THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES ACTIVITIES IN SOME SELECTED FISHING VILLAGES IN THE SOUTHERN ZONE OF KAINJI LAKE BASIN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT:
Questionnaires containing 39 questions were prepared and administered to 50 women in ten fishing villages in the southern Kainji Lake Basin to assess the level of women participation in fisheries activities. Results of this research showed that 100% of the women interviewed were involved in fisheries activities and the following factors were considered. The following age categories were identified. Age group between 20-30 years was 18%, 31-40 years, 30%; and above 40 years had the highest percentage of 40%. Also 98% of the women involved in fisheries activities were married while only 2% were not married. Muslim women constituted 82% while 18% were Christians. About 70% of Hausas were involved; no Igbo and Yorubas, while 30% were other tribes, which included Ijaw, Isoko and Urhobo. The percentage of women without education amounted to 62%, those women with Koranic Education accounted for 22%, 14% had primary education while only 2% had secondary education. Few women were directly involved in fishing and statistical analysis showed that there was insignificant difference from village to village. All the women (100%) were involved in fish processing and storage (preservation) before sale. Only 26% of the women were not involved in fish marketing. Also 26% of the women made profits ranging from N500 to N1,000 per week, 24% make N1,000 to N1,500 per week, 12% made N1,500 to N2,000 and 38% made profit above N2,000. Statistical analysis showed that there was a significant difference in the profit made by the women (P<0.05). From the foregoing, women were actively involved in all fisheries activities.

Keyword: Role. Women. Fisheries activities, Kainji lake basin, Southern zone, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION
The role of women in economic activities of agricultural households in developing countries have received increasingly greater attention from researchers and international development agencies in the last decade (Dixon, 1982; Castelli, 1985; Roach, 1986). 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, but only few references exist describing the role of women in the fishing activity and in fishing communities (Dewes, 1982; Kalvathy, 1983; Yater. 1982). Only of recent was the important contribution of women farmers in agricultural development programmes came into focus. One of the laudable efforts being made to improve efficiency and effectiveness in fisheries is to include women in fisheries development programmes. One of the managers of agricultural programme described women's performance as being more responsive and more reliable than their male counterpart (Wentholt, 1989).

There is often a gender division of labour associated with small-scale fishery operations. Women are usually confined to on-shore activities such as processing and marketing. While in some cases, women are often culturally forbidden from fishing, they usually have a central role in...
the processing and marketing of fish and derive substantial status and income to their households from these activities (Alamu, 1992).

In some Malaysian and Philippine fishing communities, women are involved in such activities as hauling, sorting, drying and marketing of catch, (Khan 1983). While in Gabon, a significant number of fishing canoes in the estuary of river Gabon near Libreville are operated by the wives and daughters of the Yoruba owners (Trottier 1987).

In Nigeria, just like other African countries fishing is predominantly male job. Women who go fishing do so mainly for subsistence and they limit their activities to streams, lakes and rivers. Subsequently selling and processing of fish is predominantly women role (Peche 1993). However in some parts of the country, for example around Kainji and Jebba lakes, women are involved to some extent in all aspects of the fishing industry (Alamu. 1991; 1992; 1993; Roder and Alamu, 1993; Rettberg et al, 1994).

This study is undertaken in order to ascertain the involvement of women in fisheries activities with a view to knowing the categories of women fisherfolks involved in fisheries activities in the southern zone of Kainji basin. The objectives of this study to:

i) Determine the age group of women involved in fisheries activities. ii) Know the marital status of the women involved in fisheries activities. iii) Determine the religious practice of women involved in fisheries activities. iv) Determine the tribal composition of women involved in fisheries activities. v) Know the educational status of women involved in fisheries activities. vi) Know whether women are involved in the act of fishing. vii) Know whether most women are involved in processing of fish. viii) Discover whether the women are involved in storage of fish. ix) Know the involvement of women in marketing of fish.

Materials and Methods.

A standard questionnaire was prepared containing 39 questions related to the general personal data of the respondent, their participation in fishing, processing, storage and marketing of fish, including profit made (Economic consideration). The questionnaires were administered to only female fisher folks.

