362	1010154	205208	17%	3360770	5287000	2.9	2.4
97/98	2672444	1535493	1136951	43%	4226097	6937000	2.3	3.18
98/99	2078251	1593258	484993	23%	2281087	5551094	1.7	1.43
99/00	1014499	575804	438695	43%	720845	5305552	1.9	1.43
Total	8020774	5388906	2631867	33%				

*Gadaref State, which lie in Butana expanse, is famous for large scale mechanized farming of Durah and sesame.

**Estimates of Durah and sesame yield levels are for the area actually produced and not for areas generally cultivated.

Source: Quoted from Bank of Sudan, Gadaref in Mohamed Ahmed A O, 2000: 14

Heavy taxation is yet another aspect of government policy that hampered constrained agriculture and

²⁹ In the social context of Sudan's countryside, being taken to jail is overloaded with a kind of social prejudice, which peasant community members avoid at all costs. It is not just considered a violation of a contract, even if the reasons are genuine, but a downgrading event that affect social status and social position. The social stigma associated with being jailed, even if for not being able to pay the Bank's loan, is perceived to be so painful that having a loan for which one could possibly be jailed an unthinkable step.

³⁰ Since the second half of the 1950s and up to the 1980s, (when the Islamic forms of credit began to be implemented during the last years of the Nimeri government as the latter came under the influence of the NIF), the ABS was extending medium term loans to framers to purchase agricultural equipment. The interest rate was in the region of 7% and the period of repayment extends for five years.

³¹ The total amount of the loan includes the cost of the equipment plus the profit margin of around 18% of the cost of the equipment for the Bank, i.e., the amount of the loan extended. The total is to be paid within a year in a monthly installments to be paid in advance to the bank in the form of deferred payment checks signed by the farmer who receives the loan.

contributed to rural poverty. Taxes imposed on agriculture at different federal, state and local council levels are numerous and extremely high and one of the main factors fuelling the process of rural poverty during the last ten years. Heavy taxation does not only constitute an additional burden on this vital productive sector that limits productivity and growth, but also a major contributory factor to worsening and aggravating the poverty conditions of the already poor peasant farmers and pushing the non-poor farmers into poverty.

Taxes, fees and levies on the Sudanese agriculture are characterized by being high, large number of categories and variation in the number of taxes and tax categories between different agricultural sub-sectors. Complete information on all the categories of taxes, levies and fees is lacking³² but available information is sufficient to indicate the extent to which heavy taxation on agriculture at the federal, state and local council levels has contributed to the impoverishment of Sudan's rural population.

Taxes on agriculture including all agricultural sub-sectors could be divided into three categories; i) taxes on crop producers; ii) crop market taxes and iii) export taxes³³. In addition to these taxes irrigated and the so-called mechanized sub-sector are indirectly taxed by levying custom duties on imported production inputs and agricultural equipment. (See Table 6)

Table 6: Taxes and Fees on Durah Producers in Gadaref Area for the Agricultural Season 1996/1997

Taxes on the Producer	As a % of Cash Value	Fees in Ls Per sack
Zakat	10%	--
Production Tax	1%	--
State Fees	1%	--
Road Tax	1%	--
Farmers' Union	--	150
Plant Protection	--	20
Sub-total	13%	170
Taxes on Traders	As a % of Cash Value	Fees Ls per Sack
Crop Market Tax	8%	--
City Water Tax	2%	--
Jihad Prep	---	50
Road Tax	1%	100
Sub-total	10%	150
Grand Total	23%	320

Source: Abdel Aziz A and Shugari S, 1997: 14, Annex 4.

The peasant sub sector, (the so-called traditional sub-sector), in which the poorest of Sudan's rural population and most hard hit by drought in recent years live, suffers from both official and non-official *ad hoc* taxes, levies and fees. Although other irrigated and mechanized sub sectors are also heavily taxed, the impact of heavily taxing the peasant farming sector, the predominant activity in Sudan's poorest regions, on poverty is significant. Official taxes on peasant producers till 1999 amounted to 27% of gross crop proceeds. (See Table 7) Despite the realization at top government levels of the grave social and economic consequences of very high taxes on agriculture and the issuing of a Presidential Decree, in 1999, to reduce taxes, taxes remain high. The Presidential Decree abolished only two official tax categories amounting to only 3.5%. (See Table 7) Current official taxes of 23.5% are still too high on rain fed peasant farming in the already drought hit and impoverished regions.

³²Categories and levels of taxes, fees and levies are different for the sub-sectors of mechanized farming, irrigated agriculture and traditional rain fed peasant agriculture. In addition to official taxes, fees and levies imposed at different levels, state and local councils impose *ad hoc* taxes on agriculture. Tax levies differ over time and the tax structure also has changed over time. Some taxes have been abolished and some new others have been added. However, high and numerous taxes have not decreased and still remain very high despite the intervention of the Council of Ministers and the President of the Republic himself who several times issued resolutions and decrees to bar the levying of ad hoc levies by local authorities.

³³Abdel Aziz A, Shugeri S, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

Table 7: Taxes On Rain Fed Farming before and after the 1999 Presidential Decree

TAX	PRE-D	AFT-D	COMMENTS
Zakat	10%	10%	Federal
Ushur	8%	8%	State & Local Source of Revenue
Services	3%	3%	State & Local Source of Revenue
Other L	2%	----	Local Abolished
Farmers'	0.5%	0.5%	Applies for Some Areas
Agricul.	2%	2%	State & Local Source of Reven.
Jihad	1.5%	----	Abolished by the Presid. Decree
Total	27%	23.5	Only 3.5% were cancelled

Source: Worked out from IFAD, Working Paper, 2001: 4.

Before the 1999 Presidential Decree there was an unknown number of taxes and levies on agriculture and agricultural produce not included in the table. Taxes on agriculture and livestock constitute the major source of revenue for the increasing number of states and local councils. The implementation of the policy of federalism and decentralization which dramatically increased the number of states and local councils have brought with it more burden on agriculture in general and the peasant farming sector in particular. The number of states increased to 26 with their legislative, executive and judiciary bureaucracies. Local councils also increased to an unprecedented scale and in North Kordofan for instance the number of local councils have increased since 1991 by 300%. (IFAD, Working Paper II, 2001:3). The required huge expenditure on regional bureaucracies at state and local council levels is not met by meager federal funds support. With the absence of alternative sources of finance, in Sudan's poor countryside, the already burdened agriculture is resorted to as the main source of financial resources to support expanding regional bureaucracies and the ever-increasing number of local councils and officials. The insufficiency of financial transfers from federal government and revenue share from official taxes stipulated or earmarked for state and local councils³⁴, has made the latter resort to *ad hoc* levying of taxes and fees to meet their increasing expenditure needs³⁵. What makes matters worse is that the amount of federal financial transfers allocated to states is made proportionate to the resources states could generate; thus encouraging levying more and higher taxes both to increase their revenue and maximize federal financial support. The negative impact on living conditions and poverty in the countryside is further made worse by the inability of states and local councils to provide services neither to agriculture nor to peasant farmers.

Gum Arabic as an export cash crop peasant farmers which is an additional source of cash income for peasant farmers is mainly produced in impoverished rural Kordofan and Darfur, suffers from so heavy taxation that peasant farmers either abandoned producing it altogether or sold their produce to merchants. Merchants smuggle the crop to neighboring countries and offer higher prices than the official marketing channel; Gum Arabic Marketing Corporation. Gum Arabic Public Corporation maintains monopoly over the purchase of Gum Arabic, and this monopoly position has enabled the Corporation to control the marketing of the crop and appropriate huge profits. Control over the crop through marketing made it possible to levy numerous taxes specially levied on Gum Arabic. According the General Director of Gum Arabic Marketing Corporation more than 41 categories of taxes are levied on Gum Arabic that together constitute between 109% and 139% of the purchase price³⁶. According to the same source taxes and fees levied on Gum Arabic in Port Sudan alone amount to 59% of the purchase price.

Mechanized farming sub-sector is also heavily taxed with implications for productivity and returns. In terms of Sudanese standards farmers involved in mechanized farming are relatively rich and better off than peasant farmers in the traditional and irrigated sub-sectors. The mechanized sub-sector employs seasonal labor drawn from the traditional sub-sector. Despite low wages offered to seasonal wage laborers, these constitute an important supplement, meager, as it is, to subsistence production for

³⁴These include ushur of 8%; service charges of 3% and agricultural tax of 2%.

³⁵Inter-state crossing taxes, road taxes and taxes on crossing bridges were imposed on agricultural produce. See IFAD, Working Paper II, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³⁶Abdel Aziz A and Shugeri S, *op. cit.*, Discussion attached, p.4.

some poor peasant farmers in the traditional sub-sector. Heavy taxation compels farmers to push seasonal labor wages even lower and shift the burden of taxation onto poor laborers. An example of the magnitude of taxation on mechanized farming is that taxes constituted 81% of Durah net cash returns per feddan for the 1992/93 agricultural season, increased to 106% and 118% of net cash returns per feddan for the agricultural seasons of 1994/1995 and 1996/1997 consecutively. (See Table 8) This increase in taxation was accompanied by a rapid increase in the cost of production during the same period. The impact of both heavy taxation and high cost of production on profitability and productivity is severe and farmers in large numbers ran into debt.

Table 8: Taxes and Fees on Durah per Feddan in Gedarif Mechanized Farming Area 1992/93-1996/97

ITEMS OF COST, RETURNS	1992/93I	1994/95	1996/197I
Pre-Tax Cost of Production per Fedd.	2150	8516	54000
Gross Returns per Feddan	2717	9764	60000
Net Returns per Feddan	567	1248	6000
Tax Categories per Feddan			
Land tax	25	50	200
Zakat	272	976	6000
Production Tax	163	195	600
Local Tax	-----	98	300
Total Taxes per Feddan	460	1319	7100
Taxes as a % of NCash Returns/Fedd	81%	106%	118%
Net Returns After Taxes and Fees	107	(71)	(1100)

Source: Worked out from Abdel Aziz A and Shugeri S, 1997:7

Cotton, produced in irrigated and rain-fed sub-sectors, is similarly heavily taxed both explicitly and implicitly. In addition to heavy taxation, the sharp rise in the cost of production has contributed to the drop in tenant farmers' net cash income from cotton in irrigated agriculture; particularly in the Gezira Scheme. Direct federal and state taxes and fees amounted to 25% in addition to a 10% export tax, custom duties on each of around 5 production input items varying between 5% and 10% in addition to zakat levied on cotton gross proceeds amounting to 5%. Direct and indirect taxes and fees on cotton gross proceeds amount to approximately 55%. Indirect taxes on cotton include taxes agricultural inputs and agricultural machinery and equipment that raise the cost of production and reduce cash returns. (See Table 9)

Table: 9 Taxes and Fees imposed on Cotton Returns before The Deduction of Production Costs 1996

Category of Tax or Fee	%	Type
Export Tax	8%	Federal level Tax
Commission	1%	Federal level Tax
Advertisement and Inform. Fee	1%	Federal level Tax
Commission for Export Branch	1 %	Federal level Tax
Commis./ Cotton Corp.	1%	Federal level Tax
Commis./ on Cotton Seeds	1%	Federal level Tax
Transport, Shipping Cost& Prt Fee	1%	Federal Level Tax
State Tax	8%	Sate Level Tax
Social Services Fees	1%	State level Tax
Drinking Water Fees	1%	State Level Tax
Farmers' Union	1%	State Level Tax
Total	25%	

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 1996.

3.5. Government Policy and Urban Poverty

Inflation and the erosion of real incomes

During the second half of the 1990s, prices of basic commodities and services increased dramatically as a result of government policy. The insufficiency of revenue to meet its massive mostly non-productive expenditure despite heavy taxation on agriculture and other sectors of the economy, the government resorted to domestic borrowing. Some deficit financing could have negligible impact on eroding real incomes in the long run if it was meant to finance productive activities. However, huge domestic borrowing has been for financing the war in the South, the bureaucracy, the security machine and the military to maintain power. Domestic borrowing particularly from the Central Bank during the 1990s was not matched by an increase in production by a higher proportion than the increase in the money supply in the economy. Instead the agricultural and industrial production stagnated aggravating the negative consequences of inflation (largely resulting from deficit financing) that eroded real incomes even further. As productive activities stagnated, the local currency lost its value and the cost of production rocketed. Together with poor infrastructure, all these factors have led to persistent unprecedented levels of inflation reaching three-digit levels with devastating impact on the economy in general and on real incomes of urban dwellers in particular. During the period 1990-1995 prices increased 36 times while the minimum wage increased by only 8 times. From 1990 to 2000 prices increased 192 times while the minimum wage increased only 40 times (See Table: 10). Unlike peasants and farmers in the countryside who have also been affected by inflation, salaried and wage earner urban dwellers that rely only on cash for subsistence, have been particularly harshly affected. As the purchasing of the local currency dropped, real incomes of salaried employees, wage earners, the self-employed as well as peasant farmers dropped dramatically.

Table 10: Minimum Wage in SD, Minimum Wage Index and Price Index For the Period 1990-2000 (Base Year 1990=100)

YEAR	INFLATION	MINIMUM	M WG	PRICE INDEX
1990	44.6	30 SD	100	100.0
1991	121.9	30	100	288.3
1992	118.7	100	333	496.9
1993	99.3	150	500	1000.0
1994	115.7	250	833	2155.4
1995	69.0	250	833	3629.2
1996	130.3	390	1300	8445.2
1997	46.5	600	2000	12391.3
1998	17.7	1500	5000	14511.1
1999	16.1	3500	11666	16832.1
August 2000	9.0	4025	13417	19232.6

Source: Worked out from Suliman, M et al, 2000:20 and Bank of Sudan, 1999:116.

The stagnation of the industrial sector, resulting from government policies, has accelerated and deepened urban poverty as it has not only been unable to create labor opportunities but also added to unemployment. In urban centers and namely Khartoum, the industrial sector has deteriorated dramatically during the last ten years. Most factories have persistently suffered from major problems of finance, high cost of production, numerous and high taxes and fees, power cuts, scarcity and high cost of inputs, lack of spare parts and poor infrastructure.

To take the textile industry as an example, by 2001, about 12 out of 16 textile plants were out of order halting production altogether. Textile plants were running at 15% of productive capacity in both private and public sectors and some plants were functioning at 10% of their designated productive capacity. Between 1990 and 2000, with the exception of one plant, all public sector textile plants came to a halt³⁷. Thus most factories were running at a loss and most of them closed down altogether or functioned far below capacity. The contribution of the industrial sector in growth domestic product subsequently dropped from 17.5% in 1990 to 14.9 in 1999³⁸. The closing down of industrial plants has

³⁷ Mohamed Musa Mona, *The Major Problems of the Textile Industry in the Sudan (1990-2000)*, (in Arabic), An M.Sc. Dissertation, Development Studies and Research Center, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, 2003, p.12.

³⁸ Center for Sudanese Studies, (2000), *The Condition of the Homeland. The First Sudanese Strategic Report, 1999-2000*, Cairo, p.149.

added to the inflating urban unemployed and contributed to the already disintegrating urban environment.

In a normal development process the industrial sector has to expand and develop hand in hand with the development of agriculture. Under such circumstances freeing the labor force from agriculture as a result of the use of advanced technology and increased agricultural production and productivity, is accompanied by the provision of work opportunities in a concurrently expanding industrial sector. Such a process of urbanization functioning through shifting labor from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector, termed rural urban migration is set in motion in a development process in which both agriculture and industry develop and expand simultaneously. This is what the experience of developed countries and some less developed countries that have achieved some measure of economic development shows.

In the case of the Sudan and particularly during the 1990s, what has actually occurred is the reverse. Rural migrants leaving the countryside not because of the development of agriculture and the use of advanced technology that frees labor, but because of the deterioration of agriculture and rural conditions. This deterioration is partly as a result of agricultural decline in addition to displacement resulting from drought, civil war and inter-tribal conflicts. Instead of expanding to provide employment opportunities for those leaving the countryside, the industrial sector contracted and shrunk instead. And most plants either closed down or running below capacity; sometimes even below 15% potential productive capacity. Thus instead of expanding employment opportunities the contraction of the industrial has added to the army of the unemployed in urban centers as plants closed down and laid off workers.

In addition, and apart from the pursuit of the policy of privatization as part of the self-imposed structural adjustment, government policy of achieving political objectives has led both to an increase in unemployment in urban areas and the destruction of livelihoods of numerous employees and wage workers. The policy of dismissing potential and/or real political opponents widely known as "*salih al aam*" took a large number estimated in thousands into forced retirement³⁹. Dismissal of government employees and workers deprived large numbers of Sudanese of their work and only source of cash income; contributing to increasing the number of the poor and intensifying the severity of urban poverty.

Government policy, which has led to i) the decline of the industrial sector; ii) the dismissal of real or potential political opponents from amongst public employees; iii) the increase in the number of war and drought-displaced; and iv) the increase of rural urban migrants, added to the mass of urban unemployed. In the mid 1960s and quoting the 1967/68 household survey the overall unemployment rate for Sudan was 2.9% of the labor force⁴⁰. Unemployment, for all Sudan, increased to 11.1% in 1991 and to 16% in 1996⁴¹. Urban areas for which wages and salaries, low as they are, constitute the main source of cash to purchase food and other basic necessities have suffered most. The share of urban areas in unemployment in 1996 registered 19.6% vis-à-vis 15.3% unemployment rate for rural areas.

With the stagnation and decline of the industrial sector during the 1990s, urban employment opportunities in Sudan have predominantly been provided by the informal sector⁴². Because of the lack of employment opportunities in formal economic sectors, as the latter have stagnated or declined as a consequence of economic malaise and government policies, the informal sector has evolved as the main provider of the bulk of urban employment. In the absence of employment opportunities in

³⁹ Attempt has been made to get figures on those dismissed and forced into early retirement, but the relevant government department has been reluctant to release information and statistics on the number and categories of those forced into retirement.

⁴⁰ Abu Shaikha A, Towards the Alleviation of Rural Poverty in the Sudan, FAO, Rome, 1983, p. 25.

⁴¹ UNDP, op.cit. p. 51.

⁴² There is a general agreement that there is no exhaustive definition of the informal sector. Although there is emphasis on its limited effectiveness, its use of backward technology, relatively lower earnings, greater dependence on family labor and limited organizational skills, three characteristics stand to distinguish the informal sector from the formal sector despite the difficulty of drawing a demarcation line between the two. These are easy entry into the informal sector, reliance on family labor and low operating capital.

formal economic sectors, the informal sector presents a venue for self-employment. It provides most urban employment opportunities but as earnings are low, irregular and not guaranteed and thus working in the informal sector is strongly associated with poverty. Nonetheless given the mass of unemployed in urban centers it is the main exit from unemployment and poverty. With the increase in urban poverty the size of the informal sector subsequently increased and the increase in its size could be considered one of the indicators of urban poverty. Estimates of the informal sector's contribution to urban employment differ but they all indicate a rapid increase in the increasing role of the informal sector in providing urban employment opportunities during the 1990s. Different sources' estimates, on average, put the informal sector's contribution to urban employment opportunities, in the 1990s, in the region of 65%⁴³.

The progressive increase in the role of the informal sector is closely associated with government policy, population growth⁴⁴ and the rapid increase in rural and urban poverty in the 1990s. Government failure to stimulate economic activities; particularly the industrial sector, together with other policies that have led to mass poverty, the informal sector has become refuge for the unemployed, the displaced migrants and the "new" and "old" urban poor attempting to cope with poverty. It has become almost the only source of employment and cash income for the war, drought and tribal conflict-displaced and rural migrants flocking into urban centers; namely the capital Khartoum as well as the newly impoverished sections of the original urban dwellers. Despite irregular and low earnings, without the informal sector, urban poverty could have been even far worse.

Despite its importance in providing income, commodities and services for the poor, the informal sector has been neglected in government policy. The problems of finance and access to cheap credit, taxation, regulation of activities, organization, access to technology and training have received the least attention from government. This neglect, particularly of the productive activities of the informal sector, has implications not only for the aggravation of poverty, but also on the production and provision of goods and services this sector contributes to the urban economy. It particularly meets the needs of the urban poor for goods and services, and adds value to the national economy in general⁴⁵.

3.6. Inequalities and Poverty

The increase in inequalities during the last ten years is closely associated with the increase in rural and urban poverty. Taking the distribution of income as a measure of inequalities, available data indicate that income distribution in Sudan has shown a tendency to be more unequal over time since independence in 1956. However, during the 1990s inequality in the distribution of income has increased dramatically simultaneously with an increase in the GDP of an annual average of approximately 6% during the same period as well as an increase in the incidence of poverty reaching around 94% in 1996.

Since independence in 1956, the increase in income inequality has progressed with differential speed and magnitude at different periods. Using the measure of gini coefficient at the time of independence inequality in the distribution of income was 0.34. By 1967/68, the gini coefficient reached 0.41, registering an increase of 7 points; an annual average increase of around 0.64 point. The change in income inequality was at its lowest during the period 1968-1976 when the gini coefficient increased from 0.41 to 0.42 for the whole eight year period (See Table 11). Compared to the preceding period of 1968-1976, the 1976-1980 period witnessed a rapid increase in income inequality during which the gini coefficient had risen from 0.42 to 0.50; with annual average increase of 2 points. The period of 1980-1990 witnessed a similar pattern of increase in income inequality that progressed during the preceding period.

⁴³ Center for Strategic Studies, *op.cit.*, p.187; UNDP, 1998, NHDR, *op.cit.*, p..58.

⁴⁴ Annual population increase during the period 1993-1998 is estimated in the region of 2.73% and an annual growth in the labor force of about 3.9%. See Center for Strategic Studies, *op.cit.* p.186.

⁴⁵ Center for Strategic Studies, *Sudanese Strategic Report*, for 1997, Khartoum, 1998, p.187.

Table 11: Gini Coefficient for Rural and Urban Sudan, and all Sudan, 1955-1996

Year	Rural	Urban	Sudan
1955/56*	----	----	0.34
1967/68**	0.34	0.41	0.41
1976**	0.35	0.40	0.42
1978-80**	0.51	0.42	0.50
1990***	0.69	0.56	0.61
1996***	0.65	0.75	0.74

Sources: * Abu Shaikha, 1983:32; **ILO, 1986: 37; ***Ibrahim A Ibrahim, et al, 1997. Also see Government of Sudan, Ministry of Manpower and ILO, 1997: 62;

Although income inequality progressively increased since independence and up to 1990, during the period of 1990-1996, the first six years of NIF rule, the increase in income inequality and poverty has been exceptional. Unlike the different periods since independence, income inequality increased both in pace and intensity to unprecedented record levels. During the six-year period of 1990-1996, the gini coefficient shot from 0.61 to 0.74; registering an increase of 13 points. The annual increase in the gini coefficient during this six year period (1990-1996) reached 2.15 points compared to around one point for the ten year period immediately preceding 1990. (See Table 11)

The dramatic increase in income inequality and poverty during the period 1990-1996 could also be supported by statistics, consistent with the trend in the gini coefficient) showing change in the shares of the top 10% and bottom 40%. (See table 12) The share of the bottom 40% income group dropped from 9.14% in 1990 to only 3.82% in 1996. On the other hand the share of the top 10% increased from 65.41% to 76.5% during the same period. This means that while the share of the bottom 40% decreased by an annual average of around 1%, the share of the top 10% increased by an annual average of 1.85%. That means the share of the top 10% increased to 20 times the share of the bottom 40% during the six-year period of 1990-1996.

If most sources⁴⁶ quote the figure of over 90% poverty incidence in Sudan in 1996, data on income inequality confirms the credibility of this 90% level of poverty measured in terms of income. From Table 12, the top 10% income group has a share of 76.5% of national income, then the share of 90% of the Sudanese population both urban and rural is only 23.5%. The drop in the share of the bottom 40% from 9.14 in 1990 to only 3.82% indicates the increase in intensity and severity of poverty among the poorest sections of the population. The decline in the share of the 50% in between (lying between the top 10% and the bottom 40%) indicates the squeeze of the middle class and the creation of the new poor particularly in urban areas. The 50% in between have its income share dropped from 49.8% in 1980 to 25.45% in 1990 and to 19.32% in 1996.

Table 12: The Evolution of Income Inequalities, for Sudan, Rural and Urban Areas Measured in Terms of the Top 10% and the Bottom 40% Income Shares For Different Periods Between 1966 and 1996

Category Year	RURAL		URBAN		SUDAN	
	Lowest 40%	Top 10%	Lowest 40%	Top 10%	Lowest 40%	Top 10%
1967-1968*	15.1	26.7	12.8	33.4	15.6	33.1
1978-1980*	10.0	39.5	16.5	33.2	12.4	37.8
1990**	6.99	72.93	11.28	60.69	9.14	65.41
1996**	7.11	67.6	5.36	74.7	3.82	76.5

Source: *Worked out from ILO, 1986:32; ** Quoted from Government of Sudan, Ministry of Manpower and ILO, 1997:62.

Spatial inequality could be viewed from rural urban income and poverty distribution disparities perspective. The rural population has less share in national income than urban population. Thus most of the poor are found in Sudan's countryside. Despite the increase in urban poverty, poverty in Sudan could still be regarded as a rural phenomenon. Despite the increase in poor urban population

⁴⁶ Ibid and UNDP and the Ministry of Manpower, 1998.

following the large number of displaced flocking into urban centers, the increase in rural urban migrants and the erosion of urban incomes as a result of inflation, the rural character of poverty in the Sudan has persisted. Using the head count measure of the incidence of poverty, rural poverty in the Sudan increased from 74.5% in 1990 to 94.8% in 1996; at an annual rate of increase of 3.63% (see Table 13). During the same period urban poverty increased from 79.6% to 81.4%; at an annual increase of 0.35%. Poverty measured in terms of income is higher in the countryside than in Sudan's urban centers and has increased faster. The depth of poverty, measured in terms of the poverty gap, is also greater in rural areas than in urban areas. Similarly the severity of poverty registered high levels in rural areas than urban areas during the six-year period of 1990-1996. (See Table 13)

Another form of spatial inequalities is regional inequalities that have developed between regions. Some regions in the Sudan are far worse than others or in other words some regions are better off than others both in terms of the distribution of national income and the availability of services such as education, health and water provision facilities. For lack of space two criteria are used here to indicate regional inequalities. One is the comparative share of regions in the distribution of educational facilities, measured in terms of the number of basic and secondary schools and teachers for basic and secondary school education. The second is the share of regions of health delivery facilities.

Table: 13: Poverty Trends by Place of Residence, Sudan, 1990-1996

	1990	1996	Annual Growth Rat 1990-1996 1968- 1978	
Head Count				
Rural	75.4	94.8	3.63	0.23
Urban	79.6	81.4	0.35	2.58
Sudan	77.5	90.5	2.46	0.50
Poverty Gap				
Rural	47.32	75.80	7.48	0.84
Urban	51.13	53.89	0.83	6.53
Sudan	48.66	68.73	5.48	0.64
Severity of Poverty				
Rural	34.38	64.25	9.93	-
Urban	37.27	40.30	1.24	-
Sudan	35.90	56.66	7.24	-

Source: Government of Sudan, Ministry of Manpower and ILO, 1997:31.

Table: 14 The Distribution of Educational Facilities for Different States up to 1996

State	No of Schools		No. of Teachers	
	Basic	Secondary	Basic	Secondary
All States	10668	1124	95213	11661
Northern State	427	52	5486	518
Nile River State	555	80	7907	783
Khartoum	1120	208	16250	3062
Gezira	1549	197	16491	2147
Blue Nile	220	14	1293	151
Sinnar	520	83	4444	524
White Nile	593	109	6689	829
Red Sea	217	22	1576	376
Kassala	322	25	3914	346
Gadaref	443	60	3491	358
N. Kordofan	939	46	5419	449
W. Kordofan	560	35	3315	233
S. Kordofan	386	24	3332	296
N. Darfur	701	61	4991	460
W. Darfur	516	20	1498	204
S. Darfur	1130	66	5043	418
All Southern States	470	22	4274	303

Source: Worked out from the Ministry of Education, 1996:17-30.

To take education, the share of Khartoum State⁴⁷ in basic education schools, is almost equal to share of South Darfur; 1120 for Khartoum and 1130 for South Darfur. However, inequalities in educational facilities become more pronounced as Khartoum has a share of 16250 basic school teachers for almost the same number of schools as South Darfur that has only 5043 teachers; almost three times as much teachers for almost the same number of schools. (see Table:14) In terms of secondary schools Khartoum has three times as much schools as South Darfur; 208 secondary schools for Khartoum and 60 for South Darfur. Inequality in the share of secondary schools teachers is even sharper as Khartoum has 6 times as much teachers as South Darfur. With the exception of Khartoum, Rive Nile, Gezira and the Northern State, all states suffer from understaffing in basic and secondary schools.

Table 15: Distribution of Health Workers by Category and Region and Manpower per 1000 Population (1996)

Region	Specialists	All Doctors	Technicians
Khartoum	286 (8.4)	1149 (33.7)	991 (29.0)
Central	106 (2.0)	391 (7.2)	206 (3.8)
Northern	30 (2.3)	129 (10.0)	83 (6.4)
Eastern	64 (2.1)	224 (7.3)	93 (3.0)
Kordofan	24 (0.8)	93 (2.9)	85 (2.7)
Darfur	18 (0.4)	65 (1.4)	116 (2.4)
Equatoria	1 (0.1)	18 (1.6)	59 (5.1)
Bahr el Gazhal	1 (0.1)	18 (0.9)	27 (1.4)

Source: UNDP and the Ministry of Social Planning, 1998, NHDR:91.

Health service delivery facilities are also unequally distributed among regions. The distribution of health workers could be used as an indication of the distribution of health services over different regions of the Sudan. In this Khartoum, Central and Eastern regions have the best manpower population ratios. Khartoum, the Central, Northern and Eastern regions have far more specialist doctors, doctors of all kinds and technicians than the rest. Bahr el Gazhal, Equatoria, Darfur and Kordofan have the lowest health manpower ratio. (See Table: 15). On all accounts used here as criterion for measurement of spatial and regional inequalities Khartoum and central regions stand as the most favored, while Kordofan, Darfur and Southern regions are most disadvantaged.

⁴⁷ Khartoum is the smallest in size of 26 states forming the federal system, but it is the capital city.

Section Four

Poverty and the Poor: Definition, Coping Mechanisms, and Constraints

And Suggestions for Exit

Introduction

The definition of poverty among the poor is as problematic as it is among academics and so are the criteria used to identify poverty the poor. In the different rural and urban areas of Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira in which the fieldwork has been conducted poverty has been assigned different meanings and various criteria are used for the identification of the poor. Before detailing the definition of poverty among the poor some observations are important to put forward from the beginning: Despite the diversity some common:

1. Within local communities local community leaders or community members refer to the individual head of the household as the social unit identified as poor but implicitly what is actually referred is the family household he heads or belongs to;
2. There is also more or less identification of distinction between household poverty and community poverty with different but sometimes intersecting criteria for the definition of both;
3. The definition and the criteria used for the identification of the community as poor is less clear and imprecise than the identification of the head of the household. What the community suffers from in general and the action the community has taken to deal with those problems is clearer than the definition of community poverty. This is true more for rural areas than for urban areas and perhaps this arises from the fact that community bonds are more stronger in rural areas than in urban areas;
4. In both rural and urban areas no distinction is made between individual and household poverty and once the family is identified as poor all family members are considered poor;
5. There is some form of identification between the extremely poor, the poor and the better off. The extremely poor are those who "have nothing", the poor are those who "are managing with difficulty" and those for whom "life is easy and comfortable"⁴⁸.

