

IV. CHARACTERIZATION STUDY OF CONSUMERS AS A MAJOR FISHERIES
SECTOR COMPONENT GROUP

RESEARCH TEAM:

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1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDY:

The study of fish consumers as a major fisheries sector component group is part of a larger project which seeks to improve performance of the fisheries sector by strengthening capabilities at the Uganda Freshwater Fisheries Research Organization (UFFRO) and within the entire fisheries sector in Uganda, and to identify critical constraints in the performance of the sector and to find practical ways to improve its performance.

This study team was constituted following the recommendations of The First National Fisheries Production to Consumption System Research Workshop, held on 2 - 3 December, 1992 at UFFRO, Jinja.

1.2. Justification:

This study is justified on the basis of the following factors:

- a) Previous studies on fisheries have rarely addressed the question of fish consumption, so there is hardly any information on this aspect of the fisheries.
- b) Malnutrition has been detected in societies living close to and in the hinterland of water bodies. There is no clear explanation for this nor how the situation could be remedied.
- c) As a result of the high prices for meat in the country, fish is now regarded as the main source of relatively cheap animal protein. There is, therefore, need for a clear understanding of the factors governing its consumption.

2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:

This is one of the studies aimed at diagnosing the different major groups participating in the fisheries sector. The objective is to undertake a study to characterize the consumers as a fisheries sector component group, identifying the group's interests, strengths and weaknesses and their interaction with other sector component groups and to assess its influence on the overall fisheries sector.

The study will generate data on fish consumption and help to bridge the gap by providing up-to-date data on the subject.

The findings from the study will not only facilitate formulation of policies and decisions relevant for the enhancement of fish consumption but will contribute towards planning the broad food policy in the country.

Specific objectives of the study include:

- a) to undertake a review of previous studies on the subject to establish existing understanding on fish consumers in Uganda.
- b) to identify the different categories of fish consumers.
- c) to identify specific factors that determine the level of fish consumption in the country.
- d) to identify problems or constraints that fish consumers experience in obtaining fish for consumption.
- e) to identify the place of fish in the diet of different societies in Uganda.
- f) to ascertain why some people do not eat fish inspite of its richness in terms of food values.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Social studies on fisheries in Eastern Africa until very recently were very scanty. However, in the last one and half decades there has been a positive shift in the direction of social sciences inquiries concerning the fisheries sector. Indeed a number of physical and social scientists have attempted to investigate into the dynamics of the fisheries sector. (ASOWA-OKWE, 1988; GERRAD, 1987; OKARONON, et.al, 1985; SSEMAKULA, S.M. 1986; SENTONGO, G. and R.L. WELCOMME, 1985; SWANTZ, M.L. 1986; CHACHAGE, C.S.L., 1987; PAULINE WYNTER, 1989).

These studies address varied issues of theoretical and practical significance to the future of fisheries in East Africa.

Principally these studies look into the socio-economic and political developments within the fisheries. These texts tackle a wide range of questions: Capital penetration and labour dissolution, ownership and control of means of production, transportation and distribution, forms of labour and modes of fish production, gender relations, influx of foreign capital in the fisheries, the socio-economic effects of Nile perch fishery on Lakes Kyoga and Victoria, and the contradictions between capital, labour and the state. REYNOLDS and GREBOVAL in their study reports an apparent reduction in the number of owner-operated fishing units (artisanal fisheries) in the country (1988:60). This is sharply contrary to the findings of BUTCHER and COLORIS (1975) whereby 55% to 60% of the boats operating on Lake Victoria were owner-operated.

(BUTCHER, D.A.P and COLARIS, J.C.G., 1975). ASOWA-OKWE (1989:9) reveal that with fishing becoming increasingly lucrative, more business people and bureaucrats with reasonable capital outlay have began to invest in the

fisheries sector. None of these, however, engage in direct fish production, instead they rely on hired labour.

This shift in the nature and structure of ownership and control of fishing gear and crafts, and the alienation of the bulk of those engaged in fisheries from the same, have wider implications not only to fish production, processing and marketing, but also to fish consumption in the country.

Furthermore, these texts show that there have been radical changes in the realm of production, forms of processing and marketing, and forms of labour.

However, these studies hardly endeavored to analyse the implications of or the relations of such developments to the use of fish and other raparian resources i.e. fuel wood, timber, e.t.c Other issues which are not analysed and critically examined relate to the so-called Nile perch "boom" in Lake Victoria, and the proliferation of modern fish processing plants and the recent government emphasis of fish as a potential source of foreign exchange which has generated intense interest on the fisheries sector among investors. (REYNOLDS, 1991:16)

Related to this is the question of 'smuggling' of fish from Uganda or undocumented export of fresh and processed fish, particularly along and across the waters of Lake Victoria into Kenya, and across Lakes Albert and Edward into Zaire. There are no data on this question, even though it is clear it has greater implications to fish consumption within the country; and the loss of official expert revenues and value added benefits to the national economy which must account to many hundreds of thousands of dollars (REYNOLDS 1991:16).

This study thus seeks to bridge this yawning gap by building the data base on fish consumption; and examining how the latter is shaped by the dynamics of fish production, processing, income, traditional norms and the distance from water bodies and marketing places.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

4.1 To facilitate the survey, it was decided to divide the respondents and study areas into three categories:

- i) Rural consumers
- ii) Urban consumers
- iii) Island consumers

In addition, consideration was given to the fact that consumers in the hinterland of any water bodies, and those of rural and urban communities that are near water bodies differ, and face different problems (or constraints) in respect to access to fish and the costs of obtaining fish for consumption.

