

Production of Locally Woven Textiles for Poverty Alleviation in Makurdi Local Government Area

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Abstract: *This study investigated the production of locally woven textiles for poverty alleviating in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State. A survey research design was used for the study. Five research questions guided the study. The population for this study comprised 550 local weavers and dyers. A sample size of 352 were purposively selected and used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers from the review of literature. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that narrow loom was majorly used for the production of local fabrics, the white and black colour of Tiv traditional woven textile fabrics were produced in large quantities representing 45% compared to Idoma and Igede tribes in the state. Majority of local weaver had difficulty in getting initial capital to start production, most of the local weavers adopted a strategy of constant supply of woven fabrics in the market in order to alleviate poverty. The study concluded that the Tivs have high regard for locally woven fabric which forms the bed rock for their cultural celebrations. More than half of the local weavers earn between ₦50, 000 to ₦55, 000 Per annum representing 86% of the local weavers. The study recommend among others that jobless youths to learn basic narrow loom fabrics production skills of local woven fabrics in order to earn a living for themselves.*

Key Words: Textile, Weaving, Production and Poverty Alleviation

Introduction

Textile refers to the processes of fiber treatments used in the production of fabrics. The fabrics are used in making clothes. Fibers are made in to yarns and subsequently knit or woven into fabrics (Nordas, 2014). The author asserts further that yarn is produced by spinning raw fibers of wool, flax, cotton, or other material to produce long strands. Textiles are formed by weaving, knitting, crocheting, knotting, or felting. Local textile production refers to the hand technical practices of making fabrics through interlacing of fibers (Balter, 2019). Fabric refers to any material made through weaving, knitting, spreading, crocheting, or bonding used for making garments. The making of these fabrics was as a result of twisting fibers together to form yarns. The appearance of a yarn can easily be observed through, color and size. According

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to Nordas (2014), traditional yarns are those yarns produced by methods used in the early historical fiber development. Weaving is a process of producing fabrics by interlacing at least two sets of yarns at right angles. The author submitted further that the three basic types of weaves include, plain weave, twill weave and satin weave. The plain weave was the simplest and was used by the local weavers in Benue State to reduce poverty (Spindel, 2013).

Poverty is a phenomenon which is as old as the society. It could be said to mean a state of perpetual want, absence of essential means of survival. To be economically poor implies not having and not being able to get the basic needs of life. Poverty was also defined by British Institute for International and Comparative Law, (BIICL 2013) as the scarcity of human basic needs for human survival, like adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, healthy education and recreation. The institute further averred that poverty affect human livelihood in totality and hence encouraged nations to put measures to alleviate poverty especially among rural dwellers in developing countries

Poverty alleviation aims at improving the quality of life for those people currently living in poverty. It is one of the most difficult challenges facing any country in the developing world where, on the average, majority of the population is considered poor. Evidence in Nigeria shows that the number of those in poverty has continued to increase. For example the number of those in poverty increased from 27% in 1990 to 46% in 2020 and 67% in 2010. By 2020 it increased to more than 70% Poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria are means through which the government aims to revamp and reconstruct the economy, (Olugbamigbe, 2021). The researchers in this case, have identified local textile production as an ancient craft that can be used for poverty alleviation in Benue state. This is because local textile production industries form a major part of manufacturing production, employment and trade in many developing countries especially Benue state-Nigeria. Textile and clothing industry offers a range of opportunities including entry-level jobs for unskilled labour in Benue state thereby reducing the level of poverty of people involved especially people in Makurdi who have the skills of producing these local textiles. In doing this, they have experienced a very high output growth rate in the sector, (Boyo & Dada 2015). For efficient textile production to be achieved, the individuals must possess requisite skills in weaving of the cloth materials

Weaving is a method of textile production in which two distinct sets of yams or threads are interlaced at right angle to form a fabric or cloth. Similar methods of fabric production are knitting, felting and braiding or plaiting. Weaving and dyeing are part of primary methods of textile production and it involves interlacing a set of vertical threads called warps with horizontal threads called weft while dyeing is the coloring of fabric with soluble solution or substance (Balter, 2019). Weaving can be done by hand or by machines, though hand weaving is still in practice mostly by some local textile weaver and dyers in Benue. It involves finger weaving, lacing and knotting together with thread by hand, is still used today by many traditional weavers in Makurdi and other state. It is based on the conversion of fibers into yarn, yarn into fabric. These are then dyed or printed, fabricated into clothes. Different types of fiber are used to produce yarn. Cotton is the world's most important natural fibers. In the year 2017, the global yield was 25 million tons from 35 million hectares cultivated in more than 50 countries (Kathleen, 2015).

