

African Indigenous Industries and Colonial Incursion: A Real Examination**By****Edna Adagogo Brown PhD,
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The indigenous industries in Africa during the pre-colonial period were known to have done tremendously well. Particular attention was paid to the leather industries using hides and skins and the products were competing with the foreign imported leather. The African blacksmiths too were manufacturing guns used for local wars and hunting, particularly in West Africa. Salt manufacture gained significance when it became used as currency in exchange across the regions of Africa from West Africa across the Sahara desert on camels' back. But the industrial revolution in Europe changed all that. Within a century after the industrial revolution European mass produced products flooded African markets and the African consumers preferred the foreign goods to the local ones. This gradually caused economic upheavals in the local industries. From research it became obvious that the local manufacturers began to abandon their industries and went into cash cropping and later white collar jobs. That was how the local industries succumbed to the colonial incursions. The textile industries were probably the last to stagnated, as the Yoruba tie and dye cloth continued to provide clothing for both indigenous uses and also attracted consumers and patronage from other continents.

Keywords: Indigenous Industries, Colonialism, Industrial Revolution, Markets, Economic Upheavals

Introduction:

Africa developed at its own pace before the coming of the Europeans. Some were wholly agrarian, while some adopted the mixed farming culture of cultivating the land as well as keeping livestock or animal husbandry. Within this set up the people of Africa still had time for crafts and industry on a small scale and to some extent specialized. Pre-Colonial Africa had such manufacturing industries as Iron working, salt making, leather working, basket weaving, cloth weaving, glass working, ceramics industry and pottery. Others include canoe building, carving etc. the existence of these manufacturing industries in pre-colonial Africa raises the questions of the acquisition of technical skills, the type and degree

of specialization and the character of demand for manufactures goods, iron, gold and salt were the most important minerals produced in Africa.

But the Europeans of all shades and colours infiltrated the main stream of these local economies, collected local samples of those manufactures and with time were able to manufacture more durable qualities and gradually displaced the local manufacturers. The influx of foreign manufacture grew gradually and by the 1900s got to its peak.

This paper had been divided into three parts, the first looked at a general overview of the pre-colonial manufacture, taking some specific area for indepth study. Part two looked at the colonial period and how these industries were affected by the colonial incursions and part three looked at observations, suggestions and conclusion of the paper.

Pre – colonial industries:

Cotton Industry

Cotton had long been established crop in Africa and Africans had been using cotton at a very early date, though the expansion began with the spread of Islam from the 8th century onwards, and by the 12th century, cotton goods from Western Sudan had become well known to Europe and terms such as 'bouracan and bougran' were in use to describe certain types of cloth.

Stages of manufacturing include ginning, carding, spinning, dying and weaving at the close of the 16th century, the city of Timbuktu had 26 master tailors many of whom employed between 50 and 100 apprentices and workers. By the middle of the 19th century, Kano had become the Manchester of West Africa

Hides and Skins Industry

Hides and skins were raw materials for the leather industries and were abundant in Africa especially among the pastoral people of Africa, many of this product were exported and became known as 'Moroccan leather', the reasons being that the goods were finally shipped through Moroccan Ports to Europe.

Metal Industry

Metal working was also long established craft and blacksmiths were especially important in Africa. The craft of iron working was of great antiquity. Blacksmith work is closely associated with the production of implement required in farming. This industry is subject to market fluctuations, it has its busy season in the early rainy season and its slack during dry season to the farming people like the Igbo of West African, smittery was very

important, so important in farming that a Northern Igbo legend says “it was the smith who dried up the land at the beginning of the world, thus, making smitting the first profession in Igbo land”. Blacksmith in pre-colonial Africa made all the varied iron tool which the people needed in the home and farm in war and peace, for rituals and ceremonies.

Salt manufacturing Industry

Salt is likely one of the essential but rare commodity long needed by human communities and therefore a breaker of the barriers of self - sufficiency (Waldecker J. 1967:7) quoted in Alexander J. salt deposit in West Africa include Idjil, Awlil, Teghaza, Touted and Bilma, Salt could be used at least in four different ways, there are Diatetic Necessity, Luxury, Industrial necessity and for tribute payment. It was also used as currency (Hopkins, A. 11973:164).

