

Impediments to the Growth of Cottage Industries in Kakamega County, Kenya

PaulPeter M. Makokha

P. O Box 51175 – 00100 GPO, Nairobi, KENYA.

Email: paulpetermakokha@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Cottage industries play a significant role in Kenya's socio-economic development. However, a number of obstacles inhibit their growth. This research paper, which employed an exploratory research design, unearths these impediments. The major challenges cited by potters, crude sugar producers, brick-makers, liquor producers, masons, carpenters, traditional medicine persons, charcoal producers, weavers, bakers, bicycle repairers, flour-grinders, and shoe-makers and repairers in Kakamega County were: inadequate capital, competition, lack of ready market, scarcity of raw materials and unfavourable weather.

Key Words: Impediments, Growth, Cottage Industries, Kakamega

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rasheed (2000), in *Four Essays of Development*, argues that Africa's underdevelopment problem stems, to a great extent, from basic structural inadequacies such as low productivity, predominance of subsistence and commercial activities, and limited technological know-how. The interaction of these inadequacies with mass poverty, the development bias in favor of urban areas and a number of other external and internal aggravating factors, including misguided reform and development policies, he contends, have precipitated the crisis of underdevelopment on the continent.

The *Fourth Human Development Report (2005)* identifies poor infrastructure as a major impediment in the growth, expansion, and productivity of cottage and small-scale industries. The report notes that the major constraints are the present restrictions on the cottage or small-scale industries, on the one hand, and the inadequacy of public services on the other. Most local authorities lack the basic infrastructure for industry and do not have suitable zones to serve as incubators for these industries and enterprises too. Thus, the report concludes, these industries lack visibility and cannot foster a sustainable linkage with medium and large-scale industries.

Coughlin (1988) observes that cottage and small-scale industries suffer many disadvantages when competing against medium-scale and large-scale enterprises. Often, they have management, technical, financial, and marketing difficulties that bigger firms do not experience. He notes further that the small indigenous manufacturers are often unjustifiably handicapped when competing against large manufacturers.

Koyano (1965) points out that among Japan's traditional crafts, many could not adapt to the changes in lifestyles which accompanied industrialization, and consequently, they suffer from technological stagnation or are even on the verge of extinction.

Coughlin (1988) cites policy and implementation deficiencies. He states that the absence of governmental policy concerning certain issues and the malfunctioning implementation of existing policies restrain Kenya's industrialization. He suggests that the policies regarding cottage, small-, medium, and large-scale industries have to be reviewed for significant progress to be made. He observes that cottage and small-scale industries suffer many disadvantages when competing against medium-scale and large-scale enterprise. Often, they have management, technical, financial, and marketing difficulties that bigger firms do not experience.

Coughlin (1988) points out that in some cases, economic development strategies can gradually generate forces both favoring and opposing the further development of a nation's economic base. He further notes that sometimes these conflicts of interest have caused the government's policies for industrial development to be inconsistent or have scuttled their implementation.

Ndam (1991) observes that in India, the numbers employed in handicraft and traditional artisan industries have reached the point where they must be shielded from competition to which they are vulnerable, especially in the short-term.

Staley and Morse (1965) point out that the artisans were usually considered the most prosperous elements of the community. Successive changes in the economic and social structure profoundly influenced the way of life of the people, their occupations and trades with the result of that traditional crafts are declining, and the number of trades practiced and the variety and quality of the products manufactured, are constantly diminishing. Imported goods and similar commodities manufactured in factories within the country itself have competed strongly with handmade products, and traditional crafts are constantly losing their share of the home market. They further note that operations were highly seasonal in most of the industries.

The Ministry of Industrialization's *Strategic Plan (2008-2012)* highlights Kenya's development challenges in the global, regional, and national arena. These challenges traverse the political, economic, socio-cultural, as well as the technical, legal, and environmental. They include; insecurity and lack of national cohesion, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as the absence of peace. Majority of the micro and small industries are informal, rural-based, and have a high mortality rate. Due to the informality and concentration of formal firms in major towns, there are weak linkages, inadequate business development services and subcontracting arrangements with the medium and large firms. Similarly, these business development services are not readily available and affordable to most micro, small and medium industries.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This research paper employed the exploratory research design (field studies). This design was preferred because the study was basically a fact-finding mission; to find out the impediments to the growth of cottage industries in Kakamega County, Kenya. The research was both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

2.1 Areas of Study

Kakamega County is a part of the larger Western Province of Kenya. It is predominantly inhabited by the Luhya-speaking community. This study was conducted in three districts in the county, namely: Kakamega North, Kakamega East, and Lugari.

Kakamega North District is situated off the Eldoret-Webuye Road, on the way to Kakamega Town. It is 427.4 square kilometres in size, has a population density of 480 persons per square kilometre, and 40,635 households with an approximate population size of 205,166 people. This district has four divisions, namely: Kabras Central, Kabras South, Kabras, East, Kabras North, and Kabras West (*Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009*). However, due to the constraints of time and finances, the study in this district was confined to Manda Sub-Location, which is in Sirungai Location, Kabras North Division.

Kakamega East District is located along the Kakamega-Kisumu Highway. It is 445.5 square kilometres in size, has a population density of 358 persons per square kilometre, and 34,177 households with an approximate population size of 159,475 people. This district has three divisions, namely: Shinyalu, Ileho, and Kakamega Forest. Due to the constraints of time and finances, the study in this district was limited to Mukhonje Sub-Location, situated in Ilesi Location, Shinyalu Division.

Lugari District is situated along the Eldoret-Webuye Road. It is 668.9 square kilometres in size, has a population density of 437 persons per square kilometre, and 59,476 households with an approximate population size of 292,151 people. This district has three divisions, namely: Matete, Lugari, and Likuyani. Because of the limitations of time and finances, the study in this district was confined to Kivaywa Sub-Location, which is in Chevaywa Location, Matete Division.

