

Impact of Darfur's War on Socioeconomic Activities of the People in Thur Area , Jabel Marra Central Darfur State; Sudan

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Abstract

This study was conducted in Thur village Jabel Marra, Darfur which is one of the richest places in Sudan in terms of biodiversity and vertical land for agriculture since agriculture is constitutes the backbone and principal source of Jabel Marra's economies. The aim of this study was to assess the impact of war on the socio-economic activities of rural communities in the study area. The study adopted the descriptive analytical approach for the collection and analysis of data, using questionnaires, meetings, and inventory as a basic tool for data collection and analysis by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS). The study concluded that, decreased cultivated lands led to decrease in the production system; which means that, the war affected human activities. Also about 94% of the studied communities are engaged in agricultural activities, where 84% confirm that, the available areas have dramatically decreased due to conflicts causing, further distresses to other agricultural activities. Added to that, about 68% of respondents were depends on the forests products as source of income, while 32% of them mention that they do not depend on the forest. The bulk of respondents mentioned that, the area exploited for agriculture were decreased due to the war period, which led to reductions in individual income as a result of high level of insecurity.

Keywords: Darfur • Jebel Marra • Impact of War • Socio-Economic Activities • Natural Resource

Introduction

Darfur region lies in the western Sudan, seven million Sudanese people called Darfur home, but at least half of them displaced because of war. Darfur has been affected by intermittent war. There have been many different approaches for analysing and understanding the war, some of them attributed it to what is called the inherent war of nature of tribalism and pastoralism. Others related to the pressure of ecological degradation, others considered this political war between government and groups of rebels highlight issues such as developments, authorities share and marginalization, this lead to war according to rebels Agenda.

In Jebel Marra particularly, the war is unbroken because of its strategic position in Darfur surrounded by mountains, flanks, drainages, natural and artificial forests, all these factors made the mountain to be the best place for clashes and battles. Many people were killed, injured and displaced to other areas, for instance, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) camps in several cities in Darfur, similarly many animals were looted in this war. Natural resources were seriously deteriorated and socioeconomic affected.

Study Area

Location

Central Darfur State is located in the south western part of the Sudan. It is extending from 14.8°-11.8° East and 24.5°-22.5° North [1]. The state is

bordered by three states, North, South, and West Darfur and both republics of Chad and Central Republic of Africa [2].

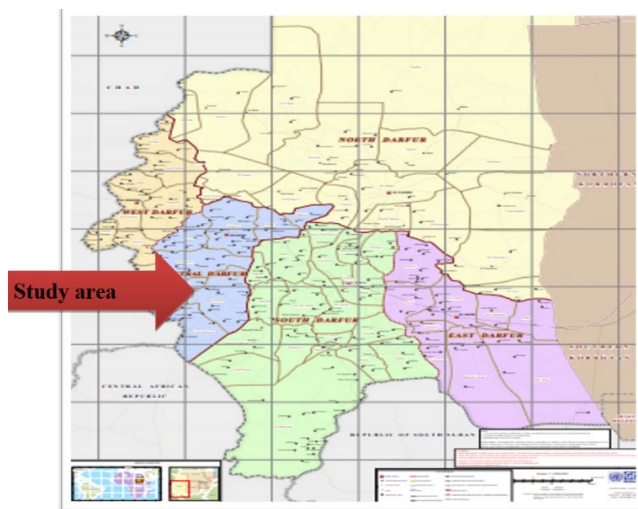
Geographical location of jabel marra

Jabel Marra is an isolated 3042, high volcanic massif. It is located mostly in Central Darfur State of Sudan republic near the border with Chad (Figure 1.) approximately between latitudes of 12°-30°N and 13°-30°N and longitudes of 24°E and 24°-30°. The most interesting feature of Jabel Marra is its island-like position amidst the lowlands of the Sahelo-Sudanian transition zone. It lies "In the very heart of African continent" [3] at minimum 1500 km from the sea. The most peculiar feature of this location is that it is at least 1000 km away from any similarly high mountain [4]. The present research is conducted in the western and southern flanks of Jabel Marra (Thur area) it attempts to study impact of Darfur war on the natural resource as general and forest sector in particular

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Source: FAO 2010

Figure 1. Shows the study area

General objective

The overall objective of the study is to identify the impact of war on the community activities in the study area.

