

ISSN 1115 - 960X



**Ilorin Journal**

**of**

**Business and Social  
Sciences**

**Volume 13. No 2**

**December, 2009**

*Published by the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences  
University of Ilorin, P.M.B. 1515, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

# TIME BUDGETING AND ACTIVITY PATTERN OF RURAL WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANING IN RAFI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NIGER STATE.

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## **Abstract**

*A balanced participation of both genders results in a more comprehensive approach to issues of development. Indeed, their living conditions are more widely taken into account thus, leading to improved measures and their enhanced acceptance of rural development decision. Decision-making have to be comprised of both men and women in a proportion, if the decisions made is to be valid. Women are the most threatened by the dangers that stem from global warming, war, disaster, etc. Therefore, defending the full range of women's human rights within the context of gender equality in addressing issues of spatial development is essential both to protecting women themselves and to cultivating their capacity for leadership—on which so many lives depend. Using questionnaire technique, 150 women from 10 district heads of Rafi Local government area of Niger state were interacted with to elicit information on the relationship between time budgeting and activity pattern of rural women in rural development and planning. The questionnaire probed into the background of each woman such as age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly and income and average percentage of income spent on family expenses. The study revealed that rural income is generally low because of the low level of social and economic activities. In a community where there is no supply of electricity and water and the roads are almost impassable, it would be impossible for any meaningful economic activity to operate. Policy on the planning of the area should include the provision of social facilities and the establishment of industries capable of, among others, processing farm products.*

## **Introduction**

The complexity of forces working against poor women in developing countries is now greater than ever. The traditional socio-cultural constraints that have long limited women's participation in the economy and their access to resources are now coupled with international issues of debt, structural adjustment programmes, declining terms of trade, and war. Austerity

measures have curbed public spending, cutting deep into social sector programmes and causing hardship for many poor women and their children. The current lack of dynamism in many national economies has resulted into fewer economic opportunities, while innumerable barriers, such as caste and lack of education and access to land and capital, obstruct the efforts of the poor to break out of poverty.

The worldwide economic recession and the severe food crisis throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa during the 1980s have particularly intensified the burden on poor women. They now increasingly contribute to, and often assume sole responsibility for the welfare of their families. Where many men are forced to migrate to cities, mines or abroad, this burden is particularly acute.

The result of the 1991 Nigeria Census shows that women constitute 49.6% of the nation's Population. In Niger State women constitute 48.54% of the total population and in the study area 51.46%. Implicit in above statistics is that planning and execution of developmental efforts should include women since they were likely to be the most affected by the consequences of any planning and developmental efforts in a community (Agbola, 1996).

The history of traditional African society has shown the tremendous contributions of women to the social, economic and political development of different African communities. Women were so recognized in society that in some communities, genealogy and inheritance were reckoned along maternal line (Bolanke, 1992). The roles of women in sustainable development in Nigeria include child bearing and rearing, production of food crops, collection of water and firewood for domestic use, and shopping for domestic needs (Ekop, 1996). However, arising from modernization and western education, the frontier of these traditional functions has been greatly expanded beyond the limits of traditional functions.

The contributions of women to domestic work, economic productivity and activities aimed at improving the health and dorsal economic progress of society, though long recognized, were not to receive any documentation until recently in Nigeria. The importance of considering women contributions to development efforts go beyond equality issues, but also an economic issue (Ekop, 1996).

This study therefore, aimed at assessing how rural women in Rafi local Government Area budget and channel their time towards productive activities and other aspects of life; and the implications of the observed activity patterns for rural planning.

Women and men have different gender based roles and responsibilities in their own lives, families, households, and communities. They have different knowledge of, access to, and control over natural resources, and different opportunities to participate in decisions regarding natural resource use. Understanding women's and men's relationships to the environment plays an important role in developing solutions for more sustainable use of natural resources. Ignoring gender distorts the understanding of human impact on the environment.