Kakamega North, Kakamega East, and Lugari Districts have their provincial headquarters in Kakamega Town, also the county headquarters. They receive fairly high levels of rainfall throughout the year, and agriculture is the dominant economic activity. Some of the crops cultivated in these districts include: sugarcane, maize, beans, sunflower, potatoes, cassavas, fruits, et cetera. A map of Kakamega is shown in Figure 1.

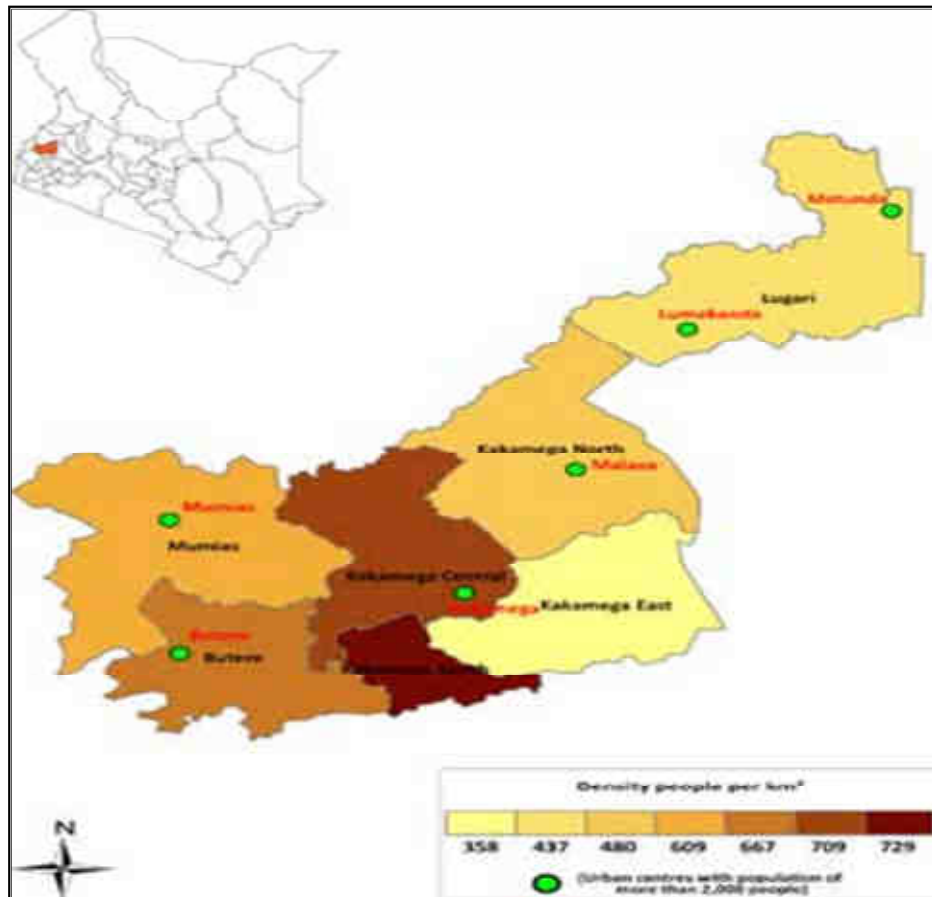


Figure 1: A map of Kakamega County, Kenya.

2.2 Unit of Analysis and Unit of Observation

The unit of analysis was the owners and workers in cottage industries while the unit of observation was the cottage industries in the areas of study.

2.3 Sampling Design and Procedures

Manda, Mukhonje, and Kivaywa Sub-Locations were purposively selected for the research study. This was after a reconnaissance trip to the areas of study exposed the types of cottage industries the researcher had a keen interest in. The information obtained from the local leaders of Manda, Mukhonje and Kivaywa revealed that these sub-locations had 180, 200 and 170 cottage industries, respectively (a total of 550).

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), from a population size of 550, a sample size of 226 is to be used. The Proportionate Random Sampling procedure was applied to come up with a sample size of 70, 82, and 74 respondents in Manda, Mukhonje and Kivaywa, respectively, who were picked out through Simple Random Sampling.

2.4 Sources of Data

2.4.1 Primary Data

The sources of primary data included youth, men, and women owning or working in the cottage industries, local leaders and key informants in the region.

2.4.2 Secondary Data

These included information from publications at the district and national level, for instance, district development plans, national census reports, et cetera.

2.5 Methods of Data Collection

2.5.1 Observation

In the course of the study, snapshots of the various forms of cottage industries were taken, including those of respondents in their natural setting. An observation check-list was used.

2.5.2 Focus Group Discussions

A well-selected group composed of 8-12 members was assembled in each of the three sub-locations, and questions and discussion points were put forth to generate a discussion. Open-ended questions and Focus group Discussion guides were used.

2.5.3 Semi-scheduled Questionnaire

A set of research questions was presented to the respondents with the aim of extracting relevant information.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This study, therefore, employed descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in the analysis of data.

2.6 Challenges in the Field

2.6.1 State of roads. The rural road network was quite poor, with impassable feeder roads. The researcher and his assistants had a difficult time skipping and, in some cases, stepping into mud.

2.6.2 Unpredictable weather. Whenever it rained while the researcher was in the remote areas, he always had no otherwise, but to cut short the exercise. At other times, it was simply too hot!

2.6.3 Mistaken identity. For some, despite full disclosure of the researcher's identity and nature of visit (academic), still remained distrustful.

2.6.4 Distance. The research study was tedious. This is because it entailed walking from village to village, using footpaths that motorbikes could not use, and crossing makeshift bridges.