Specific objectives

To assess the impact of war on the socio-economic activities of rural communities in the study area.

To know the real situation of rural communities during the war period

Methodology

Informal interviews with elder's villagers, humanitarian staff official staff of administration units, and both Forest National Corporation (FNC), Range and Pasture Administration (RPA), group discussions were organized. A questionnaire was prepared for collection data, it composed of 34 different questions, while 50 household were interviewed; target groups were local village leaders, teacher, farmers, herders and forests.

Computer and software SPSS was used to analyse the numerical data collected. Results obtained from the analysis were presented in the forms of frequency tables.

Results and Discussions

Table 1. The Gender composition of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	19	38
Male	31	62
Total	50	100

The result of gender composition of the respondents show in Table (1), 62% of the respondents were male, while female represent 38% of respondents, this might be due to religious values, customs and tradition, but on the other hand contribution of female is supposed valuable. FAO [5] stated that, involving women in the forestry could make a positive

contribution to the forests development Figure (2) Occupation of the respondents in the study area:

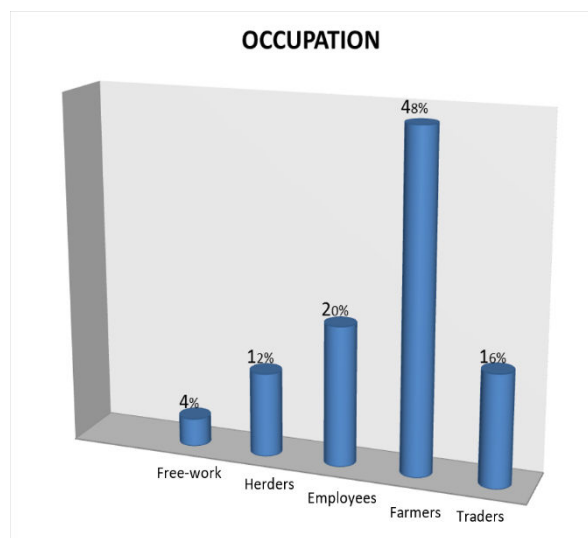


Figure 2. Occupation of the respondents in the study area

Figure 2. Describes the occupation of the respondents in the study area, 48% of respondents were Farmers, this agreed with Elsidig [6] and Abdalla [7] were certain that, the majority of the people in Jabel Marra were farmers and depends on the agricultural activities as main source of income, while 20% of the respondents were employees, but they mention that, they practiced farming activities beside their work, then followed by 16% and 12%, which were traders and herders. This explained that most of the respondents were depending on agriculture activities to meet their needs for food and improve their personal incomes, Awoke [8] stated that the agricultures is the main occupations for the people of Jabel Marra since centuries ago. These may be referring to soil fertility, very good environment, and availability of water resource and high productivity of cultivated lands.

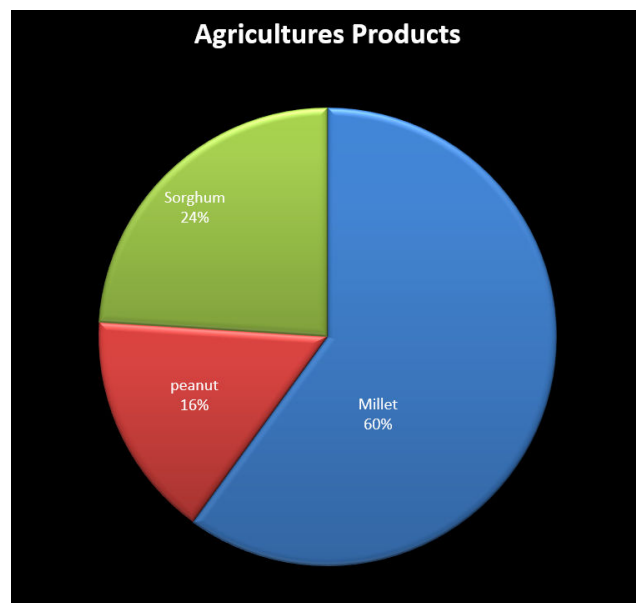


Figure 3. Agricultural Products

Figure 3. Show the main agricultural products, 60% of the respondents mentioned that, they produced millet as the main agriculture products which explained that millet is the main daily food in the study area, while 24% of

respondents produce sorghum and about 16% of them produce peanut. These maybe referred to the distinguished productivity of the land.