Gender refers to the different social roles that woman and man play, and the power relations between them. Gender relations influence how communities, households, and institutions are organized, how decisions are made, and how resources are used. To understand how gender shapes activities that affect the environment, it is necessary to examine women's and men's roles

and responsibilities, access to and authority to make decisions about resource use. An important indication of the differences in these roles is how women and men spend their time

### **Study Area**

Kagara, the administrative headquarter of Rafi Local Government Area is located between longitudes 6.33E and latitude 1.37N with an estimated land mass of 3461.91Kilometer square. It is bound in the North by Kaduna State and in the east by Kuta LGA, to the west by Bangi LGA. The town is boarded to the south by Sarki Pawa (Fig.1).

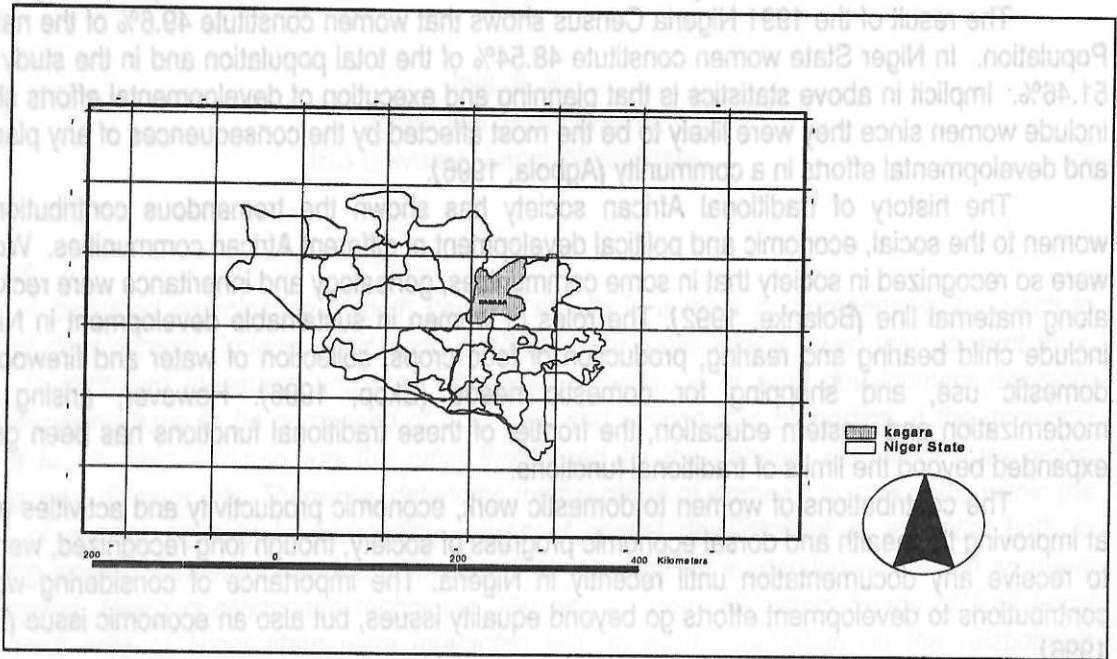


Fig.1: Map of Niger State Showing the Location of Kagara Town

### **Research Methodology**

The study covered all the ten (10) districts in the local government area namely: Kagara, Tgina, Kuserki, Gunna, Kongoma, Mujanjan, Uregi, Katunga, Ringa and Madaka. This selection was made based on the existing number of district in the local government area. The target population was women of different occupations. The ten districts were divided into units to ensure adequate coverage. Random sampling technique was used in selecting the households to be interviewed. The oldest woman members of the household, not below the age of 20 years were interviewed.

