



# Small Research Grant Project



Identification and Analysis of  
Traditional Gender Norms  
and their Impacts on  
Equitable Socioeconomic  
Development in Akwa Ibom,  
Bayelsa and Ondo States

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## 1. Executive Summary

Aries Concept Nigeria Limited is pleased to present the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta with the findings of a study on Identification and Analysis of traditional gender norms and its impacts on generating equitable socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Ondo states. The purpose of the study was to:

1. Identify traditional gender norms and categorize them based on commonalities and differences in the selected study locations.
2. Identify socio-economic activities that are traditionally defined and ascribed for men and women.
3. Identify potential socio-economic and income generating activities that traditional norms inhibits the participation of men and women.
4. Analyze identified gender norms and relate them with its impact in generating equitable socio-economic development.

For the purpose of sampling, sample a multi-stage random sampling method was used to select respondents and study locations. Across the three states, nine communities were randomly selected from nine senatorial districts. A combination of Focused Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and Community Analysis Sessions was used to elicit and collect relevant data for the study.

## 2. Background

In response to PIND's call for proposals published in the Vanguard Newspaper on Tuesday, 5th April 2011, Aries Concept Nigeria Limited submitted a research project titled: "Identification and Analysis of traditional gender norms and its impacts on generating equitable socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Ondo state respectively". After a rigorous competitive screening process including due diligence, grant worthiness check and capacity assessment, Aries Concept Nigeria Limited was finally selected for a grant award. On the 30th day of September, 2011 a Sub-grant agreement (PIND-A&A-SRGP-01-2011) was jointly signed by PIND and Aries Concept Nigeria Limited thus signaling the official commencement of the Small Research Grant Project. In line with the Small Research Grant Project sub-grant agreement reporting requirement outlined in Article IV, section 4.1 and 4.2 (pages 3 and 4 of the sub-grant agreement), this report therefore presents the goal, objectives, methodology, findings, conclusions as well recommendations based on the primary data collected through Focused Groups and Key Informant Interviews conducted.

## 3. Introduction

The household is a basic unit of society where men and women both cooperate and compete for resources. It is also a primary place where they confront and reproduce societal norms, values, power, and privileges. Under increasing economic pressure, men in many parts of the world have lost their traditional occupations and jobs, and women have been forced to take on additional income earning tasks while continuing their domestic tasks. These changes have touched core values about gender identity, gender power, and gender relations within poor households, and anxiety about what is a "good woman" or a "good man" seems pervasive. This is particularly true in rural areas where both men and women are generally involved in productive work but lack access to assets they need to play that socially ascribed role effectively.

As a result of the age long traditional gender norms which have resulted in economic imbalance between men and women, it has thus prevented them from being able to equitably generate socioeconomic development and therefore leaves the poverty trend at the household and community level at an increasing rate. What is striking is that despite widespread changes in gender roles, traditional gender norms have shown remarkable tenacity, leaving families and communities struggling to meet the often contradictory demands. Even in the face of changing gender roles, rigid

social norms ground men and women in particular identities and expectations. These norms constitute a formidable barrier to survival of individuals, households, and communities and it has continued to play a role in the perpetuation of poverty as expressed in their inability to generate equitable socio-economic development in terms of food security, job creation, productivity and income generation. At the regional level, it is pertinent that these traditional gender norms are identified, analyzed and brought to the public domain so that projects or interventions can effectively design and tailor their programs towards ensuring equitable participation of men and women in their program delivery.

Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Ondo states are three states with strong traditional and cultural gender norms even though there are perceived and real differences in terms of their ethnic configuration, customs and belief. Because of their cultural differences, the gender norms in practice is expected to have influence and impact on men and women ability to contribute and generate equitable socio-economic growth in their respective communities. So far no deliberate effort has been made to systematically document the impact traditional gender norms has had on men and women trying to generate equitable socio-economic growth and development in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Ondo states. This study was designed and aimed at identifying prevailing traditional gender norms inhibiting women and men from participating and benefiting from economic activities in the three selected states in the Niger Delta region.



Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing study locations.

Table 1: Communities Selected for the Study in each State.

