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## Women Involvement In Small Scale Industries In Ondo State.

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### ABSTRACT

*This study continues the gender debate by evaluating the roles of women as proprietors, and workers of small scale industrial enterprises in Ondo state of Nigeria. The study made use of 200 questionnaire which was administered on women owned enterprises sampled from the existing 1250 enterprises in the state. The second questionnaire was administered on two workers who were picked randomly from the selected industries making 400 female workers. Data collected were analysed using descriptive methods such as simple tables, pie charts and ANOVA. Previous studies had established preponderance of males as proprietors and workers of small scale industries, this study established that 82% of women were involved in informal enterprises mostly in agro and food products industries. For example out of the 200 women proprietors 36.7% were in Textile, 41% in Agro/Food products, 12.1% in Consumer products, 10% in Industrial/ Constructional products sector. The study also revealed a very low capital base among women. Some 20% (40) of respondents had businesses whose values were between N21, 000 and N50, 000. The study also revealed that most of the workers are apprentices (40%) and with low remuneration which averaged 7,500 (\$47.4) per month. The study established that the course of regional development will be better served when women have improved access to means of production across the three regions of the state.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One major reason for underdevelopment in Africa is inadequate access to means of production. Yet the little available ones have been inequitable, lopsided and pro male much to the disadvantage of the female folks who seem to have accepted the traditional sexual division of labour which had limited the occupation they could be involved in. Most gender based studies have always painted a grim picture of the female folk as the most vulnerable group in term of indices of human development. One of the reasons often cited for this state of the female folk lies in the fact that, there is gender inequity in access to means of production through which poverty is reduced. Studies have however shown that this trend is changing very rapidly especially in the agricultural sector where recent studies have identified an upsurge in involvement of the females (Imonikebe, 2010). In Africa, Sessay and Odebiyi (1998) found that rural Nigerian women play an important role in food production and nutrition of their families with the women providing up to 80% of the food crops. However not every sector has experienced an upsurge in women participation as in subsistent agricultural sector.

Manufacturing provides a veritable opportunity for women participation as entrepreneurs workers and retailers of products of small scale enterprises thereby helping to reduce poverty. Studies on poverty have highlighted the fact that poverty which from previous studies such as Olayemi (2002) mostly affects female folk is a consequence, not only of the misfortunes and limited capabilities of individuals, but also of the structure and processes that determine the distribution of income (Soludo, 2003). Access to means of production such as small scale industrial development however plays a leading role in income redistribution much to the advantage of women.

The relationship between women empowerment and small scale industries cannot be overemphasized. These enterprises have been described as a means of livelihood for new entrants into the urban labour force, who through lack of opportunity and/or training are unable to seek employment in the real sector of the economy. It is also seen as a means of survival for the migrant and vulnerable especially when no social welfare services are available. This explains why cottage informal small scale industries such as weaving, wine making, and garri processing enterprises thrived among women for ages.

In spite of this however, it has been established in previous studies that women constitute the least group of people who on the basis of income, literacy and social status, are sufficiently empowered to establish manufacturing enterprises or work as factory hand in such enterprises. This is despite governments numerous empowerment schemes. However it is generally acknowledged that the process of establishing small scale industries is less cumbersome, less financially demanding and easily manageable which an average woman should be able to afford

It is based on this premise that the study proceed to evaluate how women have performed in this sector on two fronts: women as proprietors and as workers, in small scale industries in Ondo state.

## 2. LITERATURE

Extant literature is explicit on the role of women in development in spite of the negative picture which are often portrayed of women in different sectors. Previous studies have been conducted on various issues concerning women such as gender inequality in education (Ndali 2010, Bauer 2000) women and science (Erinosho, 1997) women and national development (Oduaran and Okukpon 1997) women in oil and gas production ((Fatusin, Aribigbola and Adetula 2008) have painted women as lagging behind their male counterparts. Yet studies such as Williams (2005) while acknowledging the sordid situation have identified small scale trading, fashion design and subsistent farming as areas where women in Nigeria have performed creditably. In the public sectors Mitchell (2014) reported that women are suffering from public-sector job cuts and shifting into lower-paying fields such as retail and leisure and hospitality, as their job gains fail to keep up with men in the recovery.

