

EVALUATION OF WOMEN FISHER FOLKS INVOLVEMENT IN FISHERIES ACTIVITIES IN KAINJI LAKE BASIN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The extent of rural women fisher folks contribution to fisheries was grossly under estimated and certainly under valued. The basis ofr their involvement in fisheries activities is to make themsewelves equal partners to men, productive and self reliant participants in the process of improving their own and their family living standard and to enable them realise their full potentials. This survey is niformed a system of data collection with the aid of questionnaires and analysis. Niny six(96) of the questionnaires were administered to women fisher folks in eight fishing communities selected at random. Thirty seven (97)percent of the women fisher folks are between ther ages of 25-35 years .59.4%of them can only raed and write in arabic language and 21.9%only are literate in weastern educvation, which is a general characteris tic of the rural populoation in Nigeria . 24.0% of the responndents are in full time fishing activies while 65-5%are fish mongers. They belong to cooperative societies but only 26%indicated to have benefited from loan and credit facilities. 84.4% of the respondents are sustained by the bussiness.The major problems facing women fisherfolk includes poor market price, fish spoilage, high transport cost and lack of access to laon and credit facilities and extension assitance. Solution to these prblems will increase their status benefit and development.

INTRODUCTION

The Subject of woman's roles in the fisheries sector has received little attention to date. Considering the fact that woman comprise thirty to fifty percent of the total fisheries workforce, there is a need for the various government and agencies responsible for fisheries to pay more serious attention to this large group in the rural fishing communities (FAO, 1986).

The extent of rural woman's contributions to agriculture and fisheries was generally grossly underestimated and certainly undervalue (Bill Bronell et al 1984. Planners assumed that it was the man who did the cultivating or the fishing, sold the produce, administered the income, made the decisions, while the woman took care of the house and children.

One of the greatest problems afflicting contemporary Nigeria is food. The issue of self sufficiency in food seems to have eluded solution inspect of the government's effort, it stands to reason that the problem will continue to defy all solution as long as our agricultural and rural development policies and strategies are conceived and executed in such a way that they marginalize peasant women who constitute a bulk of the agro-rural population; while the peasant women toil hard in food production, processing and marketing, they are at once the most neglected, most exploited and most under – rewarded

Stratum of humanity. Due to divergent cultures, some peasant women are over worked some are under worked in their contributions to the socio-economic development. To drive home the point:(Ahooja-patel, 1982) said, "Most of the unemployed are women. The majority of the malnourished are also women. The majority of women are not represented in important assemblies where decisions on development are taken. The majority of women are not benefiting from the cumulative technical and scientific knowledge of mankind".

From the late 1970, it become obvious that is necessary to improve the status of the rural women because of their contribution to the rural economy as part of the solution to the increased

awareness as shown by (Famoriyo, 1985), the direct connection between the food crises and marginalisation of women producers, rural-urban migration, limited access of women to output increasing technology and the Lagos plan of Action Africa (1980) which emphasized the action of government in encouraging rural women to increase food production, reduce food importation and reduce rural migration (FAO, 1984). Despite the above statement, it does not seem that the realization of the Lagos plan of action has been captured in Nigeria. According to the (FAO, 1984) since then (1980) the governments of Tanzania (1981), Ethiopia (1982) Somalia (1982) and Lesotho (1982) have Reviewed women's role in agricultural production and its implication for national food, agricultural and rural development strategies. It is clear that the need to improve rural women's status in Nigeria is at best, still considered if at all, as a social welfare function.

There has been no significant change in the material and social conditions of Nigeria rural women. In the words of (Raza and Famoriyo 1980) given the global focus i.e. the absolute number of rural women in the developing societies, their poverty, their contribution to national economics and their role set in the socio-cultural life of the societies and their deprivation should make them a primary target for integrated rural development. any social transformation in most parts of Africa cannot be achieved without women paying a full role.