4.1.1 The Poor Definition of Poverty: Urban Marginal Areas

How the poor in marginal urban areas characterize poverty (the make a more clear distinction between the poor and the severely impoverished)

1. Inability to reach a certain level of acceptable level of consumption
2. Employment by job
3. Difficulties in the extent to which they have difficulties in having access to health services, education and the security of having a house.

The definition of poverty in communities and individuals in communities has undergone quite a significant change during the last 10 or 20 years accompanying socioeconomic and political changes. However, the degree to which the conception of poverty has changed during the last 10 or 20 years differs in rural and urban areas. By rural areas reference is to the countryside, and urban areas refer to original urban areas, excluding urban marginal areas whose inhabitants have recently migrated from rural areas. Communities in marginal urban areas whose recent past is rural there is no difference in the conception of poverty in the past. The views or the conception of poverty held by today's urban marginal areas inhabitants is not significantly different from the conception of the rural communities in the past simply because they were part of the rural communities that have been displaced by drought and war.

Although there are some minor differences in the definition of poverty between that of the rural communities and communities in marginal urban areas, they almost hold a similar conception of

⁴⁸ The extremely poor "have nothing" muadam", the poor "who are managing with difficulty" or subject to shocks "halatum saaba" and those for whom life is easy and comfortable "murtah".

poverty in the past. According to 66.2% of the 77 community leaders poverty in the past meant having food but no assets, for 11.6% meant having less than 10 cows and for 5.1% poverty meant having no food supply for the year but no assets.

The remarkable shift in how poverty is conceived and defined now in comparison to the past is manifested in the greater importance now attached to cash as means of obtaining subsistence. Among the 120 community leaders being interviewed, 63.3% stated that poverty at present is defined as insufficiency of income to cover food and other needs including educating children and meeting health services expenses.

4.1.2 The Definition of Poverty: Past and present in Marginal Urban Areas

There are differences as well as common shared understanding of the poor in marginal urban areas of poverty. This is a similar feature of the definition of poverty held by community leaders who have been informally interviewed. The result of the small sample gives further support to the information community leaders have given on the definition of poverty and some aspects of its dimensions. For 26.2% of the sample in marginal urban areas, in the past being poor meant having no food supply for the year and for 22.3% being poor in the past meant having food but no assets⁴⁹. Although they are now residing in an urban setting for some significant group (27.2%) of the poor in marginal urban areas, the definition of poverty in the past was a combination of having less than ten cows and having food but having no assets. For 10% poverty in the past was understood as a combination of having food but no assets and having no food for the year. (See Annex 6, Table 54).

The perceptions of poverty at present for the poor in marginal urban areas have changed significantly from that held 10 or 20 years ago. At present poverty means a combination of having nothing (meaning no cash and no assets that could be liquidated into cash) and no regular cash income for the largest percentage (44.7%) of the poor in marginal urban areas. Poverty at present meaning having no cash income to cover the cost of daily food needs and other necessities combined having nothing is held by 18%. For 17.5% poverty at present means have no cash to cover daily expenses of food and other needs, for 15% it means having nothing (no assets and no cash) and for 3.9% poverty means having no regular cash income. (See Annex 6, Table 55).

4.1.3. Discussion of the Definition of Poverty: Past and present.

From data collected through participatory methods of in formal open-ended informal interviews backed up by small samples of formal survey questionnaire results, it is evident that there are some characteristic differences between the conception of poverty in the past and at present among the poor in marginal urban areas:

One, there is a remarkable shift in the definition of poverty from having no sufficient food for the year, having food but no assets or having less than ten cows to a combination of having nothing, no regular cash income and no cash income to cover daily expenses. The shift is one from of securing food needs for a long duration to one of being unable to secure daily food needs and that also involves shifting from securing food needs from own production to one of securing food needs almost solely through purchases from the market using cash.

Another characteristic feature of definition of poverty among the urban poor in marginal urban areas in past is the importance assigned to access to food and livestock as important attributes in defining poverty. While residing in urban areas during the last 10 years or so the definition of poverty involves ownership of less than ten cows and assets, that also mean livestock. Both characteristic features in the differences between the definition of poverty in the past and present reflect inability to produce their food and the sudden loss of possessions including livestock as a result of displacement.

Poverty in the past was defined in terms of lack of access to possessions or assets, but lack of food was not considered in defining poverty implying that access to food was not an issue to be incorporated in the definition of poverty. Households having access to food but having no assets could

⁴⁹ Assets for the poor in marginal urban areas have a different meaning from past and present. In the past and depending on their area of origin means land or livestock. At present assets means possessions, which could be turned into cash in time of need or assets that, could generate income such as carts.

be considered poor. Assets in most cases mean ownership of land or the possession of livestock depending on the location.

Cash was not mentioned as a criterion in defining and measuring poverty in the past. This is the main difference between the definition of poverty in the past and the definition of poverty at present. While cash insufficiency or irregularity has currently become important, as a defining attribute of poverty, it was insignificant in the past.

4.1.4. The Defining Characteristics of a poor Household in Marginal Urban Areas

All community leaders in marginal urban areas have stated general poor appearance as the main characteristic of poor households in marginal urban areas. To different degrees community leaders emphasized a combination of poor general appearance, poor housing, poor clothing, lack of assets and inability to educate children and always being in debt as additional characteristics of a poor household in marginal urban areas.

The results of the small surveys support the community leaders. The majority (93.6%) pinpointed poor general appearance, either separately or in combination with other manifestations of poverty, as the main the characteristic to identify a poor household. Of the 93.6%, 66% have identified general poor appearance combined with poor housing, 25.2% poor appearance combined with poor clothing and 2.4% mentioned general poor appearance only as the characteristics that define the poor. Others mention inability to educate children, having no sufficient cash income and always in debt and many family members crammed in one room as what characterizes a poor household. (See Annex 6, Table 56).

In an answer to the question of whether they consider themselves poor according to the same criteria they set for defining poverty, about 86% of those interviewed in marginal urban areas answered that they consider themselves poor. About 11% do not consider themselves poor and about 3% do not now whether they are poor or not. Thus more than 85% of the residents of urban marginal areas and according to the criteria they themselves (the poor) set for defining; that is having insufficient cash income to cover food and other daily expenses, consider themselves poor. (See Annex 6, Table 57). Although we have not incorporated a question of whether they considered themselves poor according to their criteria of defining poverty in the past, it could be inferred from information generated from interviewing community leaders and information generated from the small survey, that they did not consider themselves poor in the past despite the fact that life was not easy. There is a change between the definition of well being mainly resting on securing food through their own subsistence production, mainly geared to food production and the provision of other needs with minimal cash transactions, and wellbeing to be derived from sufficient cash income to cover food needs. This situation has suddenly arisen when the conditions of those now living in marginal urban areas have suddenly worsened mainly as a result of war, drought or the decline of agriculture. From the small sample survey 87.4% of respondents in marginal urban areas affirmed that their conditions have deteriorated during the last 10 years, 4.4% stating their conditions have not deteriorated and 7.6% their conditions remained the same. (See Annex 6, Table 60). The reasons for which their conditions have deteriorated the respondents gave the following reasons; 52.4% of respondents representing 61% of those considering themselves poor, in marginal urban areas have stated that it is the war in the South and drop in cash income. 20.9% of respondents; representing 24.5% of those considering themselves poor stated the decline of agriculture and irregular work and cash income. The remaining 14% (15.7% of those considering themselves poor) stated various other reasons. (See Annex 6, Table 61). These include loosing their jobs, drop in cash income and increase in consumer prices, drop in production and producer prices, irregular work and income, economic policies at the national level, loss of assets and economic activities because of war and drought, economic decline and lack of work opportunities.

The way the poor in marginal urban areas consider themselves as poor and which group in society do they compare themselves with the sample survey results reveal the following. 35% stated that they compare themselves with the very poor, 25% compare themselves with the very rich and 35% never thought of this. (See Annex 6, Table 59).

4.1.5. Discussion of Characteristics (Urban Marginal)

The poor in marginal areas make a distinction between the definition of the poverty on the one hand and the characteristics of the poor showing the forms in which poverty manifests itself among the poor on the other. Being more visible the criteria for the identification of the characteristics of a poor individual or poor household are more precise than the criteria for the identification of a poor individual or poor household.

Both the criteria to define poverty and distinguish poor households are material in nature. Non material attributes of poverty could be detected among the poor in marginal urban areas, but the way these are expressed differ and come up as individual cases. Thus while hard feelings could be felt sometimes to the point of crying through informal interviews, there is a difficulty of both developing indicators and making generalizations. Thus with the exception of health, education, the difficulties associated with access to water and participation in social occasions, there is difficulty in detecting, identifying and generalizing on the non-material attributes of poverty using both participatory and survey methods.

4.1.6. Adjustments to Cope with Poverty among the Poor in Marginal Urban areas in Sudan

Reduction in consumption and the switch to low quality cheap food varieties is the main adjustment the poor in marginal urban areas adopt to cope with poverty. It is one of the main options the poor in marginal urban areas are compelled to chose in the face of the new reality in which food has to be purchased from the market under conditions that provide little cash and limited employment and cash earning opportunities. About 90% of respondents in marginal urban areas adopted this adjustment in consumption and 6.8% did not change their consumption pattern. (See Annex 6, Table 65).

One major feature of the poor in marginal urban areas, who are mostly displaced and rural migrants, is their recent rural backgrounds, lack of education and skills to get well paid jobs and make a living. Thus most of those living in marginal urban areas work as wage labors, free day laborers and in the informal sector as porters, construction workers, mechanics, carpenters, drivers and petty traders. Thus the expenditure on consumption depends on their daily earnings.

There are few farmers and day agricultural laborers in marginal urban areas around Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira. Some of the displaced dwellers of marginal areas around cities still practice farming on surrounding agricultural land as tenants and agricultural laborers to earn cash income. Recent farming background and experience in agriculture facilitates the resort to agriculture and earning a living from farming but such farming opportunities in cities are limited given the large scale influx of displaced. However, any economic activity resorted to earn cash, other than farming, could be considered as some form of adaptation and adjustment to the new urban environment and the new conditions of impoverishment created by the loss of assets, farming and livestock as a result of the drought and war. The largest group in the sample (23.3%) work as day laborers, followed by the self-employed in informal irregular work (16%) and salaried employees (12.6%). Petty traders represent 7.8%, wage workers 6.8% and the rest adopt a combination of independent peasant farming agricultural tenants, agricultural labor, salaried and wage employment. (See Annex 6, Table 11).

The major characteristic of coping among this group of urban marginal urban poor is the limited chances of diversifying cash income sources. Most respondents in the sample amongst this category of the poor 83% stated that they do not have secondary economic activity. The rest 17% who have secondary economic activity adopt day labor, self-employment in marginal informal work and work as agricultural laborers as well as petty trading. In an answer to another question of what changes have they adopted to increase cash income 48.5% answered that they have not adopted any changes to increase cash income. The remaining 51.5% adopted a variety of adjustments to earn cash income. Some resorted to additional work (12.1%), do any casual job (9.7%), additional work and work over time (4.9%), and those who do any casual job and adopted income-generating activity counting 4.9% and 1.9% of the sample for this category of the poor resorted to getting women and children to work.. Some 9% have adopted "other" changes to increase cash income including illicit activities⁵⁰ and borrowing to access cash income, purchasing some small assets when they get cash income to sell when they do not get work. (See Annex 6, Table 12 and Table 66).

⁵⁰ Illicit activities include brewing and prostitution.

4.1.7. Coping with Poverty Marginal Urban Areas: Discussion

The distress the poor in marginal urban areas around Khartoum and El Obied and Medani experience is perhaps greater than what the rural poor and the poor in original urban areas experience. The poverty of the displaced migrants in marginal urban areas is aggravated by the double loss of own food production and social support mechanisms that could guard against hunger.

Cash income, after displacement and the loss of subsistence production and livestock, is only means to obtain food. This increases the general vulnerability of households and the possibility of falling into severe poverty being even unable to provide for daily food needs. 92.2% of the respondents in marginal urban areas depend only on cash to secure food from the market. This increases the vulnerability of the poor in marginal urban areas because cash earnings are both *low and irregular*. For 72.8% of the respondents in marginal urban areas cash income is not guaranteed and for 80% cash income fluctuates. The fluctuation of cash for 70% of the respondents is due to a combination of irregular employment and fluctuation of market prices. On some days some work is found, some cash is earned, and on some other days they go without work and without cash income. Because of the large influx of the displaced and rural migrants into cities and towns together with the general economic decline, work opportunities are scarce and earnings are low. Because of the abundant supply of labor and the inflation of the informal sector, cash income derived from wages or self employment in the informal sector are very low and given the rate of inflation and the increase in the cost of living daily meals could hardly be attained. The conditions are more difficult for daily income earners who cannot afford one or two meals without resorting to borrowing when they do not find work. Around 80% of the respondents take less than three meals. (See Annex 6, Table 39). For these low irregular income earners, reduction of consumption and getting used to one or two meals and the consumption of food of low quality is the most widespread practice⁵¹. Thus for the majority with low irregular cash income the reduction of consumption, getting accustomed to the consumption of low quality food and borrowing when having no work and no cash income are the common coping mechanisms.

Although forming part of cities, the poor displaced and migrants in marginal urban areas (around Khartoum and El Obied for example) do not have access to social amenities such as piped water, electricity, transport or communication. Of these the most important is water, which is in short supply for 55.7% of the respondents and for 17.5 the shortage of water is experienced when there is no cash to purchase water. (See Annex 6, Table 51 and Table 46). Most displaced purchase from water distributors who use donkey driven carts to deliver water on cash payment to 81.1% of respondents in marginal urban areas. The average cost of water is SD150-250 a barrel⁵² reaching between SD 700-1300 per week per household. This is very expensive given the low level of income in these marginal areas. When the family could not afford the cost either water consumption is reduced or members of the family; particularly women and children, walk long distances (in Khartoum and El Obied) to fetch water. In some marginal areas in Khartoum water is brought from surrounding agricultural areas risking contamination and the contraction of water-borne diseases. In addition to economic burden and the drain of an already low cash income, the shortage of water results in a host of health problems. Infrequent use of water in bathing and washing utensils for 56.8% of the sample and 4.9% use contaminated water leading to the contract of water-borne diseases. (See Annex 6, Table 52).

The large size of families among the displaced in marginal urban areas is one contributory factor to poverty. Families of more than 5 member families form 85.9% of the sample and those above 7 members 43.2% of the sample. Marginal urban dwellers' families are characteristically large and mostly composed of children between five and 19 years of age. Those having above three children compose 65% of the sample and 10% having more than 10 children. (See Annex 6, Table 9). In most cases the number of consumers within the family is larger than income earners. Feeding large families on low and sometimes irregular cash income is one of the causes of severe poverty but also for the head of the household it a very heavy burden. Given the low level of cash income earnings the increase in the number of children, which is a clear tendency among the displaced in marginal urban

⁵¹ The two daily meals are composed of durah porridge and soap made of dried okra or bread and beans.

⁵² An average family of six consumes at least consumes one barrel a day.

areas, contributes to sinking the drought and war-displaced and rural migrants' families into even deeper poverty.

The poverty conditions in which families live combined with the large number of children in school age contributes to depriving children from getting education. Children are either not taken to school at all (25% of the sample) or dropped out of school at some point⁵³ (41% of the sample). (See Annex 6, Table 33 and Table 36). The inability to afford the cost of educating children and the need for children to do some marginal work to earn some cash income to contribute to the support of their poor families are the two major reasons behind the deprivation of children to attend school. This information which is gathered from informal interviews with local community leaders is supported by the results of the small sample survey which gives the result of 68.9% having difficulties maintaining their children at school. 29.1% have children dropping out of school because of inability to pay fees and meet other schooling requirements. 8.3% state the reasons of economic inability to pay fees and the need for children to work and earn cash income for the family. (See Annex 6, Table 37). Thus the deprivation of children at school age from schooling, which is the result of their families' poverty, limits their opportunities to have access to education, gain skills and exit from poverty. The conditions contributing to the generation of poverty within the family are reproduced to extend over generations by being passed over from parents to children; leading to the reproduction of the conditions producing poverty within the displaced families and communities.

For the displaced in marginal urban areas, with their rural backgrounds women and children formerly work on family farms for food and cash crop production. Other forms of work in the market to earn cash are not usual pursuits. But the under the compulsion of poverty getting women and children to do any marginal job and earn cash is another coping mechanism with poverty among urban marginal dwellers. Women work as food, tea and coffee sellers, domestic servants and petty traders. Children work as street vendors, car washers, shoe polishers, assistant mechanics and domestic servants. Although most family members do some work, including women and children, cash income earned is always insufficient to cover family needs because of low wages and low earnings from self-employment. However, the intensification of family members' self-employment contributes to earning some cash income that helps the family provide some of the necessities under conditions of increasing cost of living, but these are constrained by the general economic decline and lack of work opportunities and irregularity of work.

Borrowing in cash or kind from friends and work associates is one source of cash to meet food needs. When the family household head or other family members earn no or insufficient cash income the only resort is borrowing in case they do not have little assets to sell. Also for the displaced who depend on daily work and whose income is irregular and not guaranteed, borrowing is the only means to get cash when there is no work opportunity and no small assets to liquidate into cash to meet family food needs.

The sudden shocks of emergencies are the times when cash is needed most and also the time when households are exposed to vulnerability most. For 63.6% the time when cash is needed most, is during both illness and death of one family member and for 12.8% and 5.3% cash is needed most during illness and death respectively. (See Annex 6, Table 26). This adds up to about 81% of the respondents in the sample stating that the time when cash is needed most is during illness and death. In the absence of cash borrowing, which is normally from friends, work associates and shopkeepers, is main source to acquire cash in such times of crisis or emergency. During illness and unemployment borrowing provides badly needed backup to meet the cost of treatment and food needs.

If in their rural home of origin in the South, Kordofan and Darfur reciprocal social support networks used to cushion vulnerability to changing fortunes, displacement which has placed marginal urban poor under an urban setting exposed their vulnerability without support mechanisms to ease the stress associated with it. Although they live in communities, former communal relations have almost broken down among the displaced and migrants in marginal urban areas. If communal relations existed at all they are not as strong the social and kin relations they had once had in their home villages. Thus building up new forms of social networks as a substitute for kin and extended family solidarity

⁵³ The number of children dropping out of school differs for different families. One child for 16% of families in the sample, two for 10.2%, three children for 18.3 and above four children for around 5% of families. (See Annex 6, Table 36).

networks is a form of collective coping mechanisms the displaced and migrants have now adopted to deal with the new distressful conditions. New forms of relations and organizations are forged among individuals in marginal urban areas to compensate for the loss of village community security by being part of larger group networks of friends and work associates. In some displaced marginal urban in Khartoum formal tribal associations are formed not only to provide security to members but also to link them to the larger rural groupings they belonged to in their home areas and villages. Tribal associations for example are stated as formal organizations they belonged to by 8.7% of the respondents in the sample, tribal associations and charitable organizations by 10.2% of the respondents. (Annex 6, Table 84). The evolution of such social networks, which are in some cases loose and somewhat formalized in others, provides a security valve to meet the challenge of vulnerability the displaced are prone to under their current conditions. Such networks are particularly useful as a source of moral and material support when households are subjected to sudden shocks such as illness, death and loss of cash income. It is an attempt to create new sources of social capital to offset the deprivation experienced as result of being uprooted from their original communities, the loss of kin, extended family and village community support. Although these might provide some kind of support, the effectiveness of such support is limited by the prevalence of poverty amongst members of such group networks.

The preservation of links and relations with relatives in original rural home areas is another form of coping mechanisms shaped by the specific conditions of some of the displaced in marginal urban areas. Some families among the drought-displaced in Kordofan (living around El Obied the regional capital) maintain connections with their home villages, communities and extended families in a reciprocal relation that functions both ways and benefits both the displaced and their relatives in their home villages. While living and working in El Obied to earn cash as wage laborers, petty traders and self-employed in different jobs, some return to their home villages during the rainy season to cultivate plots of their own and sometimes rear livestock. During their intermittent absence during the agricultural season, relatives look after their farms and assets left behind. For the displaced in marginal urban areas in El Obied, food and cash crops harvest supplements meager urban earnings and enables them to make ends meet. When they return to town during the dry season the displaced leave their livestock and dwellings in the care of relatives.

This rural-urban linkage also functions to benefit their rural folks. Relatives in urban marginal El Obied provide a temporary home for rural relatives when the latter pay a visit to town. In cases of illness of some rural family members taken to the town's hospital, the displaced relatives, settled in El Obied marginal areas, provide material moral support. This urban connection also provides rural relatives with a valuable a source of information on income earning opportunities in case of intention to take on some cash earning activities during the dry season⁵⁴.

Also some urban dwellers in both marginal and original urban areas maintain this rural connection but in a different form. Urban dwellers in Kordofan, even if they are experiencing difficult economic conditions, provide some material support to close poor relatives in rural areas in cash or kind; e.g., they send sugar, tea, coffee, clothes and money. Relatives in rural areas reciprocate by sending some part of their crops after harvest, e.g., sesame, groundnuts, dried vegetables and millet. In Khartoum, coping with poverty and deteriorating living conditions impact on rural urban linkages differently, depending on the distance from the displaced' or migrants' home of origin. Some poor rural migrants living in marginal urban areas around Khartoum and who have come from areas not very far from the city; i.e., Gezira, maintain forms of relations with their home villages similar to those of the drought displaced in El Obied in Kordofan. They send money and cash and care for the sick when they are brought to the city. Some poor migrant residents in marginal areas in Khartoum transfer close family members (wife and sons) to their home villages not very far from Khartoum to live with relatives and extended family members to reduce the cost of living and partly to avoid the possibility of their children going hungry. The tradition of sharing among relatives in rural areas are still strong and poor rural relatives produce at least part of their subsistence on their farms. The harsh conditions created by the imperative of money to survive in marginal urban areas, plus the lack of family connections all

⁵⁴ Seasonal migration to earn some cash, it is important to remember, is one of the pursuits the rural poor adopt to earn some cash to supplement the declining food and cash crop production.

make it difficult to have mutual support mechanisms that could fend off hunger. Although friends might provide some support, however, poverty and dire living conditions in which all live limit such support.

However, drought and war-displaced around Khartoum coming from distant areas as far as the South, the Nuba Mountains, Kordofan and Darfur have adopted, in their coping with poverty, a different form of connection with their home villages. Although they still maintain connection with their home villages, the frequency of visits to see parents and close relatives is reduced to cut on expenses. Home visits have become too expensive to afford given low cash income levels and the poverty conditions in which the displaced and migrants in marginal urban live.

4.1.8. Constraints to Coping with Poverty and the Poor Suggestions to deal with it (Marginal Urban Areas)

In marginal urban areas, the main constraints to coping with poverty could summarized as:

1. The lack of finance capital to start income generating activities;
2. Irregularity of work and employment
3. Lack of work opportunities;
4. Increase in consumer prices;
5. The insufficiency of cash income earned to cover expenses;
6. Inability to sustain income generating activities for those who tried to adopt income generating activities; and,
7. Low producer prices for those involved in agriculture

Constraints to coping with poverty as stated by the poor in marginal urban areas themselves are many and diverse. But major among these is the lack of capital to start income-generating activities, increase in consumer commodity prices, lack of work opportunities and irregularity of work. The lack of capital to start income generating activities is stated the main constraint to coping with poverty in marginal urban areas by 32% of the small sample. Others stated increase in consumer prices (15%), lack of work opportunities (13.1%), and irregular employment (8.7%) and cash income insufficiency to cover expenditure on necessary items for 9.7%. Some others stated a number of constraints including pest attacks, inability to sustain income-generating activities and drop in producer prices. Other constraints (12.1%) include the legal requirements of licensing economic activities, limitations on women work and high taxes. (See Annex 6, Table 70)

The main suggestions of the poor in marginal urban areas (68% of the sample) to help them cope with poverty is a combination of providing credit to start income-generating activities and improving and providing cheap access to services (health, education and clean drinking water). About 14% suggest direct cash support. The rest suggests a combination of reducing consumer prices, the reduction of taxes, direct cash support and credit to start income generating activities. About 11% suggest a number of other measures of help such as facilitating the practice of economic activities and helping them to have access to cash income generating assets. (See Annex 6, Table 75).

4.2.1. Definition of Poverty in Original Urban Areas

In original urban areas the poor define poverty in term of ability to maintain a minimum level of consumption. Experiencing a certain level in the past (Better consumption level compared with the present). With the exception of the severely impoverished in marginal urban areas, these new poor in original urban areas experience a feeling of inability and deprivation more than other sections of the poor in Sudan. Given the level of education the new poor have attained together with the prevailing political conditions characterized by oppression, the resignation to the fact that they are powerless to do something to change or improve their conditions aggravates the feeling of poverty and deprivation. Some of the urban poor in original urban areas have dropped into the status of severe impoverishment when large numbers of former government employees have been forced into early retirement for political reasons. These new poor, amongst whom could be some severely poor, face great difficulties to meet family food needs, the cost of educating children and the cost of proper health treatment when

they or members of their families fall ill because of loss job and income⁵⁵. Unless they succeed to have a new job, manage to pursue an income generating activity or have had migrant sons or relatives there is no escape for them from their new poverty conditions.

Thus most of the poor in original urban areas or original urban centers are among the new poor. These are mostly salaried employees or wage earners for whom the drop in real income is so dramatic that they find themselves unable to maintain the standard of living they have once enjoyed. Thus the drop in real income (the failure of cash income at the given level of prices to maintain or meet consumption needs and other necessitates) is the major problem, which the poor in original urban areas have to deal with. Those who were poor that have been more impoverished by the drop in real income, while those formerly enjoying a better standard of living have dropped into poverty. Thus the drop in real income created the section of new poor and aggravated the poverty of the already poor.

For the poor in urban original areas, the definition of poverty in the past for the majority (44.6%) is that the poor could have food but no assets and for 29.1% poverty means having no food supply for the year. For 14.2% poverty is perceived as a combination of having food but no assets and having food supply for the year and for an insignificant percentage (0.7%) poverty means having less 10 cows and for 6.8% means inability to help relatives, to educate children and not having a house. (See Annex 5, Table 54). Taken as a whole poverty in the past to most of the poor (87.9%) in original urban areas meant having food but no assets and/or having no food supply for the year; either separately or in combination. The meaning of having food refers to the security of having sufficient cash income to cover food and other needs of health and education. This past definition of poverty is different from the definition of poverty in the past for rural peasant farmers who mean using the same wording the security of food from their own production.

The manner in which the urban poor in original urban areas define poverty is influenced by a host of factors: (These are the factors that influence the way the urban poor define poverty):

1. Educational level of the members of the community or neighborhood
2. Previous experience of a certain level of income and consumption
3. The extent to which there are increasing income disparities or wealth within the community in the same neighborhood;
4. Increasing disparities among close relatives occupying different neighborhood in the same city
5. Complete reliance on cash (earned salaries and wages as a major means to provide family food and other needs.
6. Whether having the ability to afford health treatment and educating children
7. Whether they are employees or income earners from self employment involved in trade or other services.

The definition of poverty in the past, which mainly excludes food security measured in terms of assets over and above food security or in long terms of food security, contrasts sharply with the definition of poverty at present which means having no cash to cover daily food and other needs. For 87.9% poverty at present means having nothing (no assets and no cash), having no sufficient cash to cover food and other daily needs and have no regular cash income separately or in combination⁵⁶. Broken into more details defining poverty in terms of having nothing is held by 28.4%, while 31.1% hold the perception of poverty to mean a combination of insufficiency of cash income to meet food and other daily needs and having no regular cash income. For 24.4% poverty means insufficiency of cash income to cover daily food needs and other necessities and 8.1% define poverty as having no regular cash income. (See Annex 5, Table 55).

For the majority (85.1%) of household heads interviewed in the small sample for original urban areas, poor housing and poor general appearance each separately or in combination are held to be the main characteristics of a poor household. (See Annex 5, Table 56). Of these 70.9% view the characteristics of a poor household to be poor housing and poor general appearance, 7.4% poor general appearance

⁵⁵ A large number of public sector employees has been fired and lost their jobs because they are considered or suspected to be opponents of the regime.

⁵⁶ Exactly this is the same percentage of those stating the definition of poverty in the past to mean long term food security.

and 6.8% poor housing and many family members crammed in one room. The criteria for the identification of poor families is more clear and precise among the poor in urban original areas compared to the characterization of other categories of the poor (marginal urban and rural poor) of a poor household. Moreover, poor housing in particular, which they identify as the major characteristics of a poor household, is what strikes the observer when entering some of the old original urban areas in cities. Two observations which might explain singling out housing in the characterization of poor households in original urban quarters; one is the erosion and decline of dwellings and their state of disrepair. The second, and despite the fact they are far better than the dwellings of the poor in marginal urban areas, these dwellings look poor, small and modest compared to the large luxury houses built in the new neighboring extensions. This perhaps is one factor that enhances the feeling of deprivation among the poor in original urban areas.

The examination of whether those interviewed in the small sample in original urban areas view themselves to be poor according to the criteria they have set for the definition of the poor shows the percentage of those who consider themselves poor to be lower than marginal urban areas. While for marginal urban areas it is 86%, for original urban areas 72.3% consider themselves to be poor. (See Annex 5, Table 57). Around 12.% in original urban areas do not consider themselves poor and 12.2% do not know. It is also observable that while in marginal urban areas those who do not know whether they are poor or not are only 3%, in original urban areas they are 12.2%. The prevalence of abject poverty in marginal urban areas and the relatively less badly poverty conditions in urban areas might account for the difference in the clarity the poor in each of the two groups see themselves.

However the reasons for which the poor in original urban areas see themselves as poor are more clear in original urban areas than marginal areas. Of the 106 household heads (72%) of the sample who consider themselves poor, 70 (66% of those considering themselves poor) gave the reason of cash insufficiency to cover meeting the cost of food and other needs, for why they see themselves as poor and 8 (7.5%) stated having no assets. 14.1% stated irregular work and irregular income, while 6.6% stated having nothing (no assets and no cash). The remaining 5.6% stated a combination of being in debt, having no regular source of cash income and inability to educate children and provide for health care. Of the whole sample 43% stating insufficiency of cash income to cover the daily expenses of food and other needs, 5.4% having no assets, 10.1% irregular work and cash income and 4.7% stating having nothing meaning no cash and no assets. About 4% stated other reasons of being in debt and unable to help relatives. (See Annex 5, Table 61).

With what group in society do the poor in original urban areas compare themselves in considering themselves poor. The highest percentage (35%) of the sample for original urban areas compare themselves with the poor, 25% with the rich and 25.7% never thought of this. (See Annex 5, Table 59). Like other categories of the Sudanese poor, (the rural poor and the poor in marginal urban areas) the poor in original urban areas, compare themselves with the very poor indicating the spread and severity of poverty. But also a significant group of the poor (25%) of the sample compare themselves with the better off⁵⁷.