State	Senatorial District	LGA	Community	Setting	Methodology
Akwa Ibom	Akwa Ibom North East	Itu	Ntak Inyang	Rural	FGD & CAS
	Akwa Ibom North West	Abak	Ikot Akwa Ebom	Rural	FGD & CAS
	Akwa Ibom South	Mkpat Enin	Ikot Ekpaw	Rural	FGD & CAS
Bayelsa	Bayelsa West	Sagbama	Angalabiri	Rural	FGD & CAS
	Bayelsa Central	Yenagoa	Agbura	Rural	FGD & CAS
	Bayelsa East	Ogbia	Otuabula	Rural	FGD & CAS
Ondo	Ondo Central	Akure South	Gaga	Peri-	FGD & CAS



State	Senatorial District	LGA	Community	Setting	Methodology
				Urban	
	Ondo North	Owo	Amurin	Rural	FGD & CAS
	Ondo South	Ilaje	Ugbonla	Rural	FGD & CAS

## 4. Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to generate data and provide analysis on traditional gender norms that could assist PIND in designing effective programs and projects that will engage women, men and youths (boys and girls) in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Ondo states in generating equitable socio-economic growth and development in their immediate community and state at large.

## 5. Research Objectives

- Identify traditional gender norms and categorize them based on commonalities and differences in the selected study locations.
- Identify socio-economic activities that are traditionally defined and ascribed for men and women.
- Identify potential socio-economic and income generating activities that traditional norms inhibits the participation of men and women.
- Analyze identified gender norms and relate them with its impact in generating equitable socio-economic development.

## 6. Research Questions

1. What are the traditional and cultural practices men/women are expected to comply with?
2. What decisions do men/women make at the household level?
3. What income generating activities are culturally ascribed to men/women?
4. What income generating activities do local customs prohibit women/men from participating?
5. What other non-traditional challenges prevents women/men from participating in economic activities?

## 7. Research Methodology

### 7.1 Sampling Technique

A multi-stage random sampling technique was used in selecting target locations across the target states. In each state, one LGA was randomly selected from each of the three senatorial districts and within the selected LGAs; one community was also randomly selected. So in each state three communities were selected from three LGA spread across the three senatorial districts. So in all the study covered nine communities and nine LGAs.

### 7.2 Focus Group Discussions

In each of the selected community, were held with men and women. The focus group discussions were intended to understand the traditions and culture; contributions of men and women to household economy; socially ascribed income generating activities; culturally prohibiting income generating activities amongst others.

## 7.3 Key Informant Interviews

Fifteen key informant interviews were conducted with Gender practitioners working with gender-focused organizations across the three states and the interviews were meant to identify fundamental constraints prohibiting women and men from engaging in economic activities and what men and women could do to address the socioeconomic constraints they were facing. See appendix 3 for details of respondents.

## 7.4 Community Analysis Sessions

This was conducted held with men, women, traditional leaders and youth (male and female). The Community Analysis Sessions provided an initial forum in which the communities had the opportunity to discuss results from the FGDs, draw consensus and begin to act on the findings themselves. The Community Analysis Sessions also served as another opportunity for community members (both those involved and not involved in the study) to voice their questions and/or concerns regarding the research process and its findings. This analytical process also served as a means for: (a) validating and triangulating information captured from the three data collection methods adopted; and (b) promoting discussion and prioritizing areas requiring programmatic attention by PIND.

## 7.6 Data Analysis

Data collected from the study was analyzed and categorized based on the five research questions the study sought to elicit information about. The key themes from the study were:

1. Local traditions and culture
2. Household and family decision making
3. Socially ascribed income generating activities
4. Culturally prohibiting income generating activities
5. Other challenges that prevents participation in economic activities

## 7.7 Development of Research Tools

Research protocols for the FGDs, KIs and CAS were developed by Aries and efforts were made to ensure that the right caliber of respondents was engaged in each of the study locations. See appendix 1 for the research tools used for the study and appendix 2 for a comprehensive list for FGD participants.