In cases where some women of certain occupations are relevant to the study but did not fall within the sampling frame, such women were included and interviewed to ensure a complete coverage of the unit in which they lived. Accordingly, 15 women were randomly selected, from

each of the 10 existing districts thus, resulting into 150 women respondents. They were interacted with through structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire probed into the background of each woman such as age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly and income and average percentage of income spent on family expenses. Other questions probed into the different activities of the women for a period of one and a half years. From the responses to the various questions, the daily, weekly and yearly time budgeting and activity patterns were derived from all the women in different occupations in the ten districts. Simple descriptive statistical analysis was employed for the study. Information were presented in tabular and graphics (bar charts forms).

## **Results and Interpretation**

### ***Socioeconomic Profile of the Respondent***

Out of the selected 150 women respondents, 22(15.4%) were between the age of 18-25 years, 45(30%) were within the age range of 26-34 years and 44(29.3%) were within the age range of 34-44 years while 38(25.3%) were above 45 years. The bulk of the women belonged to the socially and economically active age range of 26 to 45 and 50 years above.

46 (30.7%) of the total respondents had no formal education but Qur'anic education and mostly illiterate. 31(20.7%) of the women had first school leaving certificate while 23(15.3%) and 4(2.7%) had Senior Secondary Certificate and Teachers Certificate/NCE (post secondary) respectively.

A general observation in occupational distribution among the selected women was that some practiced more than one occupation and therefore the total number of responses was more than the total number of respondents. It was common for the same woman to be a farmer and also a trader. This is confirmed by the high responses of 48.7 % ( 73) women without no occupation (housewives) in the area. Trading constitute 22.7 % ( 34) while farming constitute 18 % ( 27), Civil servant (10.7%) and students (0.0%) were other occupations of the women.

96(64%) of the women belonged to the Islamic faith, 40 (26.7%), Christians while 14(9.3%) are traditional worshippers.

Rural income is generally known to be low. Of the 150 respondents, 85 (56.7%) earned below ₦1000.00 a month (Table 1), while only 42(26.0%) earned between ₦1,100.00 and ₦2, 000 a month. Four women (4.0%) earned between ₦2, 100.00 and ₦3, 000.00, none (0.0%) earned between ₦3, 000.00 and ₦4, 000.00 while eleven women (11.3%) earned above ₦4, 000.00 a month.

An important characteristic of the respondents was their personal financial commitment to their families. None of the women belonged to the two extreme cases, which are those who would not contribute anything at all and those who would contribute all their monthly income. Field data analysis have shown that 23.3% of women spent as much as 30.0-40.0% of their income, 15.3% spent up to 40-50%, while 12.7% of them spent below 10% of their income on the family expenses. 12% of them spent as much as 20-30%, 50-70% of their monthly income on family expenses respectively (Table 2). Sixteen women from the districts spent 60-70%,

Table 1: Respondents Income per month

District/Villages	Income per Month				
	>N1000.00	N1100.00- N2000.00	N2100.00- N3000.00	N3100.00- N4000.00	>N4000.00
Kagara	9	4	1	0	1
Tegina	7	7	0	0	1
Kusherki	6	3	1	0	5
Madaka	12	3	0	0	0
Gunna	10	3	0	0	2
Uregi	7	6	2	0	0
Mujanjan	10	4	0	0	1
Ringa	7	5	0	0	3
Katunga	8	2	2	0	3
Kwangoma	9	5	0	0	1
Total	85	42	6	0	17
Percentage	56.7%	26.7%	4.0%	0.0%	11.3%

Source: Authors' Fieldwork (2008)

Table 2: Respondents Income, spent on Family Bills

District/ Villages	Percentage of income, spent on Family Bills									
	0-10%	10- 20%	20- 30%	30- 40%	40- 50%	50- 60%	60- 70%	70- 80%	80- 90%	90- 100%
Kagara	7	0	0	1	4	1	2	0	0	0
Tegina	0	0	2	6	1	3	2	1	0	0
Kusherki	1	0	2	6	0	1	2	2	1	0
Madaka	0	0	2	5	2	3	1	2	0	0
Gunna	3	3	2	3	0	1	2	1	0	0
Uregi	2	0	1	1	5	4	2	0	0	0
Mujanjan	0	1	6	4	2	0	2	0	0	0
Ringa	2	1	2	5	4	1	0	0	1	0
Katunga	1	1	0	3	4	3	2	0	0	0
Kwangoma	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	0
Total	19	9	18	35	23	18	16	10	2	0
%	12.7	6	12	23.3	15.3	12	10.7	6.7	1.3	0