In the United Kingdom Dodd (2012) while investigating the problem of women underrepresentation in creative industries identified that there are 32,800 female and 82,450 male leaders in the creative and cultural industries and despite there being a comparatively high proportion of all-female managed organizations, there are half the number of female executives per organization compared to the UK average. Yet the situation may not be entirely different among small scale industries

The contribution of small scale industries in many countries is not in doubt. It also employs between 5 and 19 workers. The UN report on the Latin - American region observed the same trend in Chile and Argentina. In these countries like those previously reviewed, small scale industrial establishments have the largest share in employment generation and they offer strong ground for linkage (Ranis and Stewart 2007). Moreover Osoba (1987) had reported that in Africa, small scale industries are large employers of labour. In Sierra Leone, Chuta and Liedholm (2008) observed that the number of small scale enterprises was about 4,700 with a total employment of 87,000 persons. During the same period, they reported that there were about 28 large scale industries which employed only 4111 persons. In his study of small enterprises in North Carolina, Landabaso (2001) asserted that among the various advantages of small scale enterprises are high total factory productivity, greater concentration among population in terms of income generated and output, greater share of ownership by nationals, industrial dispersal, stemming rural urban migration, greater reliance on domestic capital and lower levels of managerial and technological skills. Furthermore, they require relatively small amount of fund to set up and are more adaptable to local conditions, use of local raw materials and technology.

As important as these contributions are, it will be difficult to meet the Federal government's goal of gender equity in access to means of production by the year 2020, if women are not sufficiently empowered to be equal partakers in small scale industries because of its attendant spill over effects on poverty reduction which previous research also shows it has gender connotation.

### **3. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The paper draws from primary and secondary data sources. To this extent, purposive sample of 3 major towns were taken from each of the three senatorial regions of the state. Ikare from Ondo North, Akure from Ondo Central, and Okitipupa from Ondo South. Two hundred (200) questionnaire was administered on the three regions of the state. These were administered on proprietors selected randomly in the sampled cities as guided by master plans. The second questionnaire was administered on two workers who were picked randomly from the selected industries making 400 workers. Data collected were analysed using descriptive methods such as simple tables, pie charts and ANOVA.

This study was carried out in Ondo state, Nigeria. The state is one of the seven states created on 3rd February 1976. It was carved out of the former Western State. The state covered the total area of the former Ondo province, which was part of the western region which was created in 1915 with Akure as the provincial headquarters. Ondo State took off formally on 1st April 1976, consisting of the nine administrative divisions of the former Western State (Ondo Ministry of Information and Culture, 1979). These nine divisions then were Akoko, Akure, Ekiti Central, Ekiti North, Ekiti South, Ekiti West, Okitipupa, Ondo and Owo. Akure town-ship was retained as the administrative headquarters. However, on 1st October 1996, Ekiti State comprising Ekiti Central, Ekiti North, Ekiti South and Ekiti West Divisions was carved out of Ondo State. Hence, the present Ondo State is made up of Akoko, Akure, Okitipupa, Ondo and Owo divisions. Akure remains the State capital.

The state lies between latitudes 5°45' and 7°52'N and longitudes 4°20' and 6°05'E. Its land area is about 15,500 square kilometres. Ondo State is bounded on the east by Edo and Delta states, on the west by Ogun and Osun States, on the north by Ekiti and Kogi States and to the south by the Bight of Benin and the Atlantic Ocean.

