

Food Chain Activities of Women in an Agrarian Community in Central Nigeria: Implications for Rural Development

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ABSTRACT This study was carried out in Otukpo Local Government Area. The purpose was to determine food chain activities of women and implications for women in agriculture. Three hundred respondents randomly selected from the six districts that make up the local government area constituted the sample for the study. Results of the survey showed that women in the area were responsible for many activities in the food chain, including planting, harvesting, weeding, marketing and transportation of farm produce. Major post-harvest processing activities of women were milling, parboiling, pounding, peeling, threshing and grinding. Others were slicing of okro, picking of palm fruits and melon, and crushing of palm kernels. The main storage methods used by the women were smoking, salting, stacking of grains on wooden platform (oda) and storage in barns. Most of the women traveled a distance of less than one kilometer to and from their sources of drinking water. The most important sources of fuel were firewood and kerosene stoves. Field observation revealed that the women were largely responsible for the nutrition and health care of family members, particularly children. Constraints to the food chain activities were inadequate time for farming, too much involvement in domestic activities, poor financial resources and storage facilities. Implications of results of the study for rural development were identified and articulated for policy formulation and implementation.