
**EVALUATION OF SMALL ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN IN SOME VILLAGES IN THE
LOW VALLEY OF THE OUEME, REPUBLIC OF BENIN**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze the impact of small-scale activities by women in a few villages in the lower Ouémé Valley of Benin. For this, 08 villages have been covered in (04) municipalities (Bonou, Dangbo, Adjohoun, and Aguégoué). Within each village, (20) women engaged in specific activities were interviewed, for a total of 160 women. The range of women's small activities is as follows : unloading from the sand of canoes (with 28.30% of the women surveyed), gari processing (15.00%) ; collection and sale of firewood (10.00%).); preparation of kèlèkèlè 8,30% ; sell food (8,30%); transformation of tapioca (6,70%); sale of porridge (3,40%); passage of varnishes to the feet and hands (3,30%); preparation of patties (3,30 %); transform raffia leaves (3,30%), sale of agbofan 3,30 % ; sell atchouta (3.30 per cent); sale of akassa (1.70%); sale of beans (1.70%). For example, young women (< 30 years of age) tend to be more involved in dumping sand from canoes, while older women prefer to sell akassa and galette. In addition, the annual income of women for these small activities is CFAF 100,000 (33 per cent of women), CFAF 200,000 to CFAF 300,000 (12 per cent), CFAF 300,000 to CFAF 400,000 (11 per cent), CFAF 400,000 to CFAF 500,000 (17 per cent), and CFAF 500,000 or more (17 per cent). In addition, annual incomes are used to finance the same activities (for 68% of investigations). These incomes are also used for agricultural crops (62 %) ; for livestock (35 %) ; for processing activities (8.33%); for commerce (30%); for clothing (61.66%); for maintenance of housing (5%); for the purchase of pharmaceuticals (11.66%); for traditional care (25%); for travel (26.66%); for ceremonies (42%); for food expenditure (71.67%); for schooling of children (18.33%). Women in the lower Ouémé Valley are engaged in activities and earn income, which allows them to meet some needs. But the lack of financial resources and the impracticability of the routes are difficulties for women in their activities.

Keywords: Lower Ouémé valley, small activities, income, impacts

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural Africa consisted of small-scale societies with economic structures with many points in common, where most families lived from what they themselves produced, that is, subsistence economy. which does not mean poverty (Cuonzo, 2003) .But it is noticed that women are more and more in situations of progressive and less visible deterioration of the labor market because of underemployment, part-time work, unemployment, lower careers, wage gaps, degrading working conditions (Lemière, 2013). Especially since access to land is today one of the major difficulties

in the countryside. In households where the family has sold everything for economic reasons, without thinking of future generations, difficulties are expressed in obtaining a portion of arable land (Sossou-Agbo, 2013). These observations do not spare the populations of the Lower Valley. The Lower and Middle Valley of the Ouémé (BMVO) includes the communes of Sô-Ava, Aguégués, Dangbo, Adjohoun, Bonou, Ouinhi, Zagnanado, Covè, Zogbodomey, and Zè (Alimi et al. 2015). But the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé (BVO) has 4 communes to know; Aguégués, Dangbo, Adjohoun, Bonou. In the villages of this region, the level of education is low. For example in the communes of Aguégué, Adjohoun, Bonou, Dangbo, the Indice of Human Development (HDI) is low due to the main factors related to education and household income (UNDP, MEPN Benin, 2007). According to the RGPH4 (2013), the total population of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé is estimated at 260,660 inhabitants (127,224 men and 133,436 women). The commune of Adjohoun counts 75,323 inhabitants (36,385 men and 38,938 women, with 4.9 as the household size). The municipality of Aguégué counts 44,562 inhabitants with 22,198 men and 22,364 women then 5.3 as household size. The commune of Bonou counts 44,349 inhabitants with 21,360 men, 22,989 women and 5.7 the size of the household. The commune of Dangbo counts 96,426 inhabitants with 47,281 men and 49,145 women, then 4.9 as the household size.

This study aims to analyze the impact of small women's activities in some villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé in Benin. Specifically, this involves (i) identifying the diversity of small activities carried out exclusively by women in the villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé; (ii) to research the annual income and benefits derived from these small women's activities; (iii) analyze sales operations and the marketing channel for products derived from small activities; and (iv) calculate annual expenditures and use of income from small activities.

1.1. Field of study

The present study was conducted in the area between 6 ° 25 'and 7 ° north latitude and between 2 ° 25' and 2 ° 35 'east longitude (Figure 1). The climate of the study area is subequatorial. On the basis of rainfall distribution, two rainy seasons and two dry seasons are distinguished. The relative humidity of the air is maximum during the rainy and minimal season in the dry season. It varies from 43.2% to 96% depending on the month and the time of day. The average annual temperature is about 29.5 ° C. Temperatures drop to 25.4 ° C in August and then rise to 34.3 ° C in February-March (ASCENA, 2017).