Method of Manufacture of salt

Evaporation of salt can be done from sea water, salty springs, solutions made from salty earth or from salty vegetable ash both mining and large scale boiling operations require skilled specialist workers and an organizations to maintain and feed them. Strong central control of a source might also show itself by the wealth accommodated by the controllers in their settlement,

Transportation and communication

Introduction of the camel in the Sahel and the Sahara made available probably for the first time the rich rock salt deposit of Northern Mali. Trade in salt had been of a long distant type of up to 1,500kms. Coastal salt making and trading it inland certainly flourish in the 16th century but there was little evidence of long distant trading. Production seems likely to have been small scale for local needs in the forest hitherland. The coastal people like Bonny, Kalabari, Okrika and Nembe were salt manufacturers of long standing and traded it with their Igbo hitherland neighbours. The case study looked at some specific manufacturing industries during the pre-colonial period (Alagoa E. J. 1972:155).

Cloth Weaving Industry

The cloth weaving industry are located in cotton growing area of agriculture in West Africa alone there were cloth weaving industry at Owo in Western Nigeria, Kano in Northern Nigeria, Akan in Ghana, Akwette in Eastern Nigeria and pull – thread cloth among the Kalabari of South – South Nigeria, EggaNupe – speaking group of middle-belt in Nigeria,

North Africa.

Textile Industry in North Africa

Tunisian weavers have been very prominent in Africa cloth weaving industry, Tunisia weavers created masterpiece that provided their families with clothing, cushions, blankets, wall and floor coverings, sacks and bags and even shelter and tents. They also produced for exchange with neighbouring regions.

Method of production

The weavers used natural fibres, wool has occupied a place of particular important and the wealth of a tribe was traditionally measured by the number of sheep they possess, the semi – nomads added goat and camel hair to wool for greater solidity and impermedaility. While sheep sharing is a task for the men, the transformation of the fleeces into spun thread rests with the women. The wool is washed at home, in the Mediteranean, in a garden well or in waterholes of a wadi, but in each case the process, tools and materials are basically the same. After letting the wool soak in water, the women rub knead and rinsed it, then beat it with stick and rinse it again and dry, combing, carding and spinning were usually done within the family. To make the warp threads the spinner uses a small drop spindle and a distaff. To spin the weft a longer spindle is employed. Wool was usually dyed in skeins but some of the women is shawls were dyed after weaving.

The Apprenticeship

It takes a long time, sometimes many years to master the difficult techniques of weaving. The vertical loom is most common in Tunisia although horizontal looms are also used. In Tunisia two types of textiles are common, they are the knotted carpets and the flat woven textiles, the textile of Kairouan in Tunisia had remained famous but no one can be sure when the weavers in that country began to market carpets, the flat-woven textile on the other hand was dated to have been first woven in 1880, the flat-woven textiles also appeared in the Sahel region of Tunisia.

Although many of the ancient Tunisian textiles and carpets are still woven, young girls do not want to spend hours making a beautiful textile to be hung on the wall or spread out on the floor for only special days. They now term it unfashionable.

West Africa: The Jukun

Meek has done a brilliant ethnographic survey of the Jukun speaking peoples of Nigeria in West Africa. These people numbered some twenty five thousand people and occupied that part of Benue Basin which is bounded by the Abinsi to the West and Kona to the East, Pindigi to the North and Donga to the South. At the present Jukun is no longer a corporate

whole under one administration. Some of them are located around Wukari, while the Abinsi are included in the Benue province and the rest are situated at Adamawa province. Farming is the principal occupation of the Jukun, over 90 percent of the male population been engaged in agriculture, but the presence of salt conferred a peculiar sanction on any district and the Jukun with their elaborate religious ritual were peculiarly fitted to exercise control over salt bearing area the full advantage of which could only be obtained with the assistance of the gods, (Meek, C. K. 1969:176)

Method of manufacture

The methods of manufacture vary with the presence or absence of saline spring where there is no spring but extensive marsh, that contains saline deposits are obtainable in the dry season. This marsh, at the beginning of the dry season, cleared of grass and after the performance of religious rites, the salt impregnated soil is carried home, filtered and evaporated at leisure. At Azara, Abuni and several other towns the brine is obtained from pools, a layer of soft earth is spread in the vicinity of the pool and this is sprinkled repeatedly with brine, when thoroughly impregnated it may be treated there so that the labour of transporting the soil into town is avoided. At Akiri there is salt marsh in the centre of which there is a hot brine spring. If it was a woman who was working on it, she spreads a layer of sticky earth over four or five square yards of her claim and leaves it there for two days. By the second day the coating of earth now impregnated with salt is collected into a heap by means of an oval iron scraper, during the night the surface of the claim receives a fresh incrustation of salt, it is accordingly covered once more with the earth which had been scraped up the previous evening. This goes on for a period of six days for saturation to be effective. The dressing is then deposited in sieves and brine supplied by the hot spring is poured on the dressing bots are kept under the sieve for the collection of salt-water. This is taken home for boiling, as the water evaporates the saline crystal are deposited on the sides of the pans. Salt manufacture in this way was preferred to imported European salt.