2.6.5 Constraints of time and finances. The study used up a lot of time and finances. However, through sampling, the researcher was still able to obtain relevant information.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

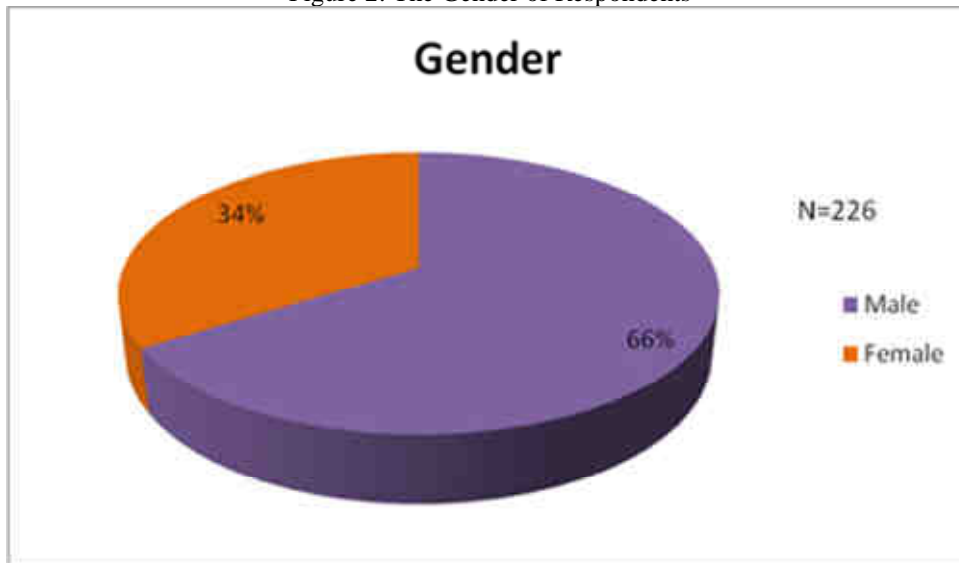
3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics in this study are: gender, age, sub-location, education level, marital status, and number of children.

3.1.1 Gender

This section looks into the composition of the respondents based on their gender. The distribution of males and females based on gender is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Gender of Respondents



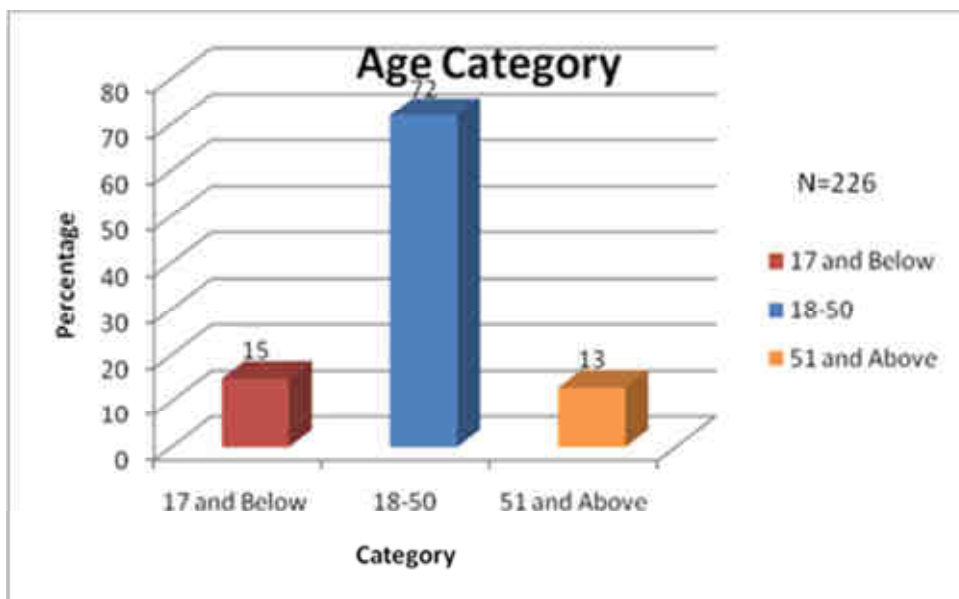
Data in Figure 2 shows that majority (66%) of the respondents were males while minority (34%) were females. This could be because most of the activities in the industries require a lot of stamina. Another reason could be that most women in the countryside spend a lot of time on household chores. Blackden and Wodon (2006) observed that women can only engage in directly productive economic activity after or in conjunction with the discharge of their domestic responsibilities.

According to the Kenya Population and Housing Census Report (2009), the rural population percentage of males in Western Province was 48 percent while that of females was 52 percent. This contrasts with the findings in this study.

3.1.2 Age

This section focuses on the ages of respondents, and was categorized into; 17 years and below, 18-50 years, and 51 years and above, according to Ericson's Model (Boeree, 1997). Classification based on age is summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The Age Brackets of Respondents



Data in Figure 3 shows that majority of the respondents (73%) fell in the 18-50 age brackets. Mosaddeque et al (2008), while looking into farmers' characteristics associated with the participation in cottage industry activities in Bangladesh, observed that the age of most farmers ranged from 18-50 years. This mirrors the findings in this study whereby majority of the owners and workers in cottage industries were in the 18-50 age brackets.

3.1.3 Level of Education

The respondents' education levels were classified into; no schooling, primary schooling, secondary schooling, and post-secondary schooling. This is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Education Level of Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
No Schooling	93	41
Primary Schooling	105	47
Secondary Schooling	22	10
Post-secondary Schooling	5	2
Total	145	100

Data in Table 1 shows that those with primary school education were in the majority (47%) while those with post-secondary education were in the minority (2%). According to the Kenya Population and Housing Census Report (2009), the percentage of those in Western Province who had primary school education was 61 percent while those with post-secondary education were 3 percent. Both in this study, and in the Census Report, it is evident that the percentage of those with post-secondary education was quite low.