4.2.2. Definition and Feeling of Poverty in Original urban areas

The feeling of deprivation as a dimension of household poverty has been felt more in the older original sections of urban centers among the new poor. These are mostly families whose members are educated and who are mainly government employees. They are among the sections of salary and wage earners that are most hard hit by the drop in real income resulting from the dramatic drop in the value of the currency, shooting up prices and almost constant monthly income. The feeling of deprivation amongst this group could be seen in relation to two significant factors of comparison. One is the previous ability to provide for necessities without difficulties, the enjoyment of a relatively high living standard and high social status compared to the present inability to provide for necessities, loss of morale and social status. The second factor that enters into the comparison and which also leads to the deepening feeling of deprivation and indignation amongst this group, is the comparison of their position with some others. The comparison becomes frustrating in what they see as undeserved economic, political and social position enjoyed by some others mainly not by virtue of having

⁵⁷ It is noticeable that a similar percentage that is almost identical is observed for the poor in urban marginal and rural areas.

superior skills and qualifications, which they blame for the worsening economic and social conditions including theirs. It is a feeling of deprivation and injustice that does not only stem out of suffering inability to provide for daily necessities but also of unequal and unfair treatment. As government supporters the less educated, less qualified and less experienced have unjustifiably moved to better economic, social and political positions.

This comparison of one's socioeconomic position with that of others understood to result in feelings of deprivation and a deepening sense of being poor among the poor when they view their position with the affluence others enjoy. The data collected through our extensive fieldwork among the poor in marginal urban areas around Khartoum and El Obied in particular in many cases reveal the contrary. When comparing themselves with others, some poor in marginal urban areas see themselves in relation to others whose positions are more acute and distressful than theirs and thus rather feel deprived they feel satisfied with their conditions, which could have been worse. Two factors could provide an explanation to this unexpected poor attitude towards their own abject poverty conditions. One is the widespread of severe poverty among the poor in marginal urban areas to extent that the poor take comfort in not being in the worse position which many endure; the severely poor. Thus the poor viewing those all around them in more severe poverty conditions gives them a better feeling rather than feeling deprived. "When I see some others whose conditions are more difficult than mine I thank God and appreciate His blessing". This phrase has frequently been cited by household heads during interviews in the marginal areas around Khartoum and El Obied. The widespread conditions of poverty and its severity amongst wide sections of the populations are so disastrous that those who have managed to survive on the lowest minimum subsistence level perceive themselves lucky and enjoy God blessings for which they have to be thankful. This is a further support to evidence presented in this report of the widespread poverty and its severity.

4.2.3. Coping with Poverty (Original Urban Areas)

Like other categories of the poor in Sudan, the main adjustment adopted by the poor in original urban areas, is the change in consumption pattern to reduce expenditure on food. 77% of the sample reduced consumption and changed to low quality cheap food varieties and 18.2% did not change consumption. (See Annex 5, Table 65). To meet consumption and other needs 52% of the sample liquidated or rented assets, 4.1 rented assets (a house or a shop attached to a house) and another 4.1% rented and liquidated assets. 2.7% increased the size of cultivated land⁵⁸. (See Annex 5, Table 67).

The main adjustment to increase cash income, among original urban poor, is the resort to additional work (16%), do any casual job 12.8%, working over time (6.1%), and adopting income generating activities 6.1%. Those who combined income generating activities with doing any casual job counted 6.6% of the sample. 43.9% have not able to make any change in their economic activities to increase cash income. (See Annex 5, Table 66). This supports information given by community leaders that more intensive work and the adoption of income generating activities are the main adjustments to increase cash income to match the increase in prices and the stagnation of income; i.e., the drop in real income.

4.2.4. Coping With Poverty of the Poor in Original Urban Areas: Discussion

Employees who have lost or have been experiencing the drop in real income deal with poverty at two levels: a) the reduction of expenditure on consumption, and, b) seeking other sources to diversify and increase cash income to cope with the increasing prices. Reduction of expenditure on food is effected through reducing food quantity and changing the combination of food varieties in diet by getting low quality food varieties to be able to afford the cost. The number of meals is cut down to two or less and in the shift to cheap low quality food, some food varieties such as fruits are abandoned altogether⁵⁹.

⁵⁸The practice of farming is common among the urban population (in both original and marginal urban areas). In Gezira, Kordofan as well as Khartoum farming is pursued by not an insignificant urban group.

⁵⁹ A number of informal interviews have been conducted with shopkeepers and butchers in original urban areas in Khartoum, El Obied (Kordofan) and Medani (Gezira). The information gathered is quite revealing of the sudden drop in the purchase of consumer commodities in general and high quality ones in particular. This fits quite well with other information gathered to consistently indicate the drop in living conditions in original urban areas in recent years. Shopkeepers have maintained that

The extent to which reduction in expenditure on food consumption results in expenditure matching food and other needs depends on a number of factors. These include, among others, the number of family members living within the household, the number of household members earning income, the frequency of occurrence of sudden shocks i.e., illness that swallows cash income and the availability of and prospects for income opportunities.

For the category of employees and workers the main sources of cash income are salaries and wages which they receive at the end of each month. One form of adaptation to increase cash earnings and halt the drop in real income and living standards is to seek and find additional economic activity. This option is open only for the few who are able to have access to resources, or have the kind of expertise and training which could be put to use to generate additional cash income. For example some employees work as teachers giving additional private lessons to the pupils of the better off for fees⁶⁰. Mechanics and electricians enter the market to work full or part time. Some others have abandoned the salaried job completely and entered the free market to work as traders and private dealers. Some trained and skilled workers and technicians migrated outside the country and also others who do not have training attempted migration to work as manual laborers.

The last ten years have witnessed an unprecedented scale of mass migration of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled Sudanese to escape poverty and suffering and attempt to improve their living conditions. Migration to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states is also one of the main options pursued by government employees or their sons. It is the option most government employees favor which is limited only by finding a contract and visa to enter the Gulf. Many skilled migrants entered Saudi Arabia as farmers being the only occupation for which they were able to find a contract in the hope to find a suitable job when they reach their destinations. Many remained without jobs and many other migrants have been able to improve their living conditions, contribute to alleviate the suffering of other close kin and relatives and provide contributions to community improvement programs. Migrants generally improve housing, establish income-generating activities to help their relatives at home and ensure a source of income when they return. From where they settled migrants send material support both in cash and kind to assist families and relatives back home and that have made a significant contribution to combat or lessen the impact of poverty.

Selling assets acquired during the good old days is yet another coping mechanism pursued by the new poor in original urban areas who have no other options. When most of these employees and workers were in good economic conditions 10 or 15 years ago they were able to construct houses in original old quarters of Khartoum. After the dramatic drop in real incomes, quite a substantial number sold their houses at relatively high prices⁶¹. In some areas of original Khartoum North and Khartoum Bahri almost all residents, mostly workers and unskilled employees, of some neighborhoods sold their houses and bought cheap land or houses in marginal urban areas where they have settled. The balance is invested in income generating activities (a shop, a taxi or a minibus for example) to earn some cash income and cope. Along the same lines of coping, and in other instances for some other employees the partition of their houses into two; one for the family to inhabit and the other part rented for cash is one way to cope with poverty. A partition of an average house is rented for about SD30 000 to SD 40 000.

their business is in decline and the empty shelves are a testimony to what they state. Customers have generally reduced the quantity of goods they purchase and shopkeepers have ceased selling some commodities such as canned fruits, jam, cheese altogether because now there is no demand for them. Customers, according to shopkeepers, now purchase only necessary commodities such as tea, sugar and cooking oil and even these unlike before they purchase in small quantities. Most customers purchase consumer commodities on credit till the end of the month when they receive their salaries. Defaulters are many among his customers, and these have stopped coming to the shop altogether. Because of lack of immediate cash payment from customers, the shopkeeper himself gets the goods from wholesale traders on credit. By the beginning of each month when he is able to collect some money from his debtor customers, the shopkeeper passes over the cash collected to wholesale traders and get some goods. Many of the shops we have visited the conditions are self-explanatory. Similarly butchers talk of the decline of their trade, lack of purchasing power and how people buy small quantities of food and low quality.

⁶⁰ Fees for private lessons are normally very high and the fees paid by one pupil for a three hours a day lesson for days a week, equals more than the salary a teacher receives from the government for the months.

⁶¹ On average a house is sold for between SD 5 million to SD2.5 million using today's (2003) prices. Another house is bought in marginal urban areas at a lower price and the balance is invested to generate some cash income.

In such cases a monthly cash income from rent provides some badly needed cash support to maintain consumption and meet other family needs.

In some other cases selling valuable assets under the stress of the drop in real income and poverty becomes the only way to obtain cash to maintain consumption or meet other urgent needs before the head of the household or members of the family get a source of cash income. Assets sold include refrigerators, cars, furniture, and other personal belongings including even clothes⁶². Such an act is pursued by families in distress as a last resort under the conditions of having no other option to maintain survival or meet an urgent need of health care or maintaining children in school but to sell assets. Assets could vary from clothes, refrigerators, and furniture to cars and houses. Clothes and refrigerators and the like are sold to meet urgent needs including food and payment for health treatment, cars and houses are sold to provide a source for starting income generating activities. Some others turned their personal cars into taxis and work as taxi drivers after the end of the official office hours.

The conditions of poverty and the drop in real income, which have turned the middle class of government employees into the new poor, have compelled them to allow their wives and daughters to seek work and earn income. In the past it was not seen as socially acceptable to allow females, wives and daughters, to go to work. In order to cope with the drop in real income female members of households are now allowed to seek jobs, earn income and help the family.

4.2.5. Constraints to Coping and the kind of Help needed to Improve Conditions (original Urban Poor)

The poor in original urban areas have numerated many constraints to their coping with poverty. The major three constraints are the lack of finance capital to start income generating activities (29.1%), lack of work opportunities (15.5%) and a combination of low salaries and wages, dismissal form jobs and irregular pay (21%). Others stated the increase in consumer prices (4.7%), cash income insufficiency to cover expenses on necessary items (4.1%) and irregular employment (3.4%). (See Annex 5, Table 70).

The poor in original urban areas in the main see effective help to aid them surmount constraints to be the provision of financial support to start income generating activities in most cases combined with other form of support. Provision of credit to start income generating activities and direct cash support for 27.7%, provision of credit to start income generating activities and solving agricultural problems to improve production and income for 17.6% and the provision of credit to start income generating activities for 16.2%. For 5.4% the best help is direct cash support and for another 5.4% the improvement of and cheap access to educational and health services and 3.4 suggest the reduction of consumer prices. Another 3.4% suggest solution to agricultural problems. (See Annex 5, Table 75). The rest has suggested the reduction of taxes, provision of employment opportunities and the increase in wages and salaries.

4.3.1. Definition of Poverty (The Rural Poor): Past and present

The definition of poverty among the rural poor in the past mainly rested on the ability of a household achieving food security normally for a longer period that is not less than a year. For most respondents in rural areas (91%), poverty was defined as having food but no assets (37.0%) or having no food supply for the year (35.3) or a combination of both (18.7)%. The definition of poverty in the past in terms of a household owning a minimum of number of cattle (less than 10 cows) is given by 4.7% of the rural respondents. (See Annex 4, Table 54).

The definition of poverty in the past in terms of ability to achieve food sufficiency and ownership of livestock, contrasts sharply with the current definition the majority (96.5%) of rural respondents give poverty the meaning of cash insufficiency to cover daily food and other needs. Broken down into more detail, 50.6% see poverty as a combination of having nothing and having no sufficient cash to cover daily expenses of food and other necessary needs and 33.6% define poverty as having nothing

⁶² The researcher visited some markets and observed the expansion of trading in second hand goods. The expansion of trading in second hand goods in the three cities of Khartoum is a testimony to the poverty and distress that compels families to sell their household articles, furniture and personal belongings.

(no cash and no assets). 12.3 % define poverty as having no sufficient cash to cover daily expenses of food and other needs count about and the rest define poverty as having no regular cash income. (See Annex 4, Table 55). This represents a marked shift from defining poverty in terms of secure food access to the definition of poverty in terms of sufficiency of cash to cover daily food needs and other necessities. It is a shift that signifies an increasing process of commodity production and consumption and the increasing dominance of the cash or the money economy in rural communities .

For the rural poor the main characteristics of a poor household are general poor appearance and poor clothing. 90.2% of the respondents have stated that poor general appearance and poor clothing are the main characteristics of poor households (notice here emphasis is on clothing and not on housing as in urban original). For the remaining 9% they stated poor housing and many children crammed in one room, having no assets and inability to educate children are cited as the main characteristics of poor households. (See Annex 4, Table 56).

On the question of the perception of themselves and whether they consider themselves to be poor according to the same criteria they set as a definition of poverty, 78.3% affirmed that they consider themselves to be poor. 14% of the respondents do not consider themselves to be poor and the remaining 7.7% do not know whether they are poor or not. (See Annex 4, Table 57).

In looking into their situation as poor, the largest group the rural poor (39.6%) compare themselves with the very poor, 24.7% with the better off and 17.9% never thought of this. (See Annex 4, Table 59). The largest group amongst the rural poor compare themselves with the very poor followed by those who compare themselves with the rich. The results for the rural poor are in some ways different from the results of the answer to the same question given by other urban marginal and urban original poor groups but different in some other ways. Like the poor in urban marginal and urban original areas the largest group amongst the rural poor measure up themselves against the very poor in society followed by those who contrast their conditions with those who are better off. However, the percentage of those who do know whether they are poor are larger compared to the poor in marginal urban areas.

Those who consider themselves poor in rural areas, gave different reasons for holding the view of themselves as poor. 26.% gave the reason of having insufficient cash income to meet food and other needs, 17.9% stated having no assets, 14% irregular work and having no cash income. Those who gave the reasons of having nothing (no cash and no assets) are 9.8% of the small sample. (Annex 4, Table 57).

4.3.2. Coping with Rural Poverty and Constraints to Coping

Living conditions have deteriorated for the large majority of the rural and sank into poverty, defined in terms of insufficiency to meet food and other needs including health and education. Conditions for 78% of small sample of rural dwellers have deteriorated during the last 10 years. For the majority 60%, the reasons for this deterioration are the deterioration of agriculture, lack of irrigation water or drought and the drop in productivity and real income. (Annex 4, Table 60 and Table 61).

As for all other categories of the poor in Sudan, the main adjustment adopted by the poor to cope with poverty is the change in consumption. 88.1% of rural respondents reduced food consumption and switched to low quality cheap food items and the rest did not change consumption. (Annex 4, Table 65).

To meet consumption and other necessary needs and given cash income insufficiency, 30.2% liquidated assets, 19.1% liquidated assets and changed to new crops, 8.1% increased the size of land put to cultivation and 6.8% increased the size of land allotted to new cash crops. The remaining 15% is made up of those made adjustments adopted increasing the size of land allotted to cash crops, changing to livestock, rented and liquidated assets. (Annex 4, Table 67).

Adjustments to increase cash income are adopted by almost half of rural respondents of the sample. The remaining half has not been able to make adjustments because of lack of options and constraints to coping with poverty. Those who have been able to make adjustments to increase cash income and be able to cope with poverty resorted to a variety of economic activities to earn cash. 19.6 of the sample (38% of those made adjustments to increase cash income) resorted to additional work (i.e., practice farming as an independent peasant farmer and working as an agricultural laborer), while

10.6% of the sample (20.7% of those adopting adjustments) pursued a combination of additional work and intensifying labor⁶³. Thus those who resorted to work over time or sought additional work counted around 60% of those who made adjustments to increase income in the sample. The percentage of those resorting to income generating activities in rural areas according to the results of the small sample survey is 5.1% of the sample (9.9% of those making adjustments), while those who do any casual work are 4.7%(%). Those who got children and women to work is 3.4% of the sample (6.6% of those adopting adjustments to increase cash income). (Annex 4, Table 66).

Constraints to coping with poverty as identified by the rural poor in the sample differ widely but mostly dominated by the lack of finance capital to spend on production and consumption for 16.2%, the lack of work opportunities to earn cash income for 10.6%. Around 20% stated income insufficiency to cover expenditure on food and other necessary items and increases in consumer commodity prices; (12.3% for the former plus 7.7% for the latter). The lack of irrigation water, increase in the cost of production, cost of health and education and inability to take production decisions⁶⁴ are stated to be the constraints by 17.9%. Other constraints are pest attacks (3%), drop in producer prices (2.1%) and inability to sustain income-generating activities (2.6%). (Annex 4, Table 70).

For the majority of the rural poor respondents the suggestion to improve conditions, surmount difficulties and enable them to cope with poverty is a combination of solving agricultural problems to increase agricultural production and provide credit to initiate income-generating activities (43.4%). 10.6% suggested the provision of credit to start income generating activities and those suggesting the solution of agricultural problems to increase production and income are 7.7%. Taken together those suggesting the solution of agricultural problems to improve agricultural productivity, production and cash income and the provision of credit to start income generating activities in combination or separately are 61.7% of the sample of the rural poor. (Annex 4, Table 75). Some other suggestions include improving services and facilitate access to them, the reduction of consumer prices, the provision of adequate irrigation water and the assertion of freedom to decide on the crop mix.

4.3.3. Coping With Rural Poverty: A Discussion

Change in consumption to economize on food because of shortage of cash to purchase or to economize on cash expenditure on food is the general pattern of coping with poverty all categories of the poor have adopted all over Sudan. As in the case of original urban and marginal urban areas of the Sudan, the rural poor cut on food consumption and on expenditure on food consumption in an attempt to economize on food in store and to cope with poverty and the drop in real income. Own food production is a major source of food security for a significant proportion of the rural poor. Only 34.5% of the sample rely on cash income only to purchase food. 60.8% of rural respondents wholly or partially rely on their own food production⁶⁵.

However, because of whole or partial reliance on home food production some rural areas in which the fieldwork has been conducted in Khartoum, Gezira and Kordofan the consumption of staple food has not been reduced for a large proportion of the rural poor. Some rural households (36% of respondents) still manage to take the three meals compared to 18% of respondents in marginal urban areas. In some cases consumption of food produced by the family to even production throughout the year till the next harvest because of lack of cash to purchase food. In some other cases the reduction of consumption has taken the form of cutting down on expenditure on food varieties that have to be purchased from the market. While in some areas around Khartoum and rural Gezira some poor households are still able to have the three meals, however, most households now have less meat, milk, fruits and vegetables.

Although there are similarities in changes in economic activities and economic and social behavior among different categories of the poor, there are differences in changes adopted to cope with poverty between the rural poor and other sections of the poor as well as differences amongst the rural poor themselves. Adjustments in economic activities and behavior the rural in Sudan adopted to cope with

⁶³ 1.3% (2.4%) adopted work over time.

⁶⁴ These constraints are grouped in the pre-coded questionnaire under other.

⁶⁵ 23.4% rely wholly on their own food production and 37.4% rely equally on both cash and their own food production.

poverty differs from area place to another. Major contributory factors to differences, are the location, type and form of farming activities, availability of market and cash earning opportunities, whether farming is year- round or seasonal and the form of production organization. Thus in the areas our fieldwork has covered, peasant farmers in Kordofan adopt a different combination of adjustments to cope with poverty at the household level from those adopted in rural Gezira and Khartoum. The main factors giving rise to this difference are that Kordofan peasant farmers rely solely on rain for irrigation, absence of state control in the organization of production, remoteness from the center and that poor peasant farmers suffer more acutely from the scarcity and lack of drinking water. Some consequences of dependence on rainfall are the vulnerability to rainfall fluctuation, rainfall failure accompanied by the risk of food and cash crop failure and the seasonality of economic activities. Remoteness and isolation limit coping options for Kordofan poor peasant farmers, while proximity to population centers and markets opens more diverse opportunities for choice among many coping options for Khartoum and Gezira peasant farmers. Yet while reliance on irrigation reduces much of the vulnerability to crop failure to which Kordofan peasants are susceptible, for Gezira and Khartoum peasant farmers irrigation has brought with it state dominance in production and limitations on choice associated with state control and irrigation.

One coping mechanism adopted by poor peasant farmers to deal with the decline in real income is the resort to some changes in crop mix. Changes in the combination of crops cultivated are adopted to maximize benefits and avert the risk of crop failure in an attempt to escape vulnerability to destitution. Two forms of changes pursued by two different categories of peasant farmers could be identified. In rural Khartoum peasant farmers have either completely switched to cash crops or expanded the cultivation of cash crops at the expense of food crops. Food crop cultivation is reduced or abandoned altogether and land reallocated for the expansion of cash crop production. Market opportunities made possible by proximity to Greater Khartoum market, peasant farmers changed from durrah and maize production to the production of vegetables and fodder as cash crops to meet the needs of an expanding Khartoum market. In Gezira also a similar pattern is noted in villages in the proximity of Khartoum, Medani and other market centers. Despite state control over crop rotation, cropping pattern and crop mix in Gezira Scheme some peasant farmers have been able to start with rearing cattle and produce durrah as animal feed for cattle to produce milk⁶⁶ which has become the major economic activity for some Gezira tenant farmers near Khartoum. This coping strategy has made a significant contribution not only to combat poverty among households but also the poverty of the community as well. Earnings from selling milk have been high enough to improve the conditions of families but also to contribute to help relatives and others in the community as well as make financial contributions towards the establishment and/or maintenance of schools, water provision facilities and health care centers. The major constraints or limitations are state control over rotation and inability of peasant farmers to change crop mix and lack of irrigation water. Difficult transport from the Gezira villages during the rainy season because unpaved roads that hamper the transport of milk result in wasting milk and drop of cash income for farmers while leading to shortage of milk in Khartoum and higher milk prices.

Another coping mechanism peasant farmers in Gezira adopt, which is similar to the coping mechanism adopted by the self employed in urban centers⁶⁷, is to harvest their crops particularly the durrah food crop in piecemeal to escape taxes, zakat and other state levies. Taxes and zakat are levied on the estimated volume of the crop when the durrah crop about to be harvested. Peasant farmers illicitly collect a large part of the crop to thresh it at home leaving little for harvest in the field. High taxes, zakat and other state levies are evaded and peasant farmers' maximize their share from the durrah crop.

The shortage of irrigation water in Gezira as a result of the erosion of the irrigation network is one major factor for crop failure, the decline in yield levels and drop in tenant farmer's cash income. For the majority of tenant farmers crop failure or the decline in yield levels is one contributory factor to

⁶⁶ Although some seed capital to purchase cattle is derived from the sale of some assets, starting capital is mostly from migrant sons' savings.

⁶⁷ Some self employed in the informal sector such as welders, technicians and other artisans avoid working in workshops in industrial areas and use their equipment and machinery to work at home to avoid the requirements of licensing, taxes, levies and fees.

sinking into poverty. Better off tenant farmers purchase diesel-powered pumps to utilize the low water levels in canals to water their farms. Poor tenant farmers' attempt to cope by hiring better off tenant farmers' water pumps on credit to irrigate durrah farm plots. The cost of diesel fuel, lubricants and the hiring of the pump are all obtained on credit in the absence of other cash sources.

With widespread poverty a new form of migration, not previously widely known in Sudan, is currently well under way. It is urban-urban migration, from other urban centers to Khartoum, adopted by the better off. This pattern of migration is not so much an adjustment to cope with poverty, as it is a response of the better off in Sudanese urban centers other than Khartoum to the worsening economic conditions, widespread poverty and the decline of economic activities. It is a further evidence of the neglect, decline and the spread of poverty in the Sudanese countryside resulting from agricultural decline. The decay of urban centers accompanying the decline of their agricultural hinterland has set limits to economic activities, prospects for economic advancement and the enjoyment of better life for urban groups involved in trade and forms of business. The decline of these urban centers and the migration of their merchants and businessmen to Khartoum have influenced economic activities that in turn influenced work opportunities for the poor. This in turn has contributed to poverty and the ability of the poor to cope. In areas where agriculture has declined, urban centers also declined and so are the economic activities supporting them. In Gezira the decline of the Gezira Scheme meant not only widespread poverty among hundreds of thousands of its tenants and agricultural laborers and their families, but also the worsening living conditions for the Gezira urban population poor and better off alike. Many of the better off in Medani and other urban centers in Gezira and Kordofan have sold their houses, put an end to their activities and made a fresh start in Khartoum. This has further contributed to the decline of rural centers, economic activities, rural life and the aggravation of poverty.

In the Gezira, like other rural areas in Sudan and as a result of the decline of agriculture and rural life, migration out of Gezira rural areas has been proceeding apace. Rural-urban migration is not a new process but has been accelerated during the last 10 to 15 years accompanying the decline of rural living conditions. Migration is mainly to other cities in Sudan or to Saudi Arabia to work as self employed in the informal sector, wage workers and agricultural laborers. Remittances help some rural families to cope, however, the acceleration of migration from the countryside has contributed to the agricultural and rural decline by depriving agriculture from a substantial labor force and rural areas from articulate and active youth who could have contributed to its development. The insufficiency of family labor because sons and daughters left agriculture has been stated as a major factor behind agricultural decline stated by rural community leaders and rural respondents.

In sharecropping or sub-letting farms to cope with labor shortage is another form of coping mechanisms adopted by tenants in the Gezira scheme. Caught between the compulsion to provide the necessary labor on the cotton plot to preserve their tenancies, meager cash income from cotton because of high cost of production and low yield levels (water shortage) and the insufficiency of family labor, tenants sub-let their tenancies as a major strategy to cope. Tenants sub-let their plots to migrants from Western Sudan mainly displaced by the drought a mechanism to deal with cash labor shortage in an attempt to provide the necessary labor, preserve the tenancy plots and be able to get some food crop and cash. Half the tenancy (5 feddans cotton and 2.5 durrah crops) is farmed by the original Gezira tenant and the other half run by the other tenant to whom half of the tenancy is sub-let. The sub tenancy between the two is based on agreement in which the duties of both are defined in returns for specified share of the crops and cash income. The main duty of the sub-tenant is the provision of labor on the sub-tenancy. It is a deal in which both the Gezira poor tenant and the drought displaced sub-tenant have access to some little cash and food to cope with their difficult conditions.

4.3.4. Coping with Rural Poverty; Location Specific (Kordofan): Discussion

In Kordofan the change in cropping pattern peasant farmers has adopted, differ according to the farmer's economic position, labor availability, the farming problems farmers have to contend with and the expected returns from different crop combinations. Under conditions of declining cash income *some* poor peasant farmers attach more importance to subsistence production than cash crop production thus they reduce the size of land allotted to cash crops to guarantee the production of food

crops. Given the precarious poor peasant farmers' economic position, the choice to expand food crops at the expense of cash crops, in addition to other factors, is enhanced by two factors beyond peasant farmers' control. One is frequent pest attacks that damage crops and reduce cash returns from cash crops. Expanding food crops is to compensate for the drop in yield levels and a form of insurance that some food would be harvested by the end of the season. The second factor is the uncertainty of cash returns associated with low and fluctuating market prices for cash crops.

Some other peasant farmers, who have sufficient family labor, expand the area put to cultivation to compensate for the decline in yield levels. Expansion of land put to cultivation could be for food crops or cash crops to increase cash income. While the increase in land put to cultivation could compensate for the drop in cash income and food for home consumption and enable poor families to cope in the short run, this has simultaneously contributed to agricultural decline and coping with poverty in the long run. Cutting down trees to clear land for cultivation and the reduction in land left fallow have contributed to soil erosion, decline in fertility, desertification and drop in yield levels.

Yet some other poor peasant farmers in Kordofan have reduced the size of land allotted for cultivation in general and also reduced the portion of their farms allocated to cash crops. The urgent need for cash during the agricultural season to acquire food and other necessities compels some poor peasant farmers to hire themselves out to better off farmers to earn cash and meet urgent family needs. Poor peasant farmers' family labors input on their own farms is subsequently reduced resulting in cutting down on cash crop cultivation while preserving subsistence crop cultivation. Having the financial ability to hire labor, better off farmers on the other hand have tended to expand on cash crop production; adopting different cash crop combinations in response to crop market prices and other factors. This freedom of choice among different crop combinations is not available to poor Gezira and Khartoum peasant farmers on state owned irrigation farms who are faced with state control over production. State control and fixing of crop mix that limits poor tenant farmers' ability to adjust farming and cope with declining crop cash returns. Khartoum and Gezira peasant farmers' possibilities for readjustment of farming in response to market opportunities and constraints, which Kordofan peasants enjoy, are restricted by the dominant state position in production stemming from state control over land and ownership of irrigation infrastructure.

Seeking employment to obtain cash during the agricultural season is one means of income sources diversification poor peasant farmers pursue to provide for subsistence. Rich or better off farmers provide employment opportunities for poor peasant farmers in need of cash by expanding the area put to cultivation for which their family is insufficient. For better off farmers, the expansion of farming, by extending the area put to cultivation is mainly for cash crop production using hired labor, is for profit. In most cases the farm is one among many other enterprises; including trade, selling water and extending informal credit to poor peasant farmers at high interest rates⁶⁸. For the poor and very poor, the expansion of land put to cultivation is an attempt to cope with the decline in yield levels and cash income.

Borrowing cash on informal credit is also another means of coping with the urgent need for cash to meet family subsistence (food needs and other necessities). The period when peasant farmers need cash most is during the agricultural season covering the summer period from June till the next harvest in November. This is the period 31.1% of the sample stated to be the one during which cash is needed most and also it is the period during which peasants and their families are usually involved in agricultural operations on their family farms with little cash earning opportunities. It is the time during which little savings are depleted and while running out of money, poor peasant farmers have to acquire necessities. For some poor peasant farmers who do not cultivate cash crops⁶⁹ or have some assets like livestock to sell and obtain cash, hiring themselves out is a means to get cash to meet family food and other needs. For some others who cultivate some cash crops beside food crops, informal credit is one or the only means to get badly needed cash. Informal credit, which village traders provide, is a form of forward crop selling at an agreed fixed price set at the time of the extension of the loan. The poor peasant farmer has to repay the loan in kind; i.e., in terms of units of the crop on which the informal credit is drawn during the season. The interest rate is not fixed and

⁶⁸ This practice, which is referred to elsewhere in this report, is known as the shail system of informal credit.

⁶⁹ Those who cultivate cash crops could acquire cash advance on informal shail credit.

varies according to the conditions and might also vary at different periods during the agricultural season. However, estimated interest rate is very high when considering informal credit set price and the post harvest market price, which might reach between 150-200%. Given the urgent pressure for cash poor peasant farmers need to survive during the agricultural season and the unavailability of other sources of finance, informal credit nonetheless, provides a source of support that enables them to cope. Borrowing could be in terms of cash or kind from the village informal credit dealer's shop. But drawing credit on *shail* because of their poverty and lack of other sources of credit, the poverty of peasant farmers is enhanced by receiving very low returns for their crops.

For peasant farmers who cultivate cash crops and do not resort to informal credit, cash crops are immediately sold after harvest at low prices mainly because of the need for cash to settle debt to shopkeepers⁷⁰ and also meet family needs. Sale prices immediately after harvest are normally very low following oversupply of cash crops on the market. The lack of credit, storage facilities and transport in addition to the immediate need for cash that do not encourage farmers to sell their crops at a higher price later in the season and get higher cash returns. While the selling of crops immediately after harvest help peasant farmers to get cash and meet urgent family needs, the same action contributes to the impoverishment of peasant farmers by depriving them of getting higher returns for their crops. The immediate need for cash, the resort to *shail* plus the lack and high transport cost all compel peasant farmers to sell their crops to village merchants at low prices depriving them of a large margin of cash income.