The traditional and locally decorated fabrics, like the local resist techniques of tie and dye, local woven batik, are underutilized in the country. The traditional wears for Tiv, Idoma and Igede cultures were mostly used during family meetings and festive periods, (Sokoya, 2020). In recent years, Benue textile designers are also gaining influence based on their innovative ideas. This has become a source of income for individual in the state. The styles of weaving and dyeing craft vary depending upon the cultural tradition of the place, climate conditions, cultural influences and business contacts. Nigeria has a wide range of

textiles of varied designs and manufactured by numerous techniques when compared to other countries in the world. Weaving and dyeing is mostly done by middle aged people and few men in Makurdi local government and other parts of the states with the help of different materials, and each tribe in Benue has its own styles with their love for culture treasure traditional wears.

Statement of the Problem

The covid-19 pandemic lockdown combined with herdsmen's crisis across different parts of Benue state has immeasurably increased poverty level in Benue state. This is so because, most rural dwellers engaged and depend solely on Agricultural crop production activities which they could no longer practice due to the lock down and insecurity in the State. The researchers also observed increasing numbers of local weavers selling traditional clothes after crossing river Benue bridge from wurukum area. Verbal interaction between the researchers and some local weavers revealed that weavers used clothes of different sizes and beads with assorted designed of traditional colors of different ethnic groups in the study area. This motivated the researchers to carry out this study to ascertain if this business could alleviate poverty level among local weavers or otherwise.

Objective of the Study

- Identify the types of production utilized when making fabrics
- To ascertain the decoration techniques used for fabric production by local dyers
- To identify the types / levels of production locally woven and textile dying.
- To determine the income generated per annum from the production of local woven fabrics.
- To determine production challenges faced by local weavers.
- To determine improvement strategies to be employed by weavers and dyers for increased production

Scope of the Study

This study focused on the various local textile weavers and dyers in Makurdi. Both males and females who are involved in the production of locally woven and dyed fabrics serve as respondents in this study.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study used survey research design, because it aimed at collecting and analyzing data from few people considered being a representative of the entire population or group. The design was adopted because, it found out the opinion of local textile producers (weavers and dyers) in Makurdi Local Government Area.

Area of Study

This research work essentially covers local weavers and dyers in Makurdi Local Government Area. These include North Bank, Wadata, High level, modern market and Wurukum, where production and marketing of the traditional wears were sold within the local government.

Population for the Study

The population of study for this research is made of a total number of five hundred and fifty (550) local weavers/dyers shops located within the coverage of the study area. The data was provided by the ministry of commerce and industry, Benue State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size was 352. This was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Sample Determination approach. The sample was selected using simple random sampling. This was done in order to give every local weaver the same chance of being selected as members of the population have special characteristic skills needed for weaving.

Instrument for Data Collection

Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled: Production of Local Woven Textiles for Poverty Alleviating Questionnaire (POLOWETPAQ) developed by the researchers from literature reviewed. Each POLOWETPAQ item has response options of either “Yes” or “No” for objectives 1,2, 3, 4 and 6 while POLOWETPAQ items for objective 5 has response options of either Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), or Strongly Disagreed (SD) with corresponding nominal values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education as well as three experts in Home Science and Management in the University of Agriculture Makurdi Benue State. The validators made corrections on the systematic arrangement of the items and added more items to the instrument.

Data Collection

A total number of three hundred and fifty-two (352) copies of structured questionnaire were administered to local textiles producers (weavers and dyers). This was done with the help of two research assistants which administered and collected the questionnaire. Direct contact approach was used to collect data from the respondents.

Data Analysis

The research questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 were analyzed using frequency and percentage while research question 5 was analyzed using mean and standard deviation (SD). The bench mark for items was 2.50 for research question 5. Any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree while the value with less than 2.50 is regarded as disagreed.

Result and Discussion

The result and the discussion of findings were presented according to objectives and research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the types of production utilized when making fabrics?

