MARKETS AND MARKETING OF FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS IN NIGERIA

BY ABIODUN O. CHEKE (MS)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (FISH TRADE, NIGERIA)

Abstract

Fish consumption accounts for about 45% animal protein consumption in Nigeria, currently capture fisheries and the various value chain (especially its marketing and distribution) for fisheries and aquaculture products is a vibrant and dynamic commercial sector in Nigeria, ripe with investment and employment opportunities. Marketing of fish and fish products in Nigeria commences from the harvesting stage to the end of the value chain. Key challenges of fish distribution in Nigeria include seasonality, post-harvest losses, and inadequate power supply and distribution logistics. The high cost involved in fish preservation and storage is also a key problem of the fish value-chain and marketing in Nigeria. Lack of easy access to credit is key factors hindering many youth from participating in the industry. However, mind-sets are changing as part of government efforts is for youths to see Agriculture and aquaculture and its value chain (specially marketing) as a business's. However, it could be stated that the current operators in the marketing and distribution have been able to stimulate production despite all odds especially in terms of high marketing costs. Overall, marketing environment and processes in terms of infrastructures, power supply and storage facilities need to improve; to reduce the marketing costs; which will lead to further increase in the profit of the operators.

Introduction

Fish consumption accounts for about 45% animal protein consumption in Nigeria. Currently capture fisheries and the various value chain (especially its marketing and distribution) for fisheries and aquaculture productions is a vibrant and dynamic commercial sector in Nigeria, ripe with investment and employment opportunities.

MARKETING OF FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS in Nigeria commences from the harvesting stage to the value chain where it then gets to the final consumer. Both men and women play key roles in the marketing and distribution of fish in Nigeria. In aquaculture production, both men and women are involved in fish farming whilst the women dominate at the retailing level of the farmed fish products. In the capture fisheries sector i.e. Trawling and Artisanal fisheries: the Men dominate at the production stage whilst the women are the key processors and sellers of the products.

EXAMPLE OF A NIGERIAN FISH MARKETING SYSTEM: THE TRADITIONAL FISH MARKETING SYSTEM is Characterized by fishermen, landing their catches on scattered jetties in fish baskets along the coast, known as fishing villages.

- Their catches are often bought by women who often pay the fishermen in advance, thus acting as provider of informal credit.
• There is a strong interdependence between the women fishmonger and the fishermen which influence market decision by women.

• The marketing relationship between the fish traders and fishermen is often long-lasting, providing an assured market outlet to the small-scale artisanal fishermen and a source of steady supply to the trader.

CONSTRAINTS / CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL FISH SECTOR: Fish being a highly perishable commodity: high post-harvest losses are common due to lack of proper handling on board;

• Lack of suitable shore-based fish handling, collection, storage, marketing and distribution facilities.

• Deficiencies in marketing and distribution facilities.

• Poor communications which make it difficult to operate efficient fish collection and distribution systems and thus leading to the problems of establishing adequate fish marketing information systems.

• Inadequate or misdirected government intervention and assistance schemes e.g. due to lack of understanding of understanding of the prevalent socio-economic conditions in small – scale/Artisanal fisheries: establishment of costly organizations or large installations which cannot be used or of little use by the community.

• Inadequate price policies

CLASSIFICATION / TYPES OF FISH MARKETS IN NIGERIA: Consist of: Traditional smoked fish markets (packaging is a big problem)

• Fresh Fish Market (For captured fisheries, Artisanal fisheries)

• Live Cat Fish Market (For Aquaculture Products)

• Imported Fish Markets (Cold rooms, Refrigerated Trucks and other Modern Facilities/ Refrigerated Trucks)

• Industrial Fish Market (By Trawler Operators, with Cold Rooms Trawlers and other Modern Facilities - Refrigerator trucks)

• Introduction of Modern Fish Markets (By Federal Government of Nigeria since 2010 in 6 Geo-Political Zones of Nigeria. These model fish markets are fenced all round and within the fenced perimeters are found constant power supply, generator, borehole, processing house (of EU standard), Lock-up shops, Toilet facilities for both male and female; Special area for live fish, dedicated car park and conference room for the management. The Model Fish Market addresses some key challenges of inadequate infrastructure in the Nigeria fish value chain; such as the maintenance of adequate power supply, continuous water supply, a steady and reliable avenue for various fish and fishery products data collection; as well as a
very hygienic and conducive environment for business, and a standard processing house / centre for various types of fish and other fish product processing- Filleting, Salting, Smoking etc. the Model Fish Market solves the problem of glut as there is adequate information flow between the operators in the markets in the various Geo-Political Zones.

**CHALLENGES:** Seasonality, Post-Harvest Losses, inadequate power supply and distribution logistics.

- The high cost involved in fish preservation and storage thus leading to reduced profit margins is also a key problem of the fish value chain marketing in Nigeria.
- High transportation cost
- Lack of adequate access to local and international markets information.
- Youth are scared to participate in the industry ... why? .....Because of inadequate collaboration between the various producers/ processor as to steady prices as well as lack of access to credit. They also do not generally see the agricultural sector as a business.

**EFFECT OF GLOBALIZATION:** AS per Fish Marketing and Distribution, globalization has a negative impact in the small scale (Artisanal) fishermen in Nigeria as it proves a disincentive to their operations: as globalization has led to an influx of cheaper-priced imported fish into the country. Fish like Sardinella, Bonga, Croakers which are also found in Nigerian waters and sold at cheaper prices; thus making the local small-scale fishermen products more expensive and often tedious to sell; as the selling time/period takes longer and often in an attempt to prevent spoilage the fishermen/ wholesalers are forced to sell at prices below their production cost.

**CONCLUSION:** with the various Federal Government of Nigerians intervention to eradicate poverty and increase wealth in the fishing communities and Nigeria at large, mindset are changing as part of government efforts is for youths and women to see Agriculture and Fisheries and its value chain (especially the marketing aspect) as a business.

It could be stated that the current operators in the marketing and distribution of fish have been able to stimulate production despite all odds especially in terms of high marketing costs. Overall, marketing supply and storage facilities need to improve to reduce the marketing costs; this will lead to further increase in the profit of the operators.
References


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