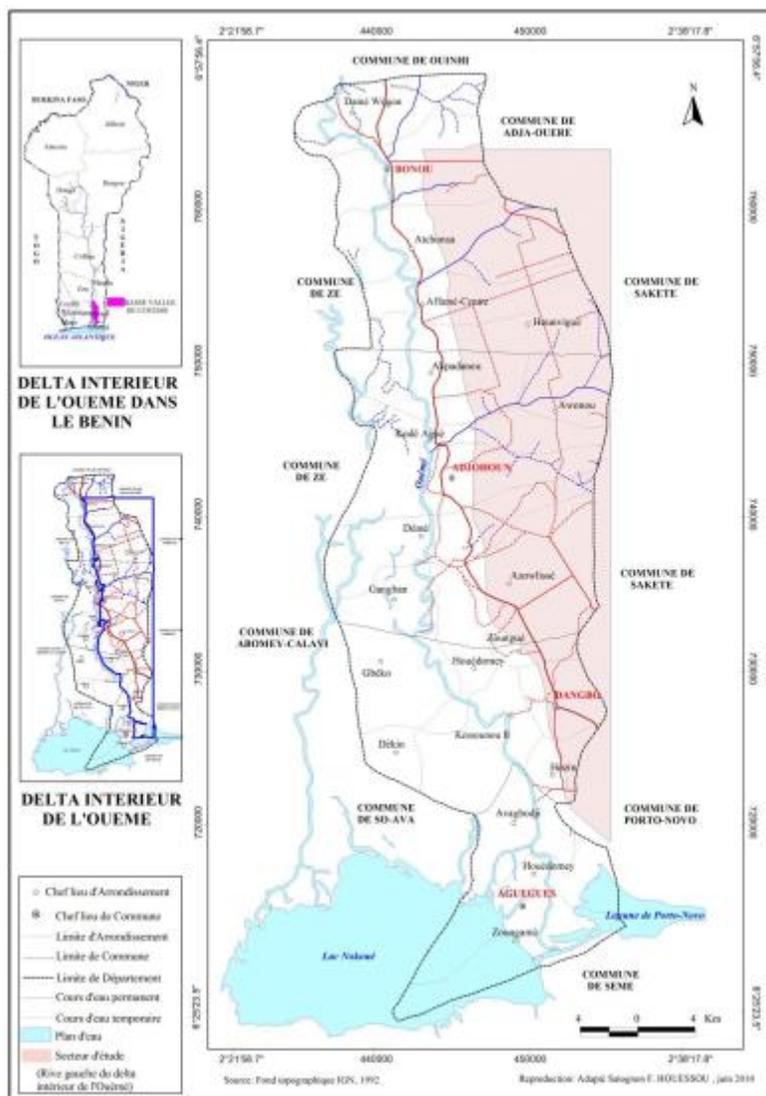


Figure 1. Geographical location of the lower Ouémé river valley Source: Houessou, 2014

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

To measure the impacts of small trades / activities of women living near the Ouémé Valley, 08 villages / localities were crossed in (04) communes (Bonou, Dangbo, Adjohoun, Aguégué). Within each village, (20) women carrying out specific activities were questioned using the cards, making a total of 160 survey cards.

Table 1. Number of women surveyed by localities / villages.

| Communes | Arrondissement | Villages | Nombre de femmes enquêtées |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Bonou | Atchonsa | Dogba-hê | 20 |
| | Damè-Wogon | Gnanhouizounme | 20 |
| Dangbo | | Hetin-sota | 20 |
| | | Hetin-aglahounsa | 20 |
| Adjouhoun | Togbota | Togbota-oudjra | 20 |
| | Gangan | Gangban-centre | 20 |
| Aguégué | | Houinta-avagbodji | 20 |
| | | Avagbodjidjekpe | 20 |
| Total | | | 160 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

A structured questionnaire was sent specifically to women in isolated localities in these regions. These questions were asked in order to know the incomes of the women of these localities. This allowed to make an analysis on their condition of life.

The survey questionnaire contains the following headings: (i) the diversity of occupations / activities exclusively reserved for women; (ii) the sources of income and the decisions on these revenues from; (iii) sales and marketing channels; (iv) - annual expenditures and income use of small trades.

3.DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed and coded in the SPSS 16 software. Data processing and analysis were done according to the following points:

-The proportions of the diversity of small activities carried out by women in the villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé have been calculated and presented in the form of a diagram.

These different activities were evaluated according to the localities / villages; age groups. This helped to identify the localities and age groups of women who do particular activities.

-The annual income derived from small-scale women's activities in the villages of the Lower Ouémé Valley has been categorized according to the following intervals (income <100,000 FCFA; [200,000-300,000 FCFA [; [300,000-400,000 FCFA [; [400,000- 500,000 FCFA [and ≥ 500000 FCFA The proportion of each interval was calculated, and this in order to assess these incomes

- The average annual profits of women were calculated according to the activities and within each village traveled

- With regard to sales operations and marketing channels, the calculations of the percentage of sales methods for the products of women's activities were made. In addition the proportions of the sales places of the products resulting from these activities have been calculated. In addition, the proportions of the types of buyers of products resulting from these activities of women were researched and analyzed.