The contribution of this sub-sector to Nigeria's socio economic development is minimal when compared to the overall contribution from agriculture, chiefly, contributions of protein and is an important requirement for a balanced diet. Williams (1985) indicated that fish consumption per individual per year was estimated as 10.5 kilogram in 1970 whilst computed estimate indicate that contribution to available protein supplies from fish and livestock in the Nigeria diet is equivalent to 15.5 percent.

The outcry is the low annual production indication that fish demand cannot be met from local supply, while production is in thousand metric tones, consumption is in million metric tones. Women play a very crucial role in the fish industry especially the Artisanal in the areas of fish processing, preservation and marketing. Some authors content that the low capital requirement of Artisanal fishery is a major explanation of women's greater involvement in it compared with industrial and fish farming. Oshuntogun and Ladipo (1985) observed that all the fish sellers from the village level to the city merchants were all women in Epe. Moreso, most of the women were found to be full time fish traders.

Fishing is one of the activities by the riverine dwellers of the lake, which constitutes a part of agriculture development.

At the early time only men were involved but now women are also in fishing activity. Without progress in the situation of women, there can be no true social development. Human rights are not worthy of the name if they exclude the female, half of humanity said Mr. Boutrus –Boutrus Ghali, a previous Secretary-General of the United Nations.

There is an important distinction between the words sex and gender as uses in gender planning theory sex defines the condition of being male or female on the basis of biological characteristics. "Gender" is socially constructed characteristics learnt from cultural, changes with time. Gender.

Distinctions are, for example, 'men's work/women's work, dress, behaviour, expectations.

Gender refers to the birth of female or male, but learnt to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what they appreciate behaviour and attitude, roles and activities. This learnt behaviour is what make up gender identify and determines gender roles Williams's et al (1974).

STUDY PROBLEMS

- *No enough interaction between fisherfolk and institutions.
- *Lack of extension work directed towards women in fisherfolk.
- *Program not related to needs of fisherfolk.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The significance of this study is to ascertain role contributions and level of women fisherfolk involvement in fisheries development.

This is to expose their contribution in fisheries to enable researchers and agencies involved in fisheries development appreciate their role and focus attention in developing appropriate information packages and using the media preferred for dissemination.

Also to reveal problems facing women fisher-folk with the aim of alerting appropriate authorities device solutions to them.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specially, the objectives of the study includes:-

- * To obtain information on women's participation in fisheries, processing, marketing and information media.
- * To sensitize the contribution of women fisherfolk in fisheries in an attempt to make them an object and subject of discourse and research.
- * To put an end to the sobriety and vetiscence of the womanhood and the old cultural behalf that the women belongs to the home only.
- * To foster gender equity and librates the mind of women for equity participation in all affairs.
- * To determine the level of women fisherfolk participation or involvement in fisheries.
- * To assess the income generation from the sales of fish by women fisherfold.
- * To identify information of needs of women fisherfolk and relate such to fishing problems encountered on the late.
- * To ascertain the preferred media information dissemination.
- * To identify the problems encountered and proper suggested solutions to them as focus by the appropriate agencies.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Structured questionnaire were administered to Ninety-six (96) women fisherfolk selected randomly in eight (8) fishing villages. Twelve questionnaires were served in each of the eight (8) villages.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The data obtained was analyzed by simple descriptive statistical method, such as averages and percentages etc.

Ninety six copies were served on the fisherfolks, twelve in each of the eight villages. He women fisherfolk were selected randomly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results were tabulated and discussed under the following broad headings: -

- Demography and personal information.
- Fish farming/fishing.
- Fish marketing and processing.
- Fishing as an occupation.
- Loan and credit facilities.
- Information sources

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS IN KAINJI LAKE BASIN

Table 1: The Demographic/Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
20-25	16	16.7
25-30	36	37.0
30-35	11	11.5
35-40	11	11.5
40-45	22	22.9
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey (2003)

Table 1 shows the ages distribution of 96 respondents. This study shows that 37.0% of the respondents are between the ages of 25-30% range of years. 22.9% are at the range of 40-45 years. 16.7% are at the age range of 20-25 years, while 11.5% are both at the range ages of 30-35 and 35-40 years. The absence of teenage might not be unconnected to lack of start up funds and inheritance status of the profession as 39.6% of the population inherit the profession from their parents. However, whatever it is, the young are more enlightened, energetic and progressive in outlook with most favourable attitudes towards changes. With the age of the women fisherfolk, changing in terms of adopting better management practices in fish capturing and handling will be very difficult.

