

## INVESTIGATION OF WOMEN'S PALM OIL PROCESSING IN SOME VILLAGES OF NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *An investigation of women's palm oil processing in some selected villages of Nigeria was undertaken on September-October, 2015 with the aim of knowing the percentage of women involved in the use of palm oil processing machine and their plight in palm oil production. The study areas considered include Ogunjimi, Danlegan, Morola, Safejo, Ogunshina, Akamo, Olokuna of Akinyele and Lagelu Local Government Areas of Oyo state Nigeria. The information provided and data generated were gathered through oral interview, discussion and questionnaires. The result showed that 80.4% females were involved in palm oil processing while 19.6% were males. About 90.2% of the respondents are pleased with the existing machine while only 9.8% were not pleased. The crosstab showed that 38 female respondents said 'Yes' to the existing machine while 3 of them said 'No'. However, their major challenge was poor roads linking their villages because 90.2% of the respondents called on the government to construct their roads while 9.8 requested for other things. These data were analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). There was a significance difference in the palm oil processing machine usage of the women in these areas than that of their male counterparts. This showed that women in these areas will produce more palm oil if encouraged by the government. This will assist them to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) objectives in terms of gender equality.*

**KEYWORDS:** Women, SDGs, Palm-oil processing Machine, Akinyele, Lagelu Local Government Areas.

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### INTRODUCTION

Oil palm (*Elaeis Guineensis*) was agreed to originate from the Tropical Rain Forest region of West Africa (FAO 2002) in which Nigeria and her neighbouring countries are situated. This forest fruit can be found in abundant in the South-Western and Eastern parts of Nigeria, oil palm fruit bunches were processed into palm oil using traditional method which is simple but tiring, the semi-mechanized method which mashes the fruits and presses out the crude palm oil and the fully mechanized method. Adeniyi et al. (2014) reported that the process of producing crude palm oil requires a large set of equipment which ranges from crude, manual mechanism to advance automated machinery. They further said that regardless of the type of machine used to produce crude palm oil, there are still a set of basic steps needed to produce palm oil. The first step in palm oil production is harvesting the palm fruit bunches. A harvester cuts the fresh fruit bunches from trees and allows them to fall to the ground. Imoukhuede et al. (2011) reported that, small-scale farmers dominate the oil palm industry in West Africa countries, but they did not report women involvement in oil palm industry. More so, Adeniyi et al. (2014) reported the sources of labour used in palm oil processing in Ogun state, Nigeria, in which, family labour has 52%, 8.3% and none for traditional, semi-mechanized and fully mechanized methods respectively. However, they did not report the percentage of women in the family

labour used in the oil palm processing. Therefore, it is necessary to study the percentage of women involved in the use of palm oil processing machine and their plight in palm oil production.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Population of the Study**

The survey was carried out in Akinyele and Lagelu Local Government Areas of Oyo State on September-October, 2015 of which the target populations were those people (villagers) involved in palm oil processing in Ogunjimi, Danlegan, Morola, Safejo, Ogunshina, Akamo and Olokuna.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected using oral interview, discussion and questionnaires. 51 questionnaires were administered to examine the view of the villagers on key issues relating to palm oil production such as years of using oil palm machine, volume of palm oil produce, cost of a gallon (25litres) of palm oil, gender, age, , and what they want the government to do for them in their business. More so, the cost of production was known through oral discussion in which the owner of the machine takes a certain percentage of the palm oil produce.

### **Data Management and Analysis**

Data management and analysis was done using SPSS and descriptive statistics using percentages and cross tabulation as a means of explaining the outcomes of findings. Bar chart was used.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Brief explanation of the palm oil processing machine on the respondents' desire**

This machine in Figure 1 has been greatly helpful to our respondents in so much that 90.2% of the respondents desired such machine as compared to 9.8% who do not desire such locally coupled semi mechanized palm oil processing machine which has been on ground more than five years ago as showed in Table 1a but desired a better machine with an improve efficiency, capacity and aesthetic value.

### **Women involvement in palm oil processing**

During this study, some palm oil processing centres of the mentioned villages were visited as showed in Figure 1. 80.4% man power in palm oil production was provided by females as against 19.6% offered by the males in the study areas of Akinyele and Lagelu local government areas of Oyo state as showed in Table 1b. This percent was highly significant between the man power put in by the female gender and male gender.



**Figure 1: Palm Oil Processing Centre**

**Table 1a: Respondents Desires on Oil Palm Machine**

Respondents desires	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	46	90.2	90.2	90.2
No	5	9.8	9.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 1b: The Gender Difference of the Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	10	19.6	19.6	19.6
Female	41	80.4	80.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

However, it was observed in one of the discussions held with the respondents that, men do not engage in refining the press out crude palm oil, this shows that, the culture of the people also has an impact on the palm oil production of the area.

#### **Gallons of palm oil produced per tank of boiled palm fruits**

Base on the oral talks and questionnaires administered, the volume of palm oil produced in the areas depends on two factors namely:

1. The variety of palm fruits
2. The height of fruits in the boiling tank

Despite these factors, the female gender produced more than his male counterpart as showed with a crosstab in Table 2. The gallon used by these palm oil producers is equivalent to 25litres.

Palm oil produced in the area was between 12.5-100litres. But this volume can be improved upon if the working conditions are made better for the producers by the government of the areas.

**Table 2: The Gender and Gallon of palm oil produce Cross tabulation**

Gender	Gallon of palm oil produce					Total
	<1gallon	>1gallon	2gallons	4gallons	others	<1gallon
Male	1	9	0	0	0	10
Female	3	35	1	1	1	41
<b>Total</b>	4	44	1	1	1	51

### The Cost of a Gallon of Palm Oil in the Study Areas

Table 3 shows the range at which oil palm are sold per gallon (25litres) in the study area of which #1000-4500 has 29.4%, #4500-6000 has 60.8%, #4500-6000 has 3.9%. Actually the variations in prices were determined by the season of production.

**Table 3: Cost of a Gallon of Palm Oil**

	Price	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	#1000-4500	15	29.4	29.4	29.4
	#4500-6000	31	60.8	60.8	90.2
	#4500-6000	2	3.9	3.9	94.1
	Others	3	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

### Major challenge of the palm oil producers

The roads linking the villages are bad because 90.2% of the women called on government to construct their roads, 3.9 % of the women requested for a credit loan and 2.0% are others as showed in Table 4. One of the respondents in safejo said that, if the roads are constructed their farm produces will thrive well.

**Table 4: Oil Palm Processing Producers' Request**

	Item considered	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Produce better machine	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Credit loan	2	3.9	3.9	5.9
	Construct good road	46	90.2	90.2	96.1
	others	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Women are indispensable in our society. The women in these areas added value to the economy growth of the areas considered in this study because 80.4% man power in palm oil production was provided by the women as against 19.6% offered by the males in the areas. I hereby advice and call on the government of Akinyele and Lagelu local government areas of Oyo state and the federal government of Nigeria to empower women in these areas which shall further boost the economy of the nation at large.

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