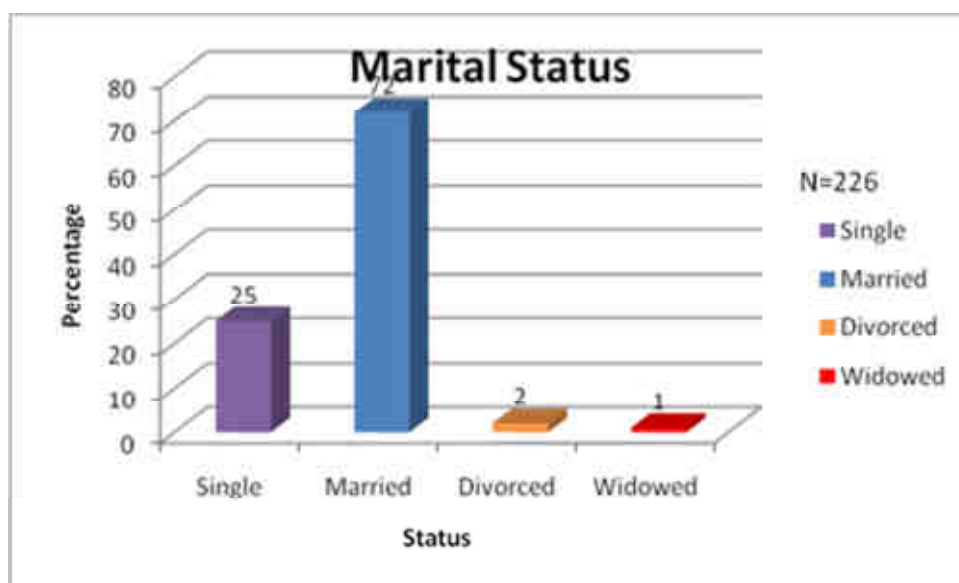
It is worth noting that the percentage of those with no schooling was fairly high (41%). This could be a pointer to high illiteracy levels in the areas of study. The Sub-Chief of Manda Sub-Location reinforced this by saying: *“Most of the people engaging in cottage industries in this region have fewer options in terms of the type of employment to engage in because they did not go far academically. This is why most of them either own or are employed home-based industries as their best alternative”*.

The perception among most respondents was that the majority of people in the areas of study engaged in cottage industries due to having low levels of education, and therefore, they could not secure white-collar jobs which required higher academic credentials. This reflects findings in *The Human Development Report* (UNDP, 1995) which concluded that the increasingly competitive labour market demands ever-higher levels of education, and that people without it are at a growing disadvantage.

3.1.4 Marital Status

This section highlights the marital status of the respondents in the areas of study, which were categorized into: the single, married, divorced, and the widowed. The marital status is summarized in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The Marital Status of Respondents



Data in Figure 4 shows that most of the respondents (72%) were married. The perception among most respondents was that married people engaged in the activities of cottage industries more than the unmarried due

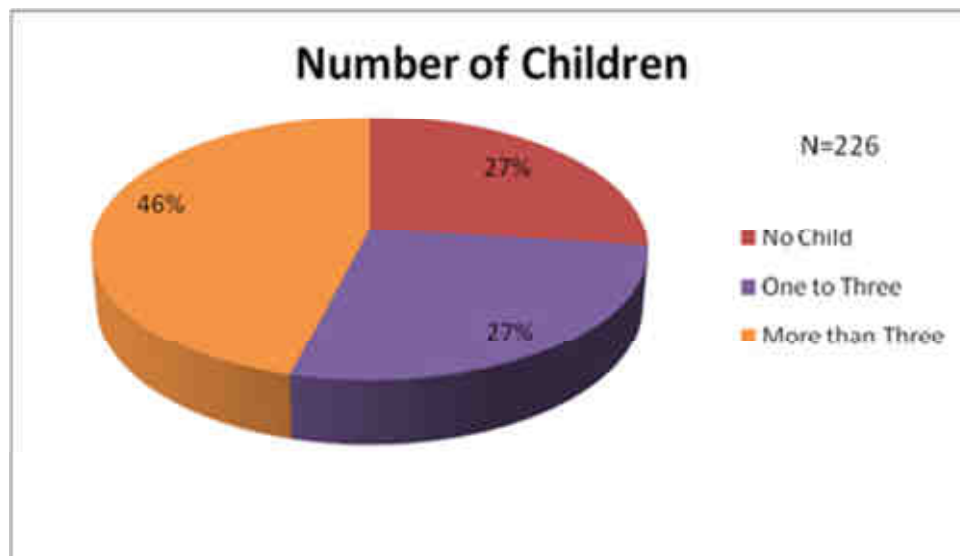
to the fact that the married were under pressure to meet the needs of their families. A village elder said: *“Most of the owners and workers in these industries are married, have families to take care of, and hence, their involvement in cottage industries”*.

Faridi et al (2009), while examining the impact of marital status on female labour force participation, concluded that those who were married were more likely to participate in productive economic activities than those who were not. This reinforces the perception among most of the respondents in the areas of study.

3.1.5 Number of Children

This section highlights the number of children per respondent, and was categorized into: no child, one to three children, and more than three children. This is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: The Number of Children per Respondent



Data in Figure 5 shows that most of the respondents (46%) had more than three children while those with none, and with one to three, were the least (26%). It is noteworthy that the percentage of those with more than three children was fairly high (46%). This could be a pointer to the high population growth rate in the areas of study. A village elder said: *“People in this area have many children; the higher the number of children, the harder they have to work”*.

Faridi et al (2009) observed that the household size significantly and positively influenced the decision of households to engage in home-based work. His findings revealed that the more the dependents, and the larger the number of children, the more the financial burden and economic pressure on a family.

3.2 The Cottage Industries in Kakamega County

3.2.1 Pottery

Data collected through questionnaires indicated that 22 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study engaged in pottery. The percentage of cottage industries in Mukhonje which were dealing in clay items was 65 percent. The high involvement in pottery in Mukhonje could be due to the abundant availability of clay, which was readily available along river banks in the area.

Pottery as a cottage industry was either self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Family members mostly worked for no pay while outsiders worked for pay. On the uses of pots, a village elder said: *“Pots are used for preparing liquor, cooking, as traditional fridges for storing and cooling drinking water, and also given out as presents in weddings. Almost every household in Luhya-land, whether poor or rich, at least owns a pot or two”*. The pots were made with the use of an improvised potter’s wheel (tire rims). They are dried under a shade for almost a week, arranged in a kiln and roasted by fire for at least three days, after which the kiln is dismantled and the clay items retrieved. Finished products are ready for use or sale.