Central Africa: Kuba and Textile Manufacturing

Kuba kingdom is situated in the fertile area of central Zaire between the Kaisal and Sankuru rivers, the various peoples who inhabited this kingdom display an unusual range of artistic expression that includes variety of poetry, skilful carvings and spectacular costumes worn by men and women. Of all these, particular attention would be paid their beautiful textiles. The textile production in this area is unique for its elaborate and complex designs, the most outstanding being the rectangular or square pieces of woven palm-leaves fibre enhanced by geometric designs executed in linear embroidery and other surfaces resembling velvet. The raw material is raffia and only women can turn simple raffia cloth

into valued plush often referred to as Kaisai velvets. These decorated panels, some dyed in soft, rich colours are not only beautiful but they also reflect something significant about African aesthetics. African textile tradition generally display regular repetition of design units. Kuba in particular according to Monni Adams developed all the geometric possibilities of repetitive variations of border patterns of seventeenth ways of that design can be respectively varied on a surface. The designs were always ordered diagonally and then using dark lines on the edges, there were similarities in shape, direction and texture of the cloth. Their ceremonial skirts for example were usually all beige or all red in colour but the border that is added to form a wrap-round skirt provides an arresting contrast with the centre field in both design and colour. The border design itself may be interrupted by a sudden shift of pattern and colour. In describing the method adopted by the Kuba embroidery the extensive work of Monni Adams comes in handy, Raffia fibre in plain weave forms the basic material of the cloth. The yarn for this foundation is obtained from the leaves of the palm, young boys strip the fibrous leaves while women helped in preparing the fibre for embroidery. Only men set up and operate the loom. The loom is a simple mechanism consisting of a heddle and two horizontal bars between which the length wise or warp strands are stretched. To thread the loom, the weaver binds all the leaf strands and attaches them to the upper horizontal bar. To produce palm cloth that is soft and supple further treatment is necessary, the woven panel is dampered in water and kneaded, beaten or rubbed between the hands. Red is a significant colour when it comes to coloration. After the dying, follows the embroidery, the embroidress if she was a woman, needs a lot of steadiness and patience to be able to get a good result, after this, the palm cloth is ready to be put into use either for special occasions or for trade purposes with neighbouring communities.

South Africa: Ndebele and the Bead Making

The Ndebele people are offshoot of the Natal Nguni. They are scattered over the farmlands of the Transvaal after a series of battles with the Boar farmers in 1882 – 1883. The dispersal resulted in the formulation of two distinct groups, the Northern and Southern Ndebele. The group for this study is the Southern Ndebele. The beaded tradition according to Priebatsch, S. had its origin in the mural art of the Ndebele Kraals. The glass-workers guild represents the most strongly organised craft among the Ndebele, they obtain their raw materials by making their own glass. The type of glass used is black in colour and rather of crude texture. The process is a long and complicated one, the workshop is built like the workshop of the smiths but has round furnace in the centre of the hut. Throughout its process its mouth is covered with pot shards and broken calabashes. The ingredients include earth, soda, water in pots and vast quantity of fire wood. The mixture of the above is placed on the bottom of the furnace with fire wood and a layer of grass for the lighting

of the fire on top. The heat is so intense that the workers have cover themselves with mat screens, the complete process to the finished glass takes about twenty seven hours, after which the glass would now be taken to the other workshop for the finished products of bangles and beads. The colour of the raw glass is a deep glossy black, the finished products of beads and bangles are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later by the traders. The finished products are of different kinds and their names derived from the use into which they are put, they had jocolo, mapoto and ghabi to mention a few. These were worn predominantly by the young unmarried girls and newly married women.