# 8. Background and Historical Description of Study Locations

## 8.1 Ondo State

### 8.1.1 Gaga Community

Gaga community is located in Akure South Local Government Area and was established about three centuries ago by a group of farmers in search of fertile land for farming. It has an estimated population of about 10,000 inhabitants comprising of 2,500 Men; 3,000 Women, 1,500 youths and 3,000 Children. (Source: community inhabitants) Gaga comprises of three sections called Gaga 1, Gaga 2, and Gaga 3 and it is ruled by one paramount ruler The Asewi of Gaga land. The community has a monarchical leadership system of governance, currently headed by Chief Olu Omotoso the Asewi of Gaga land along with traditional chief that wears beads and are all males. The rest are coordinators who do not use traditional beads. The major occupation is predominantly farming cultivating crops such as like Cocoa, cassava, maize, Yam, but a number of indigenes work as Civil servants in government establishments and others residents earn their living through private businesses.

### **8.1.2 Amurin Community**

Amurin Community in Owo Local Government Area is about 20 kilometers away from Owo town which is the local government headquarters. The people of Amurin were believed to have migrated from Owo kingdom about 300 years ago to its present site when some cocoa farmers were in search of fertile land for cocoa plantation. According to focused group participants, it has an estimated population of 10,000 inhabitants comprising of 3500 men; 4000 women and 2500 children. The major occupation in Amurin is farming and both Men and Women are engaged in farming activities in the community. Amurin is ruled currently by Oba Alaafiatayo Alamurin who is supported by some chiefs both males and females. The King of Amurin holds allegiance to the Olowo of Owo who is believed to be the father of the first king of Amurin and reserves the power to appoint the king of Amurin. The local chiefs in Amurin are also appointed as chiefs from Owo by the Olowo of Owo.

### **8.1.3 Ugbonla Community**

Ugbonla community has an estimated population of 11,500 made up of 1,500 children; 4,000 Men and 6,000 Women (FGD participants). The community is about 30km away from Igbokoda, the Local government headquarters of Ilaje Local Government. Ugbonla was established in the year 1949 by late King of Zion who later became Most RT Dr E.L Ogunfeyimi Ataroye Ajigbade. Ugbonla is a communist community founded on one religious sect, Cherubim and Seraphim as directed by the founder. All the community members attend this church till today and there is no other religious denomination in the community till date. It has a hierarchical system of government headed by king of Zion; Henry Mobolorunduro Ogunseyimi who is also the current religious leader of the community. He is been assisted by a group of men and Women who are not traditional chiefs but are chosen by the community and anointed in the church to help the king in the administration of the community and in representing the community. Hence they do not use or wear traditional beads. In terms of social amenities, the community has a comprehensive health centre that is not poorly equipped, one Zion C&S primary School establish through community effort which was later taken over by the state government, one Secondary School: C&S Academy and two privately owned primary schools. Been a riverine community, inhabitants of Ugbonla are predominantly engaged in fishing and fish selling as a means of livelihood.

## **8.2 Bayelsa State**

### **8.2.1 Angalabiri Community**

Angalabiri is a community in Sagbama LGA of Bayelsa State. It lies along the famous River Forcados which is a boundary between Bayelsa and Patani community of Delta state. It occupies a land area of about 500,000m square with an estimated population of over 2,500 persons, excluding children (Source: FGD participants). The major occupation of the people is predominantly fishing and farming at subsistence level. Angalabiri is an Ijaw speaking community and it comprises many autonomous villages such as Agbein-Ama, Olodi-Ama, Ozugbo-Ama, Tari-Ama Zion moon, Star Zion, Kalaboge-Ama, Torukubu-Ama, Atere-Ama and Gua-Ama. It is geographically bounded in the north by River Forcados, in the East by Toru-Oroua, West by Ofoni and South by a vast land extended to Eriama/Kabeama/Amatolo respectively.

### **8.2.2 Agbura Community**

Agbura is an Atissa speaking community in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa central senatorial district. It occupies a total land area of about 300,000 square meters with an estimated population of about 6,000 people living in a cluster pattern with an average of 8 persons per household which reveals their unique tradition and natural settlement. (Source: FGD participants) Agbere-Owei one of the sons of Tarakiri got the following namely; Agbere of Sagbama Local Government Area in Bayelsa state. Agbia-Agbere anglicized to Agbura in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa state and Ohordi Agbere in Patani LGA of Delta. These brothers settled near Kpakeama, along River Nun. But latter scattered as a result of inter-communal conflict and misconduct among them. Each of them migrated and took their ways to their present site along Ekolo creek. Agbura had five sons and their names were used to call the five compounds in the community known as Fan-Oye, Fan-Ogu, Fan-Ogide, Fan-Ologo and Otuokpoti compounds. The community shares compound boundaries with Azikoro by the north, Otuokpoti by the south, Agama Ijaw by the west and Oboloti by the East.