Table 1: Frequency Distribution and Percentage Response of local Weavers on Production Types Utilized when Making Fabrics

S/N	Type of Loom	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Narrow Loom	302	86
2	Wide Loom	50	14
Total		352	100

Table 1 shows that majority of local weavers (86%) used narrow loom for the production of traditional fabrics, while wide loom was the least.

Research Question 2: What are the decoration techniques used for the production of fabrics?

Table 2: Frequency Distribution and Percentage Response of local weavers on the Techniques used for Decorating Fabrics

S/N	Types of Techniques	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Dyeing	203	58
2	Printing	33	9
3	Tie & Dye	54	15
4	Batiking	62	18
Total		352	100

In Table 2, Majority (58 %) of respondents or local weavers used dyeing techniques for fabrics decoration while printing techniques has the less response by local weavers representing 9 %.

Research Question 3: What are the types and level of production of locally woven and dyed fabrics?

Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Responses on Types and Level of Production of Local Woven and Dyed Fabrics

S/N	Types and level of production	Colour	Level of production	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	The Tiv Fabrics (Anger)	White & Black	Large quantity	160	45
2	The Idoma Fabricss (Iri-Achi)	Red & Black	Medium quantity	120	34
3	The Igede Fabrics (Ogodogodo)	Green, Black and White	Medium quantity	72	21
Total				352	100

Table 3 shows that the Tiv traditional fabrics is produced in large quantity (45%). Tiv's were the largest populated people in Benue State. This justifies the production of the traditional fabrics in large quantity. Idoma traditional fabrics were produced in medium quantity as shown in Table 1, representing 34%. This was followed by the Igede Traditional fabric, 21 %. The production levels followed the pattern of level of population of each tribe.

Research Question 4: What is the income generated per annum from local woven textiles and dyed fabrics?

Table 4: Percentages of Responses on the Level of Income Generated Per Annum.

S/n	Income Per Annum(₦)	Yes	%	No	%
1	50,000 - 55,000	303	86	49	14
2	60,000 - 65,000	296	84	56	15
3	70,000 - 75,000	214	60	138	40
4	80,000 - 85,000	57	16	295	84

Table 4: Shows that majority (86 %) of respondent agreed that they earn 70,000 to 75,000 per annum from woven and dyed fabrics. Item 4 representing 84 % was not accepted as the amount of money received by the local weavers per annum. The respondents said that money in these categories was not earned by them per annum. The main reasons given by weavers were that economy in the state is slow as most customers were civil servants.

Research Question 5: What are the problems faced by weavers and dyers of local woven textiles fabrics?

Table 5: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Problems faced by Weavers and Wyers of Local Textile Fabrics

S/N	Item	Mean	Std	Remark
1	High level of taxation	2.66	0.54	Agreed
2	Raw materials purchased at high cost	2.70	0.46	Agreed
3	Lack of quality fast dyes to fabrics	2.74	0.83	Agreed
4	Lack of initial capital caused delayed production	3.86	0.74	Agreed
5	Climate change affects the production in raining season	2.51	0.79	Agreed
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.89	0.67	Agreed

N= number of respondents, Std = standard deviation of responses of respondents

Table 5 presents data on the problems faced by weavers and dyers of local woven textiles fabrics in Makurdi. The mean values of all the five items ranged from 2.51 to 3.86 with a grand

mean of 2.89 which was above the cutoff point of mean 2.50 on a four-point scale. This indicates that the respondents agreed that they were problems faced by weavers and dyers of local woven textiles fabrics in Makurdi Local government area, Benue state. The standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.46 to 0.83 with a grand index of 0.67 indicating that there was less variability in the opinion of the respondents on the problems faced by weavers and dyers of local woven textiles fabrics in Makurdi Local government area, Benue state.

Research Question 6: What are the strategies employed by weavers and dyers?

Table 6: Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Responses on the Strategies Employed by Weavers and Dyers

S/N	Strategies Employed by Weavers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Living close to business point reduce the cost of transportation	61	17.3
2	Purchasing raw materials directly from dealers reduce high cost of fibre and dye materials	70	19.9
3	Constant availability of local fabrics in the market enhances more income	81	23
4	Self-dyeing of fibers reduce cost of labour	77	21.9
5	Utilizing other locally made dyes to reduce cost of import	63	17.9
Total		352	100

Table 7 shows that majority of the weavers indicated that they adopted a strategy of making fabrics available to their customers in the market representing 23%. Others indicated strategy of self-dyeing of fabrics by themselves (21%) to reduce cost of labour. The least strategy adopted by the weavers is living close to business area which had 17.3%.