-To evaluate annual expenditures and the use of income from women's activities, the descriptive statistics of these annual expenditures were calculated.

-The one-way analysis of ANOVA variance was done to check whether or not there is a difference between the income groups found by women according to the activities. This analysis was done with the Minitab 14.0 software.

-The non parametric tests of Kruskal-Wallis were made to assess the existence or not of a significant difference between the annual average profits from the activities inside the villages of each commune.

4 - RESULTS

4.1-Diversity of small activities carried out by women in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé

In the remote villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé, women carry out activities to provide for their vital needs. Field surveys in 8 villages provide information on these small women's activities. Then 28.30% of the surveyed women unload sand from the canoes before providing for their vital needs, while 15.00% perform gari processing activities; 10.00% collect and sell firewood; 8,30% prepare kelèkèlè (it is a derivative of galette); 8.30% sell food; 6.70% make tapioca processing activities; 3.40% sell the porridge; 3.30% of women are wearing nail polish on their feet and hands; 3.30% make the preparation of patties; 3.30% convert raffia leaves for sale, 3.30% of women sell agbofan (this is the sale of prepared meat that resembles snails); 3.30% sell atchouta; 1.70% sell the Akassa; 1.70% sell the haricot. Figure 2 provides information on these activities.

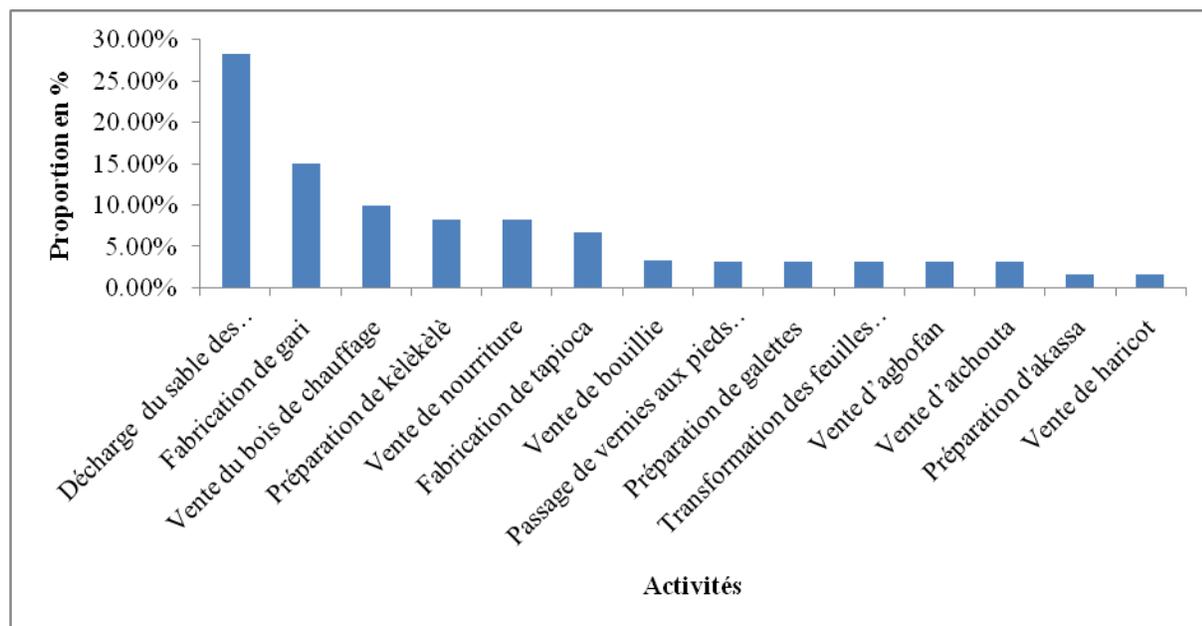


Figure2: Diversitiesmall activities carried out by women in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

The diversity of these small activities carried out by women in the villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé is presented in detail in Table 2

Table2.Diversity of women's activities in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé

| Commune | Adjohoun | | Aguégoué | | Bonou | | Dangbo | | Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| | Gangban-Centre | Togbot a-Oudjra | Avagbodji-Djèkpé | Houinta - Avagbodji | Dogba-Hé | Gnanho ui zounmè | Hétin-Aglahou nsa | Hétin - Sota | |
| Décharge du sable des pirogues | 5,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 8,30 | 10,00 | 3,30 | 1,70 | 28,30 |
| Fabrication de gari | 1,70 | 3,30 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 8,30 | 15,00 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Fabrication de tapioca | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 6,70 | 6,70 |
| Passage de vernies aux pieds et mains | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 3,30 |
| Préparation d'akassa | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 |
| Préparation de galettes | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 3,30 |
| Préparation de kèlèkèlè | 3,30 | 0,00 | 3,30 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 8,30 |
| Transformation des feuilles de raphia | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 3,30 |
| Vente d'agbofan | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 3,30 |
| Vente d'atchouta | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 3,30 |
| Vente de bouillie | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 3,40 |
| Vente de haricot | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 |
| Vente de nourriture | 0,00 | 1,70 | 3,30 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 8,30 |
| Vente du bois de chauffage | 1,70 | 3,30 | 3,30 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,70 | 0,00 | 0,00 | 10,00 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