The money obtained from the sale of clay items enabled the owners and workers in the pottery-based cottage industries to meet their day-to-day needs, for instance, buying food and clothing for the family, payment of school fees for their children, et cetera. Clay products include: pots, flower jars, and moneybanks. However,

most potters stayed far away from the source of raw material (clay) and were, therefore, forced to walk for long distances to collect it. Most of them also cited distant markets as one of the challenges they encountered. Nelson (2013) conducted a similar study which looked into the social, cultural, and economic setting for the production, distribution, and consumption of traditional pottery among the Kamba people of South-Eastern Kenya. See Plate 1:



Plate 1: A picture taken in Mukhonje Sub-Location in December 2012 by the researcher, showing a potter giving his clay item the final touches.

3.2.2 Crude Sugar Production

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 8 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study engaged in crude sugar production. The percentage of those who engaged in crude sugar production in Manda and Kivaywa was 5 percent and 19 percent respectively. Sugarcane, a major cash crop in Western Province, is the raw material used. Jaggeries were either self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Members of the family mostly worked for no pay while outsiders worked for pay. The proceeds obtained by owners and workers in jaggery-based cottage industries enabled them to meet the needs of the family. The most pressing challenge among crude sugar producers was scarcity of the raw material. Frank (1965) looked into crude sugar production. See Plate 2:



Plate 2: A picture taken in Manda in December 2012, by the researcher, of a woman feeding sugarcane into her oxen-driven crushing machine.

3.2.3 Brick-making

Data collected through questionnaires indicated that 16 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study took part in brick-making. The percentage of those who engaged in brick-making in Manda, Mukhonje and Kivaywa was 24 percent, 3 percent, and 23 percent respectively. Soil is the major raw material. Brick-making cottage industries were either self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Family members mostly worked for no pay while outsiders worked for pay. The major challenges faced by brick-makers were inadequate capital and unfavourable weather (which resulted into breakages). Proceeds from the sale of bricks enabled families which engaged in brick-making to meet their day-to-day needs. Muchilwa (2013) conducted a similar study on brick-making, but focused on the clay brick firing process. See Plate 3:



Plate 3: The researcher (left) posing for a picture at a brick-making site in Kivaywa in December 2012.

3.2.4 Liquor Production

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 18 percent of the total number of respondents (226) took part in liquor production. The percentage of those who engaged in liquor production in Manda, Mukhonje, and Kivaywa was 24 percent, 5 percent, and 25 percent. The major raw materials are maize flour and finger millet. About liquor and brews, a village elder said: “Liquor and brew is served in all our Luhya cultural events. A little drink is poured on the ground to appease ancestors”. The main challenges liquor producers experienced was inadequate capital and harassment by law enforcement officers given that the product is considered illegal by the Government of Kenya. In neighbouring Uganda, it is legal. Matzopoulos et al (2011) looked into the economic contribution of liquor. See Plate 4.



Plate 4: A picture taken in Mukhonje Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of the set-up for liquor production.

3.2.5 *Quarrying & Masonry*

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 7 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study took part in quarrying and masonry. The percentage of those who engaged in quarrying and masonry in Manda, Mukhonje, and Kivaywa was 12 percent, 5 percent, and 4 percent respectively. The masonry-based cottage industries were either self-owned or family-owned. Most family members worked for no pay while outsiders were paid. Masons in the areas of study earned money from their quarrying activities and were able to meet family needs and even invest in new ventures. The major challenge masons cited was the risk of injury associated with the work given that they did not have protective gear. Birabwa (2006) looked into the ways in which quarrying transformed the socio-economic lives of those who engaged in it. See Plate 5.



Plate 5: A picture taken in Mukhonje Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of a young man splitting a rock.

3.2.6 *Tree Logging & Carpentry*

Data collected through questionnaires indicated that 11 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study took part in carpentry. The percentage of those who participated in carpentry in Manda, Mukhonje, and Kivaywa was 13 percent, 7 percent, and 12 percent respectively. Timber is the main raw material. Carpentry-based cottage industries were either self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Family members mostly worked for no pay while outsiders worked for pay. Proceeds from the sale of furniture enabled them to meet family needs. The major challenge carpenters cited was harassment by municipal council officers who, according to them, always demanded bribes so as to continue operating at the trading centres. King (1996) looked into different kinds of trade, including carpentry. See Plate 6.



Plate 6: A picture taken in Manda Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of a carpenter at work.

3.2.7 *Traditional Medicine Extraction*

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 3 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study took part in the extraction of traditional medicine. The percentage of those who engaged in traditional medicine extraction in Mukhonje and Kivaywa was 4 percent and 5 percent respectively. Traditional medicine-related activities were strictly family-owned. Most herbalists experienced the challenge of harassment by forestry officials whenever they went to search out for herbs in nearby forests. They found it cumbersome and inconveniencing paying fines every time they needed to look for the medicinal herbs. Lambert et al (2011) highlighted the contribution of traditional herbal medicine practitioners to Kenyan health-care delivery. See Plate 7.



Plate 7: A picture taken in Mukhonje in December 2012 by the researcher, showing a traditional medicine man crushing and drying herbs.

3.2.8 Charcoal Production

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 3 percent of the total number of respondents (226) engaged in charcoal production. The percentage of those who engaged in charcoal production in Manda and Mukhonje was 7 percent and 1 percent. Trees are the major raw materials. Charcoal production was either self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Family members worked for no pay while outsiders worked for pay. Most charcoal producers thought harassment by forestry officials was their greatest challenge. Proceeds from the sale of charcoal enabled families to meet their day-to-day needs. Ruuska (2012) examined the importance of charcoal production to household income. See Plate 8:



Plate 8: A picture taken in Manda in December 2012 by the researcher, showing a charcoal-burning site.