### 8.2.3 Otuabula 1 Community

Otuabula 1 is an Ogbia speaking community in Ogbia Local Government of Bayelsa state with a population of about 2,700 persons (source: FGD participants). The community is located in the Eastern Senatorial district of Bayelsa state. The main occupation of the people includes fishing, farming and palm cutting. Otuabula 1 community was founded in 1810 by Chief Abula; one of the sons of Ogbia who migrated from Benin and settled in a place called Ogbia Toru Otokolo and later left for Okoroma. He left his father at Okoroma and settled on his own with his family at Eminama. The community can be accessed by water through Yenagoa and Ogbia water fronts. It is bounded on the North by Ologoghe, Eminama on the South, Otuogidi on the East and Okiki on the West.

## 8.3 Akwa Ibom State

### 8.3.1 Ntak Inyang

### 8.3.2 Ikot Akwa Ebom

### 8.3.3 Ikot Ekpaw

## 9. Key Findings

From the findings there was a high degree of consistency across the study locations in terms of traditions and cultural practices, how a man or woman is expected to behave, what type/kinds of work/job they are expected to do and challenges militating against their active participation in economic activities. However there were some gender norms that are peculiar to certain ethnic groups sampled in the study. Based on responses elicited from all the key informants, the study comes across with the understanding that the fundamental constraints preventing both men and women from gainfully engaging in economic activities were not only linked to norms, beliefs and traditions but it could also be linked to systemic in nature. Below are summaries of findings based on the research questions.

### 9.1 Research Question 1: *What are the traditional and cultural practices men/women are expected to comply with?*

Majority of the behavior exhibited by both men and women today all have their roots in the traditions and customs of the environment where they exist and operate and it is societal expectations that they comply with these stereotyped role required of them. In all the study locations, it was gathered from the women FGDs that local traditions and customs requires that women are expected to cater for their children, husband, prepare meals, take care of general household chores, support their husbands during difficult times.

A woman respondent in Akwa Ibom further substantiated what is expected of a woman when she noted "it is the duty of the woman to take care of their fellow women after child birth until she is strong to resume her normal house job". Another woman respondent also said "In the case of burial, women are expected to go and assist the bereaved woman family in cooking and help out in other errands but the men would not do that" These assertions were also corroborated by women in Ondo. In Bayelsa state it was consistently noted that "apart from taking care of the children, it is now our duty to pay children school fees" and these was widely reported in all the other study locations in Bayelsa state.

Aside the above mentioned commonalities in terms of traditional and cultural expectations imposed on women, it was interesting to note a number of across the study locations. For instance, in Ondo state it was widely reported that in the event of the death of a king, a woman from the departed king's family is usually appointed to seat on the throne temporarily until a new king is coronated and they are referred to as "The Regent". In addition, a participant in the women FGD in Gaga community noted that "only women are usually responsible for carrying of palm wine from one palace to the other (say from the palace of their community leader to the palace of a higher king such as the Deji of Akure).

As regards inheritance issue, women from Amurin Community in Owo LGA of Ondo state all affirmed in unison that “women can only inherit their fathers’ properties but can’t inherit their husbands’ properties and only their children can inherit their husbands’ wealth”.

When a woman gets married, the society makes her to see the society as number one and so she is not encouraged to engage in income generating activity hence she has little or no time to work and make money. Some men will say they cannot marry a professional banker because she has no time for the family also some cultures believe that it is the man who should go about to provide for the family (Program Director of an NGO).

From the male counterparts, their traditional and cultural expectations were generally the same. According to them, they are expected not to be seen crying, good at farming, provide security support to the community (vigilante), and engage in community construction work and provision of general welfare for their family.

The study came across a few interesting differences that were unique to certain locations and examples of such were observed in Ondo state. In certain parts of the state, there is a local tradition and custom that governs marriage. For instance men are involved in a unique kind of wrestling when competing for a wife. This wrestling is called for when more than one man is interested in a lady. The winner of the fight marries the lady”. The inference from this is that a man is expected to be strong and winning such a contest indicates that he is capable of protecting his wife and family and as well provides his family needs (Male respondent in Gaga Community in Akure South LGA).