Source: Authors' Fieldwork (2008)

10(70-80%), 2(80-90%) while only 2(80-90%) of their monthly income on family expenses respectively.

### ***Time Budgeting and Activity Pattern***

#### ***Daily time budgeting and activity pattern***

A general pattern was observed in the daily time budgeting and activity pattern of rural women under study. Most of them wake up as early as five o'clock in the morning. Between five and seven o'clock, they are involved in morning prayers, house cleaning and preparation of breakfast. Thereafter, each woman is involved in her occupational pursuit till about 2, 3, or 4p.m in the evening depending on the occupation. Comparatively, the full time female farmers work longer hours a day up to 11 hours, than any other professional. This is followed by traders who trade up to 10hours a day (Figure 2), on the average. Civil servants work 8 hours a day.

The evening periods are engaged in cooking, housekeeping and prayer activities. It was generally observed that by 7-8 o'clock in the evening, most of the women have finished all that they have to do for the day and ready for bed.

#### ***Weekly time budgeting and activity pattern***

When the daily activities of individual women were plotted into a weekly schedule, it was observed that each occupational activity is carried out from Monday to Saturday. In addition, Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday were observed as shopping days (Figure 3), the three days corresponding approximately to the market days of the nearby traditional markets. Although, other activities are carried out intermittently within the week, Sundays are generally observed as days of worship, rest and social meetings. Age group club meeting, visiting and social meeting are done on Sundays.

#### ***Yearly Time Budgeting and Activity Pattern***

The yearly time budgeting and activity pattern of the rural women under study took into consideration the occupational activities. The daily time budget and activity pattern, which were plotted into weekly schedule culminated into the year's pattern. Figures 4 and 5 show the yearly time budgeting and activity pattern of those women who were engaged in full time farming and those who were engaged in part time farming respectively.

Generally, the choice of farmland, site clearing and preparation of the plots to be farmed in the year would be done between January and February/March. Depending on how early the rain would come, the first planting would commence in March/April. Therefore, there would be periods of first, second and third weeding, mending and tending of the crops; between May and October. The harvesting of the first planting crops starts in June depending on the type of crop, and lasts till everything planted is harvested. The second planting periods are about September for upland areas and about November/December for swamp/wetland area. Accordingly, the periods of harvesting of the crops planted during the second planting period depend on whether the crops are

planted in upland of swamp/wetland areas. Generally, upland crops are harvested from January and swamp/wetland crops from December.

The yearly time budgeting and activity pattern were observed for all those who practice farming on either part of full-time basis. An important observation is that throughout the twelve months of the year, the farmer and trader are involved in the farming and trading, whereas the civil servants have at least on month of annual leave, generally observed in March, July, August or December. Incidentally, those months coincide with planting and weeding periods, which allow these categories of workers to participate in farming work.

