

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN TO FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT IN KAINJI LAKE BASIN

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## ABSTRACT

*The study was carried out to examine the contribution of women to fisheries development in the Kainji Lake Basin. The sample was drawn in some of the major fishing villages in the sub strata of the basin. A total of 120 respondents were used. The findings revealed that women were involved in fisheries activities most especially in the processing and marketing aspects. Many of the respondents happened to be wives of the fishermen. Few bought fishing equipment with a special arrangement for the supply of fish while some buy from fishermen. This revealed the willingness of the women to be empowered in the economic activities in the area to meet some basic household needs although some are still of the opinion that it is the duty of husband to fend for the household. Major constraints to the women in this area were the scarcity of fish, no support from the government or private agencies. Recommendations were made on how to enhance women participation in fisheries development.*

## INTRODUCTION

The greatest challenges to Africa's agricultural sector are to increase production and the value of agricultural products. The economic development taken by tropical Africa in the last century or so is that it has created a twofold dichotomy in the rural division of labour. This dichotomy is on the one hand between subsistence and cash cropping agriculture and on the other hand between women and men who inhabit the sector.

In Nigeria, the percentage of economically active female in the agricultural sector is sixty-eight, and in Gambia it is ninety. In general, African women have the highest female participation rate in agriculture of all regions in the world since eighty five percent of rural women are involved and they produce and handle up to eighty percent of the food eaten by the families. (Akosua, 1988)

Women are also found in fish processing, distribution and marketing, their role in fishing cooperatives as financiers to fishermen made them to enjoy high social statuses in fishing communities. Their economic prowess and ability to organize into viable units are emphasized. Adekanye (1988), Chikhi (1984a), Lopez (1984), Meeran (1984) among others report on the role of women in fishery cooperatives, the cultural factor affecting their participation in fishery related activities and possibilities for improving their earnings. Akerele (1979) asserts that Liberian women play a vital role in fish marketing but earn marginal profits because of competition from expatriate wholesalers.

Chikhi (1984b) reports on study of socio-economic environment of fishermen's wives in seven fishing communities in Benin and discusses their needs in terms of the formation of cooperatives and provision of credit schemes. Eeles (1984) looks at various initiatives that could improve the socio-economic status of women in fishing communities in Benin. Lacarme (1985) highlights the fact that in Dakar, Senegal the importance of women in fish processing and marketing is down played because the men monopolize power, are better educated and control credit facilities.

Women also play an important role in aquaculture production. Bernadette (1989) describes their role in this activity, using examples to show that limited time, lack of ownership of land and unavailability of credit are some of the factors limiting the involvement of women in aquaculture she proposed that women should be included as a target group in extension and training activities. Women take part in actual production in most types of aquaculture – brackish

water or freshwater fish ponds, fish farms or fish cages-whether on extensive, semi intensive or intensive level on a small, medium or large scale and in various stages of fish farm development (planning, construction and actual operation) and from seed production to grow, rearing, harvesting and post harvest handling.

Trottier (1987) states that women are, therefore a good target group for fish farming development for the following reasons:

- ✓ Because of their children, women are less likely than men to be away from home for long periods; therefore, they can give continual attention to pond husbandry if the ponds are close.
- ✓ Because they are accustomed to daily routine, women are more likely to provide the constant attention required for good husbandry and can use a variety of by-products (such as kitchen wastes, weeds and crop residues for composting).
- ✓ Because a typical fishpond does not provide full employment, women can accommodate fish farming tasks to other duties.

It is in the light of these that this paper is examining the contributions of women to fisheries development in the kainji lake basin with the following specific objectives:

- ✓ To locate what position women occupy in fisheries around the lake.
- ✓ To establish on how their participation contribute to the development of fisheries in the area.
- ✓ To identify the deterrents to the contributions they make.
- ✓ To identify factors to be employed to improve their contribution.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **The study area**

The study was carried out in lake kainji, which was formed by damming the river Niger at Kainji Island. The dam was completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1968 and the reservoir created behind it has a surface area of 1,120 km<sup>2</sup> at maximum level. The lake is 137km wide and its geographical position is 104°-155°N, 4° 45'E (Welcomme, 1972). Although the lake was formed majorly for hydroelectricity generation, it also offers great opportunities for artisanal fishery.

