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FURNITURE AND JOINERY INDUSTRIES IN MEXICO 1/

by

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1. BACKGROUND

Furniture and joinery industries in Mexico have its origin in ancient times. Some tribes showed examples of wood worked items such as arm and tool handles, benches, tables and boats. Other materials used were rocks, vegetable fibres and animal bones and hides.

2. A CHANGE THROUGH TIME

A considerable improvement particularly in the use of wood as a construction material and in furniture making occurred with the appearance of the Spaniards. Artisans began to be trained and we could say that the then current craftsmanship of Europe was transmitted to the country.

3. PRESENT SITUATION

Considerable advance can be seen in our furniture industry in relation to its origin, but, if a comparison would be made with most of the European countries and some of America, our furniture and joinery industries have remained somewhat behind. My personal and constructive criticism to solve our delay in development, would be as follows:

- a. - We have come to an unbalanced and difficult market, basically due to differences in classes of our population. A great portion of our 55 million population cannot be considered a potential customer for furniture.
- b. -- There exists practically no educational system in the field of furniture and joinery manufacturing. A slight effort has been done lately for the lower levels.
- c. - An inappropriate use of some woods has resulted due to little or no diffusion of information on availability and properties of non exploited species. Delays in research will contribute to the same phenomenon in the future.

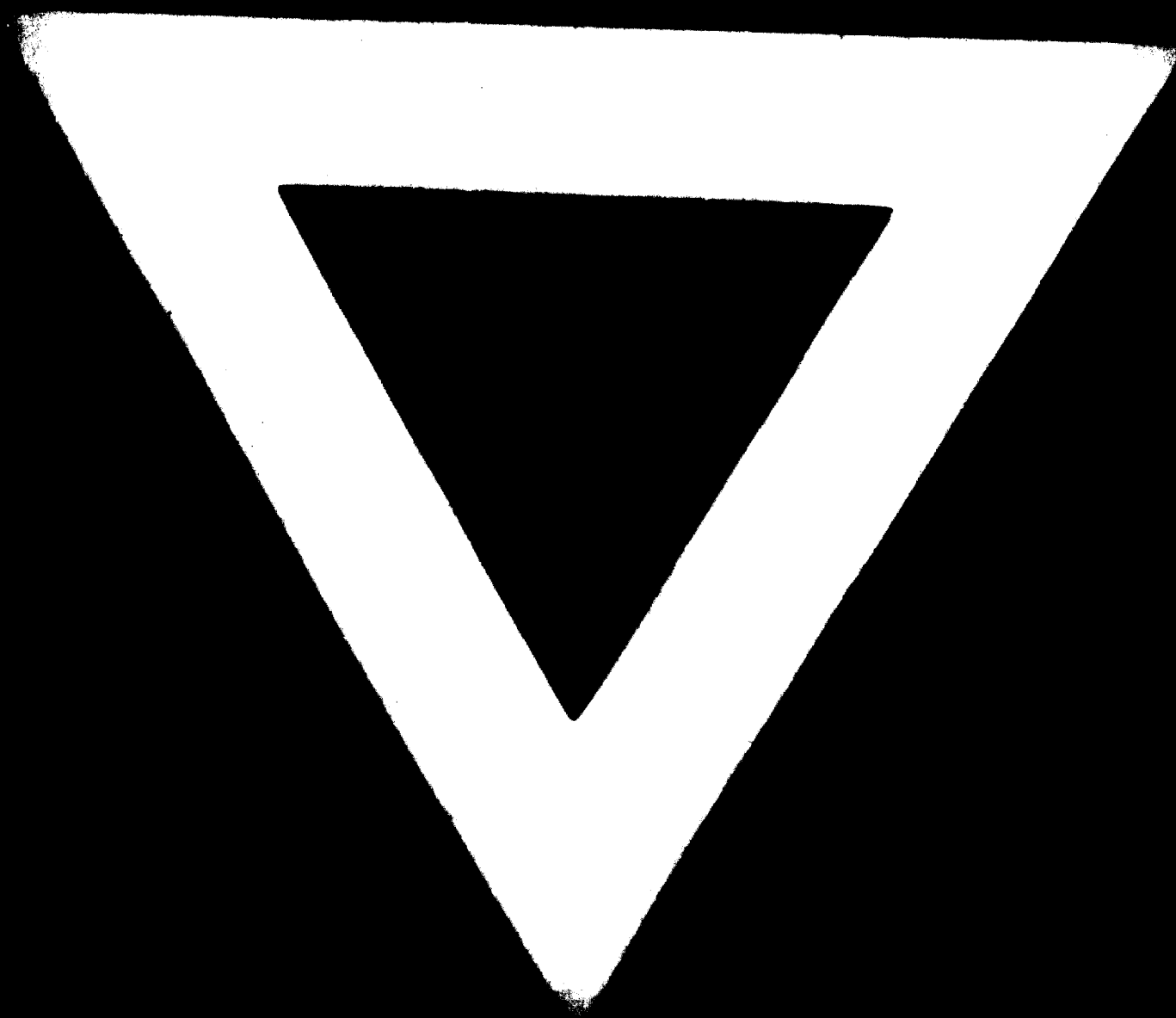
- d. - High cost of materials in relation to other countries.
- e. - High cost of production basically due to both problems, high cost of materials and low volume of market.
- f. - Poor relation between product design, market, materials used.
- g. - As a result of the above problems, our product costs are high, mainly for the poor and middle class.
- h. - Much of the industry related to furniture manufacturing does not supply adequate materials and services, some examples are: Hardware of good quality and design, efficient kiln drying, quality cushioning materials, etc.
- i. - Several associations of furniture and joinery exist, but, little planning is done related with the actual problems of future tendency of the industry.

Some proposals for accelerating the development of the furniture and joinery industries in Mexico would be:

- I. Help the actual volume balance of the market by promoting export of furniture and furniture components, improve designs to obtain industrially better costs for products directed to the poor and middle classes.
- II. Improve considerably the educational and training system for all levels of human resources to the furniture and joinery industries. A program to provide such help to industry on the shortest term possible would be most useful.
- III. Promote the use of wood species rarely used up to now such as the large variety of oaks and tropical hardwoods. Diffuse among the industry all information prepared by the Forestry Institute related to the property and possible uses of these new species.
- IV. Promote the creation of more plywood and particle board factories, particularly in areas where the burden cost of transportation is heavy. Promote the manufacture and improvement of new and effective hardware.

- V. Motivate industrial and commercial associations to set up a plan and execute it in conjunction with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in order to establish norms such as the regulation of quality and safety controls for furniture manufactured in Mexico.
- VI. The economical crisis that has invaded many countries these days has had a particularly sensible effect in my country and specifically in the field of materials and machinery, regardless of the country of supply, serious consideration should, therefore, be given to the promotion of local manufacture of the basic woodworking equipment. Several manufacturers of machinery exist, they will have now one of the best opportunities to increase considerably the local volume of sales, this will be conditioned only in direct proportion to the improvements in quality and reliability of their products.





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