The Yei People

Taking another industry from South Africa is the leather work industry of the Yei people, the Yei people live along the Western edges of the Okavango swamps in Northern Botswana. They are mainly agriculturists, although some own and bred cattle on a small scale. Lambrecht, Frank describing the Yei dress observed that the complete traditional Yei dress includes three parts: a black skirt, a beaded belt and an apron. The design of each of these basic pieces he continued may vary with the maker. He went on to describe the skirt – the skirt maybe made of the skin of impala, the need back, the lechwe or the situtungu, animals abundant around the swamps. The hides of these antelopes has soft, short hair and is easily converted by indigenous tanning methods into a supple material that lends itself to fine – stitch patch work Goat skins are never used. The skirt consists of two main parts: side panels with certain adjusting inserts, follow the natural shape of the hide with the hind quarters at the top of the skirt and a centre of hide turned inside out which is worn at the back and is the most ornamented part of the skirt. The top of the skirt has three oppendoges; the skin from the hindless which forms the upper corners and a tiny piece of tail. The leather skirts are the work of men and these garments are worn on special occasions, one of such occasion is the traditional semi – bukushu dance.

East Africa: The Gabe Blacksmiths

Radio – carbon dating in Africa have placed the first use of iron in Africa to about 500 B.C with every expectation that additional inquiry will demonstrate even earlier use. The smelters belong to the Gabe clan who reside on Kulwirwi among the Kenebe group in East Africa. Farming remains the most common means of livelihood. Though hunters are present in every community art and craft account for a number of additional professions. The Victoria Nyanza is reasonably well endowed with iron ore deposits, in the Southern lake district the richest deposits were located in Buzinza while minor deposits were found to the East and South of Bukerebe Island (Hartwig, G. 1976:45). The size of the group is itself significant, only the privileged group of royal blacksmiths evolved a large scale professional organization; the other groups which did not have the same access to constant

large scale demand upon production remained small and more loosely organized (Nadel, S. F. 1942:125).

The Workshop

The men in a workshop are usually related and belong to the same family group a father and his sons on a number of brothers, who divide work among themselves and share the proceeds. For example, Nadel cited an example with two of the largest blacksmith groups in Bida in West Africa. "In one of the workshops we find two adults and two boys working – the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house". (Nadel, S. F. 1942:127). In Gabe, the men belong to the same family with their common family head being the head of the guild. Inside the workshop one finds two furnaces each screened by an angular mud wall. On the inner side of the screen facing the open fire, sits the blacksmith himself. On the other side of the screen sits the man who works the bellows.

Method of Manufacture

In the furnace, charcoal is burnt which the blacksmiths make themselves. There is the club shaped hammer, the anvil and a bowl of water in which the finished product is left to cool. The bulk of crude iron is held over the fire until it becomes red hot and pliable, it is then placed on the anvil and gradually hammered into shape. The change from furnace to anvil is repeated several times until the object has been given its final shape. The final product include hoes, bush knives, crude axes, big nails and hooks for plank doors.

Social Status of Blacksmiths

Smiths are involved in virtually every realm of human enterprise that Gabe people considers important, they are for instance doctors, practising small pox inoculation. The Gabe like most African peoples view the world through a complex combination of scientific and super natural beliefs, blacksmiths are masters of divination and amulet making. They are careful, always to act on behalf of their communities.

Pre –Colonial Inter–Regional Trade and Exchange

We cannot talk or discuss the pre–colonial industrial activities without discussing the method of trade for these products. Trade and exchange were extensively carried out by the different communities of Africa. Symbolic relationships existed between the agricultural producers and those who specialised in craft work. The ruling groups sought to extent their power across the essentially North–South lines of trade, so that all the valuable exports of the Western Sudan for example would come into their control. Their capital and other trading towns thus gained control of the goods sought by the traders

