

# **Home Economics Extension for market women in South-Western Nigeria: The case for Ile-Ife**

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## **Abstract**

This study was designed to gain information which could guide the development of home economics extension programmes for market women in south-western Nigeria. The objectives were to: (1) determine the need for and define the scope of home economics programmes; and (2) explore the feasibility of introducing programmes through women's marketing associations. The methods used were interviewing 207 market women and the officers of 17 associations and experimentally conducting a short programme with one association. The findings suggest that any programme must deal with both women's economic and domestic roles within the reality of the market place and that stable associations could function as participating units in home economics programmes.

## **Introduction**

Market women play important roles in Nigeria's economy. As traders, they distribute most of the country's food and many commodities of foreign and national manufacture. They combine this with the bearing and raising of children to whose maintenance and education they often contribute financially. In spite of their importance and their large numbers, estimated in Ife and Ilesha for example at 54% of the adult female population (Ilori, 1978), market women constitute a group that is badly neglected in development plans. Even when plans are proposed to improve the distributive system, e.g. by the development of producers' cooperatives (Osuntogun, 1972), the tendency is to by-pass market women rather than to account

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for their abilities and needs; whereas, programmes which would aim at improving the lot and the efficiency of market women could lead to increased domestic welfare for a large segment of the population as well as better distribution of products.

Home economics extension which aims at human development through encouraging optimal resources management and which generally works with women as its audience would seem to have relevance to market women's lives. However, this field has been primarily oriented towards the needs of women who spend most of their time in the home and has not evolved programmes for the greater numbers of women who spend most of their time in markets. Nigerian home economists have realized that their professions should be adapted to the country's needs through a greater concern for the economic as well as the domestic roles of women (Nigeria, F.D.A., 1974).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to gain information which could guide the development of home economics extension programmes for market women in Ile-Ife.

Previous studies had shown that market women's business, family, and social affairs are highly interrelated (Marshall, 1964; Adeyokunu, 1971) and that the market setting itself facilitates the integration of various aspects of women's lives (Hodder and Ukwu, 1969; Mordi, 1974; Marshall, 1964). The purpose of the first phase of this study was to collect detailed information on how Ife market women conduct their lives and to determine the implications of this for home economics programme content.

It is known that organizations, by fostering groups activities (Pelz, 1955) and change agent contact (Rogers and Beal, 1958) often facilitate change (Erbe, 1962; Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971). However, the potential for cooperation between a change agency and women's trade associations must not be assumed. The suitability of an organization for participation in change programmes would depend on the efficiency with which it might facilitate contact between one agent and many market women, as well as the organization's functions and frame of reference (Van den Ban, 1957).

While previous findings on the structures and organizations of marketing associations (Adeyokunnu, 1969) indicate that they might encourage change agent contact, the roles of men in controlling the wholesale trade and in administering the market (Adeyokunnu 1969, 1971; Marshall, 1964) raise a question as to the extent to which women's organizations are free to determine their own interests within the context of their formal structures. Furthermore, other researchers have noted that marketing societies had many social functions, but almost no part to play in the marketing activities of members (Adeyokunnu, 1971; Antonio, 1970).

Therefore, the objective of the second phase of the study was to explore the potential of women's trade associations in Ife for participating

in home economics programmes dealing with both domestic and business related topics. Specifically, the second phase was designed to:

1. Determine the structures of the societies and the degree to which market women would be accessible to change agents through those structures.
2. Determine the functions of the societies and the extent to which they would be compatible with home economics programme content.

## Methods

A list of trade associations was obtained through the Ife City Council. Eighteen associations, which had members in the 5 major daily markets of Ile-Ife were selected and their officers were approached for permission to interview members. All the presidents gave the permission, and all but the president of the association of Igbira traders encouraged their members to cooperate with the researchers, so that the number of societies finally included was 17.

The sample for the first part of the study consisted of half of the members of each association who could be found in each of the five markets. A more rigorous sampling procedure was not possible because at the initial stages of the study, officers were unwilling to release membership lists, or to disclose the number of members. Two hundred and seven women were interviewed with prestructured questionnaires. Observations on the physical environment were also made.

