

## **Income Generating Opportunities Available to Widows in Agriculture and Home Economics related Trends**

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### **Abstract**

This study was on the income generation opportunities available to widows in Agriculture and Home economics related trades in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined income generating opportunities for the widows in Agriculture related trades and income generating opportunities for the widows in Home Economics related trades in Ebonyi State. This was a survey. The sample of the study was 228. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The data were analyzed using mean. Findings were that cake baking, soap making, indoors and outdoor decorations, crop husbandry, fish farming, marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities among others were identified as income generating opportunities available to the widows in Ebonyi State. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that the widows should be given training on how to engage in the above mentioned trades for them to generate income for their families using the skill centers in the state as well as organizing training workshops and conferences among others.

**Key Words:** Income, Agriculture, Home, Economics, Widows, Opportunities

### **Introduction**

Widows are women who lost their spouses through death and did not remarry. Widowhood is often a challenging experience. Christopher (2016) reported that traditionally, some widows are left without any economic and social support. This has led many widows to suffer. Many widows face serious challenges in their daily life, such as difficulties in social interaction, financial difficulties, loneliness, loss of husband's properties to in-laws, poor

relationships with the in-laws, depression and sometimes death. Prominent among the problems of widows is economic challenge. Many of them lack finance for sustaining themselves and their children. The problem is often most challenging where widows have no means of income but had depended wholly on their spouses. Some of the widows had no skills or any income generating activities when their husbands were still alive. This situation has put many

widows into difficult economic situations. To alleviate their poverty and suffering, they need viable income generating activities or opportunities.

Income generation opportunities are such ventures that can yield income to the widows. Vocational Agriculture and Home Economics are areas that can afford the widows some income generating opportunities. Vocational agricultural deals with the development of skills, competencies, values, ideas, attitudes relating to agricultural production. Ndem and Odido (2016). Identified some income generating opportunities in agricultural production such as crop production, poultry production, fishery, rabbit rearing, dry season vegetable growing, snail rearing, garri processing, marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities, marketing of simple farm tools and many others.

Home economic according to IFHE (2012) is a field of study and profession situated in human science that draws from range of disciplines to achieve optional and sustainable living for individuals, families, and communities. The document further explained that home economics also concerned with the empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities; and facilitates the development of attributes for lifelong learning for paid, unpaid and voluntary advocates for individuals, families and communities. Furthermore home economics covers studies on food, nutrition and health; child development, textiles and clothing, shelter and housing; consumption and consumer science,

household management, design and technology, food science and hospitality; human development and family studies; as well as education and community services. The profession of home economics has the potentials to influence all sectors of the society by intervening and transforming political, social cultural, economic, ecological and technological systems.

Home economic also has the attributes of focusing on fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and the family in everyday life and in their community levels and at societal and global levels so that wellbeing can be enhanced in ever changing environment.

Home economics integrates knowledge, processes practical skills from multiple disciplines synthesized through inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry. It demonstrates capacity to take critical transformative and emancipator action to enhance wellbeing and advocates for individuals, families, communities and other sectors of the society. As a result of these attributes, home economics is distinctively positioned to generate income opportunities to the widows through numerous trades such as fashion and design, bakery, cake baking and decorations, dyeing, indoor and outdoor decoration, pastry productions, cosmetic productions, bead making, weaving of mats, sweaters and caps to mention but a few.

In Ebonyi State, experience and critical observation has shown that majority of the widows are engaged in petty trading such as selling of food

stuff, vegetables, fruits, second hand shoes and clothes, package water, serving as nanny in some families, serving in restaurant, cleaning and sweeping the street for meager pay by the government. Many others are involved in street hawking while some serve as helps in building sites as well as gardeners on part time basis in government, company and individual premises. These jobs being engaged by some of these widows are hazardous and invariably expose most of them to dangers as well as not economically rewarding for them to carter for themselves and their families. It is on this back ground that this work is designed to determine the income generation opportunities available to the widows in agricultural and home economics trades in Ebonyi State.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to evolve the income generation opportunities for widows in Vocational Agriculture and Home Economics trades in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. income generating opportunities for the widows in Agricultural related trades in Ebonyi State.
2. income generating opportunities for the widows in Home Economics related trades in Ebonyi State.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the income generating opportunities for the widows in

Vocational Agriculture related trades in Ebonyi State?

2. What are the income generating opportunities for the widows in home economics related trades in Ebonyi State?

**Methodology:** This work adopted survey research design. The area of the study was in Ebonyi State of Nigeria.

**Population of the Study:** The population of the study was 2109. This comprised of 2089 widows, 5 Home economists and 15 Agriculturists drawn from the 13 Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State. Most of the widows have primary education while some have secondary education. The age range of the widows was between 30 and 55 years they have common cultural background and predominantly farmers, and petty trades.

