

GENDER ROLES, RURAL HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG WOMEN
IN SELECTED FISHING COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigerian women in fishing sector remain a potent force in the economic growth of fishing communities. The basic objective of involving women in fisheries Development is to make them equal partners to men. That will enable them to participate productively and self-reliantly to improve their family's nutritional and living standards. To create and maintain food and income security in the household, the activities are directed to economic, social and communal organizational and population related aspects. However, many socio-economic factors influences their entrepreneurial skills. This study examines some objectives, such as the roles women play in planning and fisheries management, describing the socio-economic factors, affecting fishing households. Allocation of labour time, determining the effects of some simulated policies on entrepreneurship among the women in the study area. 100 respondents were interviewed in all. A participatory action research approach was employed in addition to the use of primary and secondary data. Purposive sampling method was used in order to cover various aspects of women's economic roles in the fishing communities. Special effort was made to include all economic ventures; attention was given to the scale of operation and method of fishing activities by men and women who supply the primary products. formal and informal and group discussions were carried out for the qualitative method. For the analysis, simple counts, tables of frequencies were used. With respect to estimates of income. The study also highlighted the problems encountered by the women in the study area and proffer solution.

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INTRODUCTION

- Since the declaration of the "Decade of the Women" in 1975,
- efforts have been made to improve the living conditions of women and to correct the disequilibrium between men and women.
- This initiative was picked up by FAO and several governments in the developing world.
- Researchers and policy makers are becoming aware that women are actively engaged in many productive activities:
 - which provide added income and needed services to the household,
 - only few references exist describing the role of women in the fishing activity and in fishing communities

INTRODUCTION (CONTD.)/2

- Several factors seem to contribute to the inferior position and suppressed rights and privileges of women in the society:
 - Tradition and culture,
 - social and religious norms and values;
 - political and economic factors
- all contribute to the lowering of the status of women in the society and
- contribute to the form of dominance to which women are subjected to.

INTRODUCTION (CONTD.)/3

- Gender issues and participation in the fisheries sector can be viewed from the perspective of:
- ***gender roles and involvement in development activities of the sector.***
- In the coastal areas and in many villages along the river banks, women are deeply involved in artisanal fisheries activities.
- Despite their involvement in activities of the sector,
- women's operations are often **small-scale** and their **incomes small** as compared to their men counterparts (Agbebi, 2009).
- Women play significant roles in all aspects of fisheries:
 - both in the artisanal,
 - small-scale sector and
 - in the commercial sector.
- Roles that remains unarticulated and unrecognized.
(Polnac view)

INTRODUCTION (CONTD.)/4

- *Polnac (1991) made an assertion that coastal fisheries in the developing World is the occupation of last resort and that fisher-folks are the 'poorest of the poor' but this has been contested by several authors.*
- This study reveals how entrepreneurial women operating at different levels in the artisanal fisheries in Ilaje and Ese-Odo fishing communities of South Western Nigeria,
- used the fisheries, not just as an opportunity to earn **regular income**, but as a **strategic economic activity** which enabled them sustain the livelihoods of their families.

INTRODUCTION (CONTD.)/5

- According to Lewis (1977) an entrepreneur is one *who assumes all the risks and makes all the **decisions concerning the operation of an enterprise in order to achieve some economic and social goal.***
- The fish traders in the study area do the same in their small, medium and large scale enterprises.
- In their attempt to sustain their livelihoods,
- they took several risks,
- working under several institutional constraints, and
- succeeded in achieving both economic and social goals, using **entrepreneurial strategies.**

OBJECTIVES

- The study analysed in detail the role of women in the fishing communities,
- identified their problems,
- their entrepreneurial skills, and
- suggested realistic and practical actions to improve their socio-economic conditions
- thereby contributing effectively to food security in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

- The study areas are Ilaje and Ese-Odo Local Government areas of Ondo State, South Western Nigeria.
- The study area falls within the oil producing states in Nigeria called the (Niger Delta region)
- which is often referred to as the richest part of Nigeria, in terms of natural resources endowment.

Methodology/2

- Five (5) major fishing communities, **Ori-Oke-Iwamimo, Ilepete, Obe-Ogbaro, Idogun-Nla, Zion-Pepe** were selected in the study area.
- The site selection was based on the population/aggregation of fishing families,
- geographic distribution,
- catch volume and
- species diversities of the catches in the area.

Map of Nigeria showing the study area(South Western part)



MAP OF THE STUDY AREA



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

- At least, 80% of the fisher folks in each of the fishing communities are educated.
- 66% of the fisher folks aged between 21 and 40 years were married and operated the nuclear family.
- This implies that they are permanent settlers in the area and their economic activities revolve around the area. (*so migration is not a factor to be considered here*).