### **4. FINDINGS**

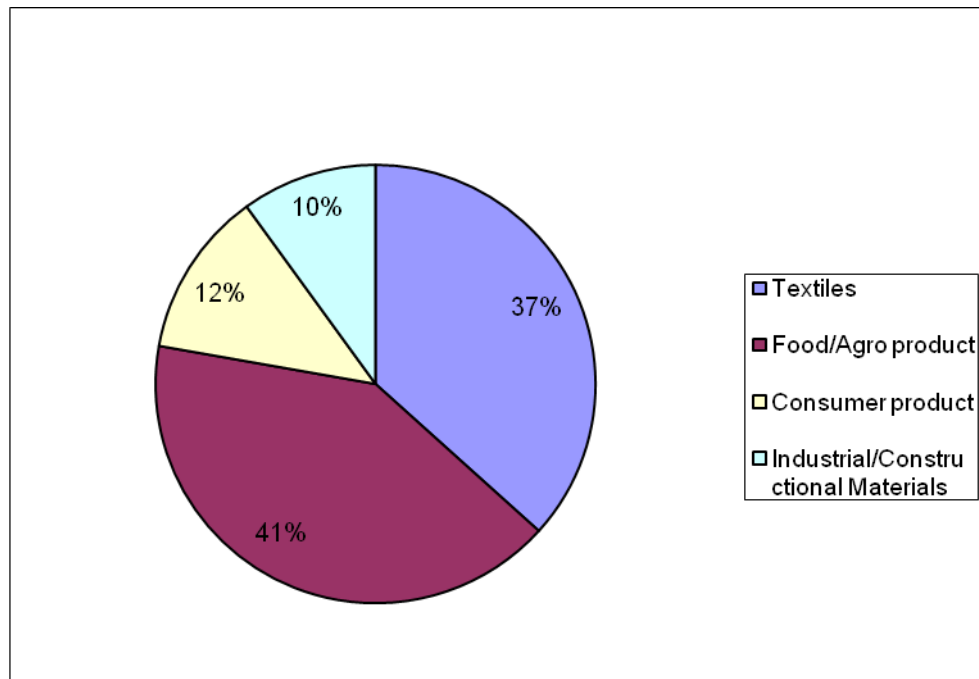
#### **Gender Characteristics of Stakeholders (Proprietors, and Workers)**

While previous studies had established the fact that women were not empowered enough to establish manufacturing industries due to constraints such as financial and possibly sociological reasons since they have to combine such roles with their traditional roles as bread winners of their families, women were seeking solace in less financially demanding roles as workers of small scale industries products. Four hundred (400) female workers were sampled representing 27% of the existing workers of small scale enterprises in the study area

In spite of the low involvement of women as factories owners and workers however, there is a noticeable increase in the percentage of women who were involved in informal small scale industrial enterprises. For example, out of the 200 women entrepreneurs 82% (164) were involved in the informal enterprises. Only 36 female entrepreneurs or 18% were involved in formal enterprises.

The structure of the informal manufacturing industries of which women were the proprietors were further investigated as shown in fig. 1. The figure reflected dominance of females in food processing, and textile sectors of the economy.