TABLE 2 ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN KAINJI LAKE BASIN NEW BUSSA.

ETHNIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Hausa	32	33.3
Kambari	7	7.3
Bussa	5	5.2
Nupe	9	9.4
Gungawa	7	7.3
Lopawa	12	12.5
Isoko	9	9.4
Ijaw	7	7.4
Urhobo	8	8.3
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003.

Respondents are found to be spread among nine various ethnic groups. The Hausa ethnic group constitute the majority with 33.3% followed by Lopawa 12.5% and Nupe and Isoko 9.5%. Others are Urhobo 8.3%, Bussawa 5.2% other migrants fishermen from Niger and Mali are also found mixed in the Hausa population. The real indigenes of the areas are the list participants probably because of cultural and religious restrictions as reported by Alamu (1998). The table above reveals the situations as stated.

FISHING AS A BUSINESS

On fishing as a business 100% of the respondents take to fishing as a business as shown in the table below.

TABLE 3 fishing as a business of respondents in kainji lake basin

FISHING AS BUSINESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (5)
96	96	100
TOTAL	96	100

Cultural and Religious Restriction

On religious and cultural restrictions, the table below shows 41.7% are restricted by religion (Islamic) 26.0% have cultural restrictions and only 32.3% have on restriction bounds.

TABLE 4 cultural and religious restrictions of respondents in kainji lake basin

RESTRICTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Cultural	25	26.0
Religion	40	41.7
None	31	32.3
TOTAL	96	100

EDUCATION LEVELS

59.4% of the respondents can read Arabic and have Quorantic education, 16.7% have gone through secondary education, 5.2% primary education, 3.1% tertiary. This low literacy rate in western education is a characteristic of the peasant population in Nigeria. Obviously, this is a major constraint to the management of the Artisanal communication in extension and other rural development programmes, which presupposes a certain minimum level of literacy among a target population/groups. The below shows the reality described above.

TABLE 5: educational level of respondents in kainji lake basin

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
QUORAN	57	59.4
Primary	5	5.2
Secondary	16	16.7
Tertiary	3	3.1
TOTAL	96	100

Source field survey, 2003

DURATION OF FISHING

72.9% of the women interviewed spend about 5-8hours in fishing trips,

16.7% between 1-4 hours and 10.4% spend over eight hours.

TABLE 6: Duration of fishing by respondents in kainji lake basin

DURATION OF FISHING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
5-8 HOURS	70	72.9
1-4	16	16.7
OVER 8	10	10.4
TOTAL	96	100

DOMESTIC WORK/FISHING ACTIVITIES

Only 44.8% spend more time in domestic work and 55.2% spent most time in fishing activities.

TABLE 7: domestic more/fishing activities by respondents in kainji lake basin

TIME SPENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Fishing activities	53	55.2
Domestic activities	43	44.8
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

FREQUENCY OF FISHING

51% go for fishing every day, while 24% occasionally and 12.5% on weekly basis. 10.4% go for fishing ant other day and 2.1% go out on monthly basis. The table is as shown below.

Table 8: Frequency of fishing of respondents in kainji lake basin

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FISH	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Everyday	49	51.0
Monthly	2	2.0
Weekly	12	12.5
No of days/wk	10	10.5
Occasionally	23	24
		0
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

FISH MARKETING AND PROCESSING

65.6% of the women are fishermen's wives engaged in the retail marketing activities, 29.2% in processing and 6.3% are in the transfer business. The Table is as shown below.