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TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF RESPONDENTS

Parameter	Range	% Demographic factors of respondents in the study area				
		Orioke - iwamimo	Idogun-Nla	Obe-Ogbaro	Zion-Pepe	Ilepete
Age	< 20 yrs	2	0	0	0	0
	21-40yrs	90	94	98	100	90
	41-60yrs	8	6	2	0	10
Marital Status	Single	13	10	20	10	20
	Married	65	80	50	70	65
	Divorced	20	8	15	15	10
	Widowed	2	2	5	5	5
Household Size	Nuclear	90	96	100	92	100
	Extended	10	4	0	8	0
Experience	6-10yrs	30	40	32	35	37
	11-15yrs	50	56	50	42	52
	>15yrs	20	4	18	23	11
Educational Qualification	None	0	0	0	0	0
	Voc. Study	5	6	0	10	4
	Secondary (Jn. & Snr)	80	90	95	85	90
	Tertiary	15	4	5	5	6

- From Table 2, the women engaged in both primary and secondary employment to improve the standard of living of the whole family and to make more money available to the whole family.
- In Table 3, Fish handling forms the primary economic activity for the majority of respondents.
- On the use of income as shown in Table 4,
- **45% of this income is spent on family subsistence.**
- **30 % is spent on children's schooling,**
- **15 % is spent on the purchase of domestic items and clothing.**
- **10% of this income is used to repay debts and loans**

TABLE 2: SOURCES OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment	Primary Activity	Secondary Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Fishing and fishing related				
Fish production	10	2	12	12
Fish processing	9	2	11	11
Fish Marketing	18	1	19	19
Production & processing	11	1	12	12
Processing & marketing	15	0	15	15
Commerce and trade				
Petty trading	3	2	5	7
Drinks	4	1	5	5
Clothing	2	0	2	2
Street food vending	2	2	4	2
Service industries				
Fashion designers	3	0	3	3
Hair dresser	5	0	5	5
Agricultural produce				
Basket weaving	5	2	7	7
Mat weaving	4	3	7	7
Palm oil extraction	3	3	6	6
Cane chairs and stools	2	2	4	4
Arable Farming	4	2	6	6
Total	100			