**Fig: 1: Sectoral Analysis of Women Entrepreneurs**

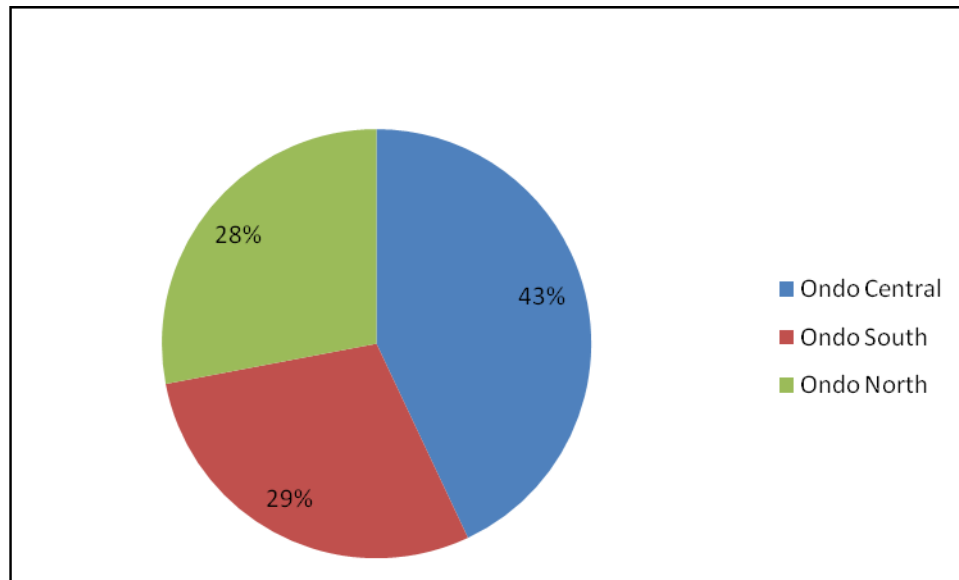


**Source: Fieldwork 2014**

Women were either excluded or excluded themselves from metal making and wood processing, with little presence in constructional blocks making plants which were sampled. For example out of the 200 women proprietors 36.7% were in Textile, 41% in Agro/Food products, 12.1% in Consumer products, 10% in Industrial/Constructional products sector. In the same vein, all the 52 female workers identified worked in the above industrial classifications in fig. 1.

However, there is a slight variation in the number of female entrepreneurs across the regions selected for investigation. There were indeed more female entrepreneurs in Ondo Central than the two other regions as shown in figure 2, where 43.3% of the 200 entrepreneurs were resident in Ondo Central. Only 27.8% of them lived and worked in Ondo North, and Ondo South being 29 percent.

**Fig. 2: Regional Analysis of Female Entrepreneurs**



**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

### **The Structure of Labour Force among Female Workers**

The structure of the labour force among female workers in the study area reveals a dominance of apprentices and casual labourers in the enterprises sampled (see Table 1).

**Table 1: The Structure of Workforce among Small Enterprises**

Type of worker	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Apprentices	160	40	40
Casual labourers	61	15.25	54.25
Join men	77	19.25	73.5
Permanent staff	145	26	100.0
Total	400	100.0	

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

For example, out of the 400 female workers sampled, 160 (40%) were apprentices, 31.3% were casual labourers (14% in Ondo North, 28% in Ondo Central and 33.2% in Ondo South) (19%) were 'join men', while only 104 (26% in Ondo North, 25.5% in Ondo Central and 20% in Ondo South) were permanent staff members. The implication of this is that majority of women workers in small enterprises were either apprentices or permanent workers.

### Labour Threshold in Small Scale Industries

The study investigated how far women were prepared to leave their places of origin in order to work in small scale industries. The study found out that there is low propensity among women to move. Out of the 400 women sampled, 64% work within their towns of origin, 24% came from other parts of the state and 11.5% were from other parts of Nigeria. The implication of this is that women have low tendencies of moving out of their enclaves to work in small scale industries as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Threshold of Female Workers**

Market threshold	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Within the town	258	64.5	64.5	64.5
Within the state	96	24	24	88.5
Nigeria	46	11.5	11.5	100
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

### Average Asset of Business

Proprietors were asked to state the present value of their business capital. Women were asked to evaluate the present value of their businesses. Some 20% (40) of respondents had businesses whose value was between N21, 000 and N50, 000, 16% (32) of the entrepreneurs had turnover of below N20, 000. Some 38 or 19% of customers had a turnover of between N101, 000 and N500, 000 while only 15% (30) of them had businesses whose turnover is above N500, 000. The implication of this is that the business capital was still very low even among the formal Small Scale enterprises. (See Table 3)

**Table 3: Present Value of Business Capital (ASSETS)**

Value ₦	Freq	%	Ondo North	Ondo Central	Ondo South
Below 20, 000	32	16	10(32%)	15(46.9%)	12(37.5%)
21, 000 – 50, 000	40	20	22(55%)	11(27.5%)	7(17.5%)
51,000 – 100,000	60	30	25(41.7%)	23(38.3%)	12(20%)
101, 000 – 500, 000	38	19	18(47.4%)	14(36.8%)	6(15.8%)
Above 500, 000	30	15	12(40%)	8(26.7%)	10(33.3%)
Total	200	100.0			