3.2.9 Basketry & Weaving

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 7 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study took part in basketry and weaving. The percentage of those who engaged in basketry and weaving in Manda and Kivaywa was 9 percent and 1 percent respectively. Papyrus reeds and the barks of herbs are the major raw materials. Weaving and basketry-based cottage industries were self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Ropes are made from sisal. However, the biggest challenge weavers faced was from synthetic products, which fiercely competed against their home-made products; some of the weavers were phased out of business as a result. King (1996) looked into the different kinds of trade, including carpentry. See Plate 9.



Plate 9: A picture taken in Kivaywa Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of a man extracting sisal for weaving baskets and ropes.

3.2.10 Baking

Data collected through questionnaires indicated that 1 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study engaged in baking. The percentage of those who engaged in baking in Mukhonje was 4 percent. Bakery-based cottage industries were self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. The cakes and bans are sold to earn the family an income that enables them to meet their day-to-day needs, such as food, clothing, school fees, medical care, et cetera. Most bakers thought the high cost of baking flour and cooking fat was their greatest challenge. Rono (2014) looked into baking, though he majored on the adaptation of processing technologies in the bakery industry in Kenya. See Plate 10.



Plate 10: A picture taken in Mukhonje Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of dough that was to be used in baking.

3.2.11 *Bicycle Repair*

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 2 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study engaged in baking. The percentage of those who engaged in bicycle repair in Manda, Mukhonje, and Kivaywa was 3 percent, 1 percent, and 1 percent respectively. Bicycle repair cottage industries were self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Members of the family worked for no pay while outsiders worked for pay. Proceeds from the render of bicycle repair services enabled the family to meet day-to-day needs. Bicycle repairers identified unfavourable weather as their greatest impediment; most of them had no shades to work under. King (1996) looked into different kinds of trade, including bicycle repair. See Plate 11.

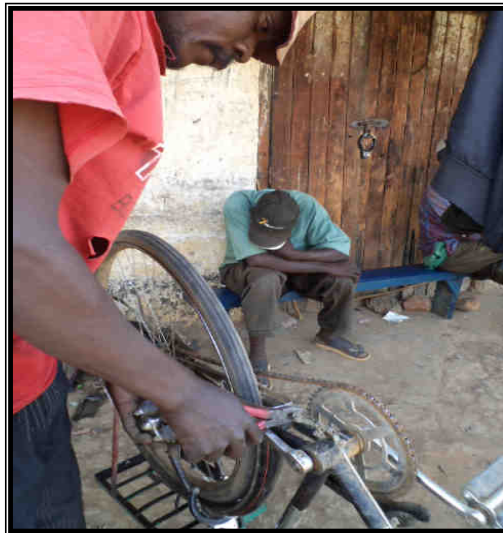


Plate 11: A picture taken in Manda in December 2012, by the researcher, of a man repairing a client's bicycle.

3.2.12 *Flour-grinding*

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 1 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study engaged in flour-grinding. The percentage of those who engaged in flour-grinding in Mukhonje was 1 percent. The flour-grinding cottage industry was strictly family-owned. Members of the family worked for no pay. The main raw materials are maize, sorghum, cassava, and finger millet. A number of villagers, one at a time, streamed in to have their cereals or grains ground. They paid for the service through barter trade by coming with extra cereals in a small basket which was given to the owner. Flour grinders cited stiff competition from modern diesel-powered grinding mills as their most pressing challenge. See Plate 12.



Plate 12: A picture taken in Mukhonje Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of a woman grinding maize grains.

4.3.13 Shoe-making & Repair

Data collected through questionnaires showed that 1 percent of the total number of respondents (226) in this study engaged in shoe-making and repair. The percentage of those who engaged in shoe-making and repair in Manda and Mukhonje was 2 percent and 1 percent respectively. Hides and skins are the major raw materials. These cottage industries were self-owned, family-owned, or owned through partnership. Proceeds from shoe-making and repair enables them to meet family needs. The most common challenge among shoe-repairers and makers was lack of proper tools and equipment. King (1996) looked into different kinds of trade, including shoe-making and repair. See Plate 13.