The study covered each of the sub strata of the basin by targeting the major fishing communities, which include, Malale, Buka Dubu, kokoli, Maigwagware, Dugamashaya, Hikiya, Pasatulu, Tunga Alhaji Shekare, Tunga Allhaji Danbaba, Tunga Baushe, Sakejikinka, Tunga Alhaji Angulu, Anfani, Tunga Gungawa, Maiwindi, Wara, Gafara Baban Tunga, Kuka-uku, Raishe, and Rukubalo. A total of 120 respondents were sampled. 6 respondents from each of the villages. The study was subjected to descriptive statistics for analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Women in the study area are into fisheries especially processing and marketing aspects. This corroborates with Saito (1992) that says the traditional structure of rights and obligation with rural Muslim families has changed. Women in northern Nigeria now play a more active role in farm activities. In 1970, they accounted for 11% of farm labour, primarily as hired labour. On non-family farms. By 1990, they accounted for 22% of the farm labour, either on their own or as hired labour.

Table1 highlights the socio – economic characteristics of the respondents and it was discovered that 39.2% and 37.5% of the respondents were between the ages 31-40 and 41-50 years respectively. This could be explained that the women at the ages were active, agile and full of vigour to bring about change considering their cultural and religious background. Majority of the respondents were married. Only 5.8% and 16.7% of the respondents were divorced and widowed respectively. It could be said that because of their status or responsibilities to shoulder, they had to render assistance to the husbands who are mostly fishermen. 89% of the respondents had quranic education while 11% had formal education (primary and secondary). Household size, large family size has been the attribute of most fishing communities, 40% of the respondents had between 11- 15 persons. 4.2% of the respondents had 1-5 persons. Large household size may be veritable source of labour for their activities. It could be thought of the women as home managers households but it is high time they are up and doing to be able to cope biting harsh economy. On the experiences, 28% of the respondents claimed that they had been on the economic activities for about 16-20 years while 25% for about 11-15 years. Their economic

activities are in area of processing and marketing except for the few who bought fishing equipment with a special arrangement with fishermen for the supply of fish. Their economic activities are in area of processing and marketing except for the few who bought fishing equipment with a special arrangement with fishermen for the supply of fish. On the quantity of processed fish, an average of five (5) daros/basins were processed per week with selling price between N700-7000 depending on the species of the fish. For example medium sizes of Tilapia, Citharinus (moonfish), Alestes etc sells between N700 and N1000 per basin, while a bag of clupeids sells for N1500. Similarly, other high priced species such as Clarias, Heterobranchus, Lates spp, Mormyrus etc. goes for between N5000-7000 per basin. It is however, interesting to note that there exist available market destinations for the processed fish species. These destinations are markedly known for their weekdays in which they are operated. They include New Bussa (Mondays), Malale (Fridays), Kokoli (Thursdays), Shagunu (Thursdays), while Wara and Yauri are operated every three days. Trucks of fish mongers from the south visits all the markets except New Bussa to buy for onward delivery to urban markets such as Ilorin, Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt etc. From the findings, an adequate support should be focused towards women in fisheries development.

