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Assessing the Adoption and Impact of Women Integration in Fishing Community Initiatives in South-Western Nigeria

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Abstract

The Nigerian fishery sub-sector is still at its infant stage where available resources are compared with the level of utilisation, economic benefits of exploiting the resources and the socio-economic status of the operators especially women in the industry. The full participation and empowerment of women in the fisheries sector will gain widespread recognition and support if the profile of the age-long social, cultural and economic barriers hindering women from being active agents and beneficiaries of development are removed.

The gender issues surrounding the roles and participation of women in both capture and culture fisheries are not unique to fisheries alone, hence, a better understanding of the constraints and challenges that women face, and the actual and potential contribution of women in fisheries requires a holistic approach that encompasses the many roles played by women in fisheries in rural and peri-urban societies. Women make highly significant but undervalued contributions to fisheries: agriculture, processing, production and retailing and fisheries sector services. The knowledge of the contributions of women in the fisheries sector is only slowly evolving and still lags behind in the rural sectors and peri-urban societies of southwestern Nigeria.

Results indicated that these roles are usually associated with the central role of women in agriculture and in attempting to secure food for their families. Hence, gender relations should not be seen as competitive but rather as complimentary and mutually reinforcing. Studies showed that rectifying the situations involves the need for family, government and non-governmental organisation (NGO), etc to cover gender questions on fisheries and agriculture in their regular agricultural censuses (awareness). Despite the lack of comprehensive data on the impact of women in fisheries, the government and several stakeholders can help hundreds of thousands of women entrepreneurs and fish producers with technical assistance, loans and credits, and fostering self-help groups.

Hence, adopters of women integration into fisheries were the economically better-off segment of the population with larger land holdings, higher income and literacy, indicating that in addition to complimentary innovations, a gender-sensitive approach is vital if the resource-poor are to benefit from fisheries advancements.

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