

## RURAL WOMEN'S TIME BUDGET

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### I . Introduction

The role of women in the development of nations has become a favourite topic of investigation in recent times. In Nigeria where about 70% of the population live in rural areas, the predominant occupation of the women is agriculture. Culturally, the role of women is defined. Besides producing and rearing children, they and their offsprings contribute the manual labour force for farm operations - mainly characterised by archaic methods.

Farm work done by them is often underestimated and not recognised as being substantive addition to the Gross National Product (GNP). Alleged lack of contribution to production efforts in combination with general shortage of funds gives women a low priority rating as recipients of governmental or other agencies public and financial support.

A primary reason for excluding women's work in the calculation of the GNP is due to much of its performance being done in the family setting. The nature of their work which is subsistence and domestic is statistically unrecognised and termed 'unpaid family labour' by economic analysts. Occupational multiplicity — the practice of combining several activities in the course of the same day in order to subsist, is another reason planners adduce for omitting women's work in GNP.

One of the functions of rural women is the local marketing of surplus farm produce. This trend has made the working mothers not only independent economically to a limited extent but has continued to help in times of financial crisis in the family. Increasingly, Nigerian married mothers are engaging in one form of economic activity or the other, which takes them away from their homes for varying hours. It can be observed today that rural women operate practically in every aspect of the economy to the extent that their aggregate effort amounts to an appreciable contribution to national wealth if evaluated.

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If the value of their work is to be included in GNP then some measure however crude should be devised to scale their contribution. For this reason, it becomes increasingly important and appropriate to identify the specific ways in which they subscribe to development. Perhaps, if their activities are known by some crude measure (e.g. time), development would be enhanced by helping them to reduce their work load through involvement in innovations.

### **1. Objective**

This paper aims at measuring rural women's contribution to development through their time budget for agricultural tasks, domestic obligations and leisure activities. It will also attempt to define how they allocate time among competing duties such as how household chores complement or conflict with gainful pursuits.

It is envisaged that the result of these will increase the understanding of the extent to which women's labour in and outside the home determines the family's productivity for recognition.

### **2. The Concept of Time Budget : By Analysts**

The concept of time is said to be imposed on individuals by their experiences of changes. 'The world is characterised with changes. Things keep changing especially ways of life. People find ways of adjusting to the changes. In spite of the changes, one thing remains constant – Time'. Time is the duration of interval when activities occur. Like money or energy, time is a resource and as a resource input, it is fixed in that each day contains 24 hours.

Since all human activities occur in time, the existence of a social system necessitates the organization of time. This entails the allocation and scheduling of time to accomplish realisation of values and needs.

The term "time budget" is a diary of the order and duration of activities engaged in by an individual over a specified period – most typically the 24 hours day. It involves the collection of information of an exhaustive account of time consumed by any activity in which man is engaged.

Time budget is an important Home Management resource tool recently employed for measuring life styles especially in behavioural sciences. One of its attributes is its 24 hours constancy to all individuals. The variation in time allocation between persons depends on 'trading off' time for some activities towards others. This way variations then become measurable.

### **3. Method**

Data for this study was collected in four states of Nigeria, namely Oyo, Kwara, Anambra and Cross Rivers. A questionnaire survey was used to

TABLE 1. Average Time Spent on Various Activities by Respondents in 1 Day(n=40)

	Time spent by 40 women in 4 days				Total time	Average/ Woman/ day	% of Woman per 24 hrc.
	Oyo	Kwara	Anambra	Cross River			
	Hr. mins	Hr. mins	Hr. mins	Hr. mins	Hr. mins	Hr. mins	Hr. mins
Primary cooupation	32. 27	27. 59	25. 00	18. 48	86. 24	2. 09	8. 96
Secondary occupation		8. 24	7. 18	13. 02	22. 44	0. 34	2. 36
Child care	16. 03	12. 39	30. 00	24. 29	59. 11	1. 29	1. 29
Food preparation	19. 28	25. 35	30. 00	23. 06	98. 09	2. 27	10. 02
House care	1. 42	10. 59	8. 06	4. 54	23. 41	0. 35	2. 43
Personal care	8. 35	11. 01	12. 00	15. 28	47. 04	1. 11	4. 93
Moving activity	6. 15	14. 32	16. 00	15. 28	52. 15	1. 18	5. 42
Leisure activities	26. 10	16. 30	17. 00	14. 35	74. 15	1. 51	7. 71
Visiting/entertaining	10. 24	6. 40	18. 12	4. 44	40. 00	1. 00	4. 17
Religious activities	2. 14	8. 45	3. 42	10. 25	25. 09	0. 38	2. 64
Others	6. 08	16. 34	15. 12	7. 53	45. 47	1. 08	4. 72
Sleeping(rest)	111. 32	91. 49	93. 18	91. 42	388. 21	9. 42	40. 42
Total percent	240. 58	251. 27	296. 48	244. 34	1033. 47	25. 50	*107. 64
Total							

\*Average overlap per day per respondent=25 hrs. 50 mins - 24 hrs. 0 mins = 1 hr. 50 mins. = 7.64 percent

collect personal information about the subjects while a stop watch was used in the non-participant observation of tasks.