**Figure 2:** Discussion with women in Ikot Akwa Ebom community in Akwa Ibom state.

Furthermore, celebration and observance of traditional masquerade festivals and other traditional beliefs and practice that were widely observed in other study sites were nonexistent in Ugbonla Community in Illaje LGA. This is because the community was founded by a religious leader and the community governance is based on biblical principles and doctrines. As noted by a male respondent from Ugbonla “this is Zion and so we do not hold to any traditional belief”.

However in Agbura Community women are responsible for caring for a bereaved family as reported in Akwa Ibom state, in Bayelsa state men are never allowed to wash a corpse it is the duty of women to do that” (male respondent, Bayelsa state). It was also mentioned in Bayelsa state that only men allowed to consult the oracles in times of problems.

## 9.2 Research Question 2: *What decisions do men/women make at the household level?*

There was varying degrees of traditional and customary powers devolved to both men and women when taking decisions that even affects both parties including the children. Virtually all the female respondents noted that their jurisdictions usually borders around the welfare of their children.

There were general consensus among the women expressing desire to have their inputs and opinion reflected in decisions made in the family and community at large. However findings from the study show that even though women make suggestions to their husbands, more often the suggestions are not accepted and women thus accepted it as a practice they must live. Female respondent in Ondo state said “a woman cannot decide for her husband”. Findings also observed high consistency from women in other study locations noting that they do not have a say in determining the number of children or wives their husbands should have.

It was also noted that women do not have control over family income and monetary matters in the family and this statement was affirmed by a male respondent from Akwa Ibom who said “there are a lot of men working for government that do not reveal their financial strength to their wife, it is good to do so”.

Listening to the men, the findings were the same. They make decisions on virtually everything in the family including taking decisions for their wives and children in respect of their movement, monitoring their where to go to and where not to go. For example a male respondent from Ondo Central said “we instruct our wives on places not to go.”



**Figure 3:** Discussion with men in Ntak Inyang Community in Akwa Ibom state.

From the Community Analysis Session conducted in Angalabiri community in Bayelsa state, it was noted that there was high prevalence of marriage divorce and this was mostly connected with men wanting to have control over the income of their wives. The men confirmed that women control more money than the men exception of those working in the government ministries. This factor has made them not being submissive to us.”

## 9.3 Research Question 3: *What income generating activities are culturally ascribed to men/women?*

There was a number of culturally ascribed income generating activities that were common and some were different across the study locations but some of the respondents in Ondo state noted that culturally ascribed roles are now changing. A male respondent said: “in recent times, men and women do like jobs however there are few exceptions such as carpentry, automobile repairs, bricklaying, iron bending that are limited only to men”. In all three study locations in Akwa Ibom state

income generating activities that are culturally ascribed to women all centered on primary agricultural production and processing activities whereas in Bayelsa and Ondo the activities were varied. The activities are presented in the table below:

**Table 2:** Culturally Ascribed Income Generating Activities Disaggregated by Gender in Study Locations.

State	Activities	
	Men	Women
Akwa Ibom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land clearing and preparation for planting</li> <li>• Palm wine tapping.</li> <li>• Palm fruit harvesting</li> <li>• Dredging of sand from the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing of palm fruits and palm oil</li> <li>• Weeding of farm</li> <li>• Planting of food crops on the farm</li> <li>• Rearing of animals, poultry</li> <li>• Hair dressing</li> </ul>
Bayelsa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logging of trees</li> <li>• Fishing in the rivers, creeks and sea</li> <li>• Canoe carving</li> <li>• Hunting</li> <li>• Cutting of palm</li> <li>• Dredging of sand from the river</li> <li>• Carpentry</li> <li>• Bricklaying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting of Cassava and Yam</li> <li>• Picking of Ogbono fruits (African bush Mango fruits)</li> <li>• Weaving of fishing traps</li> <li>• Picking of snails</li> </ul>
Ondo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Logging of trees</li> <li>• Rearing of cow</li> <li>• Canoe paddling and comer boat driving</li> <li>• Carpentry</li> <li>• Welding</li> <li>• Furniture making</li> <li>• Copper smiting</li> <li>• Bricklaying</li> <li>• Automobile repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trading of food commodities</li> <li>• Hair dressing</li> </ul>