The study covered ten fishing villages in Southern zone of Kainji Lake basin. Five questionnaires each were used to interview five women in each of the ten fishing villages making a total of 50 questionnaires that were administered. The sampling procedure involved a random selection of respondents from each of the fishing villages visited. The samples were used as determinant of the role of women in fisheries activities. Designated fishing villages where fisheries activities were practiced were visited during the survey. The villages include: Tunga Danbaba, Tunga Tada, Tunga Alhaji Ibrahim, Tunga Angulu, Sikagikinka, Kwata Wara, Faku, Musawa, Tunga Gungawa and Tunga Kaya.

The data collected were analysed inform of tables, percentages, figures, graphs such as bar charts and pie chart and also statistical analysis using Chi-square.

Results and Discussion

The results revealed that age category differs greatly from one another, but it is important to note that age is not a factor to fisheries activities. However, respondents whose ages were above 40 accounted for 52%, those within the range of 31-30 years attributed 30% and 20-30 years were 18%. Therefore adults generally undertake fisheries activities. Marital status of the women from this research conducted in the fishing villages, the data indicated that 98% of women involved in fisheries activities are married while only 2% were not married. High percentage of married women could be attributed to the fact that their husbands are fishermen.

In terms of religion practiced by the respondents, 18% of the women are Christians while 82% of the women are Muslims. It is important to note that religion is not a factor to fisheries
activities because there is no religious or traditional taboo to fish consumption, marketing or even fisheries activities in general. The data collected showed that majority of the women are Hausas which indicated 70% while other tribes attributed to 30%. (Other tribes include Ijaws, Isokos and Urohobos). This however, could be as a result of the location of the study area which is inhabited predominantly by the Hausas.

In the context of defining education as the intellectual and moral training acquired to equip one to become a productive member of the society. The percentage of women without education amounted to 62%, those women with Koranic education attributed to 22%, 14% indicated for primary education while only 2% accounted for secondary education. Therefore majority of women involved in fisheries activities are illiterates. This could be attributed to the fact that the young educated school leavers are more interested in white-collar jobs. Also most of the educated ones do not live in the villages.

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The number of women that practice the act of fishing was 7 out of the total of 50 women who were interviewed with questionnaires, this mean that only 14% of the total women do fish and 86% do not fish. The few women who practice the act of fishing make use of paddled canoes and also the fishing gear used is gill net. This few women involved in the actual fishing could be attributed to the fact that their parents do fish and they do assist their parents in fishing while they were still young. However, statistical analyses have shown that there is no significant difference in the act of fishing from village to village.

From the ten fishing villages visited, all the women that were interviewed were all involved in fish processing using smoking methods of processing, which is the traditional method of fish smoking, they all use ‘banda’ to smoke their fish. 100% involvement in fish processing could be attributable to the fact that smoking of fish could be done along side with other domestic activities. From the data collected and analysed, 74% of the total women were involved in marketing of fish while 26% of women do not market the processed fish because they are in ‘purdan’. Their husbands and children do the marketing. The high percentage of women involved in marketing of fish could be attributed to the fact that fish could be marketed with other products and produce such as provisions, farm produce, livestock and food items.

Statistical analyses showed that there were significant differences in the profit margin made by the women in marketing of fish. Profit level varies from village to village. Women (fisher folks) in Gungawa have high profit level generation while those in Alhaji Ibraiham and Tunga Tada were in the low profit group. High profit level of women (Fisher folks) in Gungawa could be attributed to the fact that they practice the act of fishing, process the fish and market the fish themselves.

Conclusively, this study has shown clearly that women are mostly involved in processing of fish in which the basic method used is smoking. Thus women contributes to fisheries development through the role they play in post harvest activities by processing fish which would have been lost in post harvest. Profits usually made by some women involved in fisheries activities are petty and not sufficient to meet their need and that of the family. But women who practice fishing realize greater profit because fish harvested were processed, stored and marketed by themselves. this implies that, if women are involved in fisheries activities from fishing to marketing they could make greater profit, thus improving the standard of living of the family and alleviation of poverty in the nation.

It is recommended that education and training should be organized for women involved in fisheries activities since most of these women are illiterate. Fishing inputs such as fishing crafts and gears should be provided to the women to encourage them in fishing. Efforts toward organizing women involved in fisheries activities into cooperative societies should be intensified. Organization of cooperative societies will enable women to get help from government and other assistance could be extended to them.
REFERENCES