Much of the information for the second part of the study was collected by interviewing the 207 trade society members as previously described. Before the members were interviewed, the presidents of their 17 associations responded to a pre-structured questionnaire. The secretary and treasurer of the Ife Market Women and Traders Association were also interviewed.

Because the samples were not randomly selected, statistical test procedures which are based on standard distributions were not used.

The survey aspects of the study were carried out between July and September 1974. In 1975, the feasibility of introducing information on child feeding through association meetings was tested in an experiment involving two societies. Field notes were taken during the experiment and data were presented descriptively.

## Results

In the first part of the study which was directed at identifying women's needs and suitable programme content, it was found that almost all of the respondents resided in Ife and considered their trading to be a full-time activity. The exceptions were two itinerant traders and two farm dwellers.

The majority of women in the sample were currently married: Only 2 were spinsters, 2 were divorcees, and 30 were widows. All but 28% of the marriages were polygamous and more than half of the respondents (53%) said that they had junior co-wives.

As shown in Table 1, the majority were of child bearing age. The youthfulness of the respondents is related to the sampling method which selected women who were present in the market. As will be shown later, age was one factor related to the traders' patterns of movement. Another was the need to care for children. Some of the women (23%) had children whom they normally left at home in the care of family members, friends, or neighbours. However, most of the women (77%) had children (not necessarily their own) with them at the market. Infants and pre-school children in the care of the latter group remained with the traders all day, everyday, while most of the older children only came after school. The age distribution of the respondents' own children is shown in Table 2.

Half of the women had children who were attending school and 94% of all school aged children, regardless of sex were being educated. Only 25 of the women said they were contributing to school fees. This may reflect the facts that most of the women's own children were still in primary school and only 13% of the children they financed were not their own children. About half of those paying fees were the sole sources of support; half were sharing the responsibility.

The ease of caring for children in the market and the children's state of health could be affected by the physical environment. Observations showed that the majority of women (59%) rented cement or cemented mud shops, but the rest made do with wooden or tin stalls, some, with open ground. Most of the shops had cement floors where children could play but three quarters were located near open drains and some (28%) were next to marshes. Only 19% of the stalls were within convenient distance of latrines, toilets, or water taps. The taps were not often running, and the sanitary facilities were in a state of neglect.

It was not surprising therefore to find that certain domestic chores were hardly performed in the market. For example, only 5% of the respondents washed clothes there. Infact, most women (55%) hired washermen for this task.

Likewise, it was found that 40% of the meals eaten by the women were bought from food vendors, only 10% were prepared by the respondents in the market, and half were cooked at home. As shown in Table 3, the tendency was to buy breakfast and lunch already prepared and to cook supper at home.

While the respondents depended heavily on others for the provision of meals and clean clothes, they tended to be self-reliant when it came to marketing their goods. Only 40% had sales helpers who included apprentices

Table 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

(N = 199\*)

<u>Age in Years</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	
	No.	%
Less than 20	19	10
20 – 29	96	48
30 – 39	58	29
40 – 49	20	10
50 – 59	5	2.5
60+	1	.5

\* The ages of eight of the women could not be determined.

Table 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN

<u>Age in Years</u>	<u>% of Children</u>	<u>(N = 283)</u>
Less than 1	9	
1 – 4	30	
5 – 10	48	
11 – 15	10	
16+	3	

Table 3

**SOURCES OF MEALS**

Percentage of Women Who:

<u>Meal</u>	<u>Cooked at home</u>	<u>Cooked at Market</u>	<u>Purchased</u>
Breakfast	41	7	52
Lunch	17	20	63
Supper	93	2	5

(4%), partners (7%), paid house-girls or sales clerks (13%), and relatives (76%). Most of the helpers were female (94%). They were also young: children below the age of twelve (39%), teenagers (42%), adults (19%). The adults included all of the partners, aged 30 to 60 years.

However, most women were sole owners of their trades. Only 10% said they had partners, mostly, their mothers. Husband and co-wife were also mentioned as partners but each only once.