The sample size was forty (40) randomly chosen from four randomly selected villages of the four states. The respondents were identified with the first letter of their states, plus a number. The Oyo women were called O<sub>1</sub> ..... O<sub>10</sub>, Kwara, K<sub>1</sub> ..... K<sub>10</sub>, Anambra, A<sub>1</sub> ..... A<sub>10</sub>, Cross Rivers, C<sub>1</sub> ..... C<sub>10</sub>.

Tasks chosen for observation during the analysis of data were done by simple frequency distribution and percentages for the demographic data, and a percentage of 24 hours for the non participant observation. A 'Pie' bar and profile charts were used. In emphasizing women's activities observed were their major and secondary gainful occupations, child care, moving activities, food preparation, visiting/entertaining, personal care, leisure, religious and other miscellaneous activities. Each participant was followed for four days, which included two working and two weekend days.

#### **4. Limitations**

Two types of limitations are predominant in this study. The first is that of the reluctance of women to participate in the study. The second is the limitation of the length of this paper to ten pages. A many faceted investigation of forty 40 women done over a period of four days per women requires to be reported more fully than ten quarto-sized pages.

## **II . Findings and Discussions**

### **1. Demographic Information**

The women in the study were all married. The forms of marriage were monogamous(62.5%) and polygymous(37.5%). They were all mothers with ages ranging from 16 - 45 years, with an average age of 30 years. Each participant had at least a child between the age of 1 month to 3 years. The mean number of children to each respondent was 4.5 while that of relatives living with them was 1.2. About 57.5 percent had formal education and 42.5 percent were illiterates.

The primary occupation of 37.5 percent was farming, 45.0 percent were involved in petty trading, 7.5 percent were seamstress, 5 percent housewifery, 2.5 percent each construction labourer, and hair dressing (plaiting).

### **2. Hours Spent on Activities**

The time spent on various activities differed among tasks. Time spent on food preparation ranked highest with 10.2 percent, followed by

primary occupation at 8.96 percent. About 7.71 percent and 6.18 percent of their time were spent on leisure and moving activities respectively. Personal care took 4.93 percent of the day while house care was done for 2.43 percent (Table 1).

The wish of the women to be financially independent is apparent in this study as 11.32 percent of their time was spent on monetary gainful occupations. A biological need for survival was shown in the length of time expended on cooking. Relatives and older children helped in doing house work, and thus reduced the housecare time for the women and gave them more time for personal attention. Time spent rearing children varied according to the children's ages, the business concern of the mothers, and aid received from relatives and older children.

Although the average overall overlapping working hours of women is seen as 7.64 percent (Table 1), individual total overlaps could sometime soar to 16.49 percent in a day, (Pie chart). The average moving time of 5.42 percent in Table 1, can be seen as 17.08 percent in the 'pie' chart. The low average percentage of moving is due to housewives and other women who engaged in sedentary occupation e.g. traders, seamstresses.

### **3. Variations in Time Spent**

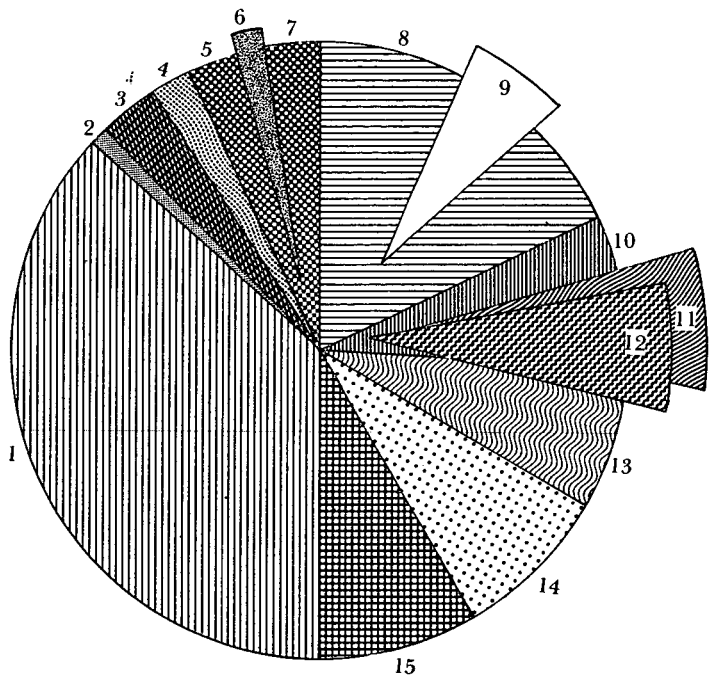
Variations in time spent on activities may depend on the occupation of the woman the bar chart shows that the seamstress spent more time on her business than the farmer, but the farmer had an additional money earning employment. Due to the nature on trading a petty trader could afford to spend more time on leisure and sleep. Very often, petty trading takes place within the home.

