

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Safeguarding and Revitalizing of Traditional Craftsmanship in Sudan

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1- Introduction:

In accordance with the UNESCO convention for the intangible cultural heritage, this paper seeks to present the pivot role of traditional craftsmanship by virtue of its diversity and intercultural nature for the societies of the Sudan . Based on this solid fact and its value, there grows substantial need for advancing means to safeguard and revitalize of traditional craftsmanship. Masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity are selected thereafter.

2. Definitions:

For the purpose of clarifying the terms, a set of relevant definitions has been introduced. These are:

2-1 The intangible cultural heritage:

According to the UNESCO convention. the intangible cultural heritage of humanity is defined “ as the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills that communities, groups and, in some case, individuals recognize as part of that cultural heritage. It is sometimes called living cultural heritage.”(1)

The intangible cultural heritage of humanity is transmitted from generation to another. It is also being renewed and recreated due to the social change resulting from different reasons. The element of cohesion built in the structure and function of the society facilitates the process

and brings the balance to the society, discarding the nonfunctional items by substitution and recreation , and keeping the functional ones intact .

The use of the term intangible (untouched), to refer, as the UNESCO convention, to the material and non- material aspects of culture seems to be paradoxical . In fact, material aspects of culture are expressions of non- material ones . They comprise artifacts associated with diet traditions, beliefs, festivals , customary rituals and different aspects of life . They are folk traditions which are unique, and are inseparable in the form of material vis-à-vis non- material . To this end, the term intangible refers to material and non- material aspects .

2-2 Safeguarding traditional craftsmanship:

Safeguarding denotes –as the convention specifies–ensuring the viability of intangible cultural heritage , and taking whatever necessary measures to identify , document ,research , preserve ,protect , promote and safeguard the cultural heritage in its territory , together with the participation of the group (s) in concern , and the relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

2-3 Revitalization of traditional craftsmanship:

Revitalizing of tradition craftsmanship denotes recovery and preservation of the cultures of the society. This may be carried through education , modernization of craftsmanship , museums, researches and recorded materials. It is a crucial step towards development of world's intellectual practices.

2-4 The Masterpieces of the traditional Craftsmanship:

According to the UNESO convention the masterpieces is a list of artifacts submitted by each member state each two years with a single example or more.

3. Craftsmanship in Sudan:

The history of the Sudan provides since 9th millennium B.C a record of accumulated technical knowledge based in its tradition and life style. Since early 20th century scientific documentation of material culture started, but with slow pace, exemplified by archaeological discoveries, ethnographic studies and very few museums three of which are located in the east, west and north.

Later efforts have been dedicated to academic and research activities and annual exhibitions, of what so-called Sudanese folklore display, take place mainly in Khartoum, the capital of the state.

The burden of documenting, preserving through research and museum laid up on the institute of African and Asian studies, however, some other relevant academic departments have played a role.

The early and careful attention of Sudan's craftsmanship is not accidental. The country has multiple and distinct cultural groups carrying different cultural traditions, customs, languages and make variable folk industries to fulfill different cultural needs. The case has intensified Sudan's culture and traditional knowledge. Whereby these groups share some traditions and use similar crafts, they show at the same time wide differences in others. The touch of unity and diversity shaping Sudan's culture is resultant from those aspects.

Traditional craftsmanship is deeply rooted and functional in past and present day Sudanese life. Although the main occupations are farming and animal keeping in addition to a small group working in services sector, the overwhelming majority of these groups are carrying traditional crafts making as part-time occupation. The farmers exploit their leisure time in non rainy seasons in making crafts, whereas the

nomads find themselves far away from the market utilize their resources in making crafts industry. The art is carried by both men and women.

That current societies of the Sudan are prone to different elements of culture from different localities and directions, in and out of the country. This is due to the easily dispensable technology, means of transportation, movement of people, development of means and media of communication. These are agents of accelerated change especially in the craftsmanship. The case of traditional craftsmanship, therefore, deserves safeguarding and revitalizing.

4- safeguarding and revitalizing of traditional craftsmanship :

The process of safeguarding and revitalizing craftsmanship should be conducted and classified on two levels. On a macro- level the measures are taken with consideration to the state territory, whereas in the micro - level they are rendered to the level of the region in state. Craftsmanship that are popular and wider dispensed in the state should be considered on the basis of fulfilling the needs on that level whereas some items are considered on regional (micro) level .

To conduct safeguarding of traditional craftsmanship in Sudan , the state should urge and encourage surveys research in order to prepare an inventory of those items with the purpose of identifying , classifying , documenting, recording and collecting of samples. The success of identification and documentation depends on carrying rigorous fieldwork , encourage research , build museums and archive centres , this is in addition to seeking means for protection as being national asset or property. The garment (glabiyyal) among other forms of folk material culture has been reproduced by other states to the markets of the Sudan . Protection in this sense denotes the right of the property to the state and acknowledges it.

A further step should be undertaken in order to revitalize Sudan's craftsmanship. This depends on creating favourable circumstances for the artifacts to continue, that is to preserve its function perfectly in the society. Attaining this goal is made by under taking following measures

- A. Design curricula in formal and non – formal education for the development of techniques and the final production of the items .
- B. Provide the artisans with assistance in the form of equipment , training, raw material and access to different exhibitions .
- C. Constitute a council for caring with craftsmanship affairs for the sake of following up development processes and hence its revitalization .

5- Masterpieces of the Traditional Craftsmanship in Sudan :

The Sudan is singled out by its multiple items of traditional craftsmanship . As such the masterpieces should include many items that characterize , define and single out the societies of the sudan. The prescribed masterpieces are below:

5-1 The national masterpieces of the Sudan :

1. The garment (Gallabiyyg)
2. The turbart (AL – Imma)
3. The cap (AL –Tagiyyg)
4. Al Thuwb
5. Al – Angariab
6. Al Hinna decoration
7. Al Sawt
8. Al Tabag

9. Al Arragi
10. Al Nahas
11. Pottery making

5- 2 The regional masterpieces of Sudan: (preliminary)

Eastern Sudan:

Al – Sdairi

Al-shutal

Al- Jabana

Southern Sudan

- Ivory bracelet (Swar)
- Brass bracele (Swar Al.Nahas)
- Sharuq boat

Darfur :

- Tanning Tradition
- leather – made artifacts
- Kukab. Spear
- Safrwk
- Al- Bartal

Kordofan:

Al- Shibriyya

Northern Sudan :

Al – Tambour

AL – Sagiqa

Blue Nile:

AL- Nashshap . (the bow and the arrow)

AL- Waza

Notes:

1. *w w w. chinadaily. Com*, updated 2004.
2. Kolgen, Stefan and Ann Laenenn, How to Open up our Intangible Cultural Heritage in a Digital Age , in *http: w w w. Kandle. be*
3. Christal, Mark and other, Museum Couaborations for Cultural Revitalization, Nathional Museum of the American Indian , U.S.A.,2001.