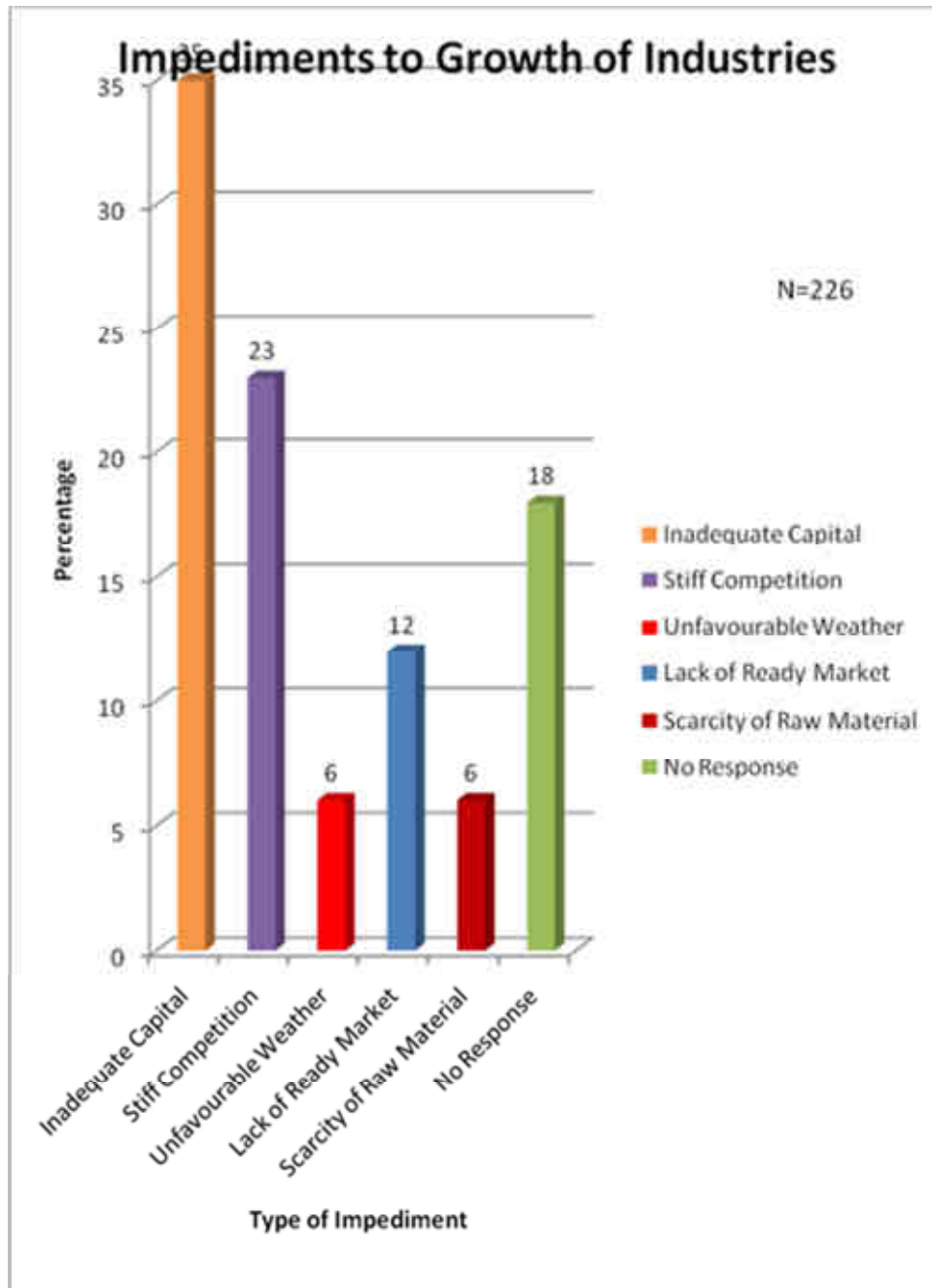


Plate 13: A picture taken in Manda Sub-Location in December 2012, by the researcher, of shoe-makers/repairers busy at work

3.3 The Impediments to the Growth of Cottage Industries in the Areas of Study

A summary of the challenges facing the cottage industries in Kakamega is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: A Summary of the Impediments



3.3.1 Inadequate Capital

Majority of the respondents (35%) felt that capital was their biggest problem. They were of the opinion that if they would access adequate capital, their cottage industries would perform better. Ikiara (1988) noted that one critical factor slowing the rate of industrialization in Kenya after 1980 has been the shortage of local investment funds.

However, a banker said: *“Even though some owners of cottage industries attempt to apply for loans, they hardly succeed in getting them because most of them do not bank the sales, but only bank the profits, making the bank unable to determine their actual cash flows to qualify them for loans. Besides, most of them do not even operate bank accounts, yet banks need evidence of banking to process any loan”*. Therefore, what most owners of cottage industries also needed was financial information.

3.3.2 Competition

The respondents who thought competition was a challenge were 23 percent. This could be because those cottage industries making similar products were located close to one another. For instance, in Mukhonje, almost every home the researcher walked into was making clay items. Competition meant that the level of supply was quite high as compared to the level of demand. The owner of a jaggery in Kivaywa said: *“We have to compete for the scarce raw materials and the control of the market niche as well. Crude sugar producers in this region sell their products at varied prices. This price war makes customers shun the products sold at a higher price. Therefore, we have to keep adjusting our prices and make them a bit lower than that of our competitors”*.

Coughlin (1988) is of the view that lack of effective co-ordination of activities among some government organs charged with the planning or financing of industrial development created redundant capacity and unnecessary competition in some industries. He gives the example of Kenya making plastic baskets for the market even though hundreds of women weave sisal baskets for their livelihood.

3.3.3 Lack of Ready Market

The respondents who felt that lack of ready market for their products was a challenge were 12 percent. The village elder of Mukhonje Sub-Location said: *“Most of respondents made the products and kept them for long periods of time before getting willing buyer”*. Staley and Morse (1965) note that imported goods and similar commodities manufactured in factories within the country itself have competed strongly with handmade products, and therefore, traditional crafts are constantly losing their share of the home market.

3.3.4 Raw Material

Accessing the raw material was a problem (6%) in a few cottage industries. For some, it was transportation, while for others it was the high cost of the raw material. The manager of a jaggery in Kivaywa Sub-Location said: *“Crude sugar producers in this area have to compete with large- and medium-scale sugar mills for the same raw materials”*. Coughlin (1988) observes that most ailing industry-related projects are affected by shortages of raw materials.

3.3.5 Unfavourable Weather

The respondents who thought unfavourable weather was a problem were 6 percent. Those who were the most affected were brick-makers. Too much rain meant that the raw bricks would not dry fast enough while too much heat caused a lot of breakages. Plate 14 shows the effect of unfavourable weather on drying bricks.



Plate 14: A picture taken in Kivaywa in December 2012 by the researcher, showing the effect of excess rainfall.

Due to excessive rains, most feeder roads became impassable, making it difficult to acquire raw materials or transport finished products to the market. A village elder lamented: *“Our feeder roads are in a pathetic state. Unfortunately, our elected leaders are not paying much attention to them, yet we are taxed heavily. For development to trickle down to the rural zones, these areas have to be opened up by a good road network. I hope something will be done about this”*.

The *Fourth Human Development Report (2005)* identifies poor infrastructure as a major impediment to the growth of cottage and small-scale industries. Plates 15 and 16 are shown:



Plate 15: A picture taken by the researcher, in August 2012, of a section of a feeder road in Kivaywa in a bad state.



