



## **Effect of Women Socioeconomic Characteristics on Local Economic Development Through Cassava Production and Processing**

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### **Introduction**

Worldwide, governments in developing nations face escalating demands to combat unemployment and provide essential services such as water, education, infrastructure, electricity, and roads, all within limited resources. When local communities take charge of their development, they can develop and implement community-based solutions that complement national efforts. Local Economic Development (LED) is gaining popularity as a self-help strategy, enabling local economies to harness their resources, including labour and land, to generate wealth for residents, according to Bartik (2003). Despite their significant contributions to Nigeria's economy, women face numerous challenges in accessing socioeconomic resources necessary for production. This research examines the interplay between women's socioeconomic factors and cassava production and processing. It identifies necessary support systems to boost productivity and assesses the economic impact of cassava production and processing in Yewa South Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **Materials and methods/Methodology.**

This research employed primary data gathered through a survey of women cassava producers and processors in the study area which was selected for its notable cassava production and processing activities. The study employed stratified random sampling to identify the sampled women. The Study Area was divided into nine strata based on political wards, and one adjacent village was randomly selected from each stratum. In each selected village, 19 women involved in cassava production and processing were randomly selected, resulting in a total sample size of 171 women.

### **Results and discussion**

The household size of the respondents is relatively large, with 100.0% having between 5 to 8 dependents, indicating a high dependency ratio. The income distribution reveals that 85.0% of the respondents earn between N40, 000.00 – N50, 000.00, suggesting a high poverty level that requires immediate government intervention. This indicates that the women may be willing to explore opportunities to increase their income and improve their living standards. Regarding land acquisition, majority of women (72%) inherited their land, while the rest acquired it through rental agreements, outright purchases, or gratuitous transfers. This suggests that women in the study area face minimal challenges in accessing land which will enable women to play a vital role in driving local economic growth and development. However, educational level of respondents is high, with 69.9% having attended secondary school.

### **Conclusions**

This research investigated the role of women's socioeconomic factors in driving local economic development through cassava production and processing in Yewa South Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria, revealing that education and family size significantly contribute to this development. Therefore, policies and programs aimed at supporting women farmers, particularly in the areas of education, credit access, and technology, are essential for promoting local economic development and improving the livelihoods of women farmers in the study area.

**Keywords:** Local Economic Development; Cassava production; Cassava Processing; Socioeconomic Characteristics