Likewise, only 10% reported that individuals other than partners gave them material or financial assistance with their trades. Most of this assistance took the form of interest free loans mentioned by 9% of the respondents. Buying of goods jointly, or in cooperation with other members of their societies was done by 4% of the women, and a few said that they were sometimes extended credit. When asked what their relationship was to people extending credit, a few mentioned husbands and other relatives as benefactors, but no one mentioned co-wives. Four percent named friends, but no one mentioned trade society members. Presumably, they considered friendship the basis for transactions between society members, rather than membership itself.

This was borne out by answers to a question about what types of business help they had ever received from their trade associations. Infact, only 29% of the respondents had ever received any business help on the basis of their membership in the societies. The assistance they mentioned took the following forms: extension of credit from wholesalers (11%), loan from association dues (9%), help in purchasing goods from out of town (6%), help in finding a shop (1%), assistance in looking after sales during sickness, (1%), and help in paying rent during sickness (1%).

Just as assistance with the financial and material aspects of trade was scarce, so was help in gaining knowledge and skills. For example, the majority of the women (69%) said they did not have any source of price information. Some reported that they learned about the availability and price of goods from other members of their societies, but only one claimed to get price information at association meetings. Likewise, 91% of the respondents had to do their accounting off-head. Only 6% were able to write their own accounts and another 3% hired people to keep records for them. Infact, most of the women (71%) expressed the wish to learn book-keeping.

Thus, the picture emerges that women engaged in trade quite independently, with very little assistance from their trade societies and families. This is not to underestimate the importance of these two institutions. Turning first to the family, an analysis of women's travel patterns indicates the adjustments to trade which families demanded.

Sixty-one percent of the women had to travel outside of Ife town in order to buy goods, and of these, two thirds had a regular pattern of travel.

It was found, by looking at the amount of time the regular travellers spent away from Ife in a month and at the distances travelled, that pre-school children seemed to have an inhibiting effect on their mothers' mobility. Women who had pre-school children spent less time travelling than those who had none. (The computed chi-squared value was 27.19, significant at the 5% level; the interaction score was .57). There was also a tendency for women without pre-school children to travel greater distances, but the relationship between distance and the presence of school children was not statistically significant. (The computed chi-squared value was 4.4 at 5 degrees of freedom). As expected, the presence of a junior wife tended to increase respondents' freedom to travel. Women who had a junior wife spent more time away trading. (The chi-squared value testing the relationship between the presence of a junior wife and time spent away from Ife was 10.51, significant at the 25% level. Interaction Score = .66). However, the presence of a junior wife was not significantly related to distance travelled (chi-squared value = 10.67, at 14 degrees of freedom) even though women having junior wives did tend to travel further than those with none.

The presence of both pre-school children and junior wives are related to a woman's stage in her domestic cycle and should be reflected in her age. Thus it was expected that travel time and distance would be least for women below the age of 30, that they would reach peaks between 30 and 49 years, and then allowing for decreased energy, be reduced after 50 years. Infact, it was found that the middle aged group spent the largest proportion of time travelling, that most of the young women who travelled spent less than 5 days per month away, and that more of the old than young women stayed in Ife all of the time. The picture for distance travelled was not as expected in that the oldest group travelled further than the middle-aged group.

One of the ways by which women may have adapted their trading to their domestic cycles seems to have been in their choice of trading commodity. Each type of commodity had its own source of supply and system of distribution from the source and therefore influenced the travel pattern of its sellers. For example, sellers of items such as kola nuts, palm oil, and peppers were able to collect their supplies on short trips to outlying farms and were noticeably younger than the average. Many dried fish and dried meat sellers bought their wares from the north and were older than the mean age.

The ages of traders in non-perishable staples imported into the Ife area followed the age distribution of the whole sample. However, those who only retailed and stayed in Ife were younger than those who also sold at the who-

lesale level and travelled to distant supply areas. In the same way, sale of provisions represented the over-all age distribution, but age differences were seen for different scales of trade.

Where a trade item required a relatively high initial investment, the sellers tended to be older than the average, regardless of source of supply. This was found for sellers of cloth and beads which were bought from Lagos and Ibadan, as well as for sellers of poultry which was locally bred.