Table 3. Diversity of activities by age group

| Activités | <30ans | 30 à 60ans | > 60ans |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Discharge of sand from canoes | 20,0 | 00,0 | 00,0 |
| Gari manufacturing | 3,33 | 8,33 | 3,33 |
| Tapioca production | 00,0 | 6,67 | 00,0 |
| Passage of polishes to the feet and hands | 00,0 | 3,33 | 00,0 |
| Preparation of Akassa | 00,0 | 00,0 | 1,67 |
| Preparation of patties | 1,67 | 00,0 | 1,67 |
| Preparation of kelèkèlè | 3,33 | 05,0 | 00,0 |
| Transformation of the leaves of raffia | 00,0 | 3,33 | 00,0 |
| Sale of agbofan | 00,0 | 3,33 | 00,0 |
| Sale of atchouta | 00,0 | 1,67 | 1,67 |
| Sale of porridge | 00,0 | 3,33 | 00,0 |
| Sale of beans | 00,0 | 00,0 | 1,67 |
| Sale of food | 00,0 | 8,33 | 00,0 |
| Sale of firewood | 00,0 | 10,0 | 00,0 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

From the analysis of this table, it should be noted that young women (age <30 years) are more engaged in the discharge activities of the sand of the dugout canoes, in the preparation of galette and Kèlèkèlè. For women between the ages of 30 and 60, they are more likely to be involved in the processing of gari, tapioca, the processing of raffia leaves, the sale of porridge, the sale of foods and the sale of firewood. While old women find themselves in the sale of akassa, galette, atchouta and bean.

4.2- Annual income and profits from small women's activities in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé

4.2.1 - Revenues of women's small businesses

The annual income from small women's activities in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé makes it possible to say that the proportions of these incomes vary according to the activities. 33% of the women surveyed manage to earn an annual income of 100,000 FCFA per year in view of their activities. 12% of women find an income of 200,000 to 300,000 FCFA, 11% manage to get by with 300,000-400,000 FCFA per year, 17% of women find an income of 400,000-500,000 FCFA per year, 17% of women arrive at to cope with income $\geq 500,000$ FCFA per year (Figure 3).

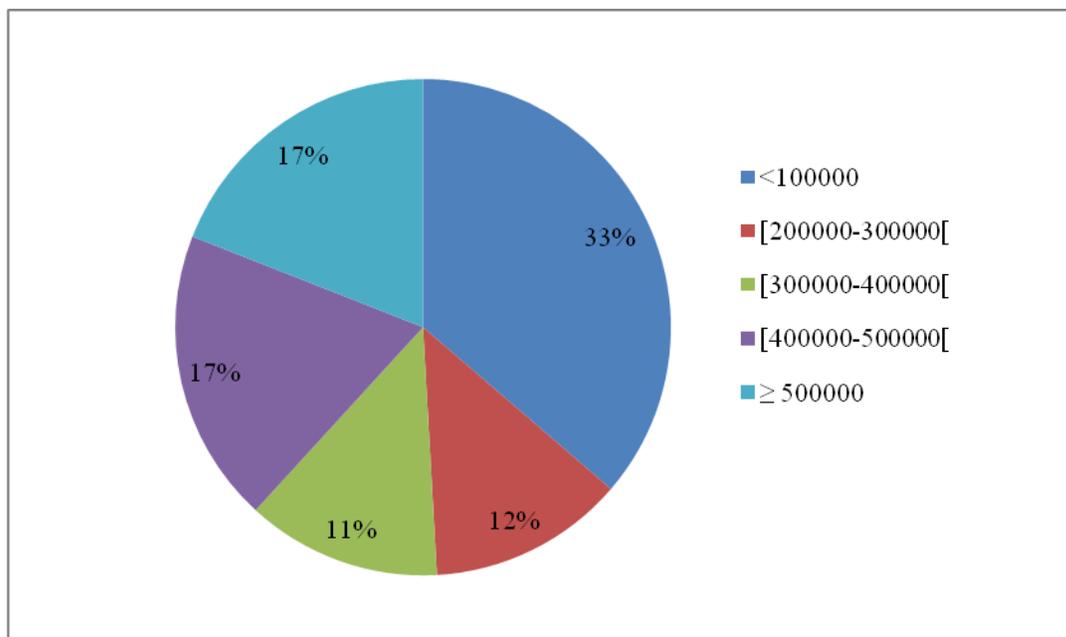


Figure3. Proportion of women's small business incomeData Source: Field Survey, August 2018

Table 4 provides a detailed breakdown of annual earnings by women's activities.