Table 2. Area Exploited for Agricultural Activities and their changes during the time of war

Exploit area for Agricultural Activities	Change of cultivated area to less during the period of war				Total
	Yes		No		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Three feddans	42	84	2	4	42
Ten feddans	7	14	1	2	7
More than 10 feddans	1	2	0	0	1
Total	47	84	3	6	50

Table 2. described the relations between the area exploit for agriculture and the degree of changes due the time of war, %84 of the respondents mentioned that, they cultivated area of three feddans, while 12% of the respondents, they exploited about ten feddans and only 2% of the respondents were used more than ten feddans. However, in terms of changed of the agricultures area, 94% of the respondents mentioned that the

area decreased in the time of conflict. Also mentioned that, the high level of insecurity was the main reason behind the decrease. Lute and Adam, [9] stated that decreases in cultivated land led to decrease in the production system; this indicated that war has seriously affected human activities. In addition, Mohamed [10] stated, that the conflicts of Darfur were seriously affected the production system of Darfurian people.

Table 3. Types of Forest Products

Types of Products from the Forest	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Charcoal	32	64	18	36
Furniture wood	21	42	29	58
Building poles	24	48	26	52
Firewood	34	68	14	32
Non-wood	23	46	27	54

Table 3. Shows the types of forest products in the study area, about 68% of the respondents mentioned that, they used the firewood as an energy products and source of income, while 64% of the respondent shows that they use the charcoal and 46% of respondents takes benefits from the non-wood products. They take about some kind of these products, honey, hey (straw), fruits of some trees, for example *zizphus spina christi*, (*Sidir*) *Balanites aegyptiaca*, (*Heglieg*) 48% and 42% of the respondents used the building poles and furniture-wood to improve their incomes, this is one of the factors led to of forest degradation.

not depend on the forest, the high percentage of respondents who dependent on forest in their daily activity reflect the importance of the forest to the people of Jabel Marra and its certain the point of which they mention that, the forest around represent one of the most important resource to the people Most of respondents said that, they carry different activities in the forest such as cultivation, grazing, and collecting firewood and building materials, this which press on tree-cover.

Table 4. Dependence on the Forest as source of Income

Dependence on the Forest	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	68
No	16	32
Total	50	100

Table 4. Shows that, the majority of respondents in the study area 68% depends in the forest as source of income, while 32% mention that, they do

Table 5. Existence of Fire

Existence of Fire	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
Total	50	100

Table 5. Shows that about 98% of the respondents mentioned that the seasonal fires was happen frequently in the study area, these unanimous of fires existence which is agree with El gamri [11] stated that the fires in Jabel Marra produce serious problem to both forests and agricultural areas. The

majority of respondents mentioned that, the reasons behind seasonal fires occurrence related to wars operation (battles), honey collectors and cleaning for agriculture land. Recently after the increasing of conflict, farmers burned their fields immediately after harvesting their crop to keep the nomads away from their farms in order to avoid any conflicts with them; this has a great effect on their socioeconomic activities such as practicing agriculture.

Table 6. The practicing of Grazing Activities

The practicing of Gazing Activity	Frequency	percentage
Yes	10	20
No	40	80
Total	50	100

Table 6. shows that, the majority of the respondent 80% do not practice grazing activities, while 20% of carry out this activity, Awoke [8] stated, the occupation of Jabel Marra inhabitants, is farmers. This maybe refers to unprofessionalism of grazing or that used to be having some animals but they were stolen the time of conflict, where the insecurity was very high, This show that war has really affect the social activities in study area.

Conclusion

Based on the results obtained and the findings of other authors, regarding the impact of warfare on natural forest and range resources in the study area it can be concluded that Decreased cultivated lands led to decrease in the production system; which means that, the war affected human activities, the bulk of respondents mentioned that, the area exploited for agriculture were decreased due to the war period, which led to reductions in individual income as a result of high level of insecurity.

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