It was found that in addition to choice of commodity, a trader's business arrangements influenced her pattern of movement. For women who travelled regularly, those with partners spent the most time outside of Ife (10 days), followed by women who had no sales helper (5 days), traders assisted by relatives (4 days), and those with paid sales clerks (3 days). Considering that the average time spent out of town was 8 days, it seems that marketing arrangements other than partnerships did not contribute significantly to women's freedom of movement. However, this may be related to the fact that most partners were the traders' mothers and could also be trusted to look after children.

The above focus on travel patterns has brought out several ways in which trading is adapted to family life. Another type of evidence of the integration of family and market activities is seen in the role of trade societies in the *rites de passage* of their members. Forty-four percent of the respondents said that their societies had participated in wedding, baby naming or funeral ceremonies which they had held. Fifteen percent had also received financial contributions for such celebrations from their associations. In addition to those who enjoyed the support of their associations during family celebrations, 29% of the respondents had received society contributions during periods of illness.

On the other hand, only six women had ever received loans from their societies for payment of school fees, and generally financial assistance for recurrent family expenses was not available through the trade associations. Nor did the market societies provide any programme of assistance or advice relating to child care, health, or nutrition. The few women who had received advice on these topics had been instructed at hospitals and clinics. Almost all of the respondents said that they would welcome programmes on these topics.

The potentials for market societies to participate in programmes originating in an outside agency were explored in the second phase of the study. The results show that eleven of the seventeen societies studied served only Ife and were not affiliated with associations dealing with the same commodities in other towns. In spite of the attempt to select only those asso-

ciations which were represented throughout Ife, two societies which were based in a particular market got included. However, the rest served all of Ife. All but two societies were branches of the Ife Market Women and Traders Association which, itself, is a sub-division of a state-wide organisation by the same name. The associations and their affiliations are shown in Table 4.

Each association had a group of officers, generally including president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Presidency was usually based on seniority in the society and was for life. Some offices were inherited from mother to daughter, and only a few were formally elected posts. All but three of the societies had clerks to take minutes at meetings and to deal with correspondence. Men figured prominently as officers in many of the associations. It seemed to be generally accepted that men can better represent women's interests in the broader society and that they can maintain order in the association. Some of the men had been elected, but in the case of the palm oil sellers' society, the Oni appointed a man as President in order to stop quarrelling in the society.

The overall Ife Market Women and Traders Association employed men as its Secretary and Treasurer. These men were indirectly appointed by the women through the President who was an elected official. The President, having consulted with Ife business men, sent nominations to the Oyo State Ministry of Trade and Cooperatives, Ibadan. These nominations were passed on to the Governor's Office, and finally to the Divisional Office for final approval. These and other officers of the over-all association at Ife formed what was called the Market Committee and were paid by the Association.

Despite the existence of a hierarchy of organizations and of formal offices, there was considerable confusion as to the functions of the various official bodies associated with market administration. For example the Market Committee described their work as the representation of market women to government in any form, in any place, but most often to the City Council and the Ministry of Trade and Cooperatives. The Market Committee also claimed that they distributed market stalls. However, the officers of two thirds of the societies clearly stated that each individual got her stall directly from the Council. Two very old societies (dried fish sellers and yam sellers) claimed that the stalls were given by the Council to the societies which then distributed them to individual members. Judging from observations of the Secretary and Treasurer of the Market Committee at work, it seems that what they actually did was to lobby the Council for stalls at the request of societies or individuals. Thus, the picture emerged that normally the Market Committee should not have functioned in the

allocation of stalls, but when stalls were scarce, they exerted pressure on the Council.

The relationship between women's associations and traditional political authority was also ill-defined. Most of the Presidents held the view that the Oni of Ife had no statutory function *vis-a-vis* their associations. Only three societies regarded him as arbiter and patron and paid him a regular tribute during festivals. Less than a third of the presidents felt that the Oni was the owner of the markets, most seeing the Council as the owner. This de-emphasis on traditional roles may have been related to the fact that a traditional market had recently been disrupted and removed to a new site. It was said that this was done forcibly by police at the instance of the Oni. It is also possible that the societies and their presidents, most of whom were quite old, had not effectively adjusted to dealing with modern government institutions and that this may explain the lack of consensus regarding the functions of various parts of the over all organisation.