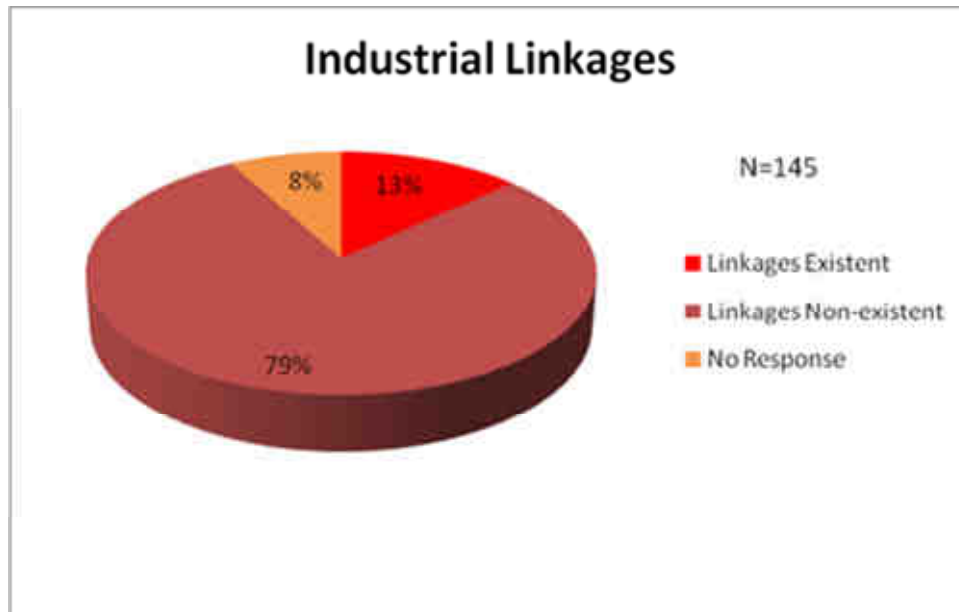
Plate 16: A picture taken by the researcher, in December 2012, showing a makeshift bridge in Mukhonje.

3.3.6 Other Challenges

3.3.6.1 Weak Industrial Linkages

This sub-section highlights the impact of weak industrial linkages on cottage industries. This was categorized into those who thought their industries had had linkages with other industries, those who thought linkages were non-existent, and those who did not respond to this particular question. This is summarized in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The existence or non-existence of industrial linkages



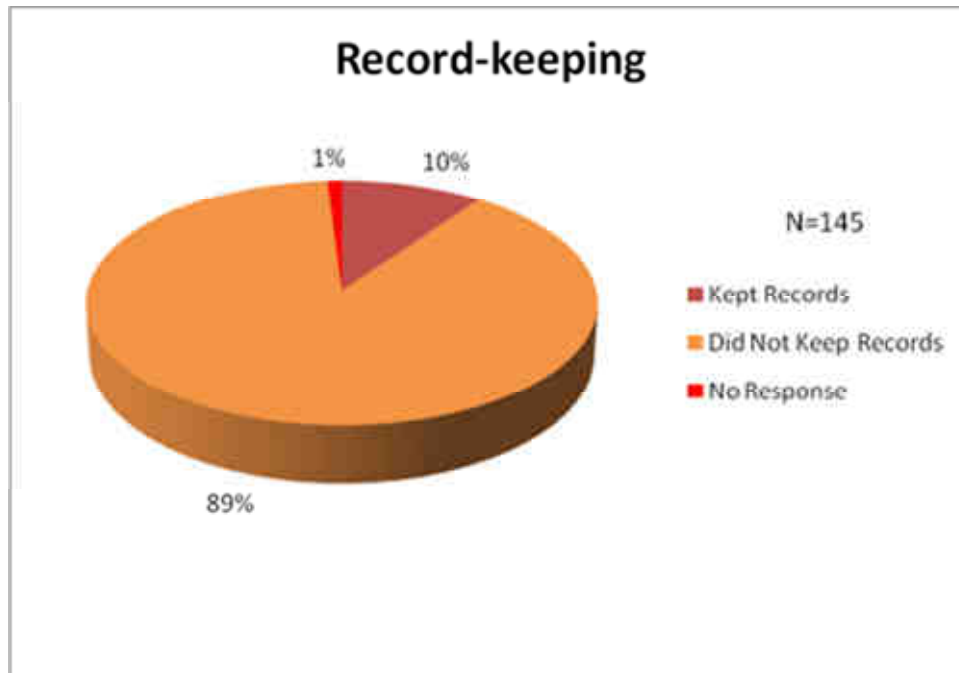
Most of the owners of the cottage industries (79%) felt that their industries were not linked with other industries. Only a few of them (13%) thought industrial linkages existed, while the remaining (11%) were not sure. Ikiara (1988) reinforces this by noting that the manufacturing sector, in general, has not developed extensive linkages with the rest of the economy.

Most local authorities lack the basic infrastructure for industry and do not have suitable zones to serve as incubators for these industries and enterprises too. Thus, these industries lack visibility and cannot foster a sustainable linkage with medium and large-scale industries. Therefore, industrial linkages are not only weak or non-existent among cottage industries, but also non-existent in a good number of small- and medium-sized industries.

3.3.6.2 Low Levels of Record-keeping

This sub-section looks at the challenge associated with lack of record-keeping. This was categorized into those who kept records and those who did not. There were also those who did not respond to the question. This is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8: The keeping or non-keeping of records



Most of the owners of the cottage industries (89%) did not keep records, while only a small fraction (10%) did. A retired school head said: “Most of the people in the area do not know how to read and write, therefore, they cannot be able to keep records. Others are used to remembering important details off-head and do not see the need for keeping records. This makes it difficult for them to get accurate information regarding the actual state or position of their cottage industries”.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The major impediments identified both by respondents and the participants of Focus Group Discussions were: inadequate capital, lack of ready market, stiff competition, scarcity of raw materials, and unfavourable weather. Other challenges were: harassment by government officers, poor state of feeder roads, high risks of injury and lack of adequate skills.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

The central government and the county governments should renew their focus on the cottage industries and put in place policies that favour their growth and development.

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