The profile chart of four women differently engaged, shows various patterns of movement from one work to another, inside and outside the home. Although priorities were exhibited in the order of work and time of day they were performed, child-care and meal preparation were done before 7:00 a.m. With the exception of the housewife who had no financial pursuit, the other three started work early in the day. The farmer commenced work before 7:00 a.m. while the seamstress and trader started at 9:30 a.m. It was observed though that farm work ended earlier than the others (See bar chart).

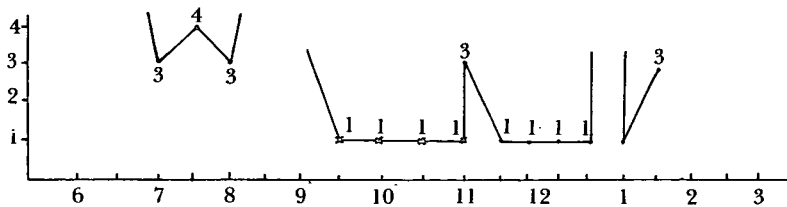
### **III . Implication of the Study**

It is important for women to budget time in order to help them improve the capabilities in their work. The reduction of time spent from one to another moving activity will help them conserve their energies.

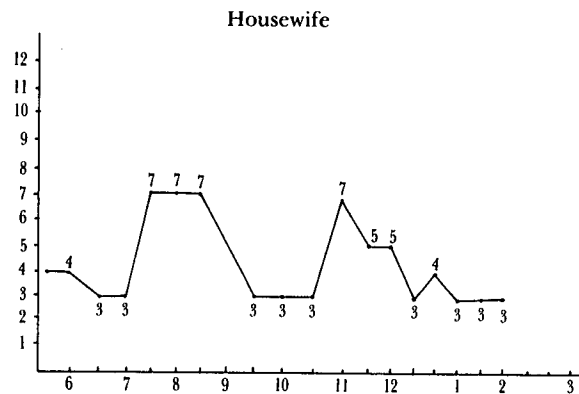
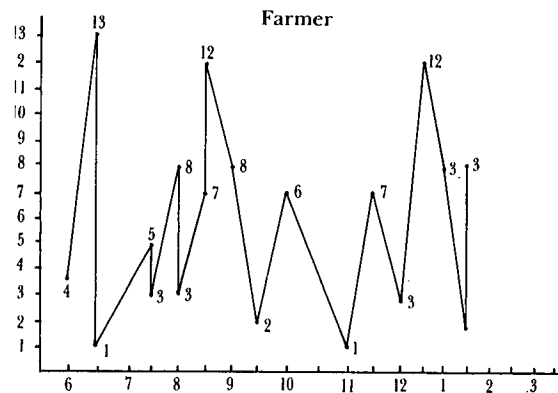
**‘Pie’ Chart Showing the Order of Work of a Farm Woman’s Weekday in Anambra State.**



Activities	Time in hrs.	% of 24 hrs.	Key
Primary occupation	2.03	8.46	15
Secondary occupation	2.1	8.75	14
Child care	1.25	5.2	3
Food preparation	1.87	7.72	13
House care	0.53	2.21	5
Personal care	0.78	3.25	6
Moving activities	4.1	17.08	8
Leisure activities	1.97	8.21	10
Visiting/entertaining	3.00	12.5	11
Religious activities	—	—	—
Other activities	0.98	4.08	4
Animal husbandry	0.2	0.83	2
Sleeping(rest)	9.15	38.13	1
Total	27.96	116.49	9
Overlapping time	3.96	16.49	12

