**COMPARATIVE PROFITABILITY OF WOMEN DOMINATED FISH-BASED LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA**

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Women are more disadvantaged than men in securing formal sector employment opportunities and access to less resources and skill makes them preponderate in low-investment and low-income informal sector livelihood activities. Any attempt to improve women’s economic power requires information on returns to investment in their traditional livelihood activities hence the need for this study which centres on comparing yield performance in artisanal fishing and fresh fish marketing. The study utilized primary data collected from 55 fishing folks and 80 fish sellers selected through multi-stage sampling method. Data collected were summarized using descriptive statistics and analysis was done using budgeting and regression models and Z-test.

Empirical findings revealed that about 75.0% of fisher folks either had no formal education or primary education while majority (50.0%) of marketers had up to secondary school education. About 74.0% of fisher folks and 66.0% of marketers considered venture as major livelihood source. Most (77.6%) of respondents took to these ventures to provide for their households or supplement spouse’s income. The net revenue accrued to fish hunters per annum was N965, 248.00 while that of marketers was N 373, 773.00. Returns to investment was 55.9% for fish capture and 43.8% for fish marketing. There were significant differences between profitability indicators at conventional significance levels. About 77.8% of income from fish capture and 69.2% from marketing went into supplementing household consumption expenditure.

OLS regression result showed that the significant factors which influenced returns from fish capture included experience, season, distance covered and type of fishing ground. Transportation, purchase cost, experience and household size were the significant factors influencing returns from fish marketing. The major challenges faced by fish hunters included increasing cost of canoes and short supply of gears while marketers face challenges of high transportation cost and losses from perished unsold fish. Both groups face lack of access to formal credit. It is concluded that fish capture and fish marketing are profitable ventures and that earnings realized contribute to households’ upkeep. Organizing women informal sector operators into groups to enable them access government support and bank credit are recommended for improving women’s livelihood.