Even at the level of individual societies, however, it seemed that the organisational structures were not very firm. This became apparent as soon as the authors had interviewed all the association presidents and began to locate the members in the markets. For example, although three separate societies with three distinct sets of officers had been identified for kola nut sellers, all of the kolanut sellers interviewed indicated that the three associations were really just one and that they were members of it. Most of the gari sellers, on the other hand, said they did not belong to any trade association. The case of the okro sellers also illustrated the degree to which organization was ill-defined. Although an association existed for okra sellers throughout Ife, only 5 members were found. The other okra sellers said they belonged to societies of either melon seed or pepper sellers.

The question of organisational solidarity may be related to the degree to which membership in an organization was compulsory. The officers and members were asked whether membership in the commodity association was compulsory for all dealers in that commodity in the markets. The officers of only 7 societies said that it was. However, from the members' responses it was found that there was widespread disagreement. The Presidents and members of only one-third of the societies showed unanimous agreement on this point. Twenty-eight percent of the members disagreed with their officers and in fact, in 5 societies the majority held views different from their officers'.

Since these discrepancies might reflect a lack of cohesion within the associations, further exploration was made, and the following factors emerg-

ed: Some societies which used to enforce membership had relaxed control without making members aware of the change. Other associations distinguished between types of activities. For example, in the case of the Palm Oil Sellers' Society, membership was required for buying in the farm areas, but not for selling in the town. However, disagreement on the necessity for joining in most societies seems to be due to differences in interpretation of the question in light of the severity of the sanctions.

For those societies where membership was claimed to be compulsory, compliance was said to be enforced through both legal means and social sanctions. An offending trader might be reported to the Council and either fined or prosecuted. Or, she might be frowned upon. For example, it was said of a kola nut seller who had not joined that she might sell, but only secretly and not openly in the market place. "Nothing particular would be done to her by the society, but she could be brought to shame by questioning her on the illicit way she is taking to sell things. This will weigh so heavily on her that she will, all on her own, volunteer to become a member." Thus, membership in the various kolanut sellers associations which were officially said to be voluntary organisations was, nevertheless viewed as being virtually compulsory by most members.

There were some incidents reported of suppliers not selling to non-members and of transporters not carrying their goods. One president said simply that non-members were banned from selling. She did not say how the ban was enforced, but it was found that members of her society were alleged to be witches. Another president said her society would "fight" a non-member who sold, and then invite her to join. Thus, the weight of the sanctions imposed on non-members seems to have varied from society to society and a certain amount of fear may have influenced women's decisions to join some societies.

Since access to trade was seen by many women as dependent on membership, it is important to see how access to membership itself could be had. None of the societies had any religious or age barrier, and only two societies required that members be Yoruba. No society required that a certain amount of capital be available for trade, although experience in the trade, usually through apprenticeship, was required by 5 of the societies. However, membership may not be viewed as open to all, since 13 of the societies required that the potential member be introduced by a member. Once accepted for membership, an initiate into most (13) of the societies was required to pay a fee. This ranged from "any amount" to ₦50. Initiation ceremonies were also performed. Once members, women remained so for as long as they traded in the relevant commodity and 50% had been members of their so-

cieties for over 10 years. This may contribute to the fact that many of the societies, although ill-defined structurally, have been in existence for a long time. (see Table 4).

Whether membership was compulsory or not, it seems likely that the various functions served by the associations would attract and keep membership. According to the officers, 11 of the societies had rules by bye-laws governing general behaviour in the market, price fixing, and/or cleanliness. These and an additional 3 societies which had no bye-laws provided a forum for settling quarrels among members. In this way, they maintained order in the market and protected the reputations of their members. Six officers said their societies gave members advice on how to sell their goods, and 5 said that their associations actually engaged in price fixing. These responses indicate some of the types of business related functions which were within the terms of references of the societies but the impact of these functions on the members is doubtful. For example, 8 of the officers said that their associations provided members with information on prices and sources of supply, but only 31% of the members claimed to have any source of information on these.