Discussion of Findings

The result from table 1 shows that majority of local weavers used narrow loom for making their fabrics. The narrow loom produces a plain weave which is the simplest of all weaves according to (Olugbamigbe, 2021). It was also noted that plain weave produces a smooth fabric surface. It was documented that different colours in warp and filling yarns are used in woven in-colour combination in fabrics as noted by the (Ghani 2019).

The study revealed that dyeing techniques was used by the majority of local weavers for decorating fabrics which represents 58% of respondents. More than half of the weavers dyed the fibers before weaving. Yarns of different colours were weaved as warp and filling yarns. This is in line with Boyo and Dada (2013), which stated that dyed fibers produce different designs according to the thickness of fibers.

The result shows from research question three that Tiv traditional woven and dyed fabrics (Anger), was produced in large quantities representing 45% among the three ethnic groups in Benue State. Tiv tribes are the largest populated ethnic groups in the state, hence produced the highest quantity of traditional woven fabrics. The people have high regards for their culture, especially during festive periods by wearing traditional attires. This statement was in agreement with Aloysius (2015) which stated that there is relationship between values and clothing behaviour. The Idoma ethnic groups produced woven and dyed textile fabrics (Iri-Achi) in medium quantity representing 34%. This is because they are less populated than the Tiv. The Igede tribes also produced Local fabrics (Ogodogodo), in medium quantity (21 %). The more populated people, the more production of traditional woven and dyed textile fabrics.

The results of the Study further revealed that majority of local weavers agreed that their income per annum were between N70, 000 - N75, 000. Some of the weavers stated that they do not

earn ₦90, 000 - ₦95, 000 per annum. Few weavers noted that the amount is not achievable as most of their customers were civil servants in the state. This supports Sokoya (2020) that a country cannot fully diversify with mono-economy. There should be diversification of economy. The fifth research question which sought information on the problems faced by weavers and dyers showed that respondents agreed that they were five problems faced by weavers and dyers of local woven textiles fabrics in Makurdi Local government area, Benue state This finding was in agreement with field (2022) that individual in a poor state of economy face difficulty in starting a viable business enterprise. The economy in the state is very tight as there was no viable industry or companies to support the income of civil servants.

It was found out from the sixth research question that living close to production area was not the overriding factor among others in the strategies employed to reduce poverty. Majority of the weavers and dyers, (17.3%) noted that rented houses in the business areas more costly to them. Most of the strategies adopted by weavers and dyers include purchasing of raw materials directly from dealers to reduce cost of fibres and dyes which represent 23 %, making of fabrics constantly available in the markets for customers was 19.9% and dyeing of fabrics by themselves to reduce cost of labour representing 17.9%. This statement is in support of Freymuth (2021), which noted that appraisal and job satisfaction is key to any business enterprise.

Conclusion

The quest to alleviate poverty among residents of Makurdi metropolis led the researcher to investigate the production of local woven textiles for poverty alleviation in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State and found that majority of local weavers used narrow loom for fabric production. More than half of the local weavers used dyeing techniques for fabric decoration. Most of the weavers dye the fibers before weaving and also create other designs after weaving their fabrics. Each type is made for a specific purpose according to cultural identity of the three ethnic groups in Benue State. The colours of fabrics differ for the Tiv, Idoma, Igede and Benue united mixed colours. The Tiv local weavers produce the fabrics in large quantity. The Idoma and Igede tribes produce traditional fabrics in medium quantity and earned between ₦60, 000 to ₦65, 000 per annum even though they were face with myriads of challenges which when addressed, could enable local fabric weavers to alleviate poverty in Makurdi.

Recommendations

- There is need for our jobless youths to learn basic narrow loom fabrics production skills of local woven fabrics in order to earn a living for themselves.
- Local weavers should engage more laborers to help them in the process of dyeing techniques for fabrics decoration as there was increase in demand for traditional woven fabrics in the society.
- The different ethnic group in Benue State which has different colours of their cultural attires should showcase their identity whereas they live outside Benue State.
- The prospective weavers that lack initial capital to start the business should engage in age- group little contribution in order to get a loan to start commercial fabrics weaving business.

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