#### **9.4 Research Question 4:** *What income generating activities do local customs prohibit women/men from participating?*

Finding obtained from interactions with both men and women showed that prohibitions placed on income generating activities were dependent on the type of activities available in the study locations. In all study locations, women respondents consistently mentioned that they are culturally prohibited from participating in certain traditional occupations in their community and these includes harvesting palm fruits, tap palm wine and any form of economic activity that requires climbing of trees. The reasons advanced for this was linked to the high risks nature of these activities and coupled with the fact that women do not have the strength to carryout tedious activities like these.

Aside traditional occupations, women in Bayelsa also added that they were prohibited from digging fish ponds, women in Ondo state noted that even though they were born in then creeks, lived all their live around water, yet they are prohibited from engaging in that can earn them more money like constructing canoe, paddle canoe or work as a commercial boat driver. In addition, women in Amurin Community in Owo Local Government Area all affirmed that they are prohibited from engaging in trading activities that involves selling cement, owning or working in a block molding industry and shoe making.

Other income generating prohibiting activities mentioned by the women included: carpentry, bricklaying, auto-mechanic, welding and electrical repairs. From the cultural perspective these activities are believed to be dangerous and hard for women to engage in.

For the men folk, the prohibition story was not found to be different. Even though there were a number of prohibitions, but it was less compared to the women folks. Some of the prohibitions were connected with activities related to household chores with a few economic activities. For instance,

men in Bayelsa said that they are prohibited from picking “Ogbono” (bush mango seeds) and selling “Gari” (fermented and roasted Cassava roots that can be available in fine, medium and coarse grain form and in white and yellow colours) while men in Akwa Ibom added that they are prohibited from selling periwinkles, harvesting of cassava on farm and carrying out maintenance and weeding on farm.

A male respondent in Ondo asserted “Yam selling is an activity that is prohibited by our custom. In fact, a man who tried it here packed up abruptly. Also men do not make or sell Iru (a local soup condiment – locust bean), Ogi (maize pap), Eko (solidified maize pap), Akara (fried bean cake) and Fufu (a local cassava processed product). Another male respondent conclude by saying “if any man tries any of these activities, he will be hated by friends and the women folks.”

### **9.5 Research Question 5:** *What other non-traditional challenges prevents women/men from participating in economic activities?*

Community governance is a factor that was found to inhibit them from participating actively from in economic activities. A gender specialist underscored this fact by saying “if any woman is vocal at a meeting, she will be warned serious and reported to her husband” and because of this limitation she added “women do not respond to town hall meetings. They will always say that whatever their husbands say is final or that their husbands should speak for them”

According to a male FGD respondent in Ondo state, “Culture, religion and stigmatization affect some of our businesses of interest. For example some religions do not support opening of beer parlor while our Muslim brothers cannot do piggery business even though they know they can make money out of it”. Men in Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom also added that apart from some cultural and traditional beliefs, lack of capital to start up a business is a major constraint preventing them from actively and gainfully participating in any profitable economic venture. Reflecting on challenges from the agricultural perspective a male respondent equally asserted that for people that are actively engaged in farming, shortage of labour to assist them on the farm due to ongoing rapid urban migration drift especially among young energetic youth including their children because they consider farming as tedious and less profitable.

Amongst men in Bayelsa, illiteracy and lack of information in whatever business any one is engaged in was also mentioned as a serious challenge preventing them and to buttress this fact a male respondent exclaimed: “how can you compete with your mates or do better than them when you cannot read or write in this computer era!!!” Other challenges mentioned included poor transportation system access road especially in coastal communities.

From the women folks, it was gathered that the other non-traditional challenges preventing them from gainfully participating in economic activities included lack of finance to run a business, insensitivity of men as reported by a female respondent from Ondo state “when a woman is making it more than her husband, the husband will become less sensitive to family issues”. Women in other locations equally confirmed that lack of equipment such as boats for fishing has made earning income, increasing production and sales challenging as a woman in one of the coastal communities said “fish and crayfish sells in Lagos and Port Harcourt and it is not far from us by water, but no good engine to move”. In Akwa Ibom, women were particularly more concerned by the constant ill health and burden of child bearing even when they really do not want a child serves blockages to their ability to generate equitable economic growth at the household level.