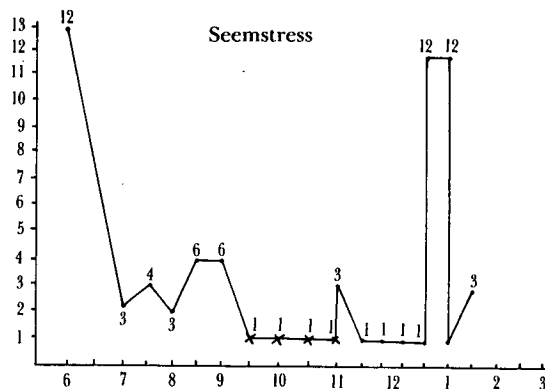
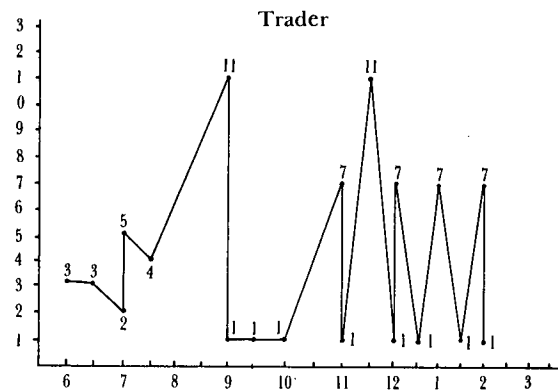


Profile Chart of Most Busy Time of a Woman's Day 6.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

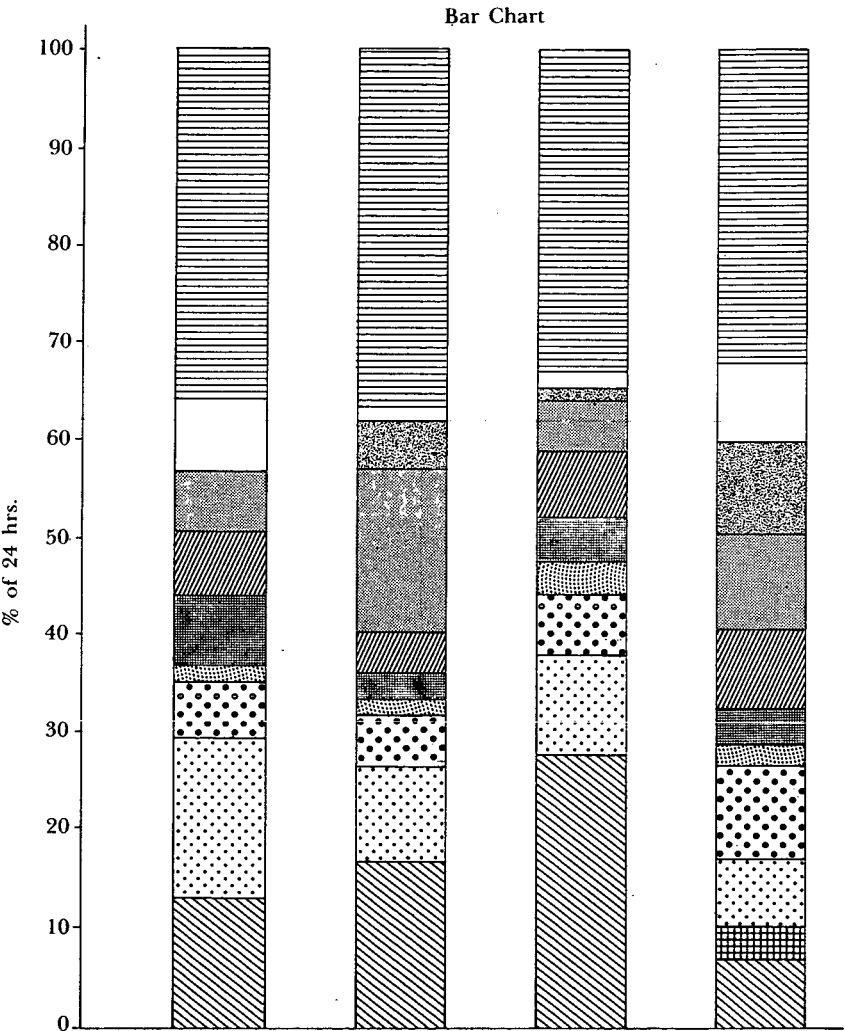


# KEY

1. Primary Occupation
2. Secondary Occupation
3. Child Care
4. Food Preparation
5. House Care
6. Personal Care
7. Moving Activities
8. Leisure Activities
9. Visiting/ Entertaining
10. Religious Activities
11. Animal Husbandry
12. Other Activities
13. Sleeping(Rest)



**Bar Chart of the Activities of Respondents on a Busy Day**



KEY			
Primary Occupation		Moving Activities	
Second Occupation		Leisure Activities	
Child Care		Visiting/Entertaining	
Food Preparation		Other Activities	
House Care		Sleep/Rest	
Personal Care			



They could dispense with or shorten the time spent on some activities like leisure, visiting/entertaining in exchange for learning new skills to promote better living.

An intensive time use can induce policy makers to consider allocating funds to rural women at the formulation stage to enhance their development. It would provoke further researches for the advantage of innovators. It would help the women to study and analyse their own use of time by exhibiting leaks in time use.

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