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

### Major Problems Confronting Proprietors

The major problems confronting most of the women sampled were lack of capital to improve their businesses and poor sales. Some 26% and 28% of women emphasized these as the most important problems. Other problems enumerated by the proprietors in order of importance included accumulating debts 13%, Transportation, 11% and lack of cooperation with other small scale industries 10%. The last 12% picked other problems such as discrimination, illiteracy, poor business skills. (See Table 4)

**Table 4; Problems Confronting Women Entrepreneurs**

Major problems	Freq	%
Transportation	22	11
Lack of capital	52	26
Debt owed to financial institutions	26	13
Poor patronage of products	56	28
Lack of co-operation by the SSI	20	10
Others	24	12
Total	200	100.0

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

Responses of women in the three regions Ondo north, Ondo central and Ondo north were subjected to Anova analysis to test if there is any significant difference in problems confronting them

**Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on Problems of Women Proprietors in The Three Regions**

#### ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1386.288	2	693.144	8.293	.060 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	250.745	3	83.582		
Total	1637.033	5			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ondo south, ondo central

b. Dependent Variable: ondo north

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014**



It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in problems confronting women entrepreneurs in the 3 regions since the  $F_{\text{tab}}$  is greater than  $F_{\text{cal}}$ . i.e.  $F_{\text{tab } 0,05} (9.55) > F_{\text{cal}} (8.293)$

### Problems confronting women workers

The major problems facing female workers as shown in Table 6 were investigated to see the magnitude. Most of the women sampled 191 (47.8%) picked poor salary, which was calculated at an average of 7,500 (\$47.4) per month or\$ 1.53 per day which is below poverty line considering the fact that they take care of their family from their meager salary as more women are now breadwinners of their family.

**Table 6: Problems Facing Female Workers**

Problems	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Poor salary	191	47.8	47.8	49.3
Family commitments	88	22.0	22.0	22.0
Non provision of protective mater	39	9.75	9.75	79.7
Sexual harassment	82	20.	20.	100
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014**

Other problems faced by workers based on the responses of the women included family commitments which would not allow them to work full time since they have to take care of their family at home. This was picked by 88 (22%), Non provision of protective material 39 (9.7%) and sexual harassment at the workplace 82 (20%).

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study was concerned with an investigation of the role of female stakeholders – Proprietors and workers of small scale industries in Ondo state. The study made use of three different sets of questionnaire. To this end, 200 proprietors and 400 workers were sampled and interviewed. Data collected were analyzed using simple tables. ANOVA was used to test the differences in responses across the three regions

The study established preponderance of males as proprietors of small scale industries in the study area, however, 82% of women entrepreneurs out of the 200 sampled were involved in informal enterprises. In the same vein the sampled four

hundred (400) female workers represented just 27% of the existing workers of small scale enterprises in the study area. The sectoral analysis of enterprises where women dominated shows that women were mostly involved in food and textile/fashion design businesses. For example out of the 200 women proprietors 36.7% were in Textile, 41% in Agro/Food products, 12.1% in Consumer products, 10% in Industrial/Constructional products sector. Majority, 43.3% of the 200 entrepreneurs were resident in Ondo Central, with only 27.8% of them lived and worked in Ondo North, and Ondo South being 29 percent.

The structure of labour force among women shows that apprentices dominated with 40%, followed by permanent staff (26%), with casual labourers being about 15%. The study also revealed low propensity of women to move outside their places of birth to work. It also revealed a very low capital base among women. Some 20% (40) of respondents had businesses whose value was between N21, 000 and N50, 000, 16% (32) of the entrepreneurs had turnovers of below N20, 000. This accounted for why 35 % of the women picked low capital base as their major problem. On the other hand most of the female workers picked poor salary, the least of which was calculated at an average of 7,500 (\$47.4) per month or\$ 1.53 per day which is about poverty line.

On the whole, this study has further pointed out the inequalities women entrepreneurs and workers in small scale industries face in growing their business. Yet it is obvious that regional development of the state will be better served if there is equitable access to means of production especially small scale industries for balanced development.

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