Migration of some family members to work in cities in Kordofan or in other cities and towns in Sudan is one major strategy to cope with poverty in rural Kordofan. Neither space nor time allows detailing the different forms of migration. But taking relevance into account, migration could be categorized as seasonal or permanent migration. It could also be categorized according to the location of migrants' destinations. The pattern of migration to cope with poverty differs in different locations, however, in some of the areas covered by the fieldwork, there is a break with traditional pattern of migration. Some poor peasant farmers migrate not during the off season but during the agricultural season after they have already cultivated their farms and having their food and cash crops established. Migrants' leave the farm behind and head for large agricultural schemes nearby to work as agricultural laborers⁷¹. Rural migrants return during the season after they have earned some cash and start to harvest their plots and migrate once again to work on the large agricultural schemes during harvest time after harvesting their own farms. It is a form of rural-rural migration but during the same agricultural season. Meager cash earned from working as agricultural laborers is spent on family needs during the difficult times immediately before harvest. This option is open to able-bodied males who could bear the difficulties of living under harsh conditions, but despite the difficulties associated with it provides a source of cash to meet some family needs.

Another form of migration to cope with dire poverty conditions is seasonal migration to cities and towns after harvest to do any marginal job and earn some cash. Migrants do low-paid manual jobs and normally return by the beginning of the rainy season to resume farming activities. Remittances, during the period of absence, are sent to the family back home in an attempt to save some of the food stored from the previous season to get the family through the remaining months of the year; particularly during the farming season before the next crop is harvested. Some small savings could also be of help not to resort or postpone the resort to informal credit *shail* for some time. However, even if migrants were able to make some little savings that together with some food in store from the previous season could barely meet family needs and enable to cope for the rest the year till the next harvest. Sometimes rural seasonal migrants' small savings are normally invested in the purchase of productive assets. Light livestock is the most favored form of savings that also serve as a source of food and stored value that could be converted into cash when needed. During the farming season; particularly the period from September to November, light livestock could be sold to get cash to purchase food and other necessities.

⁷⁰ Shopkeepers provide peasant farmers with some of their needs during the agricultural season on credit. Commodities provided on credit are normally priced higher than those sold on prompt cash payment.

⁷¹ In some of the villages covered by fieldwork, and in which we conducted informal personal interviews with community leaders agricultural schemes are 50 km away from the village.

While these patterns of rural- rural migration, within the season and seasonal migration are practiced mostly in Kordofan, permanent rural-urban, urban-urban migration and migration outside Sudan are forms of coping mechanisms widely adopted all over the country as the process of poverty accelerates. This is particularly the case for rural Sudan including the areas of Khartoum, Gezira and Kordofan. Permanent rural-urban migration and migration outside Sudan is adopted by all sections of the population whose conditions have deteriorated and those who have been impoverished during the last 15 years. Some rural migrants to urban areas including Khartoum improve their living conditions. Some others settle in marginal urban areas with no improvement in their living conditions and some might have fled from bad to even worse. Some others including those migrating outside Sudan have been able to effect some improvement and send remittances to their families back home. Thus permanent rural urban migration and migration outside Sudan does not only present a escape route from poverty for some migrants, but also enables them to send remittances to their families in rural areas and help them to cope with poverty.

4.3.5. Constraints to Coping with Household Poverty and Form of Help the Poor Need

The examination of the constraints that face the poor in coping with poverty is important for the adoption of an effective policy reduction strategy for three important reasons. One is that basing such strategy on constraints facing the poor and the measures needed to surmount them as stated by the poor themselves represents an incorporation of the poor voice and thinking into policies and actions designed for them. Secondly by doing so poverty reduction policies and actions become more realistic and relevant to the real problems the poor face in their attempt to cope with poverty. Thirdly, and this is the most important of all is that when anti-poverty action the poor themselves demand is incorporated into poverty reductions policies and programs, actions would be based on initiatives the poor have already taken to deal with their poverty conditions. This involves actions the poor are willing to take but have been unable to do so because of certain hurdles that they are unable to surmount or by pursuing policies the poor demand. If initiatives the poor have taken to deal with poverty become part of the poor economic activities and if a poverty reduction strategy is based on those initiatives, this implies relevant and realistic adjustments in economic activities more conducive to poverty reduction strategy success.

Although some constraints vary from one community to another according to geographical location, economic activities and locational categorization (urban marginal, urban original or rural) some constraints that face individual households to deal with poverty are similar regardless of differences in economic activities, geographical location, and the categorization of the poor. However, the degree of importance of a particular constraint or a set of constraints differs according to location, economic activities and the category of the poor. In their attempt to cope with poverty, the poor in urban original, urban marginal and rural areas face the following constraints to different degrees of importance:

First, the increase in the prices of necessary consumer commodities the poor purchase is one of the major constraint that face all the poor and offset their coping attempts with poverty. Attempts to increase cash income by diversifying sources of income, pursuing income-generating activities pursued by the urban poor are all neutralized by the increase in the prices of the necessary commodities the poor purchase. Intensification of labor on farms, expanding land put to cultivation, migration to earn cash income, changing the crop mix which are some of the coping strategies pursued by rural poor, but increase in prices makes all attempts to increase cash income and living conditions futile. For poor categories and in almost all locations in Sudan family earnings are insufficient to meet family needs mainly because increases in cash income resulting from different coping mechanisms cannot keep pace with the increase in prices. "All family members now work but still it (cash income) does not cover the cost of living". "We all work and work over time but it is of no use" are frequent citations the poor make with reference to the increase of the prices of the necessary commodities that swallows increases in cash earnings. The reduction or the stabilization of the prices of necessary commodity prices is one of the policy actions all categories of the poor recommend to help them deal with their poverty.

Second, the lack of employment opportunities in order to increase cash income is one of the major constraint; particularly for the urban poor in marginal and original urban areas. Although shared by all

the poor in Sudan, this constraint is a more significant hurdle for the poor in urban marginal areas who while losing the production of their own food lack skills and employment in regular work. In rural areas the desire and willing to work to increase cash income is hampered by the lack of opportunities in rural areas during the off-season. The provision of employment opportunities is one of the suggestions the poor in urban original, urban marginal and rural areas put forward to combat poverty.

Third and connected or related to the above is the lack of capital to start or expand income generating activities. In the absence of employment opportunities, the poor in all areas attempt to pursue income-generating activities to halt the deterioration in their living conditions. Because of their poverty the poor have not been able to start and pursue income-generating activities. Access to credit has been limited by the conditionality of collateral, which they are not able to provide. The poor suggest and require access to credit to start income-generating activities.

Fourth, in their coping with poverty the poor are constrained to varying degrees by the lack of or high cost of the necessary services including health, education and water provision. For some areas particularly rural areas health services are absent and the spread of diseases diminishes the ability to work produce food or cash crops and cope with poverty. In some other areas where health services are available the cost is a drain on meager cash incomes and constitutes erosion of the attempt to cope. Similarly education in some areas is lacking as there are no schools and where schools exist, the cost of education is too high for the poor to afford particularly in rural areas. Pulling children out because of the cost contributes to transmit poverty from parents to sons and daughters. The availability, quality, cost, time and effort put into fetching it is also a major constraint to coping with poverty particularly in rural and marginal urban areas. Apart from an attribute of poverty in itself, the use of contaminated water causes water borne diseases that in turn cause the loss of labor and cash income. Cash spent on water depletes cash income and the time spent on fetching water also results in the loss of labor and cash. The provision and easy access to education, health and clean drinking water is among the suggestions all the poor demand as one measure to improve their conditions.

4.4.1. Chronic Poverty: Rural and Urban Sudan

Chronic poverty is a form of poverty, which is reproduced within the family or within the community and the attributes of poverty are transmitted from one generation to the next. In a sense the causes of poverty are deeply rooted among this segment of the poor and unlike other poor it is difficult for them from poverty. It is a form persistent severe poverty, which is combined with chronic poverty. The very poor or the severely poor live far below the poverty line defined in money metric terms, which is also accompanied by poverty measured in terms of other dimensions and attributes, and their conditions of poverty are maintained over generations.

A distinction could be made between the chronically poor and the very poor or extremely poor. While the very poor could have a chance of improving their status from being very poor to just poor, the chronically poor do not have the ability or the potential to improve their conditions nor do have their children the chance to escape poverty. Their poverty is thus transmitted from one generation to the next, their children live in the same poverty conditions of their fathers. This means that while conditions might improve around the chronically poor their living conditions relatively deteriorate and thus the feeling of deprivation is more acute and severe. In most communities and this is the most important aspect of chronic poverty, poverty becomes part of their identity and they occupy the lowest scale of social status.

Like other poor or very poor families the chronically suffer from food insecurity (do not have sufficient food to live on and the food they have is normally poor in quality. This could be partly a result of inability to produce sufficient food or generate sufficient income to purchase food. Chronically poor families lack the skills and assets to generate sufficient income and subsequently do not have the ability to educate their children. They generally live in very poor housing and sanitary conditions, suffer more than others from diseases, and have no proper access to adequate health care and treatment.

4.4.2. The Causes of Chronic Poverty

In some rural in remote parts of the Sudan a large number of rural communities could not have access to education. Schools are established in one village to serve a cluster of scattered small villages, as the

number of children in each separate village is insufficient to support a school. The distant between some villages and the nearest school is sometimes more than 10 km. The more distant the village from the school the less likely its children would a chance to attend school. The lack of transport and the difficulty of getting to school bar many children to go to school. Even those who start schooling stop schooling altogether. In one village with a number of more than eight hundred inhabitants there is no school. At one stage more than 17 children attending classes at school around 20 km away from the village only two managed to continue their high secondary school education and these are the sons of the village sheikh.

4.4.3. The Lack of Access to Educational Opportunities

The lack of education and skills as a result of being born in poor families block opportunities for better paid jobs or the practice of improved income generating activities. Thus chronically poor families do not have access to opportunities to earn income at all or when they have access to income opportunities these are mostly manual low income jobs. In marginal urban areas and if the head of the household is present and healthy the job could be a day laborer in construction. Children and sometimes other members of the household also work to earn income. Earnings are very low and barely sufficient to cover the family's food expenses. The insufficiency of income to cover food expenses as a result of lack of skills leads to disease, improper children growth, mental disabilities that in turn limit opportunities for children to gain skills and improve income. Low and low living conditions are not only experienced through a prolonged period of time but passed over because of the same conditions of poverty to sons and daughters

However, the financial inability to educate children or allowing children to drop out of school, is one of most important factors that facilitate inter generational transfer of poverty. In other works the lack of opportunities for the children of the very poor to get educated, improve skills, get a better paid job to improve living conditions is perhaps the most important factor that make the children of poor families inherit the poverty conditions of their families. Children from very poor families either do not get the chance to go to school or they leave school soon after they have been enrolled.

The inability of children to continue their education could be attributed to a number of interrelated factors but most of these are rooted in the family's financial inability. In the Sudanese context the lack of financial resources that enable the head of the household to pay school entrance fees is one factor. The fees that have to be paid at the beginning for children to enter school are normally high. The head of the household have to pay these in addition to the payment of annual school fees for other children in school. The sum total the head of the household has to pay in case of many children thus becomes very high.

Fees are not the only cost of education the head of the household has to pay. In addition to fees, children need other educational requisites when school term starts. School uniform, schoolbooks, writing books and daily expenses of breakfast meal are expenses that the households have to meet at the beginning of school term and throughout the schooling year. The burden of the cost of education becomes higher when many children are at school and these expenses have to be met for all of them at the same time. For poor families with very low and sometimes irregular income who can barely meet daily subsistence, maintaining children at school is too costly to afford.

The cancellation of boarding schools above the primary or basic level is another factor that limits the chances for children from poor families to continue their education. This is particularly the case in rural areas where pupils for rural schools above the primary and basic level are found in rural centers to serve the surrounding villages. Till the beginning of the 1990s most intermediate and secondary schools in Sudan's countryside used to have boarding schools providing food and lodging for pupils and students. This was a great subsidy to rural poor families that encouraged them to educate their children despite the need for them to contribute to family labor and income. This state support for education enabled huge numbers of bright children from poor families to continue their education.

Without boarding schools children wouldn't be able to move in the educational ladder above the basic or intermediate level. Although it is quite usual in Sudan to send children to stay with a relative or a friend in the rural to continue their education, this has not been possible since the 1990s because of widespread poverty. People are now reluctant o send their children to stay with friends and relatives to

continue their education in town because they appreciate the difficult economic conditions all live and refrain from burdening close friends and relatives. Thus the abandonment of boarding schools since the 1990s deprived children having the ability to move up the educational ladder from the opportunities for further education. This applies also to universities and when sons and daughters are supported to proceed with their education this is often done at a high cost; selling assets or deplete little savings. In both cases impoverishment is the result either children go ahead with their education and deplete vital family resources in the expectation of gains from education later or drop out and sink into poverty like their parents. Later gains expected from education are limited because of lack of jobs and even if employed salaries are very meager to provide gains that offset earlier costs

The financial inability of families thus compels many children to work after the end of the school day. Many do casual and manual labor jobs to earn some cash to meet school expenses or to support family subsistence. In marginal areas in Khartoum, and Kordofan work among schoolchildren is a widespread phenomenon and teachers state how such physical burden impact on children performance. According to interviews with teachers children do not have the time to revise their lessons and reconciling schooling and working is not an easy task for them at this early age.

The children of the very poor leave school at a very early stage. All direct reasons for why children drop out of school are related to the dire economic conditions under which very poor families live. Poor performance is one direct reason for children of poor families to drop out of school. Poor performance according to interviews with teachers is closely related to the economic conditions of the family. For some children it is poor diet and going without meals that affect performance. For others it is exhaustive work after school days that affect performance. Children psychological and mental instability the difficult conditions under which their poor families live does create the right conditions for good performance and the realization of their mental abilities and potential.

Some children drop out of school altogether either because of poor performance, inability to pay fees or to work and earn income to support the family. Although there are exceptional cases of children from poor families who work to support their families and at same time perform exceptionally well at school, the majority of children from poor families could not be able to make the compromise and consequently leave school. The children who leave school do manual or marginal work to support their families. Because of their of skill the jobs they do are very low paid and could barely support their families.

4.4.4. The Lack of Productive Resources: Land and Livestock

The lack of productive resources is another factor behind chronic poverty. In rural areas where land is a common property and every family could have access to land the local communities mainly adopt subsistence production and poverty is widespread because peasants use rudimentary technology and simple farming tools that does not contribute to high productivity and high out. Where there is no irrigation this exacerbated by the fluctuation and shortage of rainfall, drought and consecutive rainfall failures. In drought-prone Kordofan whole communities are poor, it is very difficult to distinguish between the poor, very poor, and the chronically poor despite almost free access to land. As most community members could not have an alternative to agriculture as a source of livelihood, rainfall failure have reduced almost all community members to poverty. Productivity of subsistence and cash crop declined and so is the amount of food and cash families could have access to. Livestock have also been wiped out and few families could recover light livestock.

Families' abilities in such communities where land is a communal property to cope and minimize the impact of the drought differ markedly. Some families are better equipped to cope than others. Families with abundant labor resources could expand the land put to cultivation to compensate for the loss in yields, while some other members could migrate to cities to work in marginal jobs and send some cash to support the rest of the family back home. The chronically poor among such communities suffer from shortage of labor to increase the size of land to able to produce subsistence and cash crops to compensate for the loss of yields. They do not have migrants to cities to send them some cash. Such families could have lost the head of household, composed mainly of widows and orphans, the handicapped and the elderly. Although in the countryside such families receive help from members of the local community, such community assistance is of little use because of the poverty of the

community itself. Only in cases of emergencies such as illness and death in chronically poor families would such collective community assistance be of value and use.

In communities where land is scarce the lack of access to land or to small piece of land when they have access to it limit the ability of the chronically poor families to produce their own food. The only open opportunity for the chronically poor, if they are able-bodied is to work on others' land as day agricultural laborers. The seasonality of cash, the lack of other cash earning opportunities as well as migrant members who could send cash all limit chances of securing food for the day for the chronically and very poor families. The shortage of work opportunities means that payment is very low and the seasonal character of work opportunities limit earnings only to the rainy season. Chronically poor families thus face the rest of the year under severe food insecurity stress and go without food or cash resources to meet food and other needs. Those who have access to land have to limit the size of land allotted to subsistence and cash crops because they are compelled because of the need to work on other peoples' plots to earn money. Less labor is allocated to their own farm plot which has to be cut down because no sufficient labor available to farm their own land. The lack of access to land, family labor resources, social capital, cash and food is aggravated by the lack of access to livestock. Particularly the lack of access to land and livestock, when associated with other attributes of chronic poverty, reflect not only the severe condition of poverty but also insecurity, vulnerability and greater exposure to shocks and the severe need for support in cases of contingency and emergency.

The very and the chronically poor are in most cases identical. The same attributes that makes a family very poor also makes it poor for a longer period and difficult for the offspring to exit poverty. The very poor in urban areas are the elderly, female headed households, poor households without educated children and assets, without regular jobs and income and families headed by the disabled.

In rural areas the basis on which to estimate the proportion of the chronically poor could be slightly different. These could be cited as,

- i. The extent to which the village community within which households live is poor;
- ii. the location of the village;
- iii. The possession of social capital; educated adults, migrants who send remittances;
- iv. The extent of the availability of services in the community; and,
- v. The viability of practicing other economic activities.

These are all conditions that have to be considered when assessing the position of family households within a community with regard to whether they are chronically poor or not. The ability to produce own food and cash crops for families is also an important factor for households plus the ownership of assets to estimate the proportion of families under chronic poverty conditions.

In interviews with community leaders the estimate of between 25 to 40% of the poor in their communities are chronically poor and very poor out of an estimate of poverty ranging between 90 and 95%. Community leaders in rural communities in in rural Kordofan and in marginal areas in cities, including Khartoum, Omdurman, Bahri in Khartoum state, Obied in Kordofan state and to a less extent Medani in Gezira State made the estimate of 40% to be chronically poor. In original urban areas and according to informal interviews with local leaders more than 20% are very poor and chronically poor out of an estimate of 80% of poverty incidence in the local community. (See Annex 2, Table 20). This figure of 80% incidence of poverty in urban original areas coincides both the estimate of community leaders and the answer to the question in the individual household head small sample survey in urban original urban areas of whether they consider themselves to be poor. 84% answered that they did not consider themselves poor in contrast to above 95% who answered positively among urban marginal and urban original. This indicates that those who are in transitory poverty, i.e., those for whom conditions could improve and exist from poverty was possible if appropriate and effective poverty reducing policy adjustment were taken, is about 60%.

4.5.1. Community Poverty

Community leaders make a clear distinction between community poverty and household poverty or the poverty of the community and the poverty of households. Most community leaders define community poverty in terms of the community lacking certain facilities such easily accessed cheap

drinking water, educational and health provision facilities, electricity in addition to easy transport that are necessary for improved living conditions. The presence of certain other characteristics such as the poverty of household members of the community, widespread unemployment poor sanitation conditions, widespread diseases and the inability of the community to solve its problems and help its needy members are also incorporated in the definition of community poverty. To put it in other words, community poverty is defined in terms of presence of certain undesirable attributes and the absence of certain desirable attributes. In both desirable and undesirable attributes, all households making up the community, income poor and non-poor alike, suffer from the deterioration in living conditions and the decline in the quality of life to which such attributes make a great difference. Also when measuring the poverty of community in question is compared to other communities and in this sense community poverty could be defined as a relative poverty, i.e., comparing the community and its welfare or living conditions to welfare other communities enjoy. Although there is an added element of subjectivity in the definition of community poverty to that already embodied in the concept of poverty in its absolute and relative sense, however, desirable and undesirable attributes could to a large extent be specified in an objective sense.

Some elements of this definition are incorporated to varying degrees in the characterization community which leaders give to community poverty. However, there are slight differences in the importance different communities assign to some elements that constitute community poverty, corresponding to differences in economic activities, location (urban, rural) and the extent to which communities have had the experience of being exposed to other communities enjoying better living conditions. Almost all communities share some of the characteristics incorporated into the definition of community poverty. Still emphasis in importance differ from one community to another for the same reasons of predominant economic activities, location and the extent of being exposed to urban mode of living, individualization and the extent to which cash has gained importance.

The deterioration of social services is one aspect that community leaders point out when referring to the poverty of their local communities. Answering the question of whether community conditions have deteriorated during the last ten years, 95% of all community leaders in all 50 communities covered by informal interviews answered that conditions have deteriorated, and only 4.2% stated that the conditions of their communities improved.

All communities have to have access to drinking of water in a way or another to survive. However, the mode of access to water, the quality of water and its safety, cost and the time and effort devoted to fetching it differ from one community to another. The difficulties in access to drinking water, quality and safety, cost and or labor and time devoted to fetching it, deprive the community of a desirable attribute that constitute an important criteria in the measurement of community poverty in urban as well as in rural areas. However, in rural Kordofan , Gezira and rural Khartoum, it is the safety of water, the distance from water sources, the time and effort devoted to fetching water plus water high cost that are the main problems. In urban areas (urban Khartoum, Gezira and Khartoum) it is the insufficiency of water and the high cost the poor have to pay in order to have access to water that constitute the main difficulties communities face.

For the inflated marginal displaced areas around cities, resulting from rural-urban migration following agricultural decline and displacement because of war and drought, access to sufficient clean healthy water is a major problem despite proximity to urban centers; including the capital Khartoum. For some marginal urban areas the problem is the lack of water and as a consequence they are compelled to resort to contaminated water from canals in surrounding agricultural land. Apart from serious water-borne diseases such polluted water causes, its cost also constitutes a heavy burden on poor households. The estimate of the daily cost of water is between 10-15% of household cash income⁷². All communities suffer from water provision problems but the magnitude of the presence of a water problem differs in different communities and some communities suffer more from the water problem than others. Communities most impoverished in clean water provision and water provision facilities are rural and marginal urban areas.

⁷² The estimate is based on an average income of SD 10000-150000 and the cost of water 1500 a 5 day, taking irregularity of cash income into account.

Decline of education and educational opportunities is yet another characteristic feature of the decline of living conditions in the local communities and widespread poverty among its members. The degree and extent to which education constitutes a significant problem differ from one community to another in relation to specific conditions of the community. However and with the exception of very few, and despite differences educating children has become invariably a burden for parents in almost all communities in Sudan consequent of government reduction of expenditure on social services.

In marginal urban areas it is the lack of schools that limit educational opportunities for the children of the poor in marginal urban areas. In some rural areas, depending on location it is the lack of schools or the lack of funds, where there are schools, to main them and provide for educational equipment that limit educational opportunities. The shortage of trained teachers, low salaries and delay in payment of salaries together with the general poor conditions in schools have all led to the drop in the quality of education. The cancellation of boarding schools have further increased the burden of education and made inaccessible to the poor and deprived promising children from proceeding with their education.

In original urban areas, maintenance of schools, availability of qualified teachers and educational equipment, schoolbooks, writing books are the major problems. All schools have witnessed an unprecedented deterioration during the last 10 years. Local authorities have been unable to maintain schools and pay teachers' salaries. Over and above the decline in real incomes for both urban and rural communities, the responsibility of maintaining schools, topping teachers' salaries, provision of schoolbooks have been shifted to parents' councils. Thus parent councils have to levy fees on pupils to meet the cost of shouldering these responsibilities which they have now to undertake. Poverty of the community, under these conditions, does not only result in schools being left in disrepair but in depriving the children of the very poor from the opportunity to get educated.

Health as an aspect of community poverty has many dimensions and the problem of health manifests itself in different forms. Health is a problem because of the lack of health facilities in rural and marginal urban areas. In some original urban areas where health services exist, they lack qualified doctors, equipment, drugs and other facilities to receive patients. Hospitals are mostly in disrepair and the financial resources for maintenance are lacking. Besides, patients have to pay fees, purchase drugs and pay the cost of seeing the doctor and treatment. The cost of health service is thus beyond the ability of the poor in original urban areas.

Health service facilities are even a greater problem for the communities in urban marginal areas as well as rural areas. In some cases marginal urban communities, which are densely populated there is a lack of health facilities altogether; they do not exist. Despite the inflation of marginal urban areas around Khartoum with migrants leaving the countryside because of the war, drought and the decline of agriculture estimated in thousands, hospitals are lacking in marginal urban areas. Both minor and serious cases of illness are taken to hospitals in original urban areas (Khartoum, EL Obied and Medani) which suffer from aging equipment, lack of qualified staff and drugs. Moreover, the poor have to pay the cost of the service including the most simple; i.e., dressing, which constitute a too heavy burden on the poor to afford.

For the rural poor in Khartoum, Gezira and to a less extent Khartoum "adequate" health facilities are only found in urban and some rural centers. In large villages there are dispensaries and health centers which under current conditions offer very little and suitable only to handle minor cases. Even for minor cases health centers and dispensaries are ill-equipped and empty of anything to be able to offer something to patients. Thus incases of serious illness patients are taken to the main city hospital of a distance of 10 miles or more. Some are too and get stuck for days because of difficulty of transport before the patient is taken to hospital and sometimes it is too late. For the poverty of the community and its members, in cases of taking a poor villager from the remote village to the nearest town or city the cost of transport and treatment is too high for the family of the sick to meet. In cases like these an ad hoc group is formed to collect financial contributions from community members to meet the cost of treatment⁷³.

⁷³ This is a form of support mechanism made up of individual financial contributions to someone in need like when one member of the family is ill and have to go to hospital and does not have the money for transport or the cost of seeing the doctor. This is a well ad hoc Sudanese form of support in cases of emergency known in Sudan as Kashef.

Another meaning of reference to the deterioration of health conditions as part of community poverty is the spread and frequency of the incidence of diseases that are experienced now more than in the past. Reduction in food consumption and the consumption of food of poor quality are some of reasons for the deterioration in health conditions. In some other villages particularly in irrigated areas; particularly in Gezira and Khartoum along the Nile, the deterioration of health conditions apart from the deterioration of health services is caused by relevant government authorities' neglect to combat mosquitoes, flies and other disease transmitting insects. Decline of health conditions has contributed to the decline of local communities nationwide.

The deterioration of environmental and sanitary conditions of poor fragile dwellings constructed of mud are also attributes of a poor community. In original urban areas dwellings are in a state of disrepair. In both marginal and original urban areas drainage systems are lacking and there are no garbage collection services. In original urban areas streets are littered with sewage. Disease transmitting insects like flies and mosquitoes are widespread particularly in rural areas. The inability of community members to get adequate health treatment when they fall ill further contributes to losses in productivity and cash income leading to deeper poverty, food insecurity and ill health. Environmental health decline and inability to combat disease transmitting insects plus poor diet have all contributed to the widespread of infectious diseases. In rural the spread of diseases and the lack of resources on part of both community and households to afford the cure diminished the ability to provide labor. A Higher Medical Council report stated that malaria alone during the last few years was the cause of a loss of 26% of the labor force in Sudan. Less labor input resulting from illness is one factor contributing to the decline of food, cash crop production and drop in real incomes.

Thus as a result of a combination of poor diet, poor sanitation and environmental health conditions, the widespread of diseases is one characteristic feature of poor community. The frequency of falling ill is very high and diseases among the urban the displaced anemia, malaria, respiratory infections, tuberculosis and other diseases are common among the poor marginal urban areas. Malaria and schistosomiasis are common the rural poor. Illness, like death is one of the unforeseen factors that exhibit the vulnerability of poor families. Having access to health services and getting the necessary treatment is particularly problematic and exposes the poor to severe suffering and hardship. "Getting cure depends on your pocket and if you do not have money and no body to help you, you have to wait for your fate", a poor man in a marginal urban area in Khartoum said. To get the necessary funds for medical treatment some borrow from relatives and friends and some are forced to sell the few assets they possess and thus sink into more poverty⁷⁴. Falling ill becomes a more acute problem when the head of the family who works to secure food for the family on daily basis fall ill. In such a case the family is not only drained of the few resources they have but also loses the only source of cash income and food. For the inability to provide the necessary resources some go without treatment. In some serious cases of illness the extended family members, friends or the community provide contribution and share the cost of treatment. This has been the case in Umbada (Omdurman, Hebeika, Rural Gezira, Rural Khartoum, Tyba Hasanab, Gezira, Hashmab (Rural Khartoum North), Mayo (urban Khartoum). In some other cases the poor see a herbalist for treatment because of unavailability of modern medical treatment, distance from health facilities or the inability to afford the cost when it is available.

4.5.2. Poverty of Community Members: An Attribute of Community Poverty

The poverty of community members, as stated by community leaders, is one of the defining aspects of community poverty. Low level of cash income earnings is more important for defining community poverty in urban areas (both marginal and original) more than rural ones. This is partly because in many rural area cash income is a supplement to subsistence produced and consumed directly by the household rather than a substitute to it. Cash income for almost all urban areas is the main source of cash from which consumption is derived and also the main source for meeting other household needs. Thus the low level of cash income is a characteristic and a sign of community poverty. However, its measure as an attribute of community poverty is more pronounced in marginal areas urban areas than

⁷⁴ Health Insurance is a new system of health service delivery, which the government recently introduced. But the coverage of health insurance is limited and it only covers a small fraction of the population; only covers some government employees in some urban centers.

in old quarters inhabited by cities' original inhabitants. In Khartoum, low cash income and unemployment is cited more frequently by the community leaders of marginal areas newly established around the city to house the increasing number of drought and war-displaced. Being of recent rural origin, the war and drought-displaced lack the skills to get regular better paid jobs. They derive their income working as wage laborers, day laborers, self-employed and petty traders. Reliance on low and irregular cash income fully exposes marginal urban dwellers to the vagaries of the market with the loss of production of subsistence and reciprocal social networks to cushion the pressure.

Unemployment is emphasized as an attribute of the definition of community poverty and as a characteristic criterion of measuring it. However, although still important for rural areas more emphasis is given to unemployment in urban communities than in rural ones. The explanation for greater importance attached to unemployment in urban areas is the complete reliance on the market to attain food and other family needs. Unemployment means no cash income with all implications of lack of adequate food, shelter, health, education and the inability to meet other household needs. In rural areas many of the needs are satisfied by the family members working to directly satisfy those needs, either by working on family farms to produce subsistence in agriculture, rearing livestock, maintaining the dwellings or doing some other domestic work. In fact there are no significant enterprises that employ laborers during the off-season. The absence of off-farm activities is a major characteristic of rural life particularly during the dry season, nonetheless, the production of food and social networks provide some guarantees, though precarious, against hunger.

Community poverty (for particular rural or urban groups) could be measured by the kind of work the majority of its member family households do; e.g., casual labor, day labor, agricultural wage work and other manual jobs. For some rural poor, working in agriculture is a measure of poverty. Because agricultural work is hard and gains are meager, pursuing agriculture or being a peasant farmer is not regarded favorably by the rural poor. Cash income from agriculture is low and food produce does not cover household food needs for the whole year. Thus some associate taking agriculture as the main source of livelihood with poverty. Such an association of community and household poverty with working on agriculture is widespread among peasant farmers along the Nile near Khartoum. The latter work small pieces of land, get no credit and other forms of support, use costly inputs and are fully exposed to market price fluctuations of both production costs and producers prices. Proximity to Khartoum, which avails better opportunities for some to earn better living deepen this feeling; they compare their lot with that of others.

The youth are thus refraining to pursue farming and most migrate from rural areas to work in cities. Thus when some sections of the rural population feel that they could not satisfy their needs from agriculture for a reason or another, i.e., the decline of income from farming, they have no other alternative but to migrate to cities. Migration to cities to do any casual work and earn cash income is in most cases the only option they can pursue to escape food insecurity and poverty associated with agriculture. In the cities these migrants add to the inflating numbers of the impoverished and unemployed. Thus while rural areas suffer decline and poverty because of the decline of agriculture, war and drought, the urban centers receive an ever increasing number of migrants and displaced who find no jobs, mostly join the self-employed in the informal sector and exert great pressure on already deteriorating services.