**Sample for the Study:** A simple random sampling techniques was used to draw 10% of the widows' population while all the home economists and agriculturists were used for the study making the sample size to be 228.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument has four points rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with their nominal values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument contained two parts, part one and part two. Part one collected data on the demographic information of the respondents while part two got information on income generation opportunities for the widows through

agriculture and home economics related trade in Ebonyi State. The instrument was validated by five experts. Two of the experts were agricultural education specialists, two experts in home economics and one expert in measurement and evaluation, all from the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The experts assessed the instrument based on the content coverage, suitability of the items and sentence structure. The observations of the experts were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by carrying out a pilot test using 30 agricultural and home economics lecturers from the Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The data generated from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.74 which made the instrument to be reliable for the study.

**Data Collection Techniques:** 228 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents by personal contact.

Out of the 228 copies, only 220 were retrieved representing 96.49%.

**Data Analysis Techniques:** Data were analyzed using mean with standard deviation for the research questions. Based on 4-point scale of the instrument, 2.50 was used as a criterion point for decisions. Any item with the mean score of 2.50 and above was adjudged as an income generating opportunity for the widows while any item with the mean score below 2.50 was regarded as a non-income generating opportunity for the widows.

### Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis of the data collected, the following findings were made:

1. Thirteen agricultural related trades were identified as income generating opportunities available for the widows in Table 1.
2. Twenty four home economics related trades opportunities were identified as income generating opportunities available for the widows. These are presented in Table 2.

**Table 1:** Mean responses on the income generating opportunities for the widows in agriculture related trades. N = 220.

S/N	Voc Agric Trade Related Income Generating Opportunities.	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Dry season vegetable gardening	2.90	1.00	Agree
2	Poultry production	2.96	0.99	Agree
3	Fishery	2.95	0.96	Agree
4	Piggery	2.09	0.98	Disagree
5	Processing of soya bean to soya milk	2.80	0.07	Agree
6	Rabbit rearing	2.91	1.01	Agree
7	Heliculture (Snail rearing)	2.96	0.99	Agree
8	Apiculture (Bee rearing)	2.12	1.03	Disagree
9	Processing of cassava to garri	3.04	0.93	Agree
10	Marketing of agric-commodities	2.95	0.94	Agree

11	Horticulture	2.16	1.01	Disagree
12	Marketing and distribution of farm tools and equipment	2.98	0.99	Agree
13	Processing of maize to pulp	2.60	0.05	Agree
14	Goat and sheep rearing	3.06	0.922	Agree
15	Growing of pepper	2.90	0.98	Disagree
16	Marketing of agric-chemicals	1.93	0.06	Agree
17	Growing of tomatoes	2.96	1.02	Agree

Table 1 shows that items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17 had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that the widows can generate income through those items while items 4, 8, 11, 16 and 17 had their mean scores less than the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that the widows

cannot generate income through those items in agriculture related trades such as piggery, apiculture, horticulture, and marketing of agro-chemicals with their corresponding standard deviation showing a close relationship on the opinions of the respondents.

**Table 2:** Mean responses on the income generating opportunities for the widows in home economics related trades. N = 220.

S/N	Home Economics Trade Related Income Generating Opportunities.	X	SD	Remarks
1	Fashion and design	2.74	1.00	Agree
2	Tie and dye	2.79	1.05	Agree
3	Bead making	2.82	1.04	Agree
4	Soap making	2.93	1.00	Agree
5	Production of body cream	2.87	1.03	Agree
6	Production of insecticide	2.79	1.4	Agree
7	Cake making and decoration	3.01	0.98	Agree
8	In-door and out-door decoration	2.95	1.01	Agree
9	Soya-milk production	2.79	0.99	Agree
10	Pastry production	2.83	1.05	Agree
11	Hat making	2.91	0.94	Agree
12	Baking meat pile	2.95	0.99	Agree
13	Frying of Akara	2.67	0.99	Agree
14	Frying of bons	3.60	0.64	Agree
15	Making of Yogurt	3.54	0.67	Agree
16	Weaving of mats	3.50	0.64	Agree
17	Production of liquid soap	3.52	0.70	Agree
18	Production of Air-refreshers	3.37	0.75	Agree
19	Baking of chin-chin	3.12	0.82	Agree
20	Making of egg-role	2.88	0.89	Agree
21	Cosmetology	3.00	1.05	Agree
22	Production of hair cream	3.45	0.74	Agree

23	Production of bags	3.50	0.75	Agree
24	Organization of events such as birth day and wedding	3.44	0.78	Agree

Table 2 shows that all the items had their mean scores greater than the cut-off point of 2.50 while items with their corresponding standard deviations. This implies that the respondents agreed that the widows can generate income through fashion and design, Tie and dye, bead making, soap and pomade making, production of insecticides as well as indoor and outdoor decorations among others. The value of the standard deviation indicates that the respondents' opinions did not deviate widely.

#### Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the finding is done as below. The work revealed that the widows require trades in Home Economics such as fashion and design tie and dye, bead making soap making, pomade production, insecticide production cake baking, decorations, both indoor and outdoor, soya-milk production, pastry production and hat making and weaving among others. This findings are in line with Duru (2009) who reported that fashion and designing, tie and dye, bead making, cake making and other trades in home economics are good trades which can help an individual to be self-sustenance and self-reliant. He further explained that bead making, decorations and baking of cakes and chin-chin do not require huge sum of capital for starting. He further stressed that most of the home economics related trades are

indoor activities which are suitable for women for sustainable income in the family.

Secondly, the research revealed that the widows need trades in agriculture related trades for sustainable income in the following areas, dry season vegetable gardening poultry production, fish rearing, snail rearing, processing of cassava to garri, processing of soya bean to soya milk among others. This finding is in agreement with Daniel and Chinazo (2016) who reported that fish farming processing of agric-products like cassava provides alternative source of income to the producer which invariably makes the producer to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. They further explained that fish farmers have provided employment opportunities to may unemployed youth, house wives, graduates and individuals. Equally Duru (2009) reported that in Nigeria, there is a high demand of fish and that fish farming in Nigeria is one of the agricultural sector that has the lowest farmers or practitioners, therefore, fish farming is a lucrative agric-venture that can bring sustainable income to the farmers who are engaged in it.

Additionally, the finding is in line with Chima (2005) who reported that poultry production is one of the cheapest agro-enterprises that provide sustainable income to the farmer with little investment capital. He further explained that poultry production

requires little space and initial capital to start. The author stressed that the management of poultry is less stressful compared to most other agricultural enterprises. He further reported that poultry production is capable of reducing poverty among unemployed individuals as well as contributing to national, economic development.

The finding is also in line with Eze and Egbe (2017) who stated that Rabbit rearing is an agro-enterprise trade which provides assistant to low income earners. They further explained that rabbit production can be carried out at the back-yard of residential houses with little starting income. Also the research found that snail rearing can be attractive income generating opportunities for the widows. This finding is also in line with Ndem and Odido (2016) who reported that snail rearing is a good agricultural related trade which can be used for sustainable income. He further stressed that snail can be reared within the compounds without requiring large hectare of land. Snail can feed on varieties of feeds which are common in the household. The authors also explained that snail meat are in high demand and are needed daily by people, with it's medicinal values.

Furthermore, the research found out that the widows can generate income through processing of agricultural commodities such as cassava to garri and soya beans to soya milk. This finding is in line with Ndem and Odido (2016) who stated that processing of agricultural commodities such as vegetables, fruits, yam, beans, cassava

to fruit Juice, yam flour and cassava flours and fish farming could be an attractive source of income to sustain a family. They further explained that processing of agricultural commodities do not require huge amount of money to start and does not require big store or warehouse, rather a shade can serve the purpose.

### **Conclusion**

Widowhood is a difficult condition especially for fulltime house wives before the demise of their husband. Widows are faced with difficult economic situation which lead some of them to certain anti-social activities like prostitution, stealing, drug and child trafficking as well as aiding and baiting other crimes. For the widows to be alleviated from economic difficulties, they need viable economic activities which can help generate income for them to maintain their families. Some of these altercative income generating opportunities are fashion and design, tie and dyeing of cloths, bead making, soap making, production of pomades, insecticides, baking of cake, indoor and outdoor decorations, dry season vegetable gardening, poultry production, fish farming, rabbit rearing, as well as keeping livestock like goats and sheep.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the work, the researchers recommended that;

- ❖ Workshop training on income generating trades and activities in

fashion and designing, in-door and outdoor decoration, cake making soap and pomade production should be organized for the widows by the local and state governments in the area of the study.

- ❖ Efforts should be made by the Ebonyi State government to train widows on crop and animal husbandry, fish farming rabbit rearing, processing and marketing of farm products to enable them acquire the basic skills on the above mentioned enterprises.
- ❖ Widows should make themselves available for training on agriculture and home economics related trades at the skill acquisition center in Ebonyi state.

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