from the Sahara and North Africa and equally their agents secured goods in the Sudan (Fage, J. D. 1978:72). Sudanese produce sometimes came as tribute from vabbal people. The Sanhaja tibe for instance were the link between the North American traders and states such as ancient Ghana. Later this position was taken by the growing powerful kingdom of ancient Ghana. The traders move into the hinterland areas buying the items of trade from the manufacturers. The manufacturers for the most part are interested in the production of the goods but it was the traders business to carry these products for sale to the local farmers and hunters that need the products. Market places were therefore located along the trade routes to enhance speedy exchange of goods. The black smiths exchanged their iron implement for salt and cloth. The traders formed caravans and sometimes moved their goods into the interior for exchange. Hopkins describing the long distance trade of West Africa noted that the pastoralists of the Sahara – Savannah border traded livestock, dairy produce, and salt with the cultivators of the savannah in return for millet and cloth. In turn, the Savannah region traders traded livestock, salt, dried fish, potash and cloth with the peoples of the forest, from whom they receive slaves, kola nuts, ivory, iron ware and cloth. Finally the forest people sold food stuffs and manufactured goods to coastal settlements in exchange for fish and salts. The demise of African Iron industry has commonly been explained as the direct result of European competition. By 1800 the iron mining and smelting industry upon which the blacksmiths had once had to rely completely for their raw material were almost at an end, ruined by the competition of cheaper and purer iron bars imported from Europe. Cast iron and steel had continued to be unknown and wrought iron remained insufficient to meet the need of local populations. The European iron had a high sulphur content (due to the use of coal of the smelted product and made it a poor substitute for the carbon – steel or pure iron bloom from some African furnaces. The location of the smelting site itself was dependent upon the availability of ore, fuel, water and suitable materials for the manufacture in the furnace. The most crucial factor in smelting process was the charcoal because it was involved in the very chemistry of the reduction process. Not every tree is suitable for the charring process. Even fewer species provide charcoal suitable for the smelting and forging of iron. By the mid of nineteenth century, there was already uncertainty in obtaining charcoal for the furnace. This was as a result of deforestation and over exploitation of the environment by Europeans as well as Africans, Europeans for the camwood production and Africans for iron smelting by 1519, iron was listed among the trade goods best received as far as the volta. The area of Sierra Leone at the beginning of the sixteenth century is described variously as having much iron of good quality and the best and mildest iron in all the world (Goucher, C. L. 1981:185). The French traded in iron in the Gambia in 1686. It is believed that in 1812 only Britain imported 209 tons of iron. By the end of the century between 5,000 and 10,000 tons of iron were being shipped annually from British ports to West Africa. The increase reliance on

imported iron bars thus should be viewed as a result of two developmental: an increasing industrialized Europe's ability to compete and a series of African ecological crises. Initially the European iron import was neither cheaper nor pure but rather simply a necessity as the continuation of local smelting faced increasingly severe fuel shortages. Today a large proportion of the crude iron is bought from the European stores. The Nupe called it "dry iron". The competition of cheap European iron has made the upkeep of the large native foundries unprofitable: many have been abandoned and allowed to fall in disuse, and even where they are still in use only two or three out of perhaps six furnaces are still workable. By the turn of the twentieth century most of the blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up farming on a large scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of their industry. The general weakening during the colonial period of the guild organization is brought about by the recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild - head and sectional heads has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller ones. The increasing quantities of cheap European imports of iron basins, machetes, knives, hoes and other metal goods had been turned out by the expanding mass production techniques of the industrial revolution. The English cities of Birmingham and Sheffield were specially active in this respect and by the mid nineteenth century had become an important political lobby in matters affecting British policies in Africa. Natural and geographical factors dictated the location of industries in Africa. Cloth dyeing was a special industry of its own and in most parts of Africa vegetable dyes were derived from certain local plants. The manufacture of cloth was a larger, more elaborate African industry which exhibited a greater degree of specialization and division of labour than any other and seems to have faced the challenge of European competition with far greater resilience. The market for cloth was large. In 1800, despite three centuries of European cloth imports, West Africa still produce the bulk of the cloth that was consumed, in a bewildering variety of fabrics which utilised almost every substance from which cloth could be made including animal hairs, the bark of trees as well as cotton. Much of it was plain stuff produced by women in the house hold, but for the high quality cloth, specialised centres had developed, exporting their goods over long distance. The most highly developed centres of cloth manufacture naturally arose in the towns which lay in the thickest clusters of population. Thus the Savannah, Kano, Timbuktu and Kuka were famed centres of the industry. It was the specialization of pattern, design and colour and the excessive "choosiness" of the African customer which gave the indigenous cloth industry its ability to resist European competition. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European cloth being mostly woollen and heavy and itself the product of handicraft industry, was unable to compete in price or quality, and thus the slave traders had turned to India for a supply of exotic and richly patterned light weight cottons and silks for the African markets. The Indian cloths were naturally expensive and