Table 4. Percentage of income found by women by activities

| | <100000 | [200000-300000[| [300000-400000[| [400000-500000[| ≥ 500000 |
|--------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Décharge du sable des pirogues | 27 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 |
| Fabrication de gari | 00 | 02 | 04 | 04 | 08 |
| Fabrication de tapioca | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 08 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Passage de vernies aux pieds et mains | 04 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 |
| Préparation d'akassa | 00 | 00 | 00 | 02 | 00 |
| Préparation de galettes | 00 | 04 | 00 | 00 | 00 |
| Préparation de kèlèkèlè | 02 | 00 | 04 | 02 | 00 |
| Transformation des feuilles de raphia | 00 | 00 | 04 | 00 | 00 |
| Vente d'agbofan | 00 | 00 | 00 | 04 | 00 |
| Vente d'atchouta | 00 | 02 | 00 | 00 | 00 |
| Vente du bois de chauffage | 00 | 04 | 00 | 06 | 02 |
| Total | 33 | 12 | 11 | 17 | 17 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

Table 5. ANOVA at a factor relative to the percentage of income found by women by activities

| Source de la variation | DDF | SCE | CM | F | P |
|------------------------|-----|--------|------|-----|-------|
| Facteur | 4 | 101,1 | 25,3 | 0,6 | 0,664 |
| Erreur | 55 | 2317,8 | 42,1 | | |
| Total | 59 | 2418,9 | | | |

NB: DDL = degree of freedom; SCE = sum of squares of deviations; CM = mean square; F = Fisher's statistic, P = probability

Reading Table 4 reveals the following conclusions:

27% of the women who practice the discharge activity, and 2% of women who prepare Kèlèkèlè manage to derive an income lower than 100,000 FCFA per year.

Women who earn an income of between 200,000 and 300,000 FCFA are engaged in gari manufacturing (2% of women), preparation of cakes (4%) and sale of firewood (4%). While for 4 women who carry out gari processing activities, the preparation of kelèkèlè, the transformation of raffia leaves, the income found per year amount to 300,000-400,000 FCFA.

The income between 400000 and 500000 FCFA are derived from the following activities: the transformation of gari (with 4 of the women), the preparation of akassa (with 2% of the women),

the preparation of kèlèkèlè (with 2% of the women surveyed) , the sale of agbofan (with 4% of women), the sale of firewood (with 6%).

Revenues \geq 500,000 FCFA are derived from the manufacture of gari, the manufacture of tapioca, the sale of firewood.

But the ANOVA Analysis of Variance in Table 5 estimates that there is no significant difference in the proportion of incomes found ($p = 0.664$).

The following photos show the exposure of the batches of firewood respectively; bags of fresh gari; agbofan samples; transformed raffia leaves; the preparation of Kèlèkèlè.



Photo1. Lots of firewood Photo2. Fresh gari bag



Photo3. Sample of Agbofan Photo4. Raffia leaves transformed Photo5. Preparation of Kèlèkèlè

Shooting: Gbénou, 2018

The following photos were taken in the villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé.

Photo 1 shows batches of firewood for cooking. The sale of these woods is done in batches. It should be noted that in a lot there are 40 small piles of wood. At the village level, the woods are sold at 25 FCFA (1000 FCFA per lot). Each small pile sells at FCFA 50 in the markets of the commune (or 2000 FCFA per batch).

Photo 2 shows the bags of fresh gari. These fresh bags are transformed into consumption gari. The sale of gari is done by basin or basket. A bowl of gari varies between 3000 FCFA and 5000 FCFA according to the periods of the year.

Photo3 shows some samples of agbofan in the Ouéménou language, each beaten meat sells for 100 FCFA.

Photo 4 shows the transformed raffia leaves to make huts houses. Each made sheet is sold at 40 FCFA.

Photo 5 shows the preparation of a slab derivative called Kèlèkèlè in the local language Ouéménou. Each Kèlèkèlè sells for 25 FCFA.

4.2.2 - Average annual profits from small women's activities in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé

4.2.2.1 - Average annual profits of small women's activities in the municipality of Aguégué (villages of Houinta-Avagbodji and Avagbodji-Djèkpé)

Table 6 provides information on the average annual profits of small-scale women's activities in the commune of Aguégué. In the villages of Houinta-Avagbodji and Avagbodji-Djèkpé, the average profits women receive from activities range from CFAF 75,000 to CFAF 300,000. But the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test indicates that there is no significant difference between the average annual profits of villages in Aguégué commune ($H = 7.93$, $DF = 8$, $P = 0.44$).).