Old peasant farmers living in Kordofan do not hold this view and for them agriculture is their destiny. They are more tied to the land both because of remoteness and isolation and the lack of alternative income earning opportunities in the local economy. In the words of one community leader in a village in Kordofan:

"We are farmers, we know nothing else other than agriculture. On agriculture our lives depend. If agriculture is fine we are fine, and if it is not good we are not good. We rise and fall with it. That how things have always been".

The implications of these two examples are obvious: things remaining as they are, farmers near Khartoum are unlikely to continue farming for the next generation or two unless conditions for agriculture improve. Peasant farmers in Kordofan whose living conditions are even worse and have continued farming despite all adversity (drought and other problems and constraints facing small peasant agriculture), would likely remain in farming, but under extreme conditions of hardship and

poverty. Migration of some youth from Kordofan will continue, but it will be in check if conditions for agriculture improve.

4.5.3. Community Initiative, Constraints to Community Initiative and Suggestions

Many local leaders consider the inability of the community to help its needy members, because of widespread of its members, to be one of the worst attribute of community poverty. This is true more for rural village communities that are coherently held together by family and lineage bonds. Just as the individual feels committed to family members and close relatives, village community members feel obliged to support community members in need; particularly very poor families; families headed by females, orphans and the elderly who do not have close relatives to lean upon for support. "I ask God to let me be a poor man among rich men and not a rich man among poor men"⁷⁵. Many leaders and individual household heads in rural areas in Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira we have visited have recited this phrase reflecting the strength of family and kin relationship and the shared responsibility for the survival of each other. When all community members are poor, poor community members are starved off of the main source of help.

Community poverty defined by local community leaders is partly derived from the poverty of its members and its inability to help its poor needy members, nor could contribute to dealing with other forms of community poverty. The poverty of the community is thus partly derived from the poverty of its constituent individual household members. The individual household poverty being the insufficiency of household cash income to cover family food and other needs is closely connected to and has a direct bearing on community poverty. Community amenities that provide essential services such as water provision facilities, schools, health care centers are established and maintained with community members' material contributions in partnership with government. Consequently community poverty derived from the poverty of its members results in the community's inability to establish services provision facilities or maintain them if they already exist.

Some of the attributes that are part of community poverty including the deterioration of environmental and sanitation conditions, the spread of disease transmitting insects, widespread diseases, the lack of infrastructure and generation of employment opportunities are problems that are beyond community capacity to deal with. Some other constraints such as services to the community including health, education and water in the provision, which the community has a potential to contribute to, community members are too poor to make material contributions to establish or maintain these facilities. In the absence of government action, poor communities are too poor and powerless to deal with the provision of these services, which are beyond their capacity.

Improvement in health, education and the provision of clean drinking water in Sudan and in rural areas in particular has been largely a product of community initiative. Community effort using community own resources through self-help during the 1960s and the 1970s, when conditions were better then, communities were able to establish schools, health centers and water provision facilities. Village and Neighborhood Development Committees, largely independent of government bodies, but cooperating with them, functioned as effective community bodies bringing together community effort and resources to establish water, educational and health facilities to meet community needs. A large number of schools, health and water delivery facilities were established though community material contributions with the government providing qualified personnel and running cost.

For the last ten years these facilities have declined and their operating base have been eroded. Because of widespread poverty communities lacking in these facilities have not been able to establish them, while those that managed to establish them in the past very few have been able to make financial contributions in cash or in kind to keep them afloat. According to the 120 leaders only 30.8% stated their communities were able to make contributions in cash and kind to halt the deterioration of community amenities and 67.5% stated that their communities did nothing to halt the decline of these services and amenities. (Annex 2 Table 23) For the 67.5% of leaders whose communities have been

⁷⁵ Reference made here is to kinship, lineage and extended family groups. The rich have to feel and shoulder the burden of supporting the impoverished among his group, while the poor receive the help offered by better of relatives. Perhaps an added burden to the rich is how to enjoy the fortunes while close relatives and kin relations live in abject poverty. In rural areas this does not only add to unease that accompany wealth among poor relatives but also creates strain in closely and tightly net relationships.

unable to take initiatives to halt the decline the reasons community leaders have stated are a combination of poverty of community members and that the problems are beyond community capacity to deal with them. (Annex 2 Table 24) The increasing poverty of community members and the scale of the deterioration in community service delivery facilities have resulted in the failure of the community to take action and halt the deterioration.

Deterioration in health, education and water provision facilities plus the drop in real incomes have in turn fed into further individual household and community poverty calling for multiple community and individual household poverty reduction strategies.

Outside help to support communities in attempts to halt the deterioration of services is limited. First, help to communities is limited and second some forms of help are not successful. 46.7% of community leaders stated that their communities received no outside help at all. The communities that received help, it is from migrant community members (6.7, NGOs (13.3%) from government (8.3%) and from charitable individuals (1.7%). 19.2% of community leaders stated that they received help from a combination of NGOs, migrant community members, government and charitable individuals. (Annex 2 Table 26) These attempts, and this is based on community leaders statements, vary in their degree of success from being unsuccessful (14.2), successful (15.8%) and partly successful (26.7%). Most of successful outside help are those that aided the community to establish drinking water facilities, schools and have health service delivery establishments. (Annex 2 Table 27)

4.5.4. Constraints to Coping with Community poverty

The inability to support needy community members is one attribute of community poverty. A poor community cannot support for its needy members; i.e., the orphans, the handicapped, widowed females who do not have male relatives to support them and the elderly who also do not have relatives to support them. When members of the community are poor not only do they have not the ability to support needy members but also they are in need of support for support themselves. This has been the case in almost all communities in which we have the opportunity to administer the small sample household surveys in urban original, urban marginal and rural areas. In urban original urban areas around 47% ceased helping needy relatives altogether because they cannot 39.7% still provide support but the help they provide now is far less than what they used to provide before. That means because of the deterioration of their conditions, 87% in urban original areas currently do not provide help for needy relatives as they used to do before. If help is less now for relatives needy members of the community receive far less help than before. However, some minimum forms of communal support persist despite poverty. More than 84% of the sample in original urban areas stated that members they still provide financial contributions as a form of communal support in the emergencies of death and wedding occasions. Financial inability bars the rest from providing support.

In rural areas (Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira) for which we conducted the small sample survey, around 52% ceased support for needy relatives because of financial inability and 26% reduced their support for relatives. Similar to urban original areas the support of community members in the contingencies of death and weddings is about 86% of the sample. In marginal urban areas support for needy relatives follows a similar patten of 49% no longer providing support and around 31% reducing support. The support members of communities in marginal urban areas provide to their community members in times of need (death and weeding occasions) is also similar to rural and urban original areas. Around 86% of the small sample comprising urban marginal poor still participate by making financial contributions to support other community members in cases of death and weddings. In all marginal urban, original urban and rural areas, around 14% do not participate by making financial contribution even in cases of death and weddings because of abject poverty and inability to provide the little contributions. Support in these contingencies is accorded very high importance to the extent that even within the average 84% provide support in all communities (rural, urban marginal and urban original in Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira), some have to borrow to be able to provide the support. Apart from the social significance of participation in such social occasions, financial contributions the community member make in such cases follow the lines of reciprocity and the individual member making support expects and actually receives the same kind of support on similar occasions. Thus under conditions of poverty the poor, in cases of emergency need this form most. However, the severely or chronically poor receive support in such contingencies even though they do not

participate, but the support they get is mostly from better off members of the community relatives and friends.

Informal organizations, particularly charitable organizations to provide communal support for individual community members in times of need particularly in weddings and death. In most villages and quarters subscription are collected from individual members and the cash is used to purchase make shift tents, utensils and other extra means households need during wedding funeral occasions. Community members can have free access to the services these facilities provide and this eases a lot of stress. Besides, A local shop could maintain all food and other provision on credit to be repaid by the end of the days of occasions from the cash collected from individual members' contributions. Data collected from the fieldwork (both small samples and informal interviews with community leaders consistently reveal that this is a minimum of reciprocal communal support community members still persistently preserve despite the deterioration of living conditions and prevalence of poverty.

Formal community organizations are important forums for the deliberation of community problems and institutional frameworks to pool together community efforts for improving community conditions. Community organizations in almost all communities, and in this we take information from informal interviews with community leaders, are either informal charitable organizations (25.8%) of the kind described above or informal tribal associations 5% (mainly in marginal urban areas). Formal organizations are two kinds; formal political organizations or parents' councils to deal with educational problems and look after schools. The only formal political organizations allowed to operate are Peoples' Committees. Even development committees are not allowed and the 5% leaders stating that their communities have development committees are created under special circumstances⁷⁶.

Subsequently, the lack or weakness of community organizations is another contributory factor to community poverty. Unlike charitable organizations, community organizations have been important means in bringing in government support and mobilizing community resources to establish or support service delivery infrastructure, i.e., schools, health centers, establishing water wells and water provision facilities. The power and effectiveness of community organization depend in part on national political conditions that allow free election, free speech and the democratic selection of community leaders.

Under the prevailing political conditions, communities are deprived forming their own organizations including development committees and the free selection of community leaders. Other community organizations have been dissolved and the formation of organizations other peoples committees is prohibited by law. Even in the case of peoples' organizations, the government has molded these community organizations to serve political ends and accordingly free election of leaders has been violated to bring into community organization leadership, leaders seeming more loyal to the government. Trust in community organizations bringing about change in community life waned and interest in community organizations as a means to improve conditions collapsed.

Having peoples' organizations as the only grassroots organizational frameworks to deal with community matters and affairs community members lost interest in formal community organizations. The lack of participation in peoples' committees has become a characteristic feature of grassroots activities to deal with community problems. According to information community leaders have provided there is almost no participation. Those who affirmed participation in general meetings (3.3% of community leaders), discussion (1.7%) or decision-making (5%) in peoples committees. However, some community members still provide financial contribution (25%) or provide labor and support in kind. (Annex 2, Table 40). Even when participation by making contributions is taken into account participation in peoples' committees is very minimal. From the small sample surveys 71.6%, 74.8% and 63.4%, stated that they do not participate in peoples committees for urban original, urban marginal and rural areas respectively. (See Annex 5, Table 82; Annex 6 Table 82 and Annex 4 Table 82).

⁷⁶ Development Committees are formed in some villages particularly in Kordofan where some NOGs or UNOs operate because their creation or formation was one of the conditions for initiating intervention.

Thus community members community members have been deprived of the only means (community organizations) through which they could improve community conditions. A gulf has grown between the community and local government organizations with which community leaders deal and with the absence of effective community organizations, community members feel more powerless to deal with community problems. (See Annexes)

The reasonable suggestions, which the poor put forward to improve their conditions, would certainly make a contribution to community poverty reduction. The collective improvement of cash incomes of members of the community, would deal with one attribute of community poverty. Economically capable members would be able to make contributions to deal with the deterioration of the community. The establishment of and the maintenance of schools, health centers, water delivery facilities, environmental health and sanitation would actions within reach of community members. Also when community members' economic conditions improve they would able to help needy members of the community. Community leaders suggestions to improve the conditions of the community have been a combination of improving services and improving income and living conditions for community members. Community leaders, around 35% who are mostly in urban original areas, have suggested the provision of training and jobs, the reduction of consumer prices, and the Improvement of services. Community leaders mostly in rural areas (36% of community leaders) suggest the creation of jobs, reduction of consumer prices, improvement of transport and marketing and the provision of irrigation and drinking water. In marginal urban areas also, (34% of community leaders) the suggestion is to create job opportunities, reduce consumer prices, end the war in the South, provide credit and improve the services. This is a general categorization and suggestions overlap, but important to notice that the improvement of services is suggested by almost all leaders.

Section Five

The Government of Sudan: Poverty Conception and Anti-Poverty Action; 1990-2000

5.1. Government Conception of Poverty

There is substantial discrepancy between what the government pronounces of what its conception of poverty is and poverty alleviation policies it pursues. Government claims that it bases its conception of poverty on Islamic teachings and principles relating to the poor and the destitute.

This is not a context to discuss Islamic principles and whether the government, which claims its policy towards poverty and the poor, strictly adheres to them. However, as Islamic principles are involved in government conception of poverty and anti-poverty action in the context of the Sudan, it is necessary to review some government and government adherents' interpretations and action based on the interpretations of those principles. Interpretations of Islamic principles relating to poverty have implications not only for the approximation and recognition of the magnitude and extent of the spread of poverty in society but also for the effectiveness of poverty alleviation actions pursued to deal with it.

Government conception of poverty and approach to deal with it could be divided into two phases. The first phase; 1990-1996 and the second phase; 1996-to the present (2002). However, since the present government took over power in Sudan in 1989, not only has it pursued policies that have actually increased and deepened poverty in society but also it has paid little attention its widespread in society. *Government conception of poverty during the first half of the 1990s (1990-1996) is based on the view that poverty exists in any society as a natural phenomenon.* Poverty was not recognized as a socioeconomic phenomenon even at the level of pronouncements and was seen as a fact of life that exists in any society. Subsequently its magnitude, its socioeconomic and political roots and dimensions were not appreciated enough to influence actual policy practice to alleviate it.

Government anti-poverty policy are pronounced to be based on the Islamic principle and practice of Zakat, which is a particular amount that have to be levied on the rich and distributed among others to the poor; including in terms of Islamic interpretation both *fagir* and *misikin*. Islamic jurists, economists and other specialists on whom the government relies to formulate its anti-poverty policy hold different interpretations of *fagir* and *misikin*. For the government and according to jurists' interpretations of Islamic teachings the poor "*fugara*" are those "who do not have provisions for the year and in the case of the head of the household is the one who does not have sufficient income".⁷⁷ The *masakin*, another category of the poor, according to the Act are those "who are destitute and could not afford the cost of medication and the victims of disasters"⁷⁸. A close economic adviser to the government put forward another opposite interpretation of Islamic approach to definition of the poor "*fagir*" as "the individual who does not have provisions for the day", while the destitute "*misikin*" is "the one who does not have provisions for the year"⁷⁹.

If differences in interpretations of Islamic teachings, on which government approaches to poverty and the poor are based, are put aside for the time being, two levels of poverty could be identified using a measurement of food, assets or their cash equivalents to distinguish between two categories of the poor. One is subsistence attainment measured in terms of inability to attain subsistence for a day termed "*kafaf*" level, and the second, the sufficiency level "*kifaia*" possession of food or cash

⁷⁷ Government of Sudan, Zakat Act, 1990.

⁷⁸ . Ibid.

⁷⁹ Mustafa Zakaria, Conceptions and Measurements of Poverty: An Analytical Study, (in Arabic), a Paper Presented to a Workshop on The Determinants and Measurements of Poverty in Originalization Perspectives, Khartoum, 2001.

equivalent sufficient for the year⁸⁰. The *kifaia* level (sufficiency for the year is the minimum level at which the Zakat levies have to be imposed⁸¹). Consequently the categorization of the poor into *fugara* and *masakin* depends on whether they fall below the subsistence or the sufficiency level.

There are a number of problems with the definitions the government adopts to deal with poverty and the poor. Basic to these problems are differences of interpretation offered for *fagir* and *miskin*. The first is the category of *masakin* from the singular *miskin*, which stands for those who possess more than subsistence, but not sufficient for the year to reach the level at which they could qualify for the imposition of Zakat. Although those in this category are better than *fugara* they are still poor.

Within government circles related to the poverty and the poor, in general one could distinguish two views and two levels of using the categorization of the poor with reference to the measurement of poverty in terms "*gout*" sufficiency and subsistence levels. In the first view the poor are those who fall below the sufficiency level but above the subsistence level, while *masakin* are those who fall below the subsistence level. In the second view, the poor are those who fall below the subsistence level, while *masakin* are those who are above subsistence but below the sufficiency level.

The second problem is one of measurement. The definition of provisions "*gout*", the attainment of which is used as a criteria for the identification of whether the individual or household is poor or not, is unclear and the meaning attached to it differed in pronouncements (theory) and practice. The usage of whether *gout* literary means food needs or that other subsistence requirements such as food clothing, health and education and other necessities could be included in it has been inconsistent. The third problem is the time frame for subsistence and sufficiency and whether each could be measured for a day, a month or a year. Implicit or explicit reference to the time frame has differed in theory and practice. Sufficiency for the day or the year is used interchangeably at the level of pronouncements and practice.

On which definition of poverty and towards what category of the poor the government adopts its policies have not at all been clear and never been stated with precision and clarity in any official document so far accessed. Two levels could be distinguished. One is the definition of poverty and categorization adopted in official pronouncements and the second is the definition of poverty and categorization pursued in policy practice.

From the preceding review and despite all different interpretations, government officials and close government advisers hold a very limited and narrow conception of poverty both at the level of pronouncements and the level of practice. Poverty is conceived to be insufficiency of provisions for the day and provision "*gout*" is taken to mean food. Thus the poor are identified as those who do not have sufficient food for the day or its cash equivalent.

One implication of this conception is that it captures only the extremely and chronically poor and leaves out the largest section of the poor out of consideration. Accordingly the largest section of the population who are above subsistence but below the level of sufficiency are not considered poor⁸². Thus limiting the poor only to those defined in terms of insufficiency of food for the day or the year covers only a fraction of the poor. One consequence of this is the underestimation of the magnitude, prevalence and extent of poverty in society.

In its anti-poverty action, mainly Zakat distribution, the government pursues the (view of food insufficiency for the day; i.e., the second view), while in theory and official statements the government seems to adhere to the first (insufficiency of food for the year). Thus defining the poor as

⁸⁰ Mustafa Zakaria, op.cit, p.7, El Siddig.M.O., Poverty: Conception, Measurement and A Strategy to Deal with it, (in Arabic), a Paper Presented to a Workshop on the Determinants and Measurement of Poverty and Appropriate Macroeconomic Policies for the Success of Poverty Reduction, Khartoum, 2001, pp4-8. Also see M. A. El Nagarabi, The Analysis of Social Indicators of Poverty: Arab Indicators to Aid in Measuring it, (in Arabic), a Paper Presented to the Discussion Group on Poverty and its Impact on Arab Society Categories, Khartoum, 2002,p.5.

⁸¹ Zakat according to Islamic jurisdiction is a levy that must be imposed on financial and other resources according to specific rules and regulations to level off the gap between the rich and the poor as one of its major objectives. The Zakat resources are disbursed on many venues including the poor.

⁸² Subsequently this group is not included in those eligible to be covered by government action, limited as it is, directed towards the poor.

those who do not have food "gout" for the day enables the government to deny the existence of the largest category of the poor. In other words it excludes those who are above subsistence but below the sufficiency level and lack access to health, education and water) and recognizes only the extremely poor. This allows the government to minimize the magnitude of a politically sensitive issue. The implication is that the problem is overlooked, not taken very seriously and cast aside when dealing with priorities. According to politicians' pronouncements poverty incidence, in Sudan in the late 1990s is in the region of only 25-40%. This contradicts the estimates put forward by the government own bodies that estimate the incidence of poverty in Sudan to be above 90%⁸³.

Government Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which reflects government official view, takes the issue in very vague terms,

The poor are those who live between the subsistence and sufficiency levels, Those who live below the subsistence level are destitute... very poor. According to studies in this regard, half of the population of the Sudan live below the sufficiency level and one sixth live below the subsistence level. That is to say, during the *period 1968-1996* about 15 million are poor, about five million are destitute, while 40% (12 million) are not poor and 10% (3 million) are rich people⁸⁴ (*emphasis added*).

The ambiguity of the statement is self-explanatory⁸⁵ and attempts to claim that the proportion of the Sudanese population who is poor is 50%. Politicians in public statements announced to the media claiming that only between 25-40% of the Sudanese to be poor⁸⁶. The difference between estimated figure of above 90% incidence of poverty and the estimate politicians and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Reduction claim is 40%. The of 40% figure coincides more with the proportion of the *extremely poor* than to the proportion of the *poor* in the total number of the population; estimated to be in the region of 90%. Politicians' figure of 40% incidence of poverty in the Sudan is quite in line with the conception of the poor as those who do not have sufficient provisions (food) for the day, which the government adopts and pursues in practice. The sufficiency level, which is the minimum level for Zakat imposition, which is simultaneously, could be considered the poverty line that the government ignores when the issue of measuring poverty incidence arises. Thus the remaining 50% politicians deny or drop could be considered as those who have the ability to provide for daily subsistence but do not have sufficient subsistence for the year. In other words, the 50% section of the population who are above the subsistence level but below the sufficiency level government does not consider poor despite the fact that according to official interpretation of Islamic principles the government adopts they are to be considered poor and eligible for Zakat.

If the 1996 above 90% estimate of poverty incidence in Sudan, which some government own bodies put forward, is taken to be the closest to reality, a comparison with the figure of 25-40% poverty incidence politicians pronounce reveals government inconsistency. But more importantly it also shows that the largest proportion of the poor, according to the Islamic criteria, the government does not recognize to be poor. Thus the problem of poverty is not taken seriously and left to the Zakat chamber and other organizations to deal with it.

An estimate of the incidence of poverty in Sudan could also be made from Zakat statistics. Payment of Zakat is supposed to reflect sufficiency and those who pay Zakat have supposedly been able to achieve or surpass the sufficiency level; the level at or above which Zakat should be paid and below which Zakat could be received. If Islamic principles are strictly followed and the Islamic criteria for

⁸³ See Sudan Government, Ministry of Manpower and ILO, Trends and Profiles of Poverty in Sudan 1990-1996, Khartoum, 1997, p.37,. Also see The Center for Strategic Studies, The Sudanese Strategic Report 1997, 1st Edition, Khartoum, 1998, p.322.

⁸⁴ Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Poverty Reduction Coordination Unit, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for the Sudan, 2002-2037, First Draft, Sept., 2000, p.2.

⁸⁵ The statement does not say which studies it is referring nor does it state the total number of the population. While it takes the long period of 32 years, during which the total number of the population have changes, it implies that the total number it refers to is 30 million. Certainly this could not be true for the year 1968. It is also inconsistent in using total numbers, proportions and percentages. One cannot help but think that the statement is deliberately made vague to dodge the issues and facts.

⁸⁶ Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for the Sudan, 2002-2037, First Draft, Poverty Reduction Coordination Unit, Sept., 2000, p.2.

measuring the level for levying Zakat are adhered to, the number of the population who qualify for the payment of Zakat, i.e., *those who are at or above the sufficiency level*, could be easily calculated. This could give a fairly good indication of the numbers and percentages of the population who are above and below the sufficiency levels. In other words given the 1998 total number of the population of 28,7 million⁸⁷, and using government official sufficiency level criteria of poverty measurement would make it possible to compute the figures and percentages of the population who are below the sufficiency level; i.e., the poor. However, in its annual reports and statistics the Zakat Chamber gives the total annual amount of Zakat collected in cash terms but does not provide statistics on the total number of Zakat payers or the total number of Zakat payers in each category. This disguises the number, categories and regions of Zakat payers and Zakat share paid per individual in each category of payers. In addition, the Zakat Chamber does not give figures of the total number of the population below the sufficiency level.

Zakat Chamber in fact levies Zakat on a large section of the population who are in actual fact below the sufficiency level, some of whom are entitled to the receipt of Zakat according to Islamic principles. To put it differently a large section of Zakat payers should in actual fact be Zakat recipients. The should-be Zakat recipients who are in fact charged with Zakat payment include:

- i. The majority of peasant farmers in the rain-fed peasant who constitute more than 56% of the Sudanese population and around 80% of the rural inhabitants. In Zakat incomplete reports agriculture which is dominated by peasant farming is the largest Zakat source contributing 47% of Zakat total revenue in 1999⁸⁸.
- ii. Family businesses and family farms of tenants in state-owned irrigated agricultural sub-sector whose returns are not guaranteed to cover cost of production. Zakat levies are imposed on gross and not on net returns; i.e., before the deduction of the cost of production;
- iii. Small businesses whose capital is drawn from credit that has not been repaid; and,
- iv. Government employees whose real income does not cover the cost of living for the year; i.e., who have not surpassed the sufficiency level.

The income of almost all individuals and households covered by these categories does not reach the level of sufficiency for the year; particularly peasant farmers whose income is seasonal and who while harvest crops and earn income in post harvest period their income is not sufficient for the whole year. Cash income for the majority of poor peasant farmers is not sufficient to meet family needs for the whole year. This has become particularly the case for this category since the 1990s with the rapid increase of inflation and government levies and taxation. (See the section on the causes of poverty in this report above).

This has two important implications. One the number of the poor is underestimated and the proportion of the population above the sufficiency level is overstated. The second is that Zakat by imposition of payment on the poor contributes to poverty generation rather than poverty alleviation. Tenant farmers in Gezira and other irrigated schemes also pay Zakat despite the fact most of them their revenue does not cover the cost of production and in perpetual debt. Nonetheless they pay Zakat as the levy is imposed on gross proceeds before the deduction of the cost of production government incur on behalf of tenants. This means that even if the Zakat Chamber cited the number of individuals on whom Zakat is imposed and who have actually paid it in its reports, the number of those above sufficiency would artificially be significantly inflated.

Another implication of the above discussion is that those who are below the sufficiency level among the Sudanese is far more than government pronouncements state. In the absence of figures showing the number and categories of individuals who pay Zakat, i.e., those who have reached or surpassed the sufficiency level an estimate of their number and proportion could be made from some of Zakat statistics. For the year 1999, the total amount of collected Zakat is SD10.7 billions at an exchange rate of SD 250 a dollar, the total amount of Zakat collected would equal US \$ 42.8. If on average, each of

⁸⁷ The Center for Strategic Studies, The Sudanese Strategic Report 1997, op.cit., p.186.

⁸⁸ Zakat Chamber, the General Secretariat, Some Features of the Performance of Zakat Chamber for the Year 2000, Statistics, Information and Computer Section, Khartoum, Undated, .1

Zakat payers contributed US \$ 25 (SD 6250)⁸⁹, the total number of those who paid Zakat would come to 1712000. Taking the estimate of Sudan's total population to be in the region of 28 million, those who have reached or surpassed the level of sufficiency would be 6% of the total population. Then we arrive at an estimate of 94% of the Sudanese in 1999 to be below the sufficiency level.

Amongst the mass of those who live below the sufficiency level (the poor), it seems that only those who are below the subsistence level are regarded as poor. As a result and according to the government's conception of poverty pursued in practice, defined in terms of inability to provide for daily food needs, only the extremely are recognized. Thus only a small fraction of the actually poor are covered by the government's anti-poverty mechanism; Zakat Chamber. According to the Zakat Chamber these include, in order of priority of importance in the allocation of financial and other forms of support, the orphans, widows, divorcees abandoned women, the elderly, the sick and poor students who cannot support themselves⁹⁰. Such a conception of poverty, which refers only to the extremely poor as poor, allows the government to minimize the magnitude of a politically sensitive issue. The implication is that the problem is overlooked, not taken seriously and cast aside when dealing with priorities in policy making. Thus the problem of poverty is mainly left to the Zakat Chamber and other organizations to deal with it. This official line has clearly dominated both policy pronouncements and policy practice during the first phase of 1990-1996.

5.2. Government Conception of Causes of Poverty

Poverty as a socioeconomic problem is neither recognized nor its magnitude appreciated during the first phase covering the first half of the 1990s. The National 2000 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which is issued during the second phase⁹¹, is the first official document to state government conception of the causes of poverty⁹². As the document states government conception of the magnitude of poverty, its causes and government approach to deal with it, it is necessary to cite some observations on it. First, the document is very brief⁹³ and very general on many important relevant issues. It does not provide an analysis the significance of the problem warrants. Although it is critical of the government on a number of issues, the document has failed to see that the root causes of poverty originate in government policy. Consequently a readjustment of government policy as the main effective means to deal with the escalating poverty problem has not been envisaged in NPRSP. Nor has the document recommended specific policy readjustment measures designed to halt the increase and then alleviate rural and urban poverty. In addition, some of the most important causes of poverty have not even been mentioned. Huge government non-productive expenditure both at the national and regional levels, the allocation and reallocation of resources, deficit financing inflation and the erosion of real incomes as main national policy failures leading to a dramatic increase in poverty have not been spelled out clearly. Capital resource transfers from peasant agriculture and government failure to transfer resources to it to increase productivity; production and incomes are major causes of intensifying rural and urban poverty on which the document is silent⁹⁴. As a consequence the document has failed both to recommend a broad anti-poverty policy readjustment and set outlines for specific programs to deal with rural and urban poverty.

⁸⁹ This average disguises those who could have paid higher or lower than this average. But we have to deduct the peasant framers, employees and tenant farmers.

⁹⁰ Zakat Chamber, *The Role of Zakat Chamber, in Fighting Poverty*, Khartoum 2000, p.1.

⁹¹ As has been previously stated this is the phase during which international community's concern over the problem of poverty worldwide has been at its peak. This paper numerates a number of issues that coincide with the international community's vision of some of the steps that governments have to take to reduce poverty. Some of these issues such as increasing economic growth, democratization and strengthening civil society organizations have been some of the highlights of the paper.

⁹² The causes of poverty as stated in the document are, i) the weakness of development programs since independence; ii) escalating internal and external imbalances; iii) Increased inflation rate; iv) capital flight and the migration of national expertise; v) the deterioration of material and human capital; vi) accumulation of foreign debt; vii) economic embargo since the 1990s; viii) the deterioration in the terms of trade for Sudan's exports; ix) the continuation of the war in the South; and, natural disasters such as drought desertification and floods.

⁹³ The first draft is about 44 pages long.

⁹⁴ For more details on the causes of poverty in Sudan in general and rural poverty in particular that have been neglected by the document see the section on the causes of poverty in Sudan of this research report.

5.3. Government Suggested Poverty Remedies

The document prescribes a list of more than 21 suggestions to deal with poverty in Sudan that need not be numerated here in detail⁹⁵ partly because the document is more of a pronouncement than a real policy guide to be put to practice. It refers to different problems and issues of relevance to poverty reduction rather than providing specific policy recommendations based on a coherent body of thorough socioeconomic analysis. Although at some point specific targets are set for poverty reduction, the document is not clear on the specific measures to be adopted to achieve those targets. An example of this lack of clarity is the ambiguity on the fiscal and monetary policy measures that have to be taken to reorient growth to benefit the poor. Rather than suggesting specific policy readjustment measures that combine both growth and poverty reduction, the document anticipates poverty reduction to follow automatically from increased growth rates⁹⁶. This has been the line followed in the PRSP despite marked inequalities in Sudanese society that suggest that the benefits of growth would likely accrue to a small minority; the top 10% who have 75.6% of national income (see the section on the causes of poverty of this report above). In countries characterized by significant inequalities, the fruits of economic growth have benefited the rich rather than trickling down to benefit the poor majority. The experiences of Brazil, Morocco and some other countries show that economic growth in a society, in which marked inequalities dominate, has little impact on poverty reduction.

So, despite the fact that the document condones measures to increase economic growth as a means of poverty reduction, it does not spell out the conditions that have to be met in the case of the Sudan, under which economic growth could benefit the poor and contribute to poverty reduction. The specific fiscal and monetary measures (e.g., tax and credit policies) which would simultaneously stimulate economic growth and reduce inequalities need have been clearly spelled out (see Ali, poverty in Sudan Arabic). Yet another example, is the recommendation to improve agricultural production without mentioning one of the most important impediments to increased peasant farmers' income that create incentive for an increase in peasant production and productivity; the availability of credit⁹⁷. While silent on barriers to peasant access to credit, it recommends the expansion of productive employment opportunities through effective lending to small businesses. However, no suggestion of clear measures to be taken to surmount the conditionality that bar poor families from having access to credit from existing lending institutions that aim to provide credit for the poor such Savings and Social Development Fund.