furnished only a limited demand among African rulers and coastal merchants with a taste for the unusual. After mid eighteenth century, the factory of Lancashire began producing cheap cotton cloth on an over – increasing scale at lower and lower prices. Before 1880, however although Lancashire goods increasingly entered the market, they were unable to displace the local cloth. It took years of experience in the trade for the European merchants to obtain a close understanding of local patterns and prejudices and these sometimes varied so greatly from village to village that the factory system of Lancashire could not adapt its production for such small units. Lancashire cloth was also at first much inferior in quality to the hand-made local product, and where Africans dressed more for embellishment than for warmth, quality was more important than quantity. In the far North of Nigeria where white plain cloth was more frequently worn, the high cost of transportation from the coast delayed the triumph of Lancashire cloth until the coming of the railway after 1911. When European cloth became dominant on the African markets, it meant that African producers were cut off from the increasing demand. The craft producers either abandoned their tasks in the face of a cheap available European cloth or they continued on the same small hand-worked instruments to create styles and pieces for localised markets. Therefore there was what some experts called “technological arrest” and in some instances actual regression since people forgot even the simple technique of their fore-fathers. During the colonial period what the Indians and Lebanese established were cotton gins for the separation of cotton seeds from lint while the cotton mills proper were located in Europe. Africans were not even allowed to own the gins, their role was to produce the raw materials to feed the gins and the cotton mills abroad. These companies include Francaise d’Afrique Occidentale (CFAO) and Societe Commercial Ouest Africaine (SCOA) for the French; United African Company (UAC) for the British. The Liverpool merchants who were big slave traders switched to palm produce trade and were evacuating palm oil from the shores of Africa. The industrial districts of Manchester and Cheshire had keen interest for the produce of Africa. The raw cotton and palm produce were put into finished products as Manchester cloth and sunlight soap respectively. These industries replaced the cloth and soap industries of Africa by flooding the markets of the interior with cheap inferior mass produced cloth and soap. Sometimes the firms which purchased the agricultural produce in Africa were the same concerns which manufacture goods based on those agricultural raw materials, for instance, Cadbury and Fry, the two foremost English manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate were buyers on the African coast (Rodney, W. 1974:154). The Ugandan plantation economy of the colonial period grew cotton for the Lancashire factory owners. When this cotton is put into finished product, being cotton shirts and re-exported to Uganda, the price was so high that the Uganda peasants could hardly afford to pay for it. The local people sometimes do not have any choice but to buy at whatever price the manufacturers sell their products. The opening up

of interior made comparison of local and foreign goods possible, even the manufacturers themselves found it more profitable and time saving to buy the manufactures of the Europeans with the money they now acquire from being cash crop farmers than sitting for long hours on a loom or a blacksmith shop. Looking at the local soap industry, the colonial incursions also affected it greatly. Local soap was manufactured by many communities in Africa during the pre-colonial period. For example in West Africa Yoruba women manufacture soap known as "black" soap. The soap served two purpose; for washing and bathing and for medication. Till date the Yoruba women still manufacture black soap but the demand for it had greatly reduced as a result of the influx of foreign soap. In fact the soap is only used presently for serious skin infection. Africans prefer the imported medicated soap to this all purpose local soap. To further illustrate this point, Rodney focused his attention on the activities of one William H. Lever who started the making of "Sunlight" soap. His company graduated into Unilever Soap Company and by 1900 with increase supply of palm oil from the colonies he increased the quantity of soap brought into the colonies. As time went on, he made many variety of soap including Life buoy. Lux, Vim etc (Rodney, W. 1974:181), his company which absorbed some smaller companies like Molver was situated on the Mersey side near Liverpool in England. In the leather industry the plastics and synthetics replaced for example the fine quality Nigerian leather known as "Morrocan Leather" because of the industrial revolution chemicals other than leather were now mixed in factories for production of synthetic leather bags, shoes, caps and carpets.

Conclusion

The fact that Africa started as hunting and gathering type of economy to food production and trade and crafts shoe that there were pockets of developments within Africa before their contact with the outside world. The pace of this development no doubt has been very slow but this also is tied to the fact that society develops either slower or faster depending on the challenges of the time. Africa was self reliant on its small way and whatever was produced was enough for the population at the time. Africans had a sense of improvement and innovation. In Asante, Opuku ware had already shown capacity for seeking innovation by going to the trouble of taking imported silk and unravelling it so as to combine the silk threads with cotton to make the famous kante cloth. The capitalistic instincts in the white man did not allow the Africans to develop at their own pace. Iron work thus involves four forms of production – the manufacture of the bellows of charcoal, of tool and finally the raw material used in blacksmith work. All of these roles of smiths are linked through their most fundamental purpose: to exercise their power and wisdom in the service of society. One could characterize them as seeking to establish or maintain harmony and balance in nearly every area of traditional life. The technological abilities of

smiths are a part of this broader pattern. The blacksmiths were also associated with magical powers, the clan of the smiths always produces the priest of the land. Most times the royal clan was also the clan from where the smiths were produced.

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