There is this common saying that "what a man can do, a woman will do it better". In reality, whoever has power and authority in a household determines the household functions. It is no longer a taboo or out of place that women in northern Nigeria cannot play an active role in farm activities. Today, in kainji lake basin women are not only into processing and marketing alone but are found in fish catch to the extent of owning boat for the economic activities. On the description of the newfound life style, 54% of the respondents agreed that the activity is pleasant while about 46% agreed that is unpleasant. The reasons for this may not be far fetched, considering the role as a mother, the bulk of domestic work in the home and the number of hours involved in fishing activities, it is not easy but the family must survive. With cultural and religious understanding of the northern Nigeria, one may think it will be an impossible thing to get take off capital to buying fish among the women, some are wives to the fishermen and are into partnership with their husbands. On the other hand, about 17% of the respondents used money from their saving to embark on the business. Due to civilization and the clamouring of women empowerment, today, most women in urban areas are into one economic activities or the other as a form of relief to prevent total dependency on the husbands. Likewise, in fishing communities, husbands have taken it upon themselves to encourage their wives. It is in the light of this that about 21% of the respondents claimed that their husbands gave them the capital to start the business. 79% of the respondents attested that it has not debarred them from household activities. About 21% of the respondents signified trading goes along with their fishing activities. Processing of fish is a tedious work, which requires more hands, about 95% of the respondents, used family labour and less than 5% hired labour. This confirms that the large household size constitutes the labour used in their activities. More than half of the respondents said the reasons for involvement in fisheries activities is for their self-gain. Only 39% of them said it's a way of contributing and maintaining the household. None of the respondents saw it as hobby. Little attention has been given women extension programme, this reflects in the results that 83% of the respondent got training \ information from parents. This could be because of the culture in study area that men are not allowed discriminately to enter their compounds. (See table 2)

Money accruing from their activities is used for various purposes such as replacement of worn out equipment, expansion of their activities and family upkeep. About 48% of the respondents plough the money back into the business, it is still their believe that it is the sole responsibility of the husbands to fend for household. About 26% of the respondents said at times part of the proceeds is used for petty needs of the home. Only about 7% of them who are in towns belonged to welfare association used part of money to pay their dues. This is done for security reasons (see figure 1).

The ability of women to generate income also depends on the extent to which they participate in the decision making process at all levels, including the highest national level. In this regard, they are constrained by a number of factors (Duncan, 1999). Among such constraints is the scarcity of fish, which may be caused by nature or insensitive approach to fisheries management. On man-made issues, inadequate fund has been the major problem of the women, poor market is another constraint. This might be linked to restriction on women by men, which foster the participation of middlemen who eventually make money from their activities. Although

the women are keen with availability of infrastructure, only few respondents mentioned it as a problem. This is a general phenomenon in many of the fishing communities. No primary school, some of their children walk some distance before they can find school. What obtained in the study corroborates with the constraints identified by Spore (1993) that women come up against all sorts of difficulties in their attempts to be seen as agents of development in their own right.

## **CONCLUSION**

The cultural perception of women as second-class citizens at birth continues through to old age. Changing these perceptions is proving elusive, as they permeate every facet of society. The promotion of women's participation in fisheries development can make significant contribution to building women's confidence and building confidence in the role of women.

Based on the findings of this study, one can infer that women are involved in fisheries activities in the study area. As such, sustainability of fisheries development programme would be greatly improved if the field experience of women were made known, when their views and needs were ascertained. Women were found to have the tendency to respond positively to new innovations brought to them. An improvement in technological facilities for the enterprise would aid source of funds and help increase output. It will also improve the earning of the women thereby alleviating poverty among them and their dependents. Moreover, it will help to improve the nation's economy generally.

In order to attain the goal of enhancing the involvement of women in sustainable fisheries development, the following recommendations are made:

- ✓ Female extension services or programmes should be encouraged in the Kainji lake basin
- ✓ More women should be engaged in fisheries development programmes with inclusion of sufficient gender-specific training and considerations.
- ✓ Women should be trained not only to perceive the situation they are in but also to understand how to escape from the ocean of poverty and to improve their own statuses so that they can function effectively in promoting rural development.
- ✓ Women should be organized first for credit assistance, then into their own cooperatives where they will be enlightened on self-help, self-determination and self-administration to make an on-slaught in mass poverty and destitution.