5.4. Government Anti-Poverty Action

In government thinking and policy action, poverty as a multidimensional socioeconomic and political phenomenon widespread in Sudanese society was neither recognized nor taken seriously even at the level of pronouncements till the second half of the 1990s. With the insignificance assigned to poverty as a socioeconomic phenomenon, the Zakat Chamber was seen as a sufficient instrument to deal with it. Zakat Chamber has been established with a Presidential Decree issued in 1990 and entrusted with the collection of the obligatory payment and disposition of Zakat according to Islamic jurisdiction.

Zakat Chamber as a government anti poverty instrument function and performance has changed during the period 1990- 2000 reflecting government attitude towards poverty during the first and second phases. Accordingly the proportions and amounts out of total Zakat revenue allocated to different Zakat venues of disbursement have changed⁹⁸. In 1990 the largest proportion of Zakat (75%

⁹⁵ The recommendations put forward could in brief be stated as, the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the South, the achievement of high growth rate, the creation of employment opportunities, agricultural development to achieve food security and uproot rural poverty, improvement in primary health care, basic education and the strengthening of partnership between government bodies, international organizations, non -governmental and civil society organizations.

⁹⁶ Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for the Sudan, 2002-2027, First Draft, Sept., 2000,p.28.

⁹⁷ . Ibid., p. 29.

⁹⁸ Islamic jurisdiction texts have been very general on the venues for the disbursement of Zakat as well as the conditions to be met by those who should receive Zakat. The venues for the disbursement of Zakat and the proportion of Zakat assigned for disbursement for each venue, a set of venues or the priorities in disbursement have been subject to differing interpretations since the establishment of the Chamber in 1990. See Abdel Munim El Gousi, The Role of Government

of Zakat revenue) had for some years been allocated to the Chamber's administrative costs and the government to spend on *jihad* and expanding Islam *dawa*. The remaining 25% were spent on the poor⁹⁹. This allocation has increased gradually to reach 50% in 1999. Zakat collection also increased from SD 10.7 billions in 1999 to SD 11.9 in 2000¹⁰⁰. Subsequently, despite the decrease in government share the decrease in Zakat Chamber's share has been offset by the progressive increase in total Zakat annual revenue. The proportion of Zakat revenue spent on Zakat Chamber's administrative cost for the 1990s remained in the region of 30%-35% of total Zakat annual revenue¹⁰¹. In 1999 the Zakat Chamber spent only 27.5% of its revenue on the poor¹⁰².

An untitled 2002 report produced by the Center for the Co-ordination of Poverty Reduction Projects of the Ministry of Social Planning illustrates government attitude during the 1990-1996 period " it must be stated that that the problem of poverty reduction has not been directly referred to in national plans"¹⁰³. The emphases on poverty as a major social problem was absent during 1990-1996 both from government policy pronouncements and action. The low level of priority assigned to poverty in policy-making is rooted in the structure of power and follows logically from the government conception of poverty (see above) and the failure to recognize widespread poverty as a major socioeconomic problem. This limited conception of poverty has led to government recognition of only a small proportion of the actually poor in Sudan as poor; the chronically and severely poor. Subsequently the problem of poverty was ignored and treated a phenomenon that naturally exists in any society.

Only recently since the second half of 1990s (the second phase) has government started to recognize that a problem of widespread poverty among the population exists. This recognition followed the 1996 Copenhagen Summit, backed by the World Bank and IMF, which renewed calls for governments to commit themselves to concrete programs to reduce worldwide poverty. However, recognition merely remained pronouncements and actions continued to be piecemeal. Thus rather than being a genuine change in government attitude arising from within, it has been a response to mounting international concern over the problem of poverty. HIPC initiative put forward by international development institutions has given further impetus for government adoption of a much open approach to poverty. Subsequently numerous conferences and workshops were held during the second half of the 1990s (the second phase) in which the issue of poverty was seriously discussed and openly debated amongst academic, UNOs, NGOs with active participation of relevant government bodies. The definitions, the magnitude of poverty in Sudan and its causes were seriously deliberated discussed and suggested solutions put forward.

However, clarity of what poverty means, the criteria for its measurement, its causes and the means and actions necessary to combat it remain unclear in government conceptions and practice. These are important not only for the recognition of its magnitude in a society but also for the pursuit of appropriate action or set of actions to effectively deal with it. As has been discussed in previous sections government conception of poverty lacks clarity and the connotations different relevant government departments and officials assign to the concept lack consistency. But in general and in recent years two different conceptions of poverty are adopted. One corresponds to the level of pronouncements and another to policy practice. This has implications for the effectiveness, coverage and sustainability of poverty reduction mechanisms relevant government bodies have taken to deal with poverty in Sudan. This is partly a result of the different interpretations Islamic scholars make of *fagir*; i.e., whether poverty could be defined in terms of insufficiency of food for the day, the year or

Institutions in Poverty Reduction: The Case of Zakat Chamber, A paper presented to Workshop on Poverty from a Gender Perspective 1999:10.

⁹⁹ El Gousi, 1999:10.

¹⁰⁰ Zakat Chamber, The General Secretariat, Some Features of Zakat Chamber Performance for the Year 2000, A Report (in Arabic) Department of Statistics and Information, 2001, p.2.

¹⁰¹ The amount spent on Zakat Chamber has rapidly increased with the increase in the total amount of Zakat being collected.

¹⁰² Zakat Chamber, The General Secretariat, Some Features of Zakat Chamber Performance for the Year 2000, A Report (in Arabic) Department of Statistics and Information, 2001, p.2. Also see Zakat Chamber, The Role of Zakat Chamber in Poverty Reduction, A Report, (in Arabic), Khartoum, March 2000, p.12.

¹⁰³ The Ministry of Social Planning, Untitled Report,

its cash equivalent or that the definition of gout is broader than food to accommodate other necessities. According to a senior government economic adviser:

Those in charge of Zakat Chamber interpret gout only in terms of food, which is a very narrow interpretation. We have to take a lot of time to convince them to include in gout necessities other than food such as shelter clothing, health and education¹⁰⁴.

These different interpretations, which guide policy, allow the government, disguise the magnitude of poverty in the Sudanese society, the failure of economic policy and its impact on deepening poverty. Thus up to the beginning of the second half of the 1990s government only recognizes extreme and chronic poverty and that only the extremely poor are seen as the poor in society who have to be the target of its anti-poverty action. Zakat Chamber which is the government's main instrument for combating poverty target the orphans, the widows, divorcees, the elderly and the disabled by its cash and kind hand-outs.

5.5. Zakat Anti-poverty Action during the Second Phase (1996- 2000)

Zakat Chamber's action has changed in two ways. One is the change derived from the change in the proportion of the total amount of Zakat allocated to the poor and the second is based on the proportion allocated to vertical distribution¹⁰⁵; income generating activities. The share of the poor in the total amount of Zakat increased from 25% in 1990 to 50% in 1999. The allocation made to the poor for income generating activities; i.e., income generating activities, in 1999 amounted to 25% of the share of the poor in Zakat revenue and the remaining 75% of the poor share in Zakat were made in direct cash payment. That means only 12.5% of total Zakat revenue were allocated to income generating activities for the poor.

Despite the increase in the number of Zakat recipients the proportion of the poor covered by Zakat in Sudan is very limited. It is not clear from the Zakat Chamber's reports whether payment to its recipients is made on a monthly or annual basis and whether payment is once or sustained¹⁰⁶. It is difficult to reach any meaningful figure on the poor receiving Zakat from the Zakat Chambers' reports. Reports treat figures in very dubious manner and show aggregates for a number of years rather than the number of those who receive Zakat each year. Payment is also intermittent and is not shown how frequently made. However, taking aggregate of numbers of the poor and the total amount of cash allocated to the poor from some Chambers' tables, the average amount the Chamber paid per family was LS 408 and SD 353 for 1990 and 1999 amounting to US \$ 12.75 and SD \$1.4 respectively¹⁰⁷.

Zakat Chamber increasing administrative costs is a drain on the resources allocated to the poor from Zakat revenue. As the Zakat Chamber's expenditure on its running administrative cost is a fixed share in total Zakat annual revenue collected and as this share increases annually with the increase in the total revenue the Zakat Chamber collects, an increasing annual amount of funds are available to Chamber to spend. This share has not declined from above 30% of total Zakat revenue since it has been established in 1990.

¹⁰⁴ Mustafa Zakaria, Personal Conversation, Khartoum, Feb. 2003.

¹⁰⁵ The Chamber considered the two alternatives of whether to distribute the total amount of Zakat set aside for the those who are eligible to receive it among the poor or to select a few and enable them to won income generating assets. In the first case a larger number would receive support but would not be sufficient and it would also not make them self-reliant. In the second case, a small number would be covered with sufficient resources and would be self-reliant. This is part of *igtihad* in Islamic jurisdiction

¹⁰⁶ Zakat Chamber Annual reports state the total amount of Zakat disbursed annually and the total number of the poor who received payment for each year. The total number of Zakat recipients for each year are added up which shouldn't be the case if the previous year's recipients receive funds for the year that follows. If the latter condition is true, then the number for the last reported year and NOT the total number of all years should reflect the total number of Zakat recipients. When the recipients for all years are added the figure would unduly exaggerated.

¹⁰⁷ Zakat Chamber, The Role of Zakat Chamber in Poverty Reduction, A Report, (in Arabic), Khartoum, March 2000, p.12. And also see Abdel Munim El Gousi, The Role of Government Institutions in Poverty Reduction: The Case of Zakat Chamber, A paper presented to Workshop on Poverty from a Gender Perspective, 1999, p.4.

The Chamber has developed a huge bureaucracy and a large number of beneficiaries affiliated to it. It has a council of secretariat at the federal level and a similar one in each of the 26 States making up the federal system of government. At federal level the Minister of Social Planning heads the Council with an unknown number of specialists, Islamic jurists and bureaucrats. In each state the state governor heads the Council with a large number of specialists, members of Zakat committees in the localities forming the state. Similar structures are duplicated at the level of provinces and localities forming the states that make up the federal structure. The hierarchy of the Chamber, which runs parallel to the structure of the federal pyramid, inflates horizontally from top to bottom manned by a large number of the Chamber's employees. This provides enormous opportunities for personal benefits for those who occupy the Chamber's positions at the different federal, state and locality levels. One community leader in a marginal quarter of drought and war displaced around Khartoum neatly put it, when asked if he gets help from Zakat Chamber "Zakat people do not help us, they help themselves"¹⁰⁸.

Even the fairly relatively small amount of Zakat allocated to the extremely poor does not trickle down to those really in need. There are no objective criteria to determine or to identify those in need and entitled to the receipt of Zakat. The method of determining the poor entitled to receive Zakat payment is very selective. At the bottom level, Zakat village or neighborhood committees and persons of trust¹⁰⁹ make lists of the poor entitled for the receipt of Zakat payment. Interviews with the poor and community leaders, reveal that most of those included in the lists of eligibility for Zakat receipt are government supporters or Zakat committees' members and other Zakat Chamber's employees relatives. Thus it would not be unjustified to state that even among the severely poor who receive Zakat, government supporters and Zakat Chamber's relatives receive the largest share. This suggests that even among the severely poor that the government recognizes as the only poor, only a small fraction receives Zakat.

5.6. Institutional Set-up and Anti-poverty Action at the Local Level

Political and institutional set-up in the case of the Sudan does not only constitute an obstruction to the alleviation of poverty but part of its root causes; i.e., it contributes to deepen it. Decentralization of government administrative structure with the decision making on major financial issues centralized has constituted a drain on federal resources and a burden on the poor particularly in rural areas in marginal regions. One consequence of decentralization is the creation and expansion of vast regional bureaucracies. The newly created 26 states, with several provinces within states and many localities within each constituted a black hole that sucks federal and local resources. Most of the financial resources the central government allocates to the states are spent on chapter I, II and Chapter III, i.e., on salaries, vehicles, office buildings, equipment, and a fraction of the approved budget is spent on development. For example the budget for the state of North Kordofan more than 95% of annual budgets of 1998 and 1999 was spent on Chapter I, II and III (salaries, running cost and maintenance and only less than 2% for the same years was spent on development¹¹⁰.

The financial relations between the central government and government institutions at the state level are not conducive to the alleviation of poverty. The responsibility of education, health and water facilities are all transferred to the state government with the powers to impose taxes and levies to raise revenue. The funds the National Fund for States' Support allocates to states are proportionate to the funds the state in question could raise from its resources. Thus states started to levy taxes on education, health, water and economic activities to increase revenue and allocations from National Fund for States' Support. Subsequently the burden of taxes and levies on an already burdened and impoverished population has increased. For anti-poverty reduction projects federal funds are pledged in proportion to the funds states could raise locally, thus also encouraging further levying of taxes and dues on the population who are already impoverished.

¹⁰⁸ Informal Personal Interview with a community leader, Mayo Displaced Quarter in Khartoum, August, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ These are mostly government supporters and loyalists.

¹¹⁰ North Kordofan State, The Ministry of Finance and Labor, The Third Program: The Comprehensive National Strategy (1999-2002, An Evaluation for the period 1999-2000, p. 9.

There are weak links between local government bodies and grassroots community organizations that deal with community poverty, i.e. and the lack of water, education and health. Government bodies that directly deal with poor households and local communities at the grassroots level are absent and present only in the collection of taxes and levies. If states spend more than 70% of their budgets on salaries and wages they pay to their employees and the rest on office buildings, equipment and maintenance, they have little to offer at the grassroots level in terms of contribution to the alleviation of community poverty.

With all the recent public attention paid to poverty reduction during the period 1996-2000, at the level of pronouncements at least, bureaucracies at the state level lack the understanding of, dedication and commitment to poverty alleviation. The absence of the poor voice increases the gulf between the poor and government bureaucracies that do not take real poverty reduction planning seriously. In Gezira for example, and in a paper submitted to a Workshop on Future Perspectives of Social Development held in Khartoum in 2000, the four projects were proposed including a poultry and diary farm or the distribution of few oil pressing mills.¹¹¹ Not a single health, educational or clean water facility has been proposed despite the recognition stated in the same paper of widespread poverty, illiteracy, water borne diseases such as malaria and bilharisia, lack of clean drinking water and lack of health services as the major social problems in the Gezira¹¹². It is difficult to see how a poultry or diary farm or oil pressing mills would contribute to the alleviation of poverty in the camps of migrant agricultural workers from Western Sudan states in the Gezira cotton plantation. Representatives are totally absent from the committee formed to oversee the implementation of these so-called social development projects¹¹³. The projects adopted for social development are far from relevant to what the majority poor really suffer from. The bureaucratic elite in control of power and resources at the state level are totally isolated from the local communities; particularly the poor. Although resources available to them are too meager to take effective action to deal with community health, educational and water provision problems, the little resources at their disposal are spent to serve their interests and on projects that have no relevance to community poverty or social development. The lack of commitment on the part of local elite and the absence of communication between the latter and the poor, have added to weakening of accountability and response to the poor needs and demands.

In North Kordofan in Western Sudan there is a similar widening gulf between state level bureaucrats and the local communities; particularly rural and urban poor communities. For these bureaucrats the problem of urban water and electricity shortage rank as the top two major problems in the state (Future Perspectives, 146). Although the shortage of clean drinking water is one of the major problems in rural Kordofan, two main cities that already have water provision facilities were singled out as facing water shortage problems. The combat of insects that wipe out crops, the provision of credit facilities and marketing channels and displacement resulting from the drought are not even mentioned as issues to be confronted to alleviate poverty and promote social development. (Future Perspectives, 146-149).

The above two examples illustrate the extent to which the main problems related to rural and urban poverty alleviation and social development are absent from bureaucrats' thinking and action at the state level. Government bureaucracies, both at the federal and state levels, have not only been a burden on the poor but also a barrier to poverty alleviation. These are manifested in wasting scarce resources and levying numerous and duplicate taxes and levies and in the formulation of policies and the design of programs that neglect the poor and serve only sectional interests.

¹¹¹ The paper proposed the establishment of a diary farm at the cost of LS 40 million, a poultry farm (cost is not mentioned), oil pressing mills and a flourmill. See Gezira State, The Ministry of Health and Social Development, Workshop on Future Perspectives for the Role of Social Development Institutions, Khartoum, 2000, p.171

¹¹² Gezira State, The Ministry of Health and Social Development, Workshop on Future Perspectives for the Role of Social Development Institutions, p.171

¹¹³ The Committee which was formed to supervise planning and implementation of these "social development" projects included representatives of Zakat Chamber, Social Development, Attorney General, Economic Affairs, Savings Fund for social development and the Director general for Social and Cultural Affairs. It did not include not a single representative of the poor or their grassroots organizations

5.7. Constraints to Government Poverty Alleviation Action

However, this recognition is not an acceptance of the magnitude of the problem and the extent to which it has been widespread in society, nor is it paralleled by sufficient action the magnitude widespread poverty in Sudan warrants. Shortcomings of government anti-poverty action are partly inherent in both conception of the concept of poverty, the recognition of its magnitude and the understanding and recognition of the root causes that have led to such high incidence and severe forms of poverty. (some notes on causes of poverty)

Zakat handouts are intermittent and extremely insufficient even for those covered by the government own narrow definition; i.e., the small percentage of the extremely poor. Although many of what would-be considered recipients are actually Zakat payers, because of poverty Zakat returns are very limited despite tremendous efforts to increase its revenue¹¹⁴. Most of the allocation of Zakat revenue goes to those in charge of Zakat Chamber and some other government activities. The amount allocated to this category considered poor increased from 25% the total amount of Zakat in 1990 to 50% in 1999¹¹⁵.

Government anti-poverty targeted action, could be regarded as ineffective for the following reasons:

Root causes of poverty are beyond the mandate of Zakat chamber and subsequently it is not expected to be an effective means of combating poverty even if it functioned well. Even when dealing the extremely poor, large parts of the Chambers recourses are spent on running the Chamber and government activities rather than the poor.

Only small fraction of the poor are covered and amounts disbursed only cover government loyal supporters or their clients. The lack of objective criteria left grate room for the Chambers' employees and associates to list names for eligibility at their discretion including government supporters and loyalists.

Thus coverage is very limited and even those who are covered receive only intermittent cash handouts that are also insufficient to cover needs. Many of the needy that we have interviewed in our fieldwork stated that they would not apply for Zakat because they do not expect help from it and that those in charge of only help themselves. For some poor who applied for support from Zakat stated that they would not have applied had they not been in dire need. Many stated that they have given up because of long and complex application procedures. Others stated that the amount they get in the end, if they get some at all, does not cover the cost of the numerous trips they have to make to the Chambers' offices to get approval for support.

¹¹⁴ Returns to Zakat employees are proportionate to the revenue they collect. This is an incentive to increase Zakat revenue. In fact this has created many problems between Zakat collectors and citizens. Sometimes Zakat is imposed twice and sometimes out of proportion.

¹¹⁵ General Secretariat of Zakat Chamber, *The Role of Zakat Chamber in Combating Poverty* (in Arabic), 2000:1

Section Six

NGOs' Conception of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Action: SCF and Oxfam

6.1. NGOs and Poverty

NGOs have grown tremendously in recent years and so are their activities in poverty alleviation both in the North and the South countries. This could be attributed to three main causes. The first is the dissatisfaction of donors with the state in the South and its poor performance in successfully channeling aid to effect development in general and alleviate poverty in particular. Subsequently NGOs have been seen as more effective vehicles for the promotion of development and the alleviation of poverty. The second is that NGOs are seen under current conditions in which structural adjustment dominate to fit more into current development practice than the state in service delivery. And third, NGOs support and the strengthening of their position goes in hand in hand with the support of civil society and the democratization process the South has to undergo.¹¹⁶

The researcher could not have access to literature that explicitly states NGOs definition of poverty. But the definition of poverty is implicit in NGOs' practice, the type of activities they undertake and the objectives of those activities that they conduct among the poor in the South as well as the North within the broader context of shift in development thinking and practice. The reports and documentation, which those NGOs publish also, give some indications to what poverty is held to mean among NGOs.

I will take two British NGOs active among the poor worldwide and cover disadvantaged groups both in the North and South including Sudan. In the following pages Save the Children UK and Oxfam/UK will be taken as case studies to investigate in some detail some of their activities among the poor in Sudan in the light of their worldwide activities and its impact on the poor.

The SCF's general goal is to fight for the protection of children rights. Thus SCF attempts to combat malnutrition, spread health awareness, reduce child and mother mortality, immunization of children under 5 and the creation of data base for children and local communities for appropriate planning policies with the relevant government authorities¹¹⁷. Although the aims of SCF are mainly directed to the protection of children rights, the activities of the Organization are not solely focused on children. SCF activities go beyond children to cover women and families as well as the general social conditions within which children live. For whether children enjoy rights or otherwise cannot be isolated from the socioeconomic and political conditions in which they are born and live. Thus poverty understood in terms of low living conditions of families, (household food insecurity, ill health, lack of education and clean water) have also been the focus of SCF activities. These are as much sources of suffering and distress for children as nutrition and disease, which SCF is attempting to fight to advance the rights of children.

Oxfam is another British NGO whose main purpose, is to combat poverty, distress and suffering in both North and South. More broadly Oxfam's aim is to act with poor people as an agent of change, deal with the causes of poverty, and alleviate poor people's suffering, especially females, by securing sustainable livelihoods. It also attempts to secure basic rights, respond to emergencies and help people be less vulnerable to emergencies and advocate policy changes that will to reduce poverty and injustice¹¹⁸.

These general guiding principles are more specified at the local level when Oxfam undertakes a particular project or program and they provide a general framework within which Oxfam undertakes its activities among disadvantaged groups. Oxfam's vision of development is of social development

¹¹⁶ Shirin Madon and David Lewis, Information Systems and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Advocacy, Educational Learning and Accountability in a Southern NGO, London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Information Systems, Working Papers No. 125, www.is.lse.ac.uk/wp/pdf/WP125.PDF

¹¹⁷ Faiza Ibrahim Ahmed, The Role of NGOs in the Third World, Sudan University of Technology, An Unpublished M.Sc Dissertation, Khartoum, 1995, p.16.

¹¹⁸ Neil Thin et al, Social Development Policies, Results and Learning: A Multi-agency Review, DFID, 1997, p47-48, www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/sddeu.pdf

that basically involves people as its main focus and thus poverty in its multidimensional sense is the central issue around which its activities revolve. Powerlessness is one dimension of poverty that is incorporated in Oxfam's activities in the form of adopting participatory approach. Subsequently participation and empowerment are characteristic features of Oxfam's social development programs and projects¹¹⁹.

6.2.1. Save the Children Fund Education for the Displaced in Khartoum State in Sudan

Sudan, which has the largest displaced population in the world, for SCF is the country where it has to embark on extensive relief work among impoverished war and drought-displaced families. For a long time SCF has been working in the Sudan but only following the 1980s severe drought, that hit hard many parts of the country, have the activities of this NGO intensified. The reoccurrence of the drought also coincided with the period during which the war in the Southern part of the country has started to escalate. Thus SCF has been active among the war and drought displaced in rural and urban areas in the field of food security, malnutrition, and access to basic services such as education, health as part of its attempt to fight for the protection of children rights¹²⁰.

Since the 1980s SCF has supported and funded water provision schemes in drought affected-Darfur, Khartoum and the South in areas held by both warring sides. It has built new wells, repaired pumps and helped form well committees to manage water distribution and access. In Khartoum SCF helped the displaced have access to health care by supplying drugs for free distribution in the displaced camps (marginal urban dwellers). For the children of poor displaced families its activities covered measles vaccination and support for community sanitation committees. In collaboration with other partners SCF assisted in providing training, health education and community mobilization for better health conditions¹²¹.

In rural areas and on food security SCF work has been more intensive among war and drought affected population. It has been involved in the distribution of food, seeds, tools and the communication of farming advice to support the livelihoods of war and drought affected population. It has also been involved in long term activities in rural areas to enable communities restock herds, establish seed and grain banks, loaning goats and provided veterinary services and helped in setting up vegetable gardens. But one of the most important SCF activities on food security in drought-prone areas in the Sudan, in Darfur in particular, is the establishment of an early warning system for famine to provide policy makers and donors with information of food deficit to take appropriate action before famine strikes¹²².

In South Bahr el Gazal and Upper Nile SCF supported primary schools with supplies, teacher training supplied school uniforms, contributed to repairing infrastructure and strengthened local education authorities. SCF's activities among the displaced in marginal areas around Khartoum SCF has supported schooling for thousands of children by supporting the local communities to improve the quality of education. The SCF's work among the displaced in Khartoum particularly on education worth some detailed examination to see how it has contributed to the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of the displaced by providing educational opportunities and the constraints it has faced.

In Khartoum out of a total number of 5 million inhabitants, the total number of the displaced is not certain, but in one estimate the number totals around 1.9 million displaced persons mostly leaving the South and the Western regions of the Sudan because of war and drought. The conditions of the displaced in marginal urban areas have been emphasized elsewhere in this report and have been shown how the lack of services including education have been almost inaccessible to the displaced population in marginal urban areas.

The lack of educational opportunities is one major constraint, in addition to others discussed elsewhere in this report, that limits opportunities for the displaced. The lack of schools deprived many

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

¹²⁰ Where We Work, West and Central Africa, Sudan www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk/jsp/wherework/country.jsp

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

children of the displaced in marginal urban areas in Khartoum from schooling and having access to educational opportunities. This is mainly due to the absence of schools and the limited opportunities in schools in the national capital. Certainly their poor displaced parents, because of destitution and abject poverty, were not or would not be able to enroll their children in the costly private schools that even some government employees are unable to afford.

6.2.2. The Displaced Educational Project

Given the conditions of educational opportunities of the displaced described above, SCF came in to provide a vital service which the government was not able to provide for its poor citizens. SCF's Displaced Educational Project started in 1990 covering Khartoum State including the displaced areas in Khartoum, Omdurman and Eastern Nile (Bahri) with main objectives of availing educational opportunities for the children of the displaced in Khartoum State. More specifically the Project aims to increase children enrollment in schools and improve the quality of education. These objectives were to be achieved by encouraging the localities and the local communities to increase educational opportunities, improving educational environment for the schools of the displaced by constructing classes, the provision of educational supplies (desks, stools, books, and writing books), improving teachers' skills¹²³.

The Educational Project for the Displaced in Khartoum State has been implemented in two phases after signing a technical agreement with the government of Sudan in 1990; the first phase 1990-1992 and the second Phase 1992-1995. The technical agreement defines the roles and duties of SCF and three relevant government educational bodies. The three government bodies covered by the agreement are the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Committee for the Education of the Displaced and local educational authorities in Omdurman, Khartoum and Eastern Nile (Khartoum Bahri).

According to the agreement SCF was committed to finance the construction and maintenance of classes and the purchase of equipment (i.e., desks and stools). The government was to undertake the technical supervision, the provision of books, administration and pay teachers' salaries. In the first phase of 1990-1992, 14 primary schools have been established in the displaced areas in the three parts of the capital¹²⁴. Subsequently the number of children enrolled in primary schools in the newly established schools totaled 6185 pupils.

SCF educational project was implemented in cooperation with the National Committee for the Education of the Displaced. The latter is the representative of the government's educational authority; The Federal Ministry of Education and is supposed to fulfil government commitments to the Project. However, the Committee failed to pay teachers' salaries and SCF was compelled to step in and save the Project from collapse. As SCF commitments were budgeted very specifically according to its commitments of building classes and providing supplies, SCF paid teachers' salaries at the expense of meeting the commitment of expanding schools in the second stage. Thus while in the two years (1990-1992) of the first stage 14 schools were established, during the second phase of the project (1993-1995) the Project was able to build only 6 schools.

Changes in government policies and institutions relevant to the implementation and running of the Project were not helpful for its performance. In 1994 the National Committee for the Education of the Displaced was dissolved and another committee responsible for overseeing the Project was formed with representatives from the Federal Ministry of Education, the local community, SCF and Humanitarian Aid Commission¹²⁵.

The Project has faced many constraints that have affected the performance of delivering educational services to the poor displaced in marginal urban areas, which Oxfam has attempted to undertake in Khartoum State. One of the main constraints is the change in government administrative bodies

¹²³ Facilitating drinking water within the displaced camps is also considered part of the Educational Program and access to water is facilitated through establishing wells. Children are the most affected by the shortage of water. They are to fetch water from long distances to help their families.

¹²⁴ 5 schools have been established in Mayo, (Khartoum), 2 primary schools in Wadel Bashir (Gebel Aulia-Khartoum), 3 schools for Dar Salam in Omdurman and 2 schools in Soba El Aradi (Khartoum) and one school in Hag Yousif (Eastern Nile-Khartoum Bahri).

¹²⁵ SCF, The Displaced Educational Project, A Report, 1995.

supposed to supervise and oversee the Project. Instability affected work and the administration of the Project. The result has been aggravating the problem of lack of follow up and adequate supervision.

The eviction of the displaced and the removal of their camps to other locations have compounded constraints. Schools have also been removed with the camps and children in the relocated camps have been deprived of getting education. This is a problem resulting from the lack of coordination between the City planning authorities and educational authorities responsible for the supervision of the Project.

The change of the educational ladder also put another hurdle for the project. According to the new ladder in which primary schools have been turned into an 8-year basic education level meant that each school needs additional two classes to be built and staffed. The lack of trained staff, incentives and housing for existing teachers, lack of books plus the poor economic conditions of the displaced parents of children have all made it difficult for the Project to achieve the objectives of facilitating access to quality education for the poor in marginal urban areas.

6.3.1. Oxfam's Dar Salam Income Generating Activities for Women

This sub-section deals with Oxfam's activities to establish income-generating activities among the displaced in Dar Salam in Khartoum State. Dar Salam is a settlement of 35 blocks¹²⁶ to which 2000 war and drought displaced families with an average of 7 persons (around 14000 persons) who were squatting West of Omdurman the government, has been relocated and resettled during 1990-1992. Most of the settlers are from Southern Sudan and Kordofan and thus squarely fall into the category of urban marginal poor¹²⁷.

Fleeing the war in the South and the drought-created famine in Western Sudan, Dar Salam settlers, lack the resources to get by in an urban setting. These originally rural dwellers are dispossessed, illiterate and lack the skill and experience to get jobs and earn a living. Having no regular and cash income they have to meet their needs from the market. As they were originally subsistence producers either by pursuing farming or rearing livestock they are compelled by conditions beyond their control to be in an urban environment for which they do not have the resources, the skill or the experience. Destitution in addition to the deterioration of environmental and sanitary conditions, lack of basic educational, health and water provision services are the conditions in which they have found themselves in¹²⁸. Within these displaced communities children and female-headed households are the hardest hit by the destitution and vulnerability created by new conditions.

Before displacement almost all the displaced women used to work on their own farms to produce family subsistence and shoulder the responsibility of looking after the household with the help of males. Women's major tasks that they formerly undertake are providing labor on farms, looking after domestic livestock, storage and processing of food in addition to their traditional reproductive tasks. Thus the urban environment which provides little room for farming faces displaced women household heads in particular with severe constraints and provide very limited opportunities for survival. The ability to provide for family needs, for which cash is needed, is severely restricted as women are ill prepared to fit into an urban environment.

Before displacement some females in Dar Salam might have worked as agricultural laborers and perhaps most did not know of wage employment, if there are employment opportunities at all, which could be the source of cash in an urban environment. The lack of skills, illiteracy and lack of experience, most displaced females have no other option but work in marginal low cash income earning jobs. Most earn cash by selling food, tea, washing clothes and working as domestic servants. Intermittent, irregular and low cash income all of which form part of their poverty are the major characteristics of the living conditions of females struggling to survive and earn a living for their children and the elderly of their families in an extremely restraining environment.