It appears that the societies' roles in the administration of trading were limited and that the societies mainly served by providing an umbrella which encouraged transactions between individual members. For example, half of the societies were said to encourage the extension of credit among members. This advantage was possible because 13 of the societies included both wholesalers and retailers in their membership and there were no societies serving only wholesalers. Presumably, a quarrel arising between a creditor and a debtor would be resolved by the society. Very few members had received any business related help from their societies, as stated earlier, and most of this help was in the form of cooperation between members.

Finance may have been one factor limiting the role of the societies in business related functions. It was not possible to collect reliable information about dues. Only 4 of the officers said that their societies collected dues, but collections were observed at the meetings of some societies which were said not to have dues. The use of funds, either for capital loans or for facilities could have provided a sanction to enforce trade related rules. However, only 4 societies granted business loans and only 9% of the members had ever received such loans. Neither did most of the associations provide storage or transport facilities, protection against theft, or insurance against property damage.

The Frozen Fish Sellers' Association was noticeably different from the others in that it provided more business related services. This may be

Table 4: ASSOCIATIONS STUDIED

<u>Ife Associations</u>	<u>Approximate Age</u>	<u>Number of Members Interviewed</u>
Kolanut (Abata) Sellers	Unknown <sup>3/</sup>	21
Kolanut (Goro) Sellers	Unknown <sup>3/</sup>	21
Okra Sellers	50 years	5
Vegetable Sellers	8 years	22
Provision Sellers <sup>2/</sup>	10 years	12
Gari Sellers	15 years	4
Onion Sellers <sup>1/</sup>	25 years	16
Dried Meat Sellers	40 years	11
Chicken Sellers	100 years	8
Plate Sellers	Unknown	11
Cloth Sellers	2 years	25
<u>Regionally Affiliated Associations</u>		
Rice and Bean Sellers <sup>2/</sup>	Unknown <sup>3/</sup>	26
Palm Oil Sellers	25 years	13
Western State Kolanut Dealers	<b>2 years</b>	21
Dried Fish Sellers	Unknown <sup>3/</sup>	16
Frozen Fish Sellers <sup>1/</sup>	15 years	12
Yam Sellers	Unknown <sup>3/</sup>	11

1/ Based in individual rather than in all markets of Ife.

2/ Not branches of Ife Market Women and Traders Association.

3/ Founded before the memory of any living member.

due to the fact that it dealt with one supply company as opposed to many suppliers and producers. It operated as a union and forced many advantages from the suppliers.

While society finance for business may have been limited, individuals in 8 of the associations took part in savings schemes. Usually the contributions were small and were given to the members in rotation immediately after collection, but 3 of the societies had bank accounts for their savings. In contrast to group funding for business related activities, there was a great deal of group spending for social and personal events.

Members were asked whether there were business related functions not currently performed by their societies which they would like to have. Twenty-four percent wanted their associations to provide loans internally or to arrange for loans from outside agencies, thus highlighting capital as their most important requirement. A few wanted their societies to provide transportation, better information on sources of supply, laws to enforce membership, and large-scale institutional marketing outlets. However, the majority (61%) could not think of any additional functions. This lack of response may reflect the limited expectations of the majority of the members of the societies as sources of improvement in the area of trade, rather than a lack of awareness of the problems. Similarly, when asked about improvements needed in the physical facilities of the market place, the majority mentioned improvements, but only 11% felt that their societies could bring about change.

The question therefore arose as to whether other organisations would be equally or even more appropriate as groups through which home economics programmes could be introduced to market women. It was found that all but 46 respondents participated in organisations other than their trade societies. A total of 77 voluntary organisations was identified, including: 42 Christian groups, 15 home-town associations, 11 social or mutual aid societies, 7 Muslims associations, one farmers' society and one traditional religious group. Some women also belonged to savings groups, but the number of groups, could not be ascertained. Thirty-six women mentioned that they belonged to their compounds' associations of wives. On the average, the number of market women in our sample found in each of the identified voluntary organisations was 2 and the range was 1 – 28. Thus, it seemed that these organisations would not facilitate programmes aimed at market women and they were not explored further.