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#### Appendix:

##### Socio - economic characteristics

Age	Frequency	%
20 - 30	10	8.3
31 - 40	47	39.2
41 - 50	45	37.5
Above 50	18	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status	Frequency	%
Single	-	-
Married	93	77.5
Divorced	7	5.8
Widowed	20	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
House hold size	Frequency	%
1 - 5	5	4.2
6 - 10	45	37.5
11 - 15	48	40.0
16 - 20	22	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Education	Frequency	%
Formal	13	10.8
Quranic	107	89.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Experience (years)	Frequency	%
1 - 5	8	6.7
6 - 10	35	29.2
11 - 15	30	25.0
16 - 20	34	28.3
Above 20	13	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

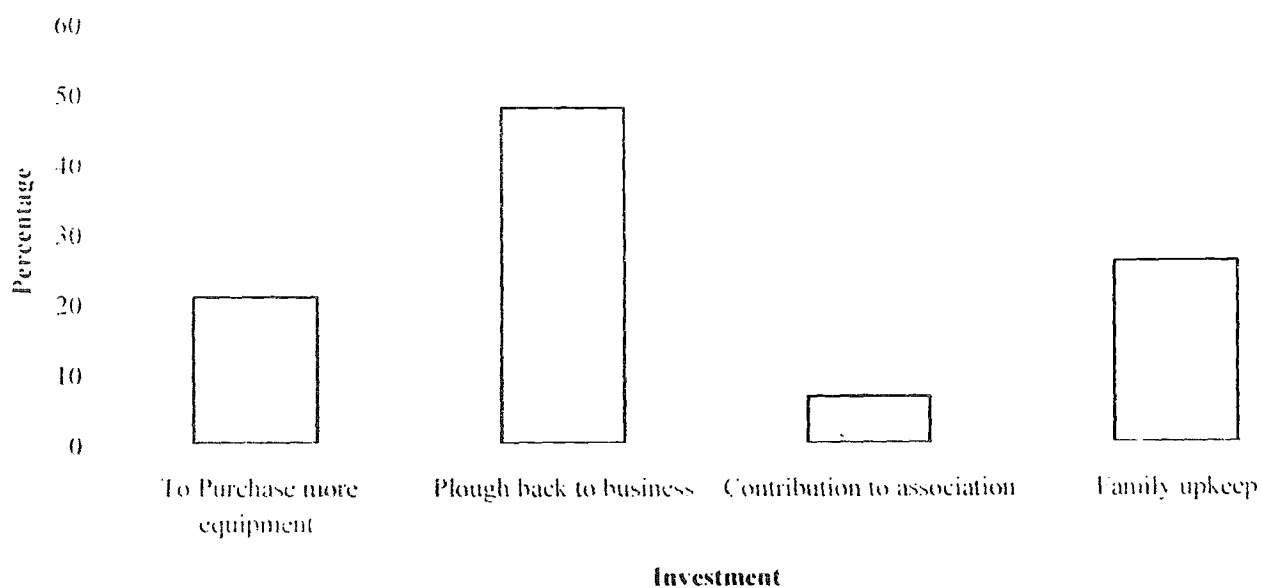


Figure 1: Investment activities

Description of experiences, take - off capital and other activities

Experience of job	Frequency	%
Pleasant	65	54.2
Unpleasant	55	45.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Take - off capital	Frequency	%
Savings	20	16.7
Contribution	75	62.5
Govt. Assistance	-	-
Financial Institution	-	-
Husband	25	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Other activities involved in	Frequency	%
Farming	-	-
Providing House hold water and fuel wood	95	79.2
Storage and transportation	-	-
Trading	25	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source of labour, training, right association and reason for activities

Source of labour	Frequency	%
Self	90	75
Children	25	20.8
Hired labour	5	4.2
Others	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Training	Frequency	%
Extension agents	15	
Posters	2	
Parents	100	
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Association	Frequency	%
Tribal	-	-
Religious	-	-
<i>Age group</i>	-	-
Welfare association	23	19.2
None	97	81.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>