Table 9: Marketing/processing of fish by respondents in kainji lake basin

MARKETING/PROCESSING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Processing	28	29.2
Marketing	63	65.6
Transportation	6	6.2
TOTAL	96	100

This high percentage of retailers could be due to huge capital needed in retail business.

PROCESSING METHODS

96.8% process by smoking while 3.2% by freezing. The tables is as shown below

Table 10: Fish processing methods by respondents in kainji lake basin

PROCESSING METHOD	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Smoking	93	96.8
Frozen	3	3.2
Sundry	0	0
Other	0	0
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

Smoking in the commonly known method of preservation.

SOURCES OF INCOME

50% got their start off fund through family sources, 27.1% through

Associations and cooperatives, 12.5% through banks and 10.4% through other sources

TABLE 11: Income source of respondents in kainji lake basin

SOURCE OF INCOME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Family	48	50
Association/Cooperatives	26	27.1
Bank	12	12
Other	10	10.4
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

REVENUE GENERATED

84.4% are comfortable with the revenue accrued to them in the business and rely on it for their family sustenance. 15.6% are not doing well and don't rely on it sustenance in the family. This is shown in the table below.

Table 11: Sustainability of business of respondents in kainji lake basin

BUSINESS SUSTAIN	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	81	84.4
No	15	15.6
TOTAL	96	100

Sources: field survey, 2003

MARKETING PLACE

60.4% sale in the urban market, 15.6% in the village market and 13.5% use the product for family consumption while 10.4% sale at the shore.

The table is as shown below.

The table 12: MARKETING OUTLETS USE BY RESPONDENTS IN KAINJI LAKE BASIN

PLACE FISH IS SOLD	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Village	15	15.7
Market (Urban)	58	60.4
At shore	10	10.4
Family	13	13.5
Other	0	0
TOTAL	96	100

Sources: field survey, 2003

FISHING AS AN OCCUPATION

39.5% inherit the business from parents. 20.8% are in fisheries by the virtue of their location and in absence of while-color job. 24% are no full time business while 15.6% as hobby. The table is as shown below.

TABLE 13: Fishing as an occupation of respondents in kainji lake basin

FISHING AS OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Hobby	15	15.6
Inherited	38	39.6
Full time	23	24.0
Others	20	20.8
TOTAL	96	100

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Low price scored 27.1%, breakage of fish through bad processing 16.7%, spoil problem also 16.7% while high transport cost 14.6% and Financial problem 8.3%. Others like missing gears on lake, charges on registration and licensing scored 6.2%. The table is shown below.

Table 14: Problems encountered by respondents in lake kainji basin

PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Financial	8	8.3
Low prize	26	27.1
Burning	10	10.4
Breakage	16	16.7
Spoilage	16	16.7
Cost	14	14.6
Transportation	6	6.1
Others	6	6.2
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

LOAN AND CREDIT FACILITIES

21.7% get support from associations and 3.1% through cooperatives; 1% through the banks, while 74% do not have any assistance from any source, that is, look inwards for finances.

Table 15: Loan and credit facilities advanced to respondents in kainji lake basin

LOAN AND CREDIT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Association	21	21.7
Cooperative	3	3.1
Bank	1	1.0
Others	71	74
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003.

INFORMATION

Those who have easy access to information are 82.3% and 17.3% get theirs in an expensive way.

Table 16: information management difficulty and expenses by respondents in kainji lake basin

ACCESS TO INFORMATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Easy	79	82.3
Expensive	17	17.7
TOTAL	96	100

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

When asked on source of information assistance on fisheries 73.9% indicated to have benefited from the college of freshwater fisheries Technology all in New Bussa. 2.2% got information through extension agents.

Table 17: impact of institutions generating information in kainji lake basin

AWARENESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
NIFFR	71	73.9
FCFFT	23	23.9
Others	2	2.2
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

Media in which information dissemination is received

86.5% through broadcast on radio, 10.4% through newspapers and 3.1% over the television.