¹²⁶ The settlement is very well organized in terms of planning the spatial distribution of houses. The whole settlement consists of 35 blocks each of which is divided into housing plots. The housing plot of 215 block meters for one family and the whole settlement provides home to around 2000 families. Each block has around 57 families. (Oxfam Annual Report, 1995).

¹²⁷ Oxfam, Oxfam Annual Report 1994-1995, Oxfam, Khartoum, 1995.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Oxfam's Dar Salam Income Generating activities to women development, which started in 1994, was formulated and implemented to deal the poverty and destitution of displaced women in Dar Salam resulting from the lack of assets, low and irregular cash income. Based on this background the basic aim of the project is to provide women with the necessary training to gain skills needed to earn regular cash income in an urban environment and the financial support to enable them start income generating and improve their living conditions. The Project adopted the participatory approach to identify the needs of women beneficiaries and also to involve them in the different stages of the project implementation to empower women and build their capacity. However, because of the realization of the multidimensional nature of poverty among the displaced and women in particular, the Project did not only cover income generating activities for women but also included other components such as adult and adolescent education, marketing and reproductive health.

Being based on the participatory approach a Community Development Committee (CDC) has been formed since 1994 with the participation of Dar Salam settlement displaced residents. The creation of the CDC was intended to form an organizational framework for the participation of community members to shoulder the responsibility of dealing with Dar Salam community problems. It was seen as a means to mobilize community resources to contribute to the implementation, follow up, and ensure the success and sustainability of the Project¹²⁹.

The CDC is composed of all displaced families and has an organizational hierarchy extending to all settlement blocks. The CDC has a general Assembly, which elects the Executive Committee. With regard to the implementation of Oxfam's Women Project, the Executive Committee elects one of its members to coordinate the implementation of one of the components of the project with stakeholders; mainly Oxfam.

The specific objectives of the Project that CDC has to implement are:

- i. The provision of loans through a revolving fund to be implemented through a lending and saving program administered for women to start income generating activities;
- ii. The conduct of training programs for women in management, communication and business skills to prepare them for self employment;
- iii. The establishment of permanent market premises and opening up of marketing channels
- iv. The improvement of community awareness of women marginalized position for improvement and the encouragement of education among women and young girls to reduce illiteracy;
- v. The implementation of a number of other sub-programs aiming at health improvement, capacity building and the empowerment of women including training in leadership, communication and participatory approaches and the formation of women cooperatives and associations¹³⁰.

The implementation of lending and saving program started in 1995 on the basis of women's own expressed needs for credit to start income generating activities, to support already existing ones and have access to productive and other forms of assets to improve living standards. Based on their own experience most women expressed the need for loans to start food processing and sale of processed food, other income generating activities and the possession of assets.

The program started by financing only 72 women in one block and gradually extended to cover 600 women in 6 blocks in 2000. The amount of loans extended to all women grew rapidly from 4.5 million Sudanese pounds in 1995 to 28 million Sudanese pounds in 1998¹³¹. Credit has been extended to women either in cash or kind and the most needy women are given priority in credit allocation¹³². Loans which the Project extended, enabled women to have access to productive assets such as sewing machines, poultry and light livestock. They have also been enabled to start income generating activities such as food processing, soap making and provided seed cash to start small-scale trading in perfumes and vegetables and the construction of kiosk for the pursuit of trading activities.

¹²⁹ Oxfam, Dar Salam Income Generating Activities to Women Project, Progress Report, Oxfam, Khartoum, 1998, p.1-2.

¹³⁰ SDC, Dar Salam, A Report May1997-April 1998, 1998, pp.1-2.

¹³¹ CDC, Credit and Saving Project May 1999-April 2000, A Report (in Arabic), 2000.

¹³² The most needy women are identified from the information given in application forms which women have to fill in when they apply for a loan. In addition Project staff pay home visits to women to get more information to decide on priority allocation to women based on need.

The loans are repayable in installments within a specific depending on the amount and the kind of loan and cash collected from repayment is used in further credit allocations to cover more women. The money collected from women beneficiaries is deposited in a bank account to form the Revolving Fund for financing other needy women. The Fund is managed by the head of women groups under the direct supervision of the Project Team.

6.3.2. The Performance of Oxfam Dar Salam Project

In terms of enabling women to have access to assets and start income generating activities the Project has made successes but also marred with some failures. The success of the Project to enable to successfully pursue income-generating activities has been exemplified by the ability of women to repay installments. The repayment of installments of original loans extended was about 60%-70% during the period 1995/1996-1998/1999¹³³. The repayment of loans means that women have been able to generate cash to be able to pay the loans and also cover some of their household needs. However, the failure of some women (30-40%) to repay loans indicates inability or failure to earn sufficient cash income.

Limitations to the success of the Project, which the proportion of women defaulters indicates, are due to some shortcomings or constraints that accompanied or faced the Project. The Project has been accompanied by a number of problems major among which is the financial constraint. The amount of the loan provided is inadequate to meet the needs of poor women households and this partly accounts for the delay in or failure of the payment of installments. The need to meet family needs compel some beneficiaries to use some of the Project funds to meet food and other necessary needs. The failure or the delay of repayment of installments reflects the failure of the investment of the loan recipient, which also affects loan extension to other women beneficiaries.

Another constraint is the insufficiency or unavailability of raw materials, which leads to delay of production, increase in the cost of production and the delay of repayment. For example in soap making inputs are not accessed in time, clothes produced are difficult to market, and when marketed cash earnings drop because of the fluctuation of market prices.

6.3.3. Training and Adolescent Education

The lack of skills, experience and training among drought and war displaced in marginal urban areas, are the major causes of poverty. Inability to do a job to earn cash income, irregular work, and low cash income are mainly due to the lack of skills and experience among the displaced in Dar Salam. To improve their opportunities and living conditions the training program is an important component of Oxfam's Dar Salam Income Generating Activities among the displaced women in Dar Salam and thus it accompanied the extension of credit. The training program could be divided into two parallel activities. One is the training activities provided to grown-up women who are involved in income generating activities or those who are in need but have no work to earn cash income. The second is education and training for adolescents who are 10 years old or more and who have not been able to attend school or continue their education.

The training program for women aims to improve the living conditions and the position of poor displaced women in general. But more specifically, for women involved in income generating activities it goes together with the credit allocation program. It is meant to improve women skills for the success and the sustainability of income generating activities that the Project has supported to enable women earn and diversify the sources of cash income.

For women involved in income generating activities training accompanied credit allocation and women have been given training courses in petty trading, book keeping, accounting, soap making and food processing. In addition, the program offered sessions in hygiene and communication. To give some examples of the achievements of the training courses offered to women in 1996, 78 women were trained in petty trading and 72 women attended soap making training course in 1998¹³⁴.

¹³³ CDC, Credit and Saving Project May 1999-April 2000, [op.cit](#)

¹³⁴ Oxfam, Dar Salam Income Generating Activities Project, Annual Report, 1997.

The participatory approach was adopted in training with the group of women trainees participating by exposing on their experiences, put forward comments, receive advice and give feedback. The project has helped some women gain skills and gave them some knowledge necessary for the pursuit of income generating activities and subsequently contributed to help them increase cash income and improve living conditions.

Despite its success, the training component of the project has faced some constraints that limited its benefits to women beneficiaries. Training is limited due to the insufficiency of the number of trainers and thus the number of women having access to the training program the Project offered has been limited. Another constraint is that trainers themselves do not have sufficient training and thus women received poor training and this has been reflected in the limited success of other components of the Project.

The adolescent education component of the program, the second parallel training activity, aims at mobilizing resources to provide basic education to adolescents who were supposed to be attending schools. It attempts to aid children who are in school not to drop out and those dropped out of school to be to continue their education¹³⁵. The project has established 5 centers for educating illiterate adolescents and dropouts to get basic education¹³⁶. Despite the large number of adults selected for training very few were able to continue their education. The main factor is economic conditions which compels them to do some work to earn cash income to support their families or leave education centers altogether to pursue cash income earning activities. In 1995, 1000 above school age children and adolescents were selected but only 400 pupils completed the training program and of these only 126 were able to sit for exams and be transferred to formal education schools¹³⁷.

For those who dropped out of school or were not able to continue their education, they were assisted to get training in different crafts. Rather than establishing training workshop arrangements, the Project attempted to get adolescents to have training in existing workshops and vocational training centers. Arrangements were made for trainees to be attached to local workshops for apprenticeship to get practical experience or getting them enrolled to training in existing vocational training centers¹³⁸.

¹³⁵ To give some financial support to families, have access to school uniforms and other school needs.

¹³⁶ The idea is based on providing schooling similar to that pursued in government schools. Pupils, who are above, later sit for exams to be incorporated in formal education. In fact the widespread adoption of this kind education for grown-up children in marginal displaced areas prompted the Federal Ministry of Education to make special arrangement to incorporate them in formal education.

¹³⁷ CDC Dar Salam, May 1997-April 1998 Report, 1998, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Section Seven

INOs Conception and Anti-Poverty Action

IFAD's ENCCP

Introduction

With the exception of relief assistance all forms of development aid have been withdrawn from the Sudan after the present government (2003) took over office in a military coup in 1989. The International Fund for Agricultural Development is one of the few international organizations that have continued its development activities in the Sudan despite withdrawal of donor assistance. In this subsection a rural development project which deals with rural poverty and whose agreement had been signed earlier and the finance for the project was disbursed in 1989 before the military take over will be described and its impact on rural poverty reduction will be investigated. The limitations and constraints that have faced the project will also be highlighted. But one has to start with a brief review of IFAD's conception of poverty, its rationale and how IFAD's activities have impacted on poverty reduction.

During the 1980's, soon after its establishment in 1978, IFAD did not have a clear definition of poverty. As an international institution mainly concerned with agricultural development, its task have been to pool in resources from international donors and to function in close collaboration with national governments to support national governments' strategy for the development of the agricultural sector. So despite the absence of a clear definition and a focussed concern over poverty during the 1980s, IFAD was and has been targeting small farmers with projects and programs that aim at increasing production and productivity of both food and cash crops with obvious implications for rural poverty reduction. Formerly IFAD (during the 1980s and till the first half of the 1990s) was involved in hard infrastructure for the agricultural sector such as irrigation rehabilitation, land reclamation and rural buildings. Recently during the second half of the 1990s, IFAD has focussed on community development and the promotion of grassroots organizations and project activities covered micro finance development, agricultural production and rural financial services¹³⁹.

7.1. IFAD's Definition of Poverty

While in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s IFAD's emphasis was on targeting small farmers to increase production, productivity and rural incomes, recently (by the second half of the 1990s) its strategy has shifted with more focus on rural poverty. IFAD recognizes that "poverty [is] broad, multidimensional, partly subjective, variable over time, comprising capabilities as well as welfare, and in part relative to local norms, comparisons and expectations"¹⁴⁰. Countries use different, often non-comparable, national consumption poverty lines. (2) However, because of difficulties of comparison between national poverty lines IFADs adopts the simple poverty measure that defines poverty "as deprivation of sufficient consumption to afford enough calories, or as dollar poverty"¹⁴¹.

IFAD's definition of poverty on which policy practice is based is much broader than the narrow quantitative definition and criteria for its measurement. Qualitative attributes of poverty are understood to be closely associated with the quantitative poverty attribute; cash income. Using this World Bank dollar poverty measure, the report emphasizes that groups and communities poor in terms of income and consumption tend to be poor in other respects¹⁴². Those below the dollar-a-day poverty line spend at least 60-70% of all income on food, most of it basic food¹⁴³. Thus people living on only a dollar a day are usually unable to afford adequate clothing, housing, schooling and health care.

¹³⁹ <http://www.ifad.org/operations/regional/2002/pn/pn.html>, IFAD Strategy for Rural Reduction in Near East and North Africa, p.8.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter2.pdf>, Chapter 2, The Rural Poor, p.18.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.19.

¹⁴² Individuals are often classified as poor on some definitions but not on others. The report cites a number of cases from different countries in which people are in some respects and not on others. <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter2.pdf>, Chapter 2, The Rural Poor, p.12-15.

¹⁴³ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter1.pdf>, Chapter 1, p.2.

Inadequate education and health, common among the children of poor parents, restrict earning potential¹⁴⁴ and the possibilities of exist from poverty. The ill being caused by poverty is held to have many dimensions. Low consumption is only one, but ill being is linked to other dimensions: malnutrition, illiteracy, low life expectancy, insecurity, powerlessness and low self-esteem¹⁴⁵.

IFAD's 2001 Poverty report points out that there are serious measurement problems of poverty, related to other non-consumption-based poverty indicators and to self-assessment to allow comparisons¹⁴⁶. But it stresses that in whatever way such measurement problems are treated, IFAD considers that the proportion of the poor making their living in rural areas has remained, and is expected to remain high. More half the world's extreme poor depend for their livelihoods mainly on farming or farm labor. Although there is recognition that rural poor welfare depends on other forms of public action- on schools, clinics and civil order poverty reduction largely depends on an adequate share of public funds to be channeled into agricultural investment¹⁴⁷. Therefore effective poverty reduction by necessity requires resources to be reallocated to the agricultural sector and rural poor (IFAD Report 2001:2). Emphasis on the agricultural sector, for effective poverty reduction for IFAD, is mainly because in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America the majority of the poor make their livelihoods from agriculture and agricultural related activities. Thus strengthening agricultural productivity and assets are considered valuable components of the rural poverty reduction¹⁴⁸.

For practical purposes of project and program targeting IFAD identifies the rural poor in terms of their livelihood systems or shared characteristics such as ethnic group or gender. Small farmers are among poor rural groups identified in terms of production systems in the NENA sub-region¹⁴⁹.

7.2. Identification of Barriers to Exit from Poverty

To combat poverty, IFAD has identified a number of constraints that hinder the rural poor from surmounting their poverty conditions. One is the absence of local institutions that link the poor to administrative and economic institutions. In the absence of these local organizations, the rural poor are unable to claim their rights and have little chance to negotiate with powerful local elite groups. Lack of access to both clean drinking water and irrigation water is another constraint on the rural poor. Variable and fluctuating rainfall with frequent reoccurrence of droughts erodes the ability of the rural poor to produce food, earn cash, and in most cases reduce them to destitution¹⁵⁰. Lack of access to technology either because it is unavailable or that it is beyond the reach of the rural poor for its high cost is yet another barrier to the rural poor to be able effect improvement in their living conditions. Lack of access to physical and social infrastructure such as roads, storage facilities, schools, clinics and training centers, the lack of financial institutions and the prevalence of poor governance and violent conflicts are also identified as main constraints that trap the majority of the rural population in poverty¹⁵¹.

On the basis of constraints being identified, IFAD seems to have set up guidelines for the formulation of projects and programs to remove these constraints and enable the poor to improve their conditions. IFAD's 2001 Poverty Report highlights the importance of four aspects that are of critical importance for understanding the tasks of rural poverty reduction. First, institutions, markets, technology policy and asset possession arrangements have to consider the important role of food crops in the livelihoods of the rural poor because they provide most of the poorest with work, income, consumption and calories. Second, rural poverty reduction increasingly requires better allocation and distribution of

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter2.pdf>, Chapter 2, The Rural Poor, p.17.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter1.pdf>, Chapter 1, p.2.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter1.pdf>, Chapter 1, p.2.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.p.2.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter2.pdf>, Chapter 2, The Rural Poor, p.33.

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.ifad.org/operations/regional/2002/pn/pn.html>, IFAD Strategy for Rural Poverty Reduction in Near East and North Africa, p.6.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.7.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.7.

water. Much dry land already suffers from severe water stress and water is of critical importance for the rural poor livelihoods. In cases where inequality is very high, achieving the poverty target requires empowerment of the rural poor through higher shares, access and control of appropriate assets, institutions, technologies and markets. Fourth, particular groups – especially women – and methods – especially participatory and decentralized ones – merit special attention¹⁵².

One of the important issues which IFAD has increasingly recently incorporated into its projects and programs is the organization and empowerment of the rural poor through participation¹⁵³. Participation allows the poor a voice, and through a transfer of responsibility gives them the power to discover and determine ways to improve their lives. Empowering the poor for IFAD is the foundation of rural poverty alleviation¹⁵⁴.

7.3. IFAD ENCCP and Poverty Reduction

En Nahud District in West Kordofan lies in the semi-arid Savannah zone of the Sudan. Rainfall is seasonal, extends between July and September, and averages 350mm. The district covers around 59 000 km. A combination of subsistence farming, cash crop production and livestock rearing are the major economic activities. Farming is seasonal and annual rainfall fluctuates leading to frequent occurrence of drought. Infrastructure is weak and the area could be considered one of the poorest and marginal areas of the Sudan. Drinking water is in short supply; particularly during the dry season and constitute a major problem to the local communities in the region. Infrastructure is weak and the absence of roads is a major feature, transport is difficult and costly and access to markets is limited¹⁵⁵.

IFAD extended around US\$ 7 million¹⁵⁶ to finance a rural development project based on credit allocation to poor farmers to have access to a technical package and agricultural extension named En Nahud Cooperative Credit Project (ENCCP). The project stated aims is to improve the living conditions of the rural poor by increasing production and productivity of food and cash crops of exiting farm plots through credit to finance the purchase of inputs, agricultural implements and agricultural extension for improved farming practices¹⁵⁷.

The target group is poor small farmers with an estimated per capita income of less than US\$ 125 (less than a dollar a day) compared to the national average of US\$ 320¹⁵⁸. This group constitutes about 96% of the population in the project area. The remaining 4% represent high-income rich farmers who run large-sized farms and involved in trade and informal credit. Targeted peasant farmers are household heads who drive their livelihood from farming, not involved in trade nor informal credit. Poor women household heads were to receive about 15% of the short-term loans in addition to loans for women farms cultivated for food crops¹⁵⁹.

IFAD adopted a participatory approach in the different phases of the project formulation, implementation and evaluation. Participation of poor peasant farmers was organized through the formation of cooperatives for credit extension and allocation and development committees that facilitated communication of improved farming practices based on adaptive research and dialogue between peasant farmers and extension officers.

¹⁵² <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter1.pdf>, Chapter 1, p.3.

¹⁵³ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter2.pdf>, Chapter 2, The Rural Poor, p.37.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/chapter6.pdf>, Chapter 6, Institutions and the Rural Poor: Building Coalitions for Rural Poverty Reduction, p.191.

¹⁵⁵ IFAD, The Sudan, Country Portfolio Evaluation, Agricultural Credit Volume II, Annex IV, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department, 1994, p.6.

¹⁵⁶ IFAD, Republic of Sudan, Country Strategic Opportunity Paper, Near East and North Africa Division, Programme Management Department, Draft Version, Feb., 2002, p.iv.

¹⁵⁷ IFAD, The Sudan, Country Portfolio Evaluation, Agricultural Credit Volume II, Annex IV, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department, 1994, pp.6-7.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.7.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.6.

Participation of the target group (poor peasant farmers) was seriously adopted and put to practice in the formulation of project objective, implementation and other phases. What peasant farmers considered of priority to them to improve living conditions was incorporated in the project. Other intervention programs were developed and implemented as part of the project in response to the importance and priority peasant farmers assigned to them. Intervention programs developed and incorporated in the project design in response to peasant farmers' needs are local pest control, livestock restocking program and the provision of drinking water facilities¹⁶⁰. Pests cause huge damage to crops; leading to food and cash crop failure, severe food insecurity and destitution. Light livestock feed on crop residues, provide food for the family particularly children and sold for cash during times of bad need; e.g. crop failure and illness thus providing some kind of security against sudden shocks. Water consumes around 50% of poor peasant families' income¹⁶¹ particularly during the dry season. The participatory approach IFAD adopted in the formulation and implementation of ENCCP gave the poor a voice to state priorities that are most important to improve their living conditions and the project plan is redesigned accordingly to incorporate those priorities they have stated. These later proved to be the most successful of the Project components.

The project had been implemented during a seven-year plan (1989-1996). During the time span of the project, 98 cooperatives were formed for the extension of credit and the distribution of inputs and agricultural implements. Access to credit provided for the agricultural sector in Sudan though the state-owned Agricultural Bank of the Sudan is accessible only to rich farmers and traders. The ABS requires physical or financial assets as collateral for the extension of credit and poor farmers lack the collateral thus ineligible to have access to credit. Thus credit, which before the project was beyond the reach of poor peasant farmers, was made available by ENCCP with the cooperative providing collective social collateral. Credit extension covered around 23 000 families having membership in addition to the 98 cooperatives, in addition to 102 women in development groups¹⁶².

Agricultural extension in ENCCP was participatory in approach based on dialogue between extension officers and poor farmers. Adaptive research was adopted for the generation of improved seeds, improved farming practices and the proper application of inputs in cooperation with Agricultural Research Corporation in El Obied; the capital of North Kordofan. Farmers actively participated in field trial of farming and input application techniques developed in research stations and the verification of the optimum package to be recommended for adoption by the rest of fellow farmers. Around 185 agricultural committees and 600 contact farmers in 600 village communities participated in field trials and verification¹⁶³. Field demonstration of the success of the new package was used to convince others peasant farmers of the effectiveness of the new inputs, farming practices and implements in increasing production and productivity. The result was a widespread adoption of the newly introduced farming technology package and a marked rise in yield levels for both food and cash crops. In 1998 cash income from millet, sorghum, groundnut water melon and sesame subsequently increased by 13%, 11%, 115%, 66% and 66% respectively¹⁶⁴.

The livestock component of ENCCP provided restocking of livestock through the distribution of light livestock and the provision of veterinary services. The ENCCP distributed 6851 sheep and goats to 749 families in 55 villages. The project also extended access to veterinary medicines and vaccines and training in animal health practices¹⁶⁵. The importance of the livestock program arises from the

¹⁶⁰ IFAD, Technology Generation and Dissemination, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. IV, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.21

¹⁶¹ <http://www.ifad.org/operations/regional/2002/pn/pn.html> ,IFAD Strategy for Rural Poverty Reduction in Near East and North Africa, p.6.

¹⁶² IFAD, Technology Generation and Dissemination, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. IV, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.20

¹⁶³ IFAD, Technology Generation and Dissemination, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. IV, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.14

¹⁶⁴ These figures are reached by surveys carried by consultants for the Internal Evaluation Study for ENCCP in 1998. See IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. VIII, Farm Income, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.1.

¹⁶⁵ IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. VI, The Livestock Sector, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.20.

contribution light livestock make to poor families food security, cash income and the reduction of poor farmers' vulnerability to sudden and unforeseen shocks. In drought periods livestock constitute a buffer against a drop in crop yields and crop failure. Thus light livestock also provide food and turned into cash when needed.

Subsequently, despite all constraints that partly originate in macro-policy the government adopts (see below), farmers' per capita income increased from US\$125 to US\$ 234¹⁶⁶. Poor farmers benefited from credit, inputs, the extension of improved farming practices and the distribution of implements to increase production and productivity of food and cash crops. Water provision and livestock also contributed to the improvement of food security and family cash income. Farmers' response and active participation in project formulation and implementation activities, an important part of IFAD's rural poverty reduction strategy have contributed to the degree of success the project has managed to achieve.

7.4.1. IFAD's ENCCP Contribution to Rural Poverty Reduction

IFAD conception of poverty and perception of the identity of the poor has made it target and select the drought susceptible region of West Kordofan whose population practice farming and considered amongst the most impoverished regions of the Sudan. Within that region it targeted only poor peasant farmers who live on less than US\$ 1 a day with special priority given to female-headed households. Thus in line with its declared approach that targets the rural poor, IFAD was selective in terms of covering only poor peasant farmers and excluding rich better off farmers running large-sized farmers, involved in informal credit (*shail*) and trade.

IFAD envisaged achieving improvement of the living conditions of the rural poor in En Nahud area through increases in productivity and production of both food and cash crops. In En Nahud area there is no problem of the poor having access to land. Land is communally owned with individuals and households having the right of access and use in so far as they meet certain conditions that in essence ensure the right of each individual to have access to a piece of land. Subsequently access to land, as productive asset is not a factor leading to poverty in En Nahud area. Rather it is the drought, lack of finance, lack of inputs, poor farming practices, the use of rudimentary tools, pests and lack of drinking water.

ENCCP emphasis was on increasing food and cash crop production by increasing productivity of land already under cultivation and *not* by increasing the size of land put to cultivation. In a drought prone area this important for land environmental conservation and improved natural resource use. This fulfils one of IFAD's objectives of guarding against desertification that contributes to land depletion and the aggravation of poverty. Drought resistant improved high yielding and early maturing crop varieties were introduced to make use of the short spells of rain.

The increase in land productivity was achieved through the extension of finance to enable poor peasant farmers acquire in addition to improved seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and agricultural implements. Agricultural extension as means of transferring technical knowledge to farmers to improve farming practices was also one of the project's main objectives. Thus a combination of diffusion of technical knowledge adapted to local drought conditions, production inputs and badly needed credit were adopted for increased yield levels without increase in the size of land under cultivation. This approach is based on IFAD conception of the causes of rural poverty to be rooted, among other factors and forces, in the poor not having access to productive assets. Similarly, the provision of light livestock under the livestock restocking intervention program that contributed to meeting the rural poor food and cash needs, in ENCCP project area, was an intervention that follows from IFAD's understanding that to eradicate rural poverty it is necessary to involve the rural poor. This is also in line with the understanding that to empower the poor, reduce their vulnerability and help exist from poverty it is also essential to enable them to have access to productive assets. Credit extension also contributed to easing dependence on informal credit dealers. This has also enabled some poor peasant farmers to benefit from increased productivity levels by selling crops at *relatively* higher prices.

¹⁶⁶ IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. VIII, Farm Income, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.1.

Emphasis on the participation of the beneficiaries in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of IFAD's ENCCP project, have led to the formation and activation of a number of grassroots organizations including credit cooperatives, women in development groups, water users' associations and agricultural development committees. Grassroots organizations participated in project formulation and implementation¹⁶⁷. With all constraints to grassroots participation the formation of these organizations in impoverished rural villages is certainly a contribution to capacity building and the empowerment of the rural poor. Despite problems relating to the sustainability of these rural organizations, the experience the poor gained in running their own affairs and participating in decisions affecting their lives, would provide an important community based institutional set up for future poverty reduction actions.

Water in some villages is lacking and where water is available it is obtained at a very high cost. ENCCP water provision contributed to improving income by saving 50% of farmers' income previously spent on water. In addition women and children of poor families are freed from the burden of walking long distances to fetch water. The availability of water enabled families to use water more frequently in personal and household hygiene. Provision of water facilities was incorporated into the project design in response to the beneficiaries' demands. Water users' associations were formed to run water provision facilities. The formation of water users' associations to run and sometimes control water yards is a significant contribution to enhancing community self-reliance and empowerment.

However, the project did not deal with two issues important for the exit of the rural poor from poverty. The first is related to the poor access to markets as an important factor in poverty reduction, which IFAD's ENCCP did deal with. Although one of the main objectives of the project is to increase poor farmers' income through increased cash crop production resulting from increased productivity, marketing was a major constraint to achieve the poverty reduction objective. Marketing deprives poor peasant farmers" from at least 70%¹⁶⁸ of their potential income. Government monopolies and intermediaries benefit more from increased productivity and production achieved by ENCCP than rural poor farmers. Marketing arrangements using the cooperatives, which the project has established, could have eliminated intermediaries and IFAD could have negotiated a deal with the government for a pricing arrangement to increase peasant farmers' income.

The second problem is the neglect of health and education. Although the provision of water facilities, incorporated in the project redesign in response to the rural poor demands, has added to improving the poor living conditions and reducing the severity of poverty. A contribution to the provision and improvement of health has not been part of the project design. Nor has education, which is an important factor both in empowering poor rural communities and breaking the cycle of chronic poverty. IFAD has no mandate for the provision of health and education, but other health and education could have been included in the project design under IFAD's mandate to promote agricultural development for which human development is necessary. Alternatively, IFAD could have lobbied government for improved health and education delivery.

7.4.2. IFAD's ENCCP Contribution to Poverty Reduction: Limitations and Constraints

ENCCP project has made significant successes in improving the living conditions of the rural poor in En Nahud area in West Kordofan, however, the project has many limitations and faced a number of constraints. The limitations are related to the extent to which the project is a contribution to rural poverty in the Sudan and constraints relate to the problems that faced the project, which limited the project ability to achieve its objectives more effectively in the project area. The major limitation of ENCCP, despite its relative success, is that like any other area-targeted project its coverage is very limited, given the magnitude of rural poverty in Sudan. The project impact might be significant on the poor in the area but if the proportion of the poor in Sudan as a whole were taken into consideration, ENCCP impact is obviously limited.

¹⁶⁷ It is not clear whether peasant grassroots organizations also participate in evaluation.

¹⁶⁸ This estimate is based on export crops prices taking into account middlemen profits and transport costs and the real cash income peasant farmers receive. See IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. II, Macroeconomic Policies, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.6.

As a local project the project achieved some successes, yet it has faced with constraints and limitations that hampered the achievement of its objective of improving the conditions of poor peasant farmers *more effectively*. The major constraint is has been the sustainability of the project activities after it was phased out in 1996. Despite success in increasing production and productivity ENCCP faced a number of constraints emanating from macro policies that limited its success. More specifically, one these problems is poor marketing for poor farmers that reduced the benefits from increased productivity. Marketing in the isolated remote project area of West Kordofan is related to a number of other problems from which the project area suffers. One problem is poor infrastructure and the absence of roads that could enable farmers to have access to markets and sell their crops at higher prices. Even if farmers sold their crops at local markets the transport cost is very high. Subsequently poor farmers sell their crops to local traders and merchants at lower prices. The second is the poor farmers' need for cash immediately after harvest that compels them to sell their crops at low prices. Yet another problem is the dominance of state marketing monopolies over the export of some crops that set prices that are not remunerative for peasant farmers.

Agricultural extension activities have subsided because of lack of funds. The responsibility of carrying out extension activities has been devolved to the State after the implementation of the federal form of government in 1995 and the responsibility for it was shifted to the State and Local Councils. The inability of the Local Councils to provide for development and social services led to the disintegration of agricultural extension and the loss of extension staff. The distribution of improved seeds and drought resistant varieties resulting from adaptive field trials research activities was discontinued because of lack of funds¹⁶⁹.

ENCCP credit extension program, which has succeeded during the project period to finance poor peasant farmers' access to inputs and cash during critical times of the year, has ceased to function. The 1998 Bank of Sudan newly issued regulation of credit extension made 100% repayment of former loans a condition for the extension of new credit to the cooperative as an entity. Peasant farmer members of a cooperative who have been able to repay loan 100% are deprived as a result of being members of cooperative which is rendered ineligible for credit because other members of the same cooperative are unable to repay their debt¹⁷⁰. This negated the more IFAD permissive rules for credit extension to poor peasant farmers. Under IFAD ENCCP, peasant farmers members who were able to fully repay loans and who are members of a cooperative that was able to repay 80% of the loans were offered new loans. Thus peasant farmers who were able to repay loans were not penalized by the default of their fellow cooperative members¹⁷¹.

