

GARRI PROCESSING AND FISH SMOKING ENTERPRISES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the status of garri processing and fish smoking projects as viable and sustainable projects in the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State. This is because the projects provided employment to the unemployed and the unemployable thereby sustaining them and improving the lot of the area.

Key words: garri processing, fish processing, sustainable development projects

INTRODUCTION

The present hard times demand that family subsistence is the responsibility of both the husband and wife, if the man is to live a bit longer. Freud (1991) considered the basic requirement of human existence, to be "To love and to work". This is why those who cannot contribute their quota as career persons or professionals, trained administrators take on other vocations that may not require many years of training and specialization. This will ensure economic stability and harmony in homes and contribute to national development by using indigenous national resource.

The study attempts to explain the meaning of sustainable development and the nutritional needs of the projects in focus. It cited the cases of garri processing and fish smoking practiced around their home environment. The study therefore argues that their efforts need to be recognized and their projects sustained to meet their present and future needs.

According to WCED (1991) sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Panayetou (1992) also defined it as the development that does not result in reduction of the future productive capacity of the economy which depends on the stock of natural capital, human capital and technology. It is further said that sustainable development means development at the highest possible rate consistent with leaving the same or improved endowment of resources and options to the future. The goal of sustainable development is casting improvement in the quality of life and not just short-term improvements that disappear rapidly at the end of the project cycle.

Development is defined as a process of change, particularly change of a structural nature towards the enhancement of people's socio-economic welfare and the average of individual's scope for self-fulfillment, such a structural change is observed, should transform the society's instructions, organisation, social rules, customary usage and the attitudes of the individuals. Thus, development is conceptualized as putting premium on people's ability, the desired structural transformation. So a development is about people rather than things (Agboola 1990). According to Azikiwe (1992) the invaluable potentials to development have been wasted due to illiteracy, lack of skills and socio-cultural discriminations. But a rapid health, social, economic and political development of any nation depends largely on the literacy participatory rate of its citizens including men and women, old and young.

It has been observed by the Urban Edge (1988), that human resources do not always receive the strong attention they deserved as crucial determinant of development. It is therefore opined that human beings and the skills they command are decisive for development and that it is investment in human capital that can yield higher returns than capital formation. The concept of development borders on improved human welfare and human resources development. This is a means, by which most people in the informal sector are provided with employment for sustenance. By this, meaning of sustainable development therefore, the

garri processing and fish smoking can be further sustained to meet the needs of the future generations.

Nutritional Contents of Fish and Cassava

Fish is about 18 percent protein, which is complete, well balanced and not easily affected by usual cooking methods. It is 85 to 95 percent digestible. An average serving of fish furnishes more than enough animal protein to meet the usual daily needs for protein. The amount of fat in fish varies. An average serving of an oily fish provides about 10% of daily requirements of vitamins A and D. A similar serving of the oily fish will satisfy about 10% of the thiamine, 15% of the riboflavin and 50% of the niacin needed. The animal content of the edible parts of fish includes satisfactory sources of magnesium, phosphorus, iron, copper, and iodine. Shellfish has as much of these minerals as milk. The bones are good sources of calcium and phosphorus. (CESAC, 1980). Fish is of great importance, it can be used for a variety of dishes. Hypertensive patients are advised to eat more smoked fish because it has a negligible content of cholesterol. Fish is almost a complete food because it is energy giving, body building and protective foods because of the nutrients embodiments. It is the core of foods, because meals are prepared around it.

Cassava on the other hand is a root vegetable that contains sodium, provides starch and very small quantity of protein (CESAC 1980). It is a very important staple food, for Nigerians, it is within the reach of the poor and readily available. Cassava is very much talked about now. The awareness is being created by the federal government. It is used for a variety of items and one of them is Garri processing which is our focus in this paper.

Sustainable small scale projects in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State

Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State is made up of three major ethnic groups, *the Ogbas*, who inhabit the *Ogba* axis, *the Egbemas*, who inhabit the *Egbema* axis, and *the Ndonis*, who

inhabit the *Ndoni* area. Each of these axes has its own traditional ruler and diverse dialectical tongues. The area has agriculture as its main occupation, which form part of the scale industries in the town. It has been recognised that small scale industries help in promoting the economic and social changes. The prevailing land use pattern of the area according to its development and growth can be grouped into residential, commercial, public and semi-public, industrial, circulation and agricultural land.

The people of the area are generally farmers who are especially involved in cassava production. Fish smoking is also a common enterprise because of the existence of rivers and streams in the area. Whereas the Ogbas and Egbemas produce garri in large quantities, the Ndonis are known for fish production. This study is a review of the work of Eze (2002) which investigated sustainable small scale industries in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State. In the study, of all the small scale industries investigated in the area, 20.31% were fish smoking enterprises which were privately owned, while garri processing enterprises accounted for 37.50%.

It is obvious that in project of this nature the female gender is expected to dominate, the survey conducted however revealed that males are now getting involved. The data revealed that in relation to gender distribution, out of the 104 people surveyed on garri processing enterprise, 82.69% constitute women while 53.39% of people on fish smoking are women. The survey further showed that all the garri producers and 88.02% fish producers are within the range of 11 and 40 years while others are within 41 and 50 years of age.

In respect of the educational status of both the entrepreneurs and the employed workers in the two types of projects, it was discovered that out of the 52 surveyed as owners of the fish smoking projects, 88.46% of them had no formal education while 11.54% attempted primary school education. Also 104 employed workers in the fish smoking project, 82.69% had no formal education while 17.31% were primary school leavers. In the garri processing enterprise, the educational status data showed that in the 96 private owners of the projects surveyed, 56.25% of

them had no formal education, 26.04% were primary school leavers, 7.29% had vocational education and 10.42% had tertiary education. Also of the 348 employed workers in garri projects surveyed 51.82% had no formal education, 33.34% were primary school leavers, 12.75% were vocational school leavers and 2.08% were tertiary school leavers. The survey revealed that a high percentage of the participants had no formal education, and were women, in garri production projects. A lower percentage of those involved in fish smoking projects had some education, obviously because they were younger. This is in line with studies that reported that younger people were more receptive to change than older people. This is also applicable to adoption studies (Savile, 1965; Ekong, 2003). It is obvious that the projects provide employment for the unemployed and even unemployable youths

Women have embarked on these two projects for a long time and they have provide sources of employment to young jobless school leavers in the modern time which shows that they are sustainable projects. What women need from the government is appropriate encouragement such as provision of finance to reduce some problems that they are contending with presently. There is general lack of capital, equipment and inadequate skill for the running of the projects. The private owners of small scale enterprises depend on personal saving to sustain their enterprise. Garri processing and fish smoking projects are sustainable project that need to be developed to enhance and improve the standard of living.

CONCLUSION

The importance of garri processing and fish smoking projects in the development of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area of Rivers State cannot be overemphasized. There are many unemployable youths in the area who ordinarily would have lost all hopes for survival but the existence of these projects seem to have brought hopes to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The efforts of this community especially women need to be recognised and not made invisible. There should be some incentives to these small scale enterprise by the government and non-governmental agencies like FAO, WHO to enhance their sustainability and production of quality products. They need to be recognised, developed and funded to promote their living standards and the nation at large.

1. The government should support and enforce non-formal vocational training of unskilled people who are struggling to make a living. The training can be organised through extension services, rural development centres.
2. Non-governmental and governmental agencies should support the enterprises with capital for the running of the projects.
3. Credit facilities through community banks in the project areas should be encouraged.
4. There should be measures to control and standardise the quality of goods produced.

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