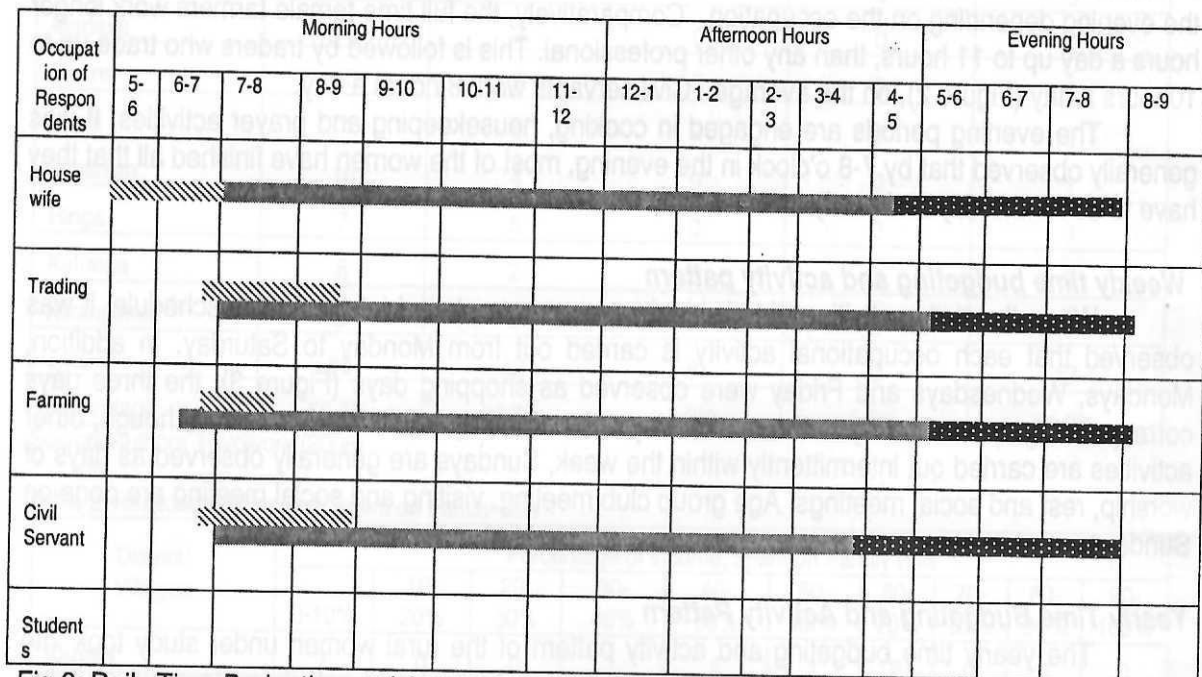


Fig.2: Daily Time Budgeting and Activity Pattern of Respondents on Week Bases

||||| Morning prayer/House work/Breakfast      Normal Occupation Activity      ■■■■■  
 Housekeeping/Rest      ■■■■■