On the other hand, 75% of the respondents reported that they attended their trade society meetings regularly, and so attention was turned to

the logistics of meeting with the trade societies. Of the 15 officers who provided information on meeting times, 5 said they met weekly, 2, bi-weekly, and 3, monthly. Five societies were said not to meet regularly, but only when necessary. This group included: the onion sellers, who said their society had been disrupted by political activities; the gari sellers, who said they did not need a formal meeting to pass information along; and the cloth, okra, and vegetable sellers who offered no explanation.

When asked whether the researchers could attend a meeting of their societies, officers of the last group said it would not be possible, and officers of the yam and chicken sellers' societies said they would have to discuss the prospect with the societies. However, all other officers indicated that the authors would be welcome. Thus, it might have been concluded that at least eight of the societies, all holding regular meetings, would be accessible by a change agent.

In order to see whether trade association meetings could accommodate home economics input, the researchers attempted to give a short lecture and demonstration on the enrichment of hot pap for feeding to pre-school children. Because of limitations of time, this experiment was carried out with only two societies and the Secretary of the Ife Market Women's Association was asked to choose the two. He chose the Rice and Bean Sellers' Society and the Palm Oil Sellers' Society, both of which seemed eager to participate.

The meeting with the Rice and Bean Sellers was entirely satisfactory: an appointment was easily arranged through the president; members were present at the agreed time and place; there was complete attention during the 20 minute presentation; members took active part in the question and discussion period and just before the researchers left, a member recapitulated all the major points discussed.

On the other hand, it was not possible to present the demonstration to the Palm Oil Sellers. After two meetings with the society and several discussions with its officers, it was discovered that the society had been under stress and had not met for six months prior to the researchers' contact with them. In fact, the researchers had provided the stimulus for the two meetings called, but these meetings were spent on settling disputes and could not be used for introducing new information.

## Discussion

Turning first to the implications of this study for programme content, one finds that, as expected, market women were not exposed to programmes that would normally come through home economics extension. The study also confirmed the findings of other authors that women integrate their business and domestic lives and that both go on simultaneously in the market. Thus home economics programmes which traditionally focussed on the home must be designed for and located in the market setting.

The programmes must also cater for the dual roles of most of the women. The finding that women tended to choose their commodities and arrange their activities in relation to their domestic necessities seems to show a priority on the family. This indicates that many of the topics which are standard in home economics programmes will still be important in a market based programme. One group of such topics indicated by the age distribution of the women present in the market is ante-natal nutrition and care, and family planning. The presence of large numbers of pre-school children in the market suggests the need for programmes in early child development, including physical care of young children and developmental activities for them. Likewise, inputs on the role of parents in the development of school children would be appropriate for the majority of women.

The eating habits of the respondents indicate that the area of nutrition should focus mainly on the purchase, rather than the preparation of balanced meals. A separate programme could be designed to teach food vendors how to prepare suitable weaning and supplementary foods for the pre-school group.

Observations made during the study showed that some home economics topics which are standard in home oriented programmes become even more important in the market setting. Water catchment, protection from insect pests and the disposal of human and other wastes would need attention at both individual and group levels. On the other hand, laundry and other topics related to clothing and textiles may not be high priority areas.

While home economics programmes should reflect the importance of the family and the physical conditions in the market place, they must also be concerned with the fact that trading is the major activity of the women, and one in which they have very little assistance. The survey showed that a programme which could teach accounting skills and provide price information and credit would fill a gap. Another business related function which falls within the subject matter of home economics is the storage and handling of trade goods. This could be taught on a commodity basis and

should include the introduction of relevant technology.

A programme on resource management, which is applicable to both the domestic and business spheres, could be directed first to marketing. Although there may be a good deal of resource flow between trading and domestic enterprises, the fact that most women were sole owners of their trades may make marketing resources easier for individuals to control.

