

Impact of Attieke's Manufacture in Koffikro in Bouaké City (Côte d'Ivoire)

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyse the determinants of the manufacture of attieke (cassava couscous) and the health problems brought about this job. Bouaké is an illustration because of the existence of so many places of production of this food. This is the case particularly observed in Koffikro, our field of investigation, located not far from Bouaké. The study (qualitative and quantitative) presents the results of the field. The activity is a source of wealth and participates in the socio-cultural life of women engaged in work. This interest in the manufacture of attieke has caused recurrent health problems, due to the low standard of living and the lack of supervision, hence the need for a deconstruction of employment policy.

Keywords: Attieke, Wealth, Social Significance, Health Problem, Deconstruction, Bouaké.

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser les déterminants de la fabrication de l'attiéké (couscous de manioc) et les problèmes de santé occasionnés par le travail. L'exemple de Bouaké, où les lieux de production de la denrée pullulent dans la commune est une illustration. Tel est le cas particulièrement observé à Koffikro, village de ladite ville, notre champ d'investigation. L'étude (qualitative et quantitative) présente les résultats du terrain. L'activité est source de richesse et participe à la vie socioculturelle des femmes engagées dans le travail. Cet intéressement à la fabrication de l'attiéké a occasionné des problèmes de santé récurrents, à cause du faible niveau de vie et l'absence d'encadrement, d'où la nécessité d'une déconstruction de la politique de l'emploi.

Mots clés : Attiéké, richesse, importance sociale, problème de santé, déconstruction, Bouaké.

Introduction

This article focuses on the health constraints associated with the production of attieke in Koffikro. In the aftermath of independence, African countries focused their development on agriculture. Côte d'Ivoire, especially made it its "Battle Horse". This leitmotiv: "The success of the country is based on agriculture" is an illustration. The country whose economy has been based on the coffee-cocoa binomial, a continuation of the colonial

agricultural policy, has experienced exceptional growth, so that specialists have called it the Ivorian miracle. Abdoulaye (1974) states that between 1960 and 1970, GDP rose from 2.807 billion ff in 1960 to 8,280,000 FF in 1970. In the same year the primary sector rose from 1.22 billion FF to 2,253,720,000 ff. Very quickly, this euphoric growth has been transformed into a "economic mirage" because of the fall or fluctuation of commodity prices on the world market. In the Face of the gloomy economic situation (financial hemorrhage) that the country knows, therapy is needed. It is a matter of importing models from Europe, because the internal attempts of the Ivorian specialists have failed. Bamba (1992) argues that so-called adjustment policies have been put in place with the aim of restoring financial balances by adjusting expenditure to resources and ensuring a resumption of growth through restructuring of the Production. Of liberal inspiration, these policies are based on the assumption that only markets, on the which plays the game of competition and price truth, are likely to restore dynamism to the production apparatus.

Financial remedial measures are then a necessary, indispensable condition, an obligatory way to ensure the revival of economic growth. In this context there is a tendency to reject the "social" and the "cultural" on the periphery of the economic machine. The social situation is taken into account mainly in terms of the negative effects of the adjustment on the living conditions of the households which are to be corrected a posteriori. As for the cultural, it is often presented as the ultimate explanation of all the woes, the exit of crisis depending on

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a great revolution of mentalities. The marginalization of socio-cultural dimensions has resulted in unemployment and poverty among low-income populations. Kramo (2016) certifies that:

Ivorian growth is not inclusive enough. Today, almost half of the population is in poverty, almost five times more than in 1985. Since 2012, poverty has declined by just 0.3% for each point of growth earned. It's too weak! As long as the fruits of growth are not shared, the poor will continue to be poor

This impoverishment also concerns Bouaké, because 'small trades', commonly known as informal activities, are perceptible throughout the city. The example of the production of the attiéké is an illustration. This is how our gaze is focused on Koffikro, village of Bouaké marked by:

- The proliferation of attieke production sites. Women in the field are more involved in the work. There is a craze for this work. We have counted (twenty) 20 sites and one hundred and twenty (120) producers. This activity allows women, through income, to provide for their social needs and to participate in local cultural activities.

-Health risks: The producers complain about their precarious state of health. The intensity of the activity, the inhaled gases are factors supporting the health problems that women are exposed to. We distinguish joint conditions, eye and pulmonary diseases. But these diseases are recurrent, lack of awareness and supervision. These findings raise questions: Why do women invest more in the production of attieke? How does the activity cause health problems? Why do they persist?

The objective of this study is to analyse the causes related to the production of this commodity and the persistence of health risks. To achieve this, we try to verify this hypothesis: Women are engaged in the production of attieke, because of its sociocultural value, but the activity has generated recurrent health problems.

Our investigation site is Koffikro, village of Bouaké. The choice of this locality is linked to the number of production sites of the attieke (about