Table 6. Average annual profits of small women's activities in Aguégué Commune (villages of Houinta-Avagbodji and Avagbodji-Djèkpé)

| Activités | Bénéfices en FCFA |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Passage de vernies aux pieds et mains | 75000,00 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Vente d'atchouta | 60000,00 |
| Préparation de galettes | 110000,00 |
| Vente de nourriture | 177333,33 |
| Préparation de kèlèkèlè | 178333,33 |
| Transformation des feuilles de raphia | 225000,00 |
| Vente du bois de chauffage | 225000,00 |
| Vente d'agbofan | 260000,00 |
| Préparation d'akassa | 300000,00 |

4.2.2 .2- Average annual profits of women's activities in Bonou Commune (villages of Dogba-He and Gnanhouizounme)

Table 7 shows the average annual profits of small women's activities in Bonou commune specifically in the villages of Dogba-Hêet de Gnanhouizounmè. In these villages, the average benefits women receive from activities range from CFAF 58181.818 to CFAF 170000. But the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test indicates that there is no significant difference between the average annual profits of villages in the town of Bonou ($H = 3.00$, $DF = 3$, $P = 0.392$).

Table 7. Average annual benefits of women's activities in Bonou Commune (villages of Dogba-He and Gnanhouizounme)

| Activités | Bénéfices en FCFA |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Discharge of sand from canoes | 58181,81 |
| Preparation of patties | 110000,00 |
| Sale of firewood | 155000,00 |
| Gari manufacturing | 170000,00 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

4.2.2.3- Average annual profits of women's activities in Dangbo Commune (Hétin-Sota and Hétin-Aglahounsa)

Table 8 shows the average annual profits of small women's activities in Dangbo commune specifically in the villages of Hétin-Sota and Hétin-Aglahounsa. In these villages the benefits related to women's activities vary between 70666.66CFA and 443750 FCFA. But the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test indicates that there is no significant difference between the average annual profits of villages in Dangbo commune ($H = 7.00$, $DF = 7$, $P = 0.429$).

Table 8. Average annual earnings of women's activities in Dangbo Commune (Hetin-Sota and Hetin-Aglahounsa)

| Activités | Bénéfices annuels en FCFA |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Discharge of sand from canoes | 70666,66 |
| Passage of polishes to the feet and hands | 128000,00 |
| Sale of food | 192000,00 |
| Sale of porridge | 204500,00 |
| Transformation of the leaves of raffia | 205000,00 |
| Sale of agbofan | 260000,00 |
| Gari manufacturing | 400000,00 |
| Tapioca production | 443750,00 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

4.2.2.4- Average annual profits of women's activities in the Adjohoun Commune (Togbota-Oudjra and Gangban-Center)

Table 9 provides information on the average annual profits of small women's activities in Adjohoun commune specifically in the villages of Togbota-Oudjra and Gangban-Center. In these villages the benefits related to women's activities vary between 70666.67 CFA and 214666.67 FCFA. But the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test indicates that there is no significant difference between the average annual profits of villages in Adjohoun commune ($H = 6.00$, $DF = 6$, $P = 0.423$).

Table 9. Average annual profits of women's activities in the Adjohoun Commune (Togbota-Oudjra and Gangban-Center)

| Activités | Bénéfices annuels en FCFA |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Discharge of sand from canoes | 70666,67 |
| Preparation of kelèkèlè | 135000,00 |
| Sale of atchouta | 140000,00 |
| Gari manufacturing | 163333,33 |
| Sale of beans | 170000,00 |
| Sale of food | 180000,00 |
| Sale of firewood | 214666,67 |

Sale of firewood 214666,67

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

4.3 - Sales transaction and marketing channel

Sales transactions and marketing channels relate to the method of selling the products of women's activities, the places of sale of the products and the types of buyers of the products.

4.3.1-Method of sale of the products resulting from the small activities of the women of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé

The method of selling products from the products of women's activities in the Lower Valley of Ouémé is done in three ways (Figure 4).

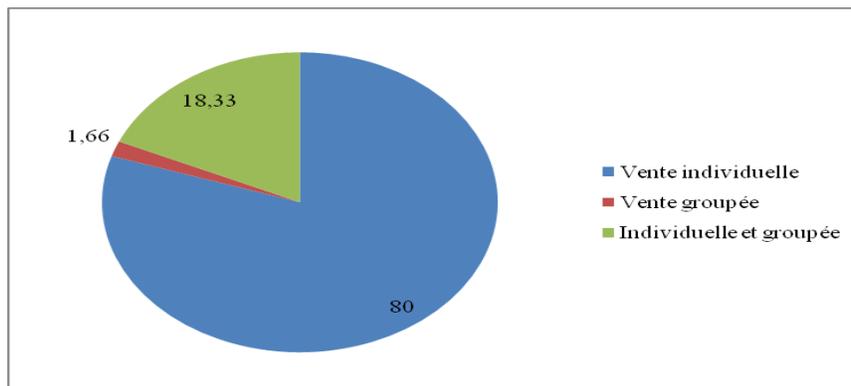


Figure 4: Method of selling activities of products from women's activities

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

From reading figure 4, the individual sales method predominates with about 80% of the women surveyed. In addition, 18.33% of the women surveyed make both group and individual sales.