All of the programme areas mentioned above should be brought together in such a way as to reflect the integration between trading and domestic activities which women achieve in their daily lives. The over-all programme rationale should emphasize the goal of increasing women's effectiveness as both mothers and traders. A popular saying states, "Money and children are what I want." The many relationships between the progress of the family and of the trade may provide the motivation for market women to participate in home economics programmes.

In terms of the feasibility of conducting home economics programmes through the associations, it appears that the trade societies offer definite advantages. However ill-defined the organisation may have been, each society was part of a hierarchical structure through which individual market women could be reached by the researchers. Although men were in control of the higher levels of the structure, they did not constitute a barrier to contact with the market women and in fact, were most cooperative. The existing linkages of the societies, reaching the City Council and the State Ministry of Trade and Cooperatives, and being more closely tied to modern than to traditional government would seem to make them accessible to government sponsored change programmes and could also provide a framework for the equitable distribution of programme inputs and facilities.

Furthermore, the associations were found to be permanent organisations with membership of long duration. Whether or not membership was compulsory, there were definite pressures encouraging women to join, and attendance at meetings was regular for most respondents. These findings indicate that long term, continuous programming would be possible through the societies. The building facilities, patterns of meetings, and patterns of authority of many of the trade associations could be used for home economics programmes and would reduce the cost of programmes in terms of time and other resources.

It can also be concluded that market women could be reached more easily through their trade than non-trade associations. It is even possible that some changes introduced to women through trade societies might diffuse through their other, voluntary organizations.

The practical, or experimental aspect of this study has demonstrated that women's trade associations may be accessible to educational programmes in the area of home economics, but that this accessibility will depend on the stability of the societies involved. It also indicated that the prospects of participating in an extension programme could provide a stimulus for weak societies to re-organize.

However it is questionable that the trade societies could participate in programmes that would go beyond education and would involve group action concerning business arrangements or storage and market facilities. It was found that the associations tended not to function effectively in these areas. Lack of finance has been cited as one possible reason for the associations' low level of involvement in trade. If this were the major problem, then finance as a programme input might strengthen the societies. However, the competitive nature of trade itself may be a more basic factor and one which requires separate consideration.

In a study of the market women in Abidjan, Lewis (1976) pointed out the ineffectiveness of women's market associations in organizing credit associations and collective buying arrangements. She noted the generally competitive relationships among traders and the fact that competition was actually enhanced by the prevailing unequal access to economic and political resources. In that setting, the trade associations were unable to carry out group action which would have yielded collective benefits, benefits disproportionate to the energy, time, or capital invested by individual members. She concluded, "The dominant individualism of the market-place itself fosters psychological predispositions inimical to group efforts." (Ibid. : 156).

Recent, unpopular incidents of price collusion by market women indicate that competition can be controlled, when deemed necessary, by the societies. Programmes offering insurance and credit schemes as well as storage technology and information for women's businesses might provide the impetus for more constructive forms of cooperation and restore public confidence in the trade associations. Even if competition did inhibit the introduction of group based business advantages, opportunities for individual improvements could still be offered through the societies.

Although this study was designed specifically to aid planning of home economics extension programmes for the Ife area, it is worth considering whether the programme contents and approaches discussed above would be applicable in other Yoruba towns.

The study findings as to how women organize their domestic and trading activities are quite similar to findings reported for Ibadan and Awe.

It seems that variations might be more salient among individual women than among women in different towns.

The functions of the societies in Ife are comparable to Adeyokunnu's description of the functions of Ibadan associations, but there were marked differences in organisational structure. These differences might be due to the sizes of the towns studied and indicate that one cannot generalize the findings from one town to another. Such variations in organisation would have implications for scale of programme coverage through societies, volumes of goods handled by individuals, and amounts of resources to be involved in programmes.

To account for differences both in individuals' needs and in the potentials of the trade associations, programming will need to be flexible and democratic. A range of optional activities and procedures should be presented to the associations so that each can plan programmes suited to the joint capabilities and the needs of its members.

Finally, it should be mentioned that before home economies extension for market women as described in this report can have a broad impact, it will be necessary to develop manpower which can work effectively in the market setting and with trade associations. Field experience with market women should form an important part of the practical training of future home economists.

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