Fig. 1 Percentage of respondents involved in various aspect of fisheries

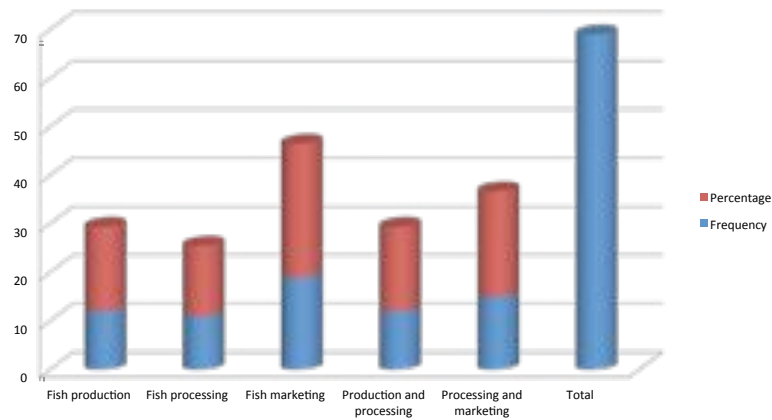


Fig. 2 Uses of income

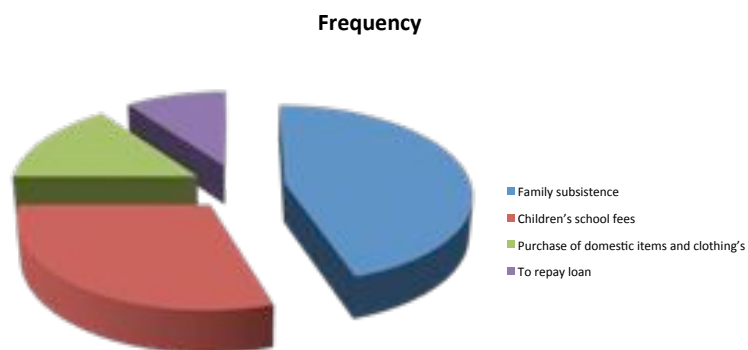


Fig. 3 Sources of capital

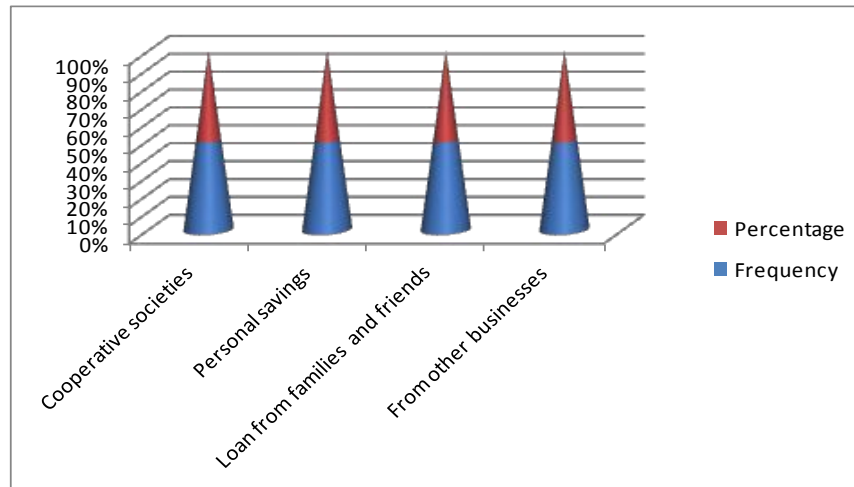


Fig. 4 Daily income of respondents

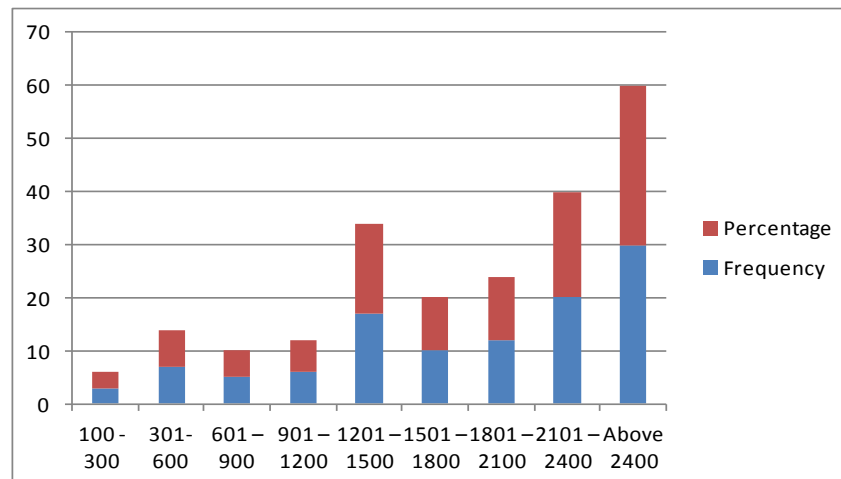
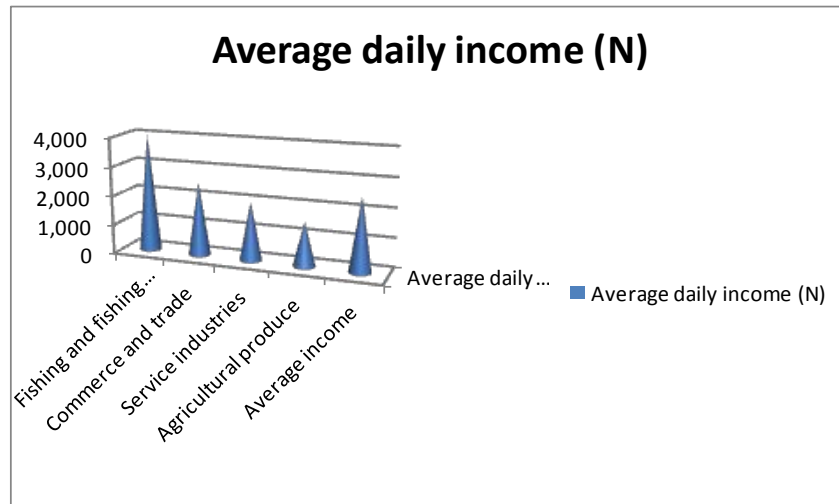


Fig. 5 Average daily income from each major occupation (1US \$= ₦ 160)



PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- Lack of credit facilities
- Transportation problem
- Insufficient fish supply
- Product quality does not guaranty the competitiveness of the women's work
- High market taxes
- Difficulties in processing during rainy season
- Tools and equipments need improvement
- Their working condition is injurious to their health

PROBLEMS ENCONTERED/2

- Their training in elementary book keeping is insufficient
- Inadequate women's group or cooperative societies
- No access to distant market.
- Acute ecological problems (pollution).
- Loss of income from fish spoilage (due to poor handling, lack of storage facilities, poor processing technology).

Policy Recommendations

- Education and training
- Cooperatives societies
- Provision of capital
- Insulated ice boxes training
- Fish handling techniques
- Saving culture
- More capital injection in the study area/
Complimentary activities.

- **THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**