4.3.2 - Place of sale of products from women's activities

The places of sale of products from women's activities vary. So 37% of women sell their produce at the village or village market; 36% of women sell their products to the commune and department markets; 25% of women sell at home (Figure 5). It should be noted that the products are transported by river with the help of the boats (board boats, motor boat), then by land.

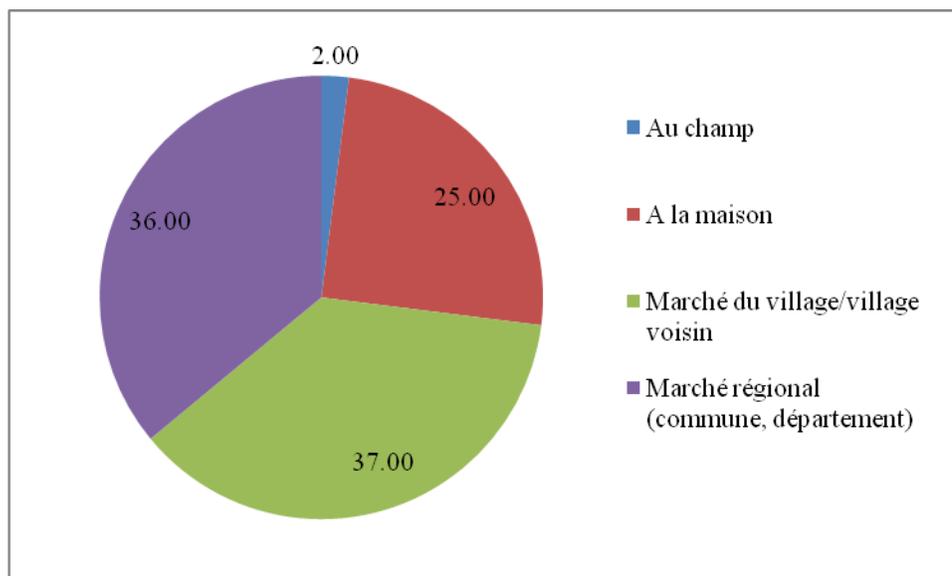


Figure 5: Place of sale of products from women's activities

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

4.3.3- Types of buyers of products from women's activities

The types of buyers of products from women's activities are retail traders (50%); individual traders (27%) and semigrossist and wholesaler traders (23%). Figure 6 shows the types of buyers of products from women's activities.

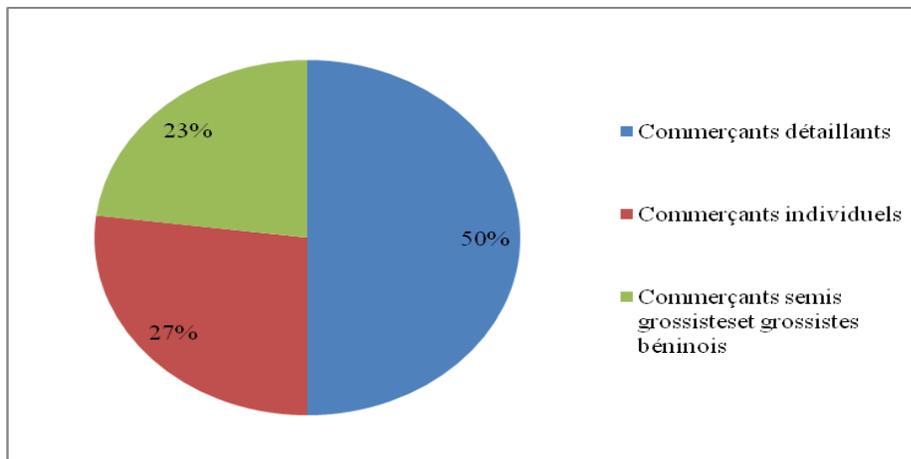


Figure 6: Types of buyers of products from women's activities

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

4.4 - Annual Expenditures and Use of Revenues of Small Women's Activities

Women from the villages surveyed in the Lower Ouémé Valley use the income from small activities in several ways. Annual revenues from small activities are spent on these same activities (for 68% of surveys). The income found is also used to grow crops (62%); livestock (35%); processing activities (8.33); to businesses (30%); clothing (61.66%); housing maintenance (5%); the purchase of pharmaceutical products (11.66%); traditional care (25%); travel (26.66%); ceremonies (42%); expenditure on food (71.67%); schooling (18.33%) of children. The following table provides descriptive statistics on annual expenditures and income utilization of women's activities in villages in the Lower Ouémé Valley.