4.2 Given the objectives of the study stated above, this survey would rely extensively on a questionnaire (structured interview) as the principal

tool of data collection. However, unstructured interview would be carried out with key informants in the regions visited to obtain qualitative data on the fisheries sector. Such respondents include the beach leaders (Gabunga), RC officials, Fisheries officers and the District Administrators or their deputies. Sometimes informal discussions at social gatherings were also applied. This would prove vital in cross-checking or authenticating the validity of data obtained through questionnaire and unstructured interviews.

4.3 After the pre-testing of our field tools (questionnaire) in Mpigi and Mubende Districts, the researchers of Consumption Group in consultation with the Principal Researcher, decided to have a sample size of 100 per region. Such a sample size we felt would cater for the variety in terms of geographical locate; social status (and income); nationality e.t.c

Random sampling was chosen to give us rich and unbiased or distorted responses, usually associated pre-arranged interview schedules.

4.2 Workplan and Itinerary:

The group would visit the five regions in the country for the purpose of data collection as indicated herein below:

i. Central Region

- a) Mubende (Urban)
- b) Butambala, Mpigi (Rural)
- c) Kampala

ii. Eastern Region

- a) Kapchorwa (Urban)
- b) Busia (Rural)

iii. Northern Region

- a) Arua (Urban)
- b) Apac (Rural)

iv. Western Region

- a) Kasese (Urban)
- b) Kazo - Mbarara (Rural)

v. Islands

- a) Kalangala
- b) Other Islands

5. IMPLEMENTATION:

5.1 The initial review of previous studies, records and documents related to fish consumption in Uganda was carried out at the principal fisheries research libraries at Fisheries Department Library, Statistics

Headquarters, Makerere University Main Library, Centre for Basic Research Library (Kololo), and MISR Library.

- 5.2 Categorization of fish consumers for the purpose of designing a sample survey was undertaken.
- 5.3 The design of a sample survey and a workplan for the study was carried out.
- 5.4 The questionnaire to be used in the study was prepared and the testing undertaken.
- 5.5 From May, 1993, the field survey began which would cover the Districts of Apac and Arua (Northern); Kamuli, Kapchorwa and Tororo (Eastern); Kasese and Mbarara (Western); Kampala, Mpigi and Mubende (Central); and Kalangala in Lake Victoria.
- 5.6 What remains to be done includes completion of data collection, identification of mode of data analysis, the analysis of the data collected and report preparation.

6. CONSTRAINTS:

- 6.1 The fact that the collaborating researchers engaged in this project were engaged in other official duties has partly hampered the pace of completing the project.
- 6.2 Language barrier which prompted researchers to use interpreters and their reliability on data collection in some areas is questionable but acceptable.

7. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS:

During the course of the studies undertaken so far, it has been possible to make some very general observations as indicated below:

- a) There are problems of malnutrition in all the five regions visited; and the following diseases are common: Kwashiorkor, Marasmus, Tuberculosis, Goeta (especially among men and women in Kapchorwa, and mainly among women in Mbarara).
- b) Improvement of methods of fish processing and preservation is needed; and also the hygienic standards in the markets and landing sites.
- c) Prices of fish is relatively higher the farther one goes from the water bodies; and this then discourages or limits the volume of fish consumers.
- d) Harvesting of juveniles is problematic in Lakes Victoria, Kyoga, Albert, Edward and George; and there is urgent need for logistics for the fisheries officers.
- e) There is great need for encouragement and expansion of fish farming in most areas distant from the lakes, particularly Kapchorwa and

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Busia sub-district. In the former there are many cases of people who suffer from goetis due to lack of iodine. The increased consumption of fish would overcome this.

- f) There is need to fight the Water *Hyacinth* as it is threatening to close entrances to fish landings.
- g) Mubende people depend mainly on smoked fish which comes once a week. Fresh fish is rather scarce.
- h) There is brisk trade in salted fish from Uganda into Zaire via Mahagi, Arua, Mpondwe and Ishasha. This is matched by sharp decline in exportation of fresh and processed fish to Kenya following the devaluation of the Kenya shilling early this year (1993).
- i) Kazo county, Mbarara District has a low degree of fish consumption. The majority of the people do not eat fish due to traditional beliefs (they are largely cattle keepers) and inavailability of fish. as a matter of fact, on Kasese in the whole of the Western Region has a fair degree of fish consumption.
- j) Relatively poor class of Ugandan Society consume more fish than the richer society.

8. EVALUATION:

- a) Field work has been going on with admirable co-operation and speed.
- b) Little more effort and logistical support will be required for the analysis of data and write-up of the final report at least by September.

9. REFERENCES:

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D. STUDIES OF THE FISHERIES CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATION

(Objective 2)

A second group of studies under the Project are looking at the contribution of fisheries to the nation. Four teams have been set up to undertake studies to quantify the contribution of Nile perch, Nile tilapia, and "*Mukene*" fisheries in Uganda and to predict the future situation with respect to the following:

- i. GDP
- ii. income and employment
- iii. diet
- iv. balance of payment

Research teams have been set up for all the studies within this group and study plans drawn up. However, due to limited transport facilities, data collection on two of the studies, namely the fisheries contribution to GDP and contribution to income and employment have not started.

At the moment, six studies under the project are going on concurrently by the different teams, and this is a strain on the limited transport facilities available at the institution. The diet and balance of payment studies are among the six studies progressing steadily. Data collection on the rest will start as soon as transport becomes available on completion of some of the on-going studies.