In the post ENCCP period, i.e., after the ENCCP was phased out, the ABS began to function under new conditions that have made difficult for peasant farmers to have access to credit. The conditions and regulations under which the Agricultural Bank of Sudan deals with individuals have been unattractive to peasant farmers. Functioning purely on commercial basis the ABS's interest rate charges under salam system amounts to around 33% and defaulters are sent to jail. Subsequently cooperatives have been deprived and peasant farmers as individuals refrained from having access.¹⁷² Moreover, the ABS has been reluctant under the conditions of drought and the risk of crop failure to extend credit to peasant farmers' beneficiaries¹⁷³.

Most of the water yards ENCCP rehabilitated constructed or which IFAD-assisted cooperatives to acquire water yards have been run down. Some water yards have been handed over to the community and some others were sold to the community financed on credit from the ABS. Most water yards under government owned Rural Water Corporation have been facing problems of breakdown, frequent stoppage or low productivity because of lack of funds to meet the need for spare parts, fuel

¹⁶⁹ IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. I, Institutional Performance, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.12.

¹⁷⁰ Omer Haggam, IFAD Coordinator, Informal Personal Interview, Khartoum, March, 2003. Also see Ibid., p.12.

¹⁷¹ Omer Haggam, IFAD Coordinator, Informal Personal Interview, Khartoum, March, 2003. Also see Ibid.

¹⁷² Omer Haggam, IFAD Coordinator, Informal Personal Interview, Khartoum, March, 2003.

¹⁷³ IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. I, Institutional Performance, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.12.

and other maintenance requirements¹⁷⁴. The government and Local Councils have been viewing water provision as a source of revenue rather than a service thus imposing higher water rates with greater burden on poor peasant farmers.

Some water yards functioning under community ownership (Water Users' Associations or Village Development Committees), while well maintained and running well are not secure under present conditions in which the relationship between government departments and local community organizations. Legislation that protects community ownership rights over assets the project has transferred to the community i.e., drinking water provision facilities are lacking. With the absence of clear legal status of community ownership, community control over such project assets remains unsettled and government officials often encroach on community rights¹⁷⁵.

Also functioning under the Cooperative Societies Law has had the disadvantage for the cooperatives to evolve as a sustainable effective community-based credit provision mechanisms. The Cooperatives Societies Law gives different government officials room for interference in the cooperatives' affairs. Cooperative officers, State Registrar, General registrar and the concerned minister continuously interfered in the cooperatives' affairs. The concerned minister has the authority to dissolve the society and confiscate its assets and funds without investigation or justification¹⁷⁶.

Sustainability of community controlled water associations has been hampered by the absence of participation of local community members. High illiteracy rate, migration of the articulate and young community members and the nature of voluntary unpaid labor and time which the poor could not afford all contributed to the Water Users' Associations being controlled by very few members. Corruption has become widespread and community interest in efficiently running and maintaining water yards has not been well preserved.

The credit cooperatives were based on voluntary work. This requires that individual peasant farmers devote considerable time and effort to run the cooperative without material compensation. The result has been a minority of peasants farmers run and control the cooperative with the majority busy running their own farms and affairs. This is facilitated by the migration of the young and articulate¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁷⁶ IFAD, The Republic of Sudan, Country Portfolio Review, Working Paper No. III, Credit, Report No.1277-SD, June 2001, p.32.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.2.

Conclusions

There is more data on the economics and politics of government policy and its impact on poverty than could be accommodated, presented and analyzed in the short space such a short paper allows. However, the evidence presented, despite all qualifications and reservation about the of the data used, indicates how different forms of government policy (both political and economic), and not simply structural adjustment, have led to the acceleration and the deepening of poverty during the 1990s to unprecedented levels. Using income as measurement, the implications of government policies during this period indicate that the over 90% incidence of poverty which some concerned organizations, including some international development institutions, regard as too high seem quite plausible. Given the oppressive nature of the regime and if other qualitative criteria of measurement i.e., empowerment and participation, are used the figure could even be higher.

The following are the main aspects of government policy, which have led to the rapid increases in poverty and its severity in Sudan during the 1990s that have been discussed in this paper.

That the war in Southern Sudan has halted production in around a third of the country disrupting normal economic activities and destroying the livelihoods of millions Southern Sudanese who have been displaced to Northern urban centers. Additionally this has increased the number of unemployed and vulnerable in Northern urban centers and constituted a severe pressure on an already under funded deteriorating educational, health, water and transport services delivery facilities.

Related to the above is that the war in the South in addition to worsening relations with most of Sudan's nine neighbors and the authoritarian character of the regime have all led to increased spending on the military and the security machine. Increased spending on defense and security has led to wasting scarce resources that could have productively used to stimulate an ailing economy. In addition, the expansion of regional bureaucracies and political organizations mainly functioning to maintain the regime in power has further increased non-productive spending and resource waste.

That extractions from the productive sectors have not been sufficient to meet increased government non-productive spending and subsequently government resorted to domestic borrowing that has not been matched by increased production. With problems crippling the productive capacity of the economy domestic borrowing has resulted in persistent inflation that eroded purchasing power depleted real incomes contributing a significant increase in both urban and rural poverty; particularly urban poverty.

That educational, health and water provision services received negligible funding compared to security and sovereign institutions. In fact resources allocated to educational, health and water provision facilities have been cut down while the number of facilities increased through self-help. This indicates that that the quality of these services and their delivery witnessed drastic deterioration both in urban and rural areas. Unlike in the past when educational and health services were provided free of charge to make them accessible to poor categories of the population, in the post 1990 period and despite the deterioration in the quality of the services, fees have to be paid for access. The majority urban and rural poor, who are unable to afford the cost are thus deprived and denied access to these vital services.

That government policy hampered the proper functioning of the economy and constrained the productive agricultural and industrial sectors. For the irrigated publicly owned and run agricultural sub-sector, government abandoned availing credit for the maintenance of the productive structure, while the lack of investment in agricultural services such agricultural extension, plant protection, storage and marketing has contributed to depressed yield levels and the decline in peasant farmers' cash incomes. Heavy taxation to generate resources to meet government massive non-productive spending burdened the different agricultural sub-sectors, blocked increased production and productivity but above all significantly contributed to the reduction of peasant farmers cash income and the acceleration and deepening of rural poverty. These are further aggravated by the lack of credit to peasant farmers, or credit that levied high interest rates pushing large number of farmers into indebtedness and jail. Peasant farmers in the rain fed sub-sector have been deprived from formal sources of credit. Either formal credit sources are not available or when available they have led to hardship and imprisonment; thus compelling poor peasant farmers to resort to informal credit that

levies very high interest rates to meet their production and consumption needs. Thus while the agricultural sector has provided the bulk of government resources, little of these resources have been reinvested back in it to maintain its productive infrastructure, let alone develop and improve the sector to realize its full productive potential. The end result of these policies has been a significant contribution to increased rural poverty.

That the industrial sector has similarly suffered from government policies including heavy taxation, power cuts, lack and high cost of inputs and spare parts which all constrained production and increased production costs. This has left little room for the industrial sector to compete with imported goods. Numerous industrial plants closed down altogether and those that continued to function have been working far below potential capacity; in some cases less than 20% below capacity. The consequence has been not only that industrial sector was unable to provide employment opportunities but laid-off workers thus contributing together with mass forced retirements for political reasons and the flocking in of war and drought-displaced to the increase in urban unemployment and urban poverty. With the decline and stagnation of the industrial sector, the informal sector grew and has become the major source of employment and income for the urban poor both "old" and "new". However, the government has provided little support in the form of training, technical assistance, credit, and marketing to improve the performance of the informal sector for increased income and supply of goods and services for the urban poor.

Policy Recommendations

From the preceding analysis and conclusions the following recommendations could be put forward as a basis for policy readjustment to deal with the primary causes of urban and rural poverty for an effective poverty reduction strategy:

The war in the South has to be halted and a negotiated deal restoring peace to the South and lifting the burden on the North has to be reached. Lives could be saved, war-devastated areas in the South rehabilitated and impoverished Southern displaced returned voluntarily to their homes. They have to be helped rebuild assets, reestablish their livelihoods and practice normal economic activities. This could also make a significant contribution to poverty reduction by lifting the burden of the cost of the war from the economy and provide the opportunity to lift millions of Southern Sudanese from poverty and destitution. In turn, this would form a significant contribution to rural and urban poverty reduction in the North. Halting the war would save resources currently wasted on running the war for productive use, stimulate production and economic activities in the South. The return of millions of Southern war-displaced to the South would ease pressure on the urban poor in the North.

Non-productive expenditure needs to be drastically cut down. Cuts in expenditure on the military is closely related to ending the war in the South, improving relations with Sudan's neighbors and reestablishing inter-tribal peace in Sudan's remote regions. Expenditure on the security machine is closely associated with the oppressive nature of the regime and cuts in expenditure on the security machine needs to be effected through democratization and the opening up of the political system, effective participation of all Sudanese and the restoration of free political environment. The present government bureaucracy is inflated, costly, ineffective and too ill motivated, because of low pay to perform its tasks. Cuts in expenditure on the bureaucracy necessitate an administrative reform and restructuring in which well paid, well equipped, lean and effective government machinery are to be re-established.

One implication for urban and rural poverty reduction of a policy reallocating resources away from non-productive uses by cutting down expenditure on the military, the security and the bureaucracy is that it allows restriction on domestic borrowing and contribute to curbing inflation. Positive signs of curbing government deficit financing on reducing inflation have already started to be manifest. Less government domestic borrowing has been recently been made possible by oil revenue, but further cuts in non-productive expenditure and reallocation of resources to productive sectors and infrastructure could also stimulate production and result in further reduction in inflation with positive impact on rural and urban poverty alleviation.

Part of the resources saved could be used for more support for educational, health and water provision facilities. More allocation of resources to health, education and water provision facilities would halt

further deterioration, improve quality, facilitate service delivery, reduce costs and make it accessible to the poor. This would also make a significant contribution to urban and rural poverty reduction.

Cuts in non-productive expenditure would avail and allow allocation of more resources to the productive sectors; namely agriculture. Expenditure on the provision of agricultural services; agricultural extension, production inputs, effective plant protection and the use of improved technology to increase agricultural productivity and production and rural incomes would not be possible without reduction in non-productive expenditure. More government investment in rural infrastructure such as roads, storage facilities, extension of electricity supply, communications and rural access to information technology would contribute positively to activate rural productive activities and improve living conditions. The stimulation of the agricultural sector to realize its productive potential is not only significant for increasing rural incomes and improvement of rural living conditions but also for economic growth and the performance of the economy in general. Increases yield levels and agricultural production would boost exports, contribute to improving the balance of payment, supply of domestic industry with cheap raw materials and increase rural incomes that would create a potential demand for locally manufactured goods and commodities both for production and consumption.

Related to cuts in non-productive expenditure is that it allows significant reduction in taxes, fees and dues imposed on the agricultural sector; namely the peasant sector with significant rural poverty reduction implications. The imposition of 10% Zakat on poor peasant farmers in the Darfur, Kordofan and other poor parts of the Sudan, who according to Islamic principles are entitled to the receipt of Zakat, could hardly be justified neither on Islamic nor economic grounds. Reduction in taxes, fees and dues would contribute to stimulating food and cash crop production, increasing rural incomes and improving living conditions.

The design of practical and cheap organizational formula to make rural credit, on easy terms, accessible to peasant farmers particularly in the rain fed sub sector and other farming communities involved in other agricultural sub-sectors, to meet peasant farmers' need for cash both for production and consumption. Cheap credit would contribute to increasing productivity, production and cash income to combat poverty. On this the former role of the Agricultural Bank of Sudan in providing short and medium term loans to farmers on easy terms of repayment needs to be restored.

With government withdrawal from providing funds to publicly owned corporations, the latter now rely on commercial banks credit to finance short term farming activities. Substantial long-term government credit support to publicly owned agricultural corporations; specifically for the maintenance and improvement of productive infrastructure has to be urgently arranged and effected to boost production and productivity and together with other measures would increase food production and peasant farmers' cash income.

The industrial sector also has to be stimulated to expand, improve quality standards, increase production and subsequently enabled to provide job opportunities to contribute to urban poverty alleviation. This entails the reduction of taxes, fees and custom duties on production, imported inputs, spare parts and new technology. Government investment in transport, communications, power plants to provide cheap energy as well as cheap inputs are necessary for the upgrading of the industrial sector. Improvement in agricultural production and raising rural incomes in part is a contribution to the improvement of industrial performance by broadening the local market and providing a steady supply of inputs.

The informal sector, which under the conditions of increased poverty and lack of employment opportunities, constitutes a refuge for the urban poor has to be supported through credit provision, the formulation of an appropriate legal framework, training, access to technology and improved marketing channels. Given its size and categories of the urban population involved in it, support for the informal sector to improve its activities, performance and earnings would contribute to lessening the severity of poverty for the majority of the urban poor.

Additional measures need to be taken in the credit extension, zakat collection, taxation, marketing, resource allocation and resource reallocation to reduce economic, social and spatial inequalities. This and other measures recommended above that would contribute to urban and rural poverty reduction,

need a restructuring of power relations and a change in the balance of power in favor of the poor; the majority of the Sudanese, at the national level.

The conclusions on the definitions the poor assign to poverty could be divided into two parts;

The first part is general conclusion drawn from the fieldwork and information gathered from community leaders and small samples of household heads on the definition of poverty, attempts to cope with it, the constraints they face and the kind of help they need to surmount poverty. The second is a more detailed conclusion on the same issues

In very general terms there is correspondence between the data generated through informal interviews with community leaders and the small sample surveys administered to heads of households in marginal urban, original urban and rural areas ;

The use of the participatory approach used in this research proved useful in showing differences and similarities. The differences correspond to location, economic activities and the category of the poor in local communities with regard to the definition of poverty, coping with it, constraints to coping with it as well as suggestions for the best form of help for effective poverty reduction.

Among all categories of the poor the definition of poverty has evolved over time and there has been a marked shift in the definition of poverty at present from the definition held in the past.

With regard to the definition of poverty in the past there are similarities as well as differences associated with the extent to which communities were penetrated by market relations corresponding differences in location, specific local conditions, economic activities and the categories of the poor;

There are some slight differences in the definition of poverty of households at present corresponding to location, specific local conditions and the dominant economic activities. However, there seems to be a tendency of convergence of the definition of poverty to mean the insufficiency of cash (and food production in some rural areas) to cover the cost of necessities including in addition to food and clothing the cost of health, water and education.

However, despite differences a general working definition of poverty in Sudan that combines both household and community poverty to guide macro policy emerges. It could be stated to be the inability to have regular sufficient cash income to meet food and other household needs including health, education and water. But taking the multidimensional character of poverty different definitions could be taken as guides to targeted location or group-specific poverty reduction interventions.

There are also similarities as well as differences in the coping mechanisms the poor adopted to cope with poverty.

The poor in Sudan of all categories and in all locations resorted to the reduction in consumption to economize on food and/or cash and changed consumption pattern to low quality cheap food to be able to cope with poverty.

Changes in economic activities to diversify sources of cash income, increase cash income or to economize on cash have been adopted by some of the poor, who have got the opportunity, to cope with poverty. However, the majority of all categories of the poor have not adopted changes in economic activities because of the lack of economic opportunities.

Those who got opportunities, of all categories of the poor irrespective of location and economic activities adopted migration, whether internal or external migration to earn cash, escape poverty and improve living conditions.

The changes in economic activities and economic behavior to diversify sources of cash income or to increase cash income differ according to the category of the poor, to location and the major economic activity.

In original urban areas, the poor (mainly salaried employees and wage workers), have adopted a number of adjustments to earn extra cash and diversify its sources. Working over time, or finding extra work to earn some cash income is another. In Khartoum some adaptations take the form of selling the house to purchase another cheap one and invest the balance in an income generating activity. Yet some others partition the house in which they live for rent to receive some cash income

at the end of the month to supplement salaries. Others turn their personal vehicles into taxis to earn some cash. In Kordofan cash income generating activities, the pursuit of farming and migration (both internal and external migration) are the major economic adjustments among the urban poor. In Gezira, they also pursue farming, income-generating activities and migration to improve cash.

A large number of the poor in marginal urban areas do not find employment opportunities and suffer unemployment. But for some of the poor in marginal urban areas¹⁷⁸, who have got opportunities, the intensification of labor, seeking additional work and the adoption of income generating activities to increase diversify sources and increase of cash income are the main adjustment adopted to cope with poverty. In Kordofan some resorted to farming during the rainy season, day labor, petty trading and casual labor. In Khartoum some of the poor in marginal urban areas have resorted to working as domestic servants, car washers and street vendors.

Adaptations with poverty among the rural poor are mainly shaped by location and their main economic activity; farming. Most poor farmers effected some changes in their farming practices depending on location and the opportunities opened to them and the constraints they face. Peasant farmers in the proximity of Khartoum abandoned subsistence farming altogether and turned to cash cropping encouraged by the nearby Khartoum market. In Gezira the constraints of state control over production impose, leave but little room for adaptation. In Kordofan some expanded cash crop production at the expense of food crop production, or increased the size of cultivated land to compensate for the loss in productivity and production, as a result of the drought, to increase food and cash income. Yet some others lacking in labor resources reduced the size of land allotted to cash crops and maintained the food plot and earned cash income by hiring themselves out to better off farmers. Some sought extra cash income by adopting some income generating activities, working as day laborers or migrated during the off-season to cities or outside Sudan.

The main general constraints facing all categories of the poor irrespective of location, economic activities and despite differences in adjustments adopted and other forms of constraints corresponding to location are:

1. Inflation which wipes out the fruit of any adjustment to increase cash income to translate into real income improvement
2. The lack of employment and work opportunities to increase cash income.;
3. The lack of capital to initiate income generating activities or to be able to have some productive assets to increase cash income and provide some measure of security;
4. The lack, poor or high cost of educational, health and water provision services;

On the basis of the poor own suggestions the best recommendations that follow from these recommendations that aid all categories of the poor cope and surmount poverty are as follows:

First the provision of capital, through credit or otherwise, to help in starting income generating activities and the possession of productive assets. This would not only improve cash income earnings but also provide security and give the poor some control over their lives. For the rural poor access to credit necessitates extending the work of lending institutions to rural areas and easing lending requirements and regulations to facilitate the poor access to credit. Credit for the rural poor also needs to be wide-ranging that includes not only credit for production, but also consumption and marketing. Credit in rural areas also has to extend beyond agricultural activities to encourage other income generating activities during the off-season. For the poor in marginal urban areas, credit is also important for starting income generating activities, acquiring assets and having some measure of security. This also applies to the poor in original urban areas.

The second suggestion for effective poverty reduction, is provision of employment of opportunities that would enable the poor make use of the only productive and income generating asset they possess; their labor. This applies to all categories of the poor but more significant for the poor in marginal urban areas because they rely on fluctuating cash earnings as the only source of subsistence. For the rural poor employment opportunities are important during the off-season and also for those who rely only on wage labor. The poor in urban original urban areas also need employment opportunities but

¹⁷⁸ Mainly unskilled casual laborers, petty traders, street vendors and self employed in the informal sector.

because they often have the skill and qualifications their prospects are better than the poor in urban marginal areas who without work would remain destitute. The poor in marginal urban areas rely on employment as the only source of cash income to purchase food and other necessities.

The third suggestion for effective poverty reduction, is the provision of cheap good quality educational, health and water services to be accessible to the poor. The provision of good quality services would enable the poor to educate their children and exit from poverty, rid themselves of disease be and able to labor and earn cash. But above all providing these vital services at low cost would make them accessible to the poor and also save badly needed cash to be spent on other necessities. This means establishing these service facilities where they are needed and do not exist, rehabilitating and providing equipment, staff and material where they exist but in disrepair or malfunctioning and reducing charges and fees for accessing the services.

The fourth suggestion is the stabilization, if not the reduction, of necessary commodity prices first to halt further deterioration in living conditions for the poor and then to make the extra cash income they earn turned into real income improvement.

In addition to the above, there are some other constraints specific to categories of the poor and their location, i.e., poor category and location specific constraints to which the poor put forward their own suggestion for effective coping with poverty:

The poor in urban marginal are the most affected by unemployment and low income because they have lost both subsistence production and reciprocal social support mechanisms. Because they lack the skills and experience to earn a living in an urban setting they face real constraints in getting jobs and when they get them, they are low-paid and irregular. Irregularity of income is a source of vulnerability and insecurity for the drought and war displaced in marginal urban areas. Another main constraint which the poor in marginal urban areas have to face in their attempt to survive in an urban environment for which they do not have the skills and experience in their informal activities are the oppressive measures undertaken by the state authorities. The requirements of licensing and the payment of fees limit their ability to cope with poverty through the adoption of informal work.

One suggestion for some groups of the war-displaced is ending the war and the restoration of peace to be able to return their home villages to pursue farming and animal rearing and resume their normal life. Another suggestion, which some poor displaced in marginal urban areas put forward is the provision of vocational training to develop skills for regular and better-paid employment together with the provision of financial assistance to have access to productive assets. The legalization and organization of informal work and the cancellation or reduction of fees is another measure that they suggest to facilitate pursuing income earning activities in the informal sector.

Another constraint, which is also a source of vulnerability and insecurity, is the legal status of their dwellings; in some cases these are makeshift dwellings. Some poor displaced areas around cities are still considered squatter settlements and thus illegal. Subsequently some of the poor in marginal urban areas live under the constant threat of eviction.

The suggestion to improve conditions is to have their dwellings the legal status of which is clear. This applies to war and drought displaced in almost all urban areas in Sudan but more noticeable in Gezira and Khartoum.

All categories of the poor have to contend with the inability to have access to the necessary educational, health and water delivery facilities, but the poor in marginal urban areas, to varying degrees, suffer more than other categories of the poor. In addition poor environmental and sanitary conditions are more of a problem for the poor in marginal urban areas.

The suggestion is, more concern and priority to improve and facilitate the performance and access to service delivery facilities. In addition, there is a need to improve sanitary and environmental health conditions through programs of primary health care to combat the spread of infectious disease and the improvement of environmental health.

In addition to constraints to coping with poverty and recommendations for effective poverty reduction that apply to all categories of the poor cited above, the poor in marginal areas face specific constraints to their coping with poverty. As most of the poor in original urban areas are salaried employees in the

main, the stagnation of salaries relative to the increase in the prices of necessary commodities is one of the major constraints to their coping with poverty. Subsequently they suggest increase in salaries and wages or the implementation of measures to reduce the prices of necessary commodities or both in order to improve their real income.

In addition to the constraints they confront like all other poor categories in Sudan, the rural poor face specific constraints that relate to the practice of farming and location. Although some of these constraints might apply to all peasant farmers, they are of considerable importance in some locations than others.

Pests that wipe out crops are a significant constraint for peasant farmers in the Sudan irrespective to location, however, it is more of a problem for peasant farmers in Kordofan than for the rural poor in Gezira and Khartoum. Credit is similarly a major agricultural production and productivity constraint for all the rural poor but it is more significant in Kordofan than Khartoum and Gezira. High taxes, transport and the lack of marketing facilities are equally significant production problems for almost all peasant farmers in Gezira, Khartoum, and Kordofan.

The suggestions of the rural poor that follow from these constraints and problems, are effective pest control, accessible and timely provision of credit, reduction of taxes and zakat, the provision of marketing information, marketing credit and marketing information.

There are also some constraints encountering the rural poor in their attempt to cope with poverty that are more location specific. The lack of sufficient and untimely delivery of irrigation water which contribute to the drop in production, productivity and cash income constitute significant constraints to the rural poor in Gezira and state-owned irrigated farms around Khartoum. To contribute to the improvement of production, productivity and cash income the irrigation system, whether relying on gravity irrigation or diesel-powered water pumps has to be rehabilitated and continuously repaired to ensure sufficient and timely irrigation water delivery.

Peasant farmers in Gezira and in Khartoum suffer incurring high cost of production relative to producer prices. This does not allow making sufficient cash earnings to meet living expenses and is one main constraint to coping with poverty. The suggestion is to implement measures to reduce the cost of production or improve producer prices to be able to cope. Despite shouldering all costs of production in Gezira the state maintains control over production, cropping pattern and produce. Tenant farmers do not have the freedom to respond to market opportunities and take farming decisions. Thus for tenant farmers in Gezira, the loosening of state grip over production to allow freedom of decisions on what to produce and with what mix of factor costs in response to market opportunities and constraints is one major suggestion Gezira tenant farmers put forward to improve their conditions.

Thus while there are suggestions to surmount constraints and broaden opportunities that apply to all the poor of all categories and locations, there are some others which are more category or location specific. This corresponds to the differences in local conditions and the forms of economic activities pursued. The implication is that effective poverty reduction entails beside macro-policy adjustment location-specific, category specific, area specific interventions in the form of poverty reduction projects and programs. The adoption of combinations of macro-policy adjustments and more targeted interventions based on detailed micro studies adopting participatory approach seem to make the success of poverty reduction actions more likely.

The poor suggestions for effective poverty reduction do not in general differ markedly from the policy recommendations based on the analysis of the causes of poverty put forward above. However, the poor views reflect the need for ore location, group and regional-specific poverty reduction intervention to complement macro policy adjustment. The poor suggestions and fieldwork among the poor provide a closer insight into complex local conditions that would be lost in macro abstractions. Thorough study and understanding of local conditions using the knowledge of the poor seems to be a necessary condition for the success of location specific projects and programs to complement macro policy readjustment.

Government conception of poverty and action belittles the problems of poverty in Sudan and does not give the importance it warrants. Government anti-poverty action passed through two phases; the first

phase 1990-1996 government did not recognize that there had been a widespread poverty problem. Government Definition of poverty is inconsistent and poverty and the poor have been assigned different interpretations leading to inconsistency on the estimation of the incidence of the poor in society. Poverty understood in terms of subsistence or provisions insufficiency whether for the day or for the year and taken only to refer to material needs and specifically those for food. Although there are some scattered pronouncements and attempts to broaden the definition to include other economic and social needs to cover education, health in addition to the empowerment of individuals and communities, the predominant official stand is the one that views subsistence or provisioning to be in terms of food. It is this conception on which government approach to poverty in general and Zakat support in particular are based.

One factor, which did make the government to recognize only a fraction of the poor, is the political sensitivity of the poverty and the attempt to disguise it. This view persisted during both the first phase and the second phase (1996-). The Zakat Chamber, which has been established since 1990 has been assigned the task of dealing with the poor according to government conception that corresponds to the extremely poor. Zakat Chamber has been an ineffective instrument or means to deal with the poor even according to the Government narrow conception that captures only the extremely poor.

The Zakat in fact levy payment on who should be Zakat recipients, according to the Zakat Chamber own criteria for the levy and distribution of Zakat, particularly the rural poor (poor peasant farmers in both the rain-fed and the irrigated agricultural sub-sectors). Being ineffective in alleviating the poverty of the extremely poor, because around the third of revenue is spent on the Chamber's running cost, payments to the poor are insufficient and intermittent and there is no objective criteria for the identification of the poor. The random selection gives "trusted individuals" leeway to enlist relatives and supporters of the regime who might not be poor. Fieldwork has demonstrated that the poor do not think of the Chamber as a source of support because it requires long application procedures, delays and support is insufficient.

Although government attitude towards poverty persisted in terms of actual policy practice to the present (2003), in terms of not dealing with the root causes and the ineffectiveness of Zakat Chamber, however, more attention is paid to poverty in recent years.

This has been a response to external stimuli; the pressure from international development institutions to formulate a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper with the incentive to receive debt relief under the HIPC Initiative. The Zakat Chamber has slightly been modified but still remains in general ineffective. Local state institutions at the State level, and in this similar to Zakat Chamber, have been isolated from the people in general and the poor in particular. Resources allocated to states have been wasted on enlarged State bureaucracies forming the federal system rather the social development and the poor. In fact like the Zakat Chamber they have a burden on the poor rather a source of poverty relief.

NGOs hold and pursue a much broader and multi-dimensional conception of poverty than the government. Although some cases of NGOs' activities among the poor cited in this report are by no means exhaustive of NGOs work and activities among the poor in Sudan, these could provide a general indication of NGOs thinking and practical work on poverty reduction.

NGOs do more on poverty reduction and alleviation than on poverty theorization and thus NGOs have produced little literature on poverty definition, but done more on the practice of poverty alleviation. Nonetheless, from SCF's and Oxfam's activities in Sudan and from the examples cited above, the implicit or sometimes explicit conception of poverty on which NGOs ground their activities is more than just a lack of cash income to meet necessary needs. NGOs' conception of poverty is multidimensional and that it encompasses social economic as well as political attributes. Thus the issues of gender, participation, health, education and empowerment count as much as food security and cash income in the implicit or explicit conception of poverty to guide practice.

That although NGOs' approach is more encompassing and takes a broader conception of poverty than the government, the main shortcoming of NGOs work among the poor is its limited coverage; only few poor of all the poor of the country benefit. Implicitly this means the scale and magnitude of poverty is too great for NGOs actions alone to handle.

Even within this limited scale of NGOs activities success is limited due to numerous constraints that inherent in the broader socioeconomic and political structure within which they operate, within the local community and sometimes the NGOs themselves.

Despite limited success, NGOs' practical approach to poverty alleviation, based on some forms of participatory involvement of the poor, positions them much closer to the poor. This equips NGOs, when it comes to the adoption of local level projects to alleviate poverty with the necessary expertise and knowledge to work with the local poor people and be able undertake more effective poverty alleviation interventions.

More detailed studies on the successes, failures and constraints the face NGOs projects are necessary to learn from NGOs experiences of working with the poor at grassroots levels. Such studies could generate invaluable information to guide future local and location specific interventions to alleviate poverty.

International Fund for Agricultural Development is one of the international organizations that work to alleviate poverty, particularly among the rural poor, worldwide including Sudan. During the 1980s IFAD general policy emphasis was on increasing agricultural production and productivity of both food and cash crops by investing in improving rural and agricultural infrastructure (e.g., roads, irrigation networks) to increase agricultural production with the aim of helping small poor peasant farming improve their living conditions.

Since the late 1990s IFAD's emphasis on poverty and the rural poor has been more pronounced and specific and the conception of poverty has been more broadened. IFAD currently adopts the multidimensional definition of poverty that involves both quantitative cash income and qualitative attributes and criteria for poverty measurement. However, IFAD uses the quantitative criteria of a minimum of a dollar a day criterion as a simple working definition of poverty together with other selection criteria to identify group or location specific rural poverty and the rural poor to target its poverty reduction intervention. Qualitative aspects of poverty are seen as closely associated with the quantitative cash income criteria and thus improvements in cash income are expected to lead or at least influence improvements in nutrition, food security and health.

However, in practice and in line with its conception of the multidimensional nature of poverty the adoption of the participatory approach and the involvement of poor peasant farmers in En Nahud area in Sudan, contributed to the empowerment of the poor. This has enabled poor peasant farmers to voice their priorities and say what they consider the best to improve their conditions. Through their participation poor peasant farmers have been able to put to the fore the point that increasing productivity and production and cash income are not enough to improve their living conditions and diminish their vulnerability to shocks. Poor peasant farmers emphasized that clean water provision, restocking of livestock wiped out by the drought and the control of pests would make significant distribution to helping them deal with poverty and improve their living conditions. These suggestions, which have been incorporated and implemented as programs into the project, have had made significant contribution to poverty reduction in the project area by saving cash, improving health, nutrition, and security and increasing production and productivity.

Thus in general ENCCP economic activities of providing credit, inputs, equipment, extension, livestock, water and the participation of poor farmers conditions has contributed to the improvement poor peasant farmers living conditions and the combat of rural poverty. Yet some of these activities have not been sustained for a host of socioeconomic and political factors and constraints.

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