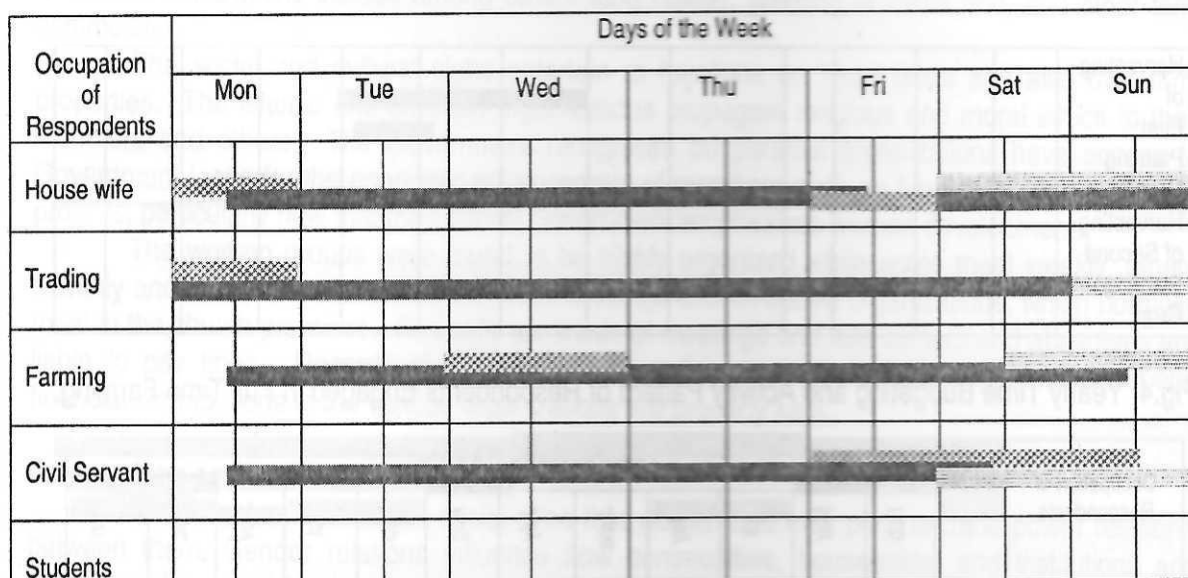





Fig. 3: Weekly Time Budgeting and Activity Pattern of Respondents

 Shopping/House work/Breakfast 
  Normal Occupation Activity 
  Recreation/social activities/Rest

Occupation of Respondents	Period Budgeted in Months												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Site Clearing and Preparation													
First Planting													
Second Planting													
First Weeding													
Second Weeding													
Third Weeding													



of these organizations include among others fund raising, granting of loans and, and other farm commodities.

The social and cultural clubs entertain at functions on hired basis and also own farm properties. The Islamic and chrtistain organizations propagate religious and moral ethics to their members and others. The Government recognised cooperative organizations have access to Government loans for the economic advancement of members such as funding of farm and trade projects, particularly now that the Federal Government emphasizes women development.

The women groups were found to be highly organized while some meet weekly, others monthly and often, in the house of the leaders except church-based organizations, which normally meet in the church premises. Roll calls are made at meetings and late comers and absentees are liable to pay fines. Records of attendance at meetings, minutes of meetings and members' financial contributions to the various organizations are properly kept.

### **Conclusions and Implications of Study**

Gender refers to different social roles that women and men play, and the power relations between them. Gender relations influence how communities, households, and institutions are organized, how decisions are made, and how resources are used. To understand how gender shapes activities that affect the environment, it is necessary to examine women's and men's roles and responsibilities, access to and authority to make decisions about resource use. Therefore, findings from a study of this nature are very important and necessary as a requirement for rural planning process and development, most especially in the preparation of sustainable development plans.

The implications for rural planning in this study arise from the fact that the ten rural settlements fall within the planning area of the district in Rafi Local Government Area. Accordingly, these settlements would be subjected to the landuse arrangements and development policies of the master plan that would be prepared for the orderly development of the headquarters as anticipated by the present administration in Niger State.

Majority of the women are involved in farming. There have no storage facilities for excess farm products. Any rural planning proposal would have to make sufficient provision for agricultural landuse and storage facilities for excess farm products. 67.9 percent of the sampled women population has no formal education; the planning of the area should include the provision of adult education centres. Centres that operate in the evenings would be preferred to allow these women continue their daily pursuits without interruption. Such centres should incorporate and emphasize religious teachings to make the curriculum attractive to the large number of Muslims and the Christian women in the area.

Rural income is generally low because of the low level of social and economic activities. In a community where there is no supply of electricity and water, and where the roads are almost impassible, it would be impossible for any meaningful economic activity to operate. Policy on the planning of the area should include the provision of social facilities and the establishment of industries capable of, among others, processing farm products. With increased social and

economic activities in the area, the necessity would arise for the establishment of a daily market and financial institutions.

Club and women organization meeting and recreational activities are held in private residential compounds. Planning proposals for the area would require the provision of women centres where provision would be made for indoor meetings, indoor and outdoor recreation and relaxation. When all the women are educated to at least the first school leaving certificate level (i.e. primary school), they would be able to read and write. With this minimum education level, their approaches to and understanding of issues would be broadened and they would be more capable of budgeting appropriately and effectively use their time and assign priorities to different occupational and non-occupational activities they undertake daily.

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