TABLE 18: Media in which information generated on fisheries is received by need in kainji lake basin

AGRIC PROGRAMME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Broadcast on radio	83	86.5
TV	3	3.1
Published on Newspapers	10	10.4
TOTAL	96	100

Source: field survey, 2003

LANGUAGE SPOKEN OR UNDERSTAND BEST

When accrued language in which information is understood best, respondents indicated as follows.

Hausa 55.2%, English 17.7% Bussa language 13.5%, and Ibo 13.5%

LANGUAGE SPOKEN/ READ BEST	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Hausa	53	55.2
English	17	17.7
Bissan	13	13.5
Igbo	13	13.5
TOTAL	96	100

SUITABILITY OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION LANGUAGE

90.6% are comfortable with the language of information dissemination through the mass media and 9.4% are not comfortable.

INFORMATION PROVIDED WITH LANGUAGE UNDERSTAND	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	87	90.6
No	9	9.4
TOTAL	96	100

DISCUSSION

Result of socio-economic data indicated that majority of the respondents 37.5% are in the active age population (25-30). Absence of teenage might not be unconnected to either lack of start-up funds, inheritance status of the profession (39.6%) or they only offer assistance to their parents. The young are more enlightened, energetic and progressive in outlook with most favorable attitudes towards change in terms of adoption of better management practices in fisheries.

Respondents cut across various ethnic groups in the lake. The indigenes of the area are the list participants because of cultural (26.0%) and religious (41.7%) restriction as women of marriable age have to be in purdah Alamu (1998). 59.4% of the women interviewed are knowledgeable in Quranic education, 25.0% have either attained primary, secondary or tertiary educational level and can read and write English language. low literacy rate in western education is a general characteristics of the rural population in Nigeria. Obviously this is a constrain in the management or decoding information generated through broadcast or print media by research institutes and extension agencies which are broadcasted or written in English.

Respondents contacted preferred spending 5-8 hours on fishing trips than domestic work. 51% of the women go out for fishing activities every day.

Majority (65.6%) of the women fisherfolk interviewed are fishmongers in retail activities and 29.2% in processing while 6.35 are in the transport business.

50% of respondents got their start up fund through family sources, 16.7% through associations or cooperative societies while only 6.3% through banks. When asked on revenue generated by the business, 84.4% are comfortable with the revenue accrued to them and rely on it for their family sustenance

60.4% either sells their catch in urban markets, others in village markets or use it for family consumption.

Majority (74%) do not have loan or credit facilities assistance. 24% of the fisherfolks interviewed are in full time fishing business. On access to information concerning their activities, 82.3% indicated to have easy access cheaply. 86.5% get their source of information through radio in the language preferred.

Problems women fisherfolks face in the course of their fishing activities includes, low price, lack of standardization and grading, bad processing method (traditional), high transport cost and lack of transport facilities, lack of enough finance and support to boost the business. Others include, high charges on registration and licensing etc.

It is discovered that if women are given assistance financially and in kind can compete favorably with their male counterpart.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that more women are engaged in fulltime fishing activities and spent long hours in fishing trips.

But the low level of western education among the fisherfolks inhibits effective written communication and information in general from reaching fishing women particularly regarding processing, preservation and marketing.

Assisting these women in extension activities cash and kind through their cooperative societies can put them in a better footings to complement the efforts of their husbands in the area of meeting family supplies, self reliance, enhancement of their status poverty reduction, increase in quality of life and social status. Energetic and well-informed younger ones need to be encouraged to develop interest in the profession to replace the fast aging women.

RECOMMENDATION

The concept of involvement of women in poverty alleviation, food security and socio-economic development activities should be given attention by making them object and subject of discourse and research to put an end to the reticence and sobriety of the womanhood by bridging the gap in knowledge regarding their status and contribution in artisional fisheries, rural and lake development.