Table 10. Summary of descriptive statistics of annual expenditures and income utilization of women's activities

| Statistiques descriptives | Proportion en % | Moyenne | Minimum | Maximum |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| | | Des dépenses | | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|
| Petites activités | 68,00 | 36878,04 | 7000 | 170000 |
| Culture agricole | 62,00 | 17216,21 | 5000 | 40000 |
| Elevage | 35,00 | 8047,61 | 4000 | 20000 |
| Activités de transformation | 08,33 | 10400,00 | 6000 | 20000 |
| Commerce | 30,00 | 19555,55 | 9000 | 50000 |
| Habillement | 61,66 | 21013,51 | 5000 | 55000 |
| Entretien du logement | 05,00 | 58333,33 | 35000 | 105000 |
| Produits pharmaceutiques | 11,66 | 9571,42 | 6000 | 20000 |
| Soins traditionnels | 25,00 | 5100,00 | 1500 | 16000 |
| Voyage | 26,66 | 11375,00 | 3000 | 20000 |
| Cérémonies | 42,00 | 26160,00 | 5000 | 70000 |
| Dépenses alimentaires | 71,67 | 27209,30 | 5000 | 75000 |
| Scolarisation | 18,33 | 21000,00 | 6000 | 50000 |

Data Source: Field Survey, August 2018

The analysis of this table makes it possible to deduce the following observations:

o About 68% of the women surveyed in the villages of the Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé use the annual income from small activities to finance these activities. Expenditures vary between 7000 FCFA to 170000 FCFA per year with an average of 36878.04 FCFA.

o This income from small activities makes it possible to grow crops. This was announced by 62% of women surveyed. These expenses vary between 5000 FCFA to 40 000 FCFA per year with an average of 17216.21 FCFA.

o Small business income is also used to finance livestock. This was announced by 35% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 4000 FCFA to 20000 FCFA per year with an average of 8047,61FCFA.

o These revenues also make it possible to make small businesses. This was announced by 30% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 9000 FCFA and 50000 FCFA per year with an average of 19555,55FCFA.

o This income from small activities makes it possible to buy clothes / clothing. This was said by 61.66% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 5000 FCFA to 55000 FCFA per year with an average of 21013.51 FCFA.

o Small business income is also used for housing maintenance. This was announced by 5% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 35000 FCFA to 105000 FCFA per year with an average of 58333,33 FCFA.

o These small business revenues are also used to purchase pharmaceuticals. This was pronounced by 11.66% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 6000 FCFA to 20000 FCFA per year with an average of 9571,42FCFA.

o Small business income is used for traditional care. This was announced by 25% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 1500 FCFA to 16000 FCFA per year with an average of 5100,00 FCFA.

o These small business revenues are used for travel. This was announced by 26.66% of women surveyed. These expenses vary between 3000 FCFA to 20000 FCFA per year with an average of 11375 FCFA.

o Small business income is used for ceremonies. This was pronounced by 42% of the women surveyed. These expenses vary between 5000 FCFA to 70 000 FCFA per year with an average of 26160 FCFA.

o These small business incomes are also included in food expenses. This was announced by 71.67% of women surveyed. These expenses vary between 5000 FCFA to 75000 FCFA per year with an average of 27209.30 FCFA.

o The income from these activities is also used for children's schooling. While 18.33% of women surveyed use part of their income for schooling, these expenses vary between 6,000 FCFA to 50,000 FCFA with an average of 21,000 FCFA.

5. DISCUSSION

Access to credit is essential to change a little time or the living conditions of women. This observation was already made by Atchadé et al. (2017) on the producers of the commune of Adjohoun also belonging to the Lower Valley of Ouémé. Since these authors have noticed that 75.51% of producers do not have access to credits. The mode of financing their activity is based on personal and family savings.

Access to the villages of the Lower Valley of Ouémé is difficult. During the rainy season, the tracks that connect the villages are inaccessible to motorcycles, so people are forced to walk without shoes, since the ground is slippery. In these conditions, women face enormous difficulties in getting their goods to communal markets. For example, research by LASDEL BENIN (2007) has shown that access to the commune of Aguégué is by motorized boats from

the Djassin pier in Porto-Novo or from Ahozin and that the trip to access lasts 30 to 45 minutes depending on the state of the boat and the loading that is done.

In addition, to increase women's income, a reorganization of activities is needed through training and capacity building. This observation is similar to that of women in the city of Parakou in Benin. Visoh (2016) said that most of the women artisans currently working in the trades received on-the-job training, which is traditional apprenticeship.

Some limits of work: In this research, some researchers may ask the question of why the activities related to fish sales are not taken into account despite it is the Lower Valley of Ouémé. The answer is that our research took into account only small activities carried out exclusively by women. That is, activities that men are not involved in. While during the field survey, it is noticed that the sale of fish is done by both sexes (men and women).

CONCLUSION

The women surveyed in the Lower Ouémé Valley carry out small activities. Revenues from these activities help to solve some problems. However, women face serious problems for the proper execution of their activities. The lack of means, the insufficiency of boats to board, the absence or the insufficiency of the motor boats, the lack of drinking water, the flood, the impassability of the tracks especially during the rainy season constitute major difficulties. It is therefore important to promote actions that will strengthen the economic empowerment of women in the study area. These actions can be directed to the equipment; through the literacy training program which will allow them to strengthen their skills; reinforcement of skills acquired; by the entrepreneurial in rural areas.

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