## **10. Impacts of traditional gender norms on generating equitable socio-economic development**

Across the world, women and men access economic opportunities whether in wage employment, agriculture, or in entrepreneurship in different ways. Women tend to occupy very different parts of the economic space from men and are disproportionately concentrated in lower productivity activities, self-employment, and the informal sector. Even in the formal wage sector, they cluster in certain occupations and industries, usually lower paying and these differences remains even as countries get richer (World Development Report 2012).



The WRD (2012) report further added that female farmers and entrepreneurs have less access to land than their male counterparts. Similarly both the demand for use of credit is lower among female farmers and entrepreneurs than among their male counterparts. These differences are rooted in failures of markets and institutions (formal and informal) and in their interactions with household responses. Women are thus at a disadvantage because they have lower or less secure access to land and are disproportionately employed in the service sector and traditional agribusiness practices where capitalization is lower and output is often intangible. These forces may be further reinforced by gender-based preferences in the households that often lead to unequal resource in the households that can lead to unequal resource allocations including land to male and female members.

The skewed nature of gender inequality observed in all the study locations has no doubt impact negatively on economic efficiency and other development outcomes on generating broad productivity gains both at household and communal levels. From the study, it is obvious that the prevailing cultural and traditional norms have served as a systemic blockage.

## 11. Conclusions

1. Women and men have very different responsibilities for care and housework and as a result of very different patterns of time use which impinge directly on choices of economic activity which this study has established is governed by prevailing traditional and cultural norms.
2. For rural dwellers the pressure to conform to societal norm is more and nobody wants to be known or seen as a rebel in the community even if it affects their chances of survival or earning income.
3. There is limited opportunity for women to influence decisions that may affect allocation of economic resource at household level and this constraints could be less if women have increased control over household resources and access to economic opportunities.
4. Women and men face differential access to productive inputs and often differential treatment by markets and institution that impacts on the level of equitable share and economic opportunities at their disposal.
5. Women struggle for equal opportunities to earn their living over three interrelated issues, over land, access to finance and decent employment.
6. The impact of these factors was found to be more inhibiting especially for women who in their quest to gain economic independence in addition to carrying the burden of catering for their children, husband and extended family members.
7. As a result of the importance attached to some of these critical issues, it is therefore not surprising to observe that in many homes, household chores are separated for boys and girls.
8. Even in the course of educational pursuit, some academic and vocational programs are regarded as not suitable for women and this belief system is a reflection of roles that are culturally ascribed to both men and women.
9. Even when a good business idea is conceived, lack of financial resources and other support mechanisms such as information was identified as major limiting factor inhibiting men and women from being economically independent.
10. Fear of insecurity and loss of headship are possible reasons why some men were aggressive towards wives who are economically advantaged than them. For others they reflect this aggression by wanting to control the income and finances of their wives.

## 12. Recommendations

### 12.1 Intervention Projects

- For community-based projects endeavor to identify and map economic activities which are inhibited by traditional norms.
- According to British Council (2012) 43% of women cited as economically inactive make their living through micro-enterprises and this assertion corroborates the findings of "2010 Access to Financial Services in Nigeria" conducted by which reported that 23% of the

respondents noted that owning a business has become the main source of income for 19.5 million adult Nigerians compared to farming (18.7%) and wage employment (12.6%) (Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access (EFInA) 2010). Thus it makes economic sense if creating small medium-scale enterprise development programs that are deliberately targeted at empowering women can be considered a viable option for creating economic space and opportunities void of traditional and cultural inhibitions for women to generating equitable economic growth.

- Some of the culturally ascribed income generating activities identified in this study for men and women could be to consider as possible options for any planned micro-enterprise programs (refer to key findings for research questions 3 and 4 for details).

## **12.2 Access to Finance**

Partner with Enhancing Financial Innovation and Access (EFInA) (A DFID and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded program designed to promote financial inclusion and access to financial products and services in Nigeria) to identify innovative approaches that can facilitate access to finance for both women and men entrepreneurs.

## **12.3 Limiting Cultural and Traditional Barriers**

Community entry and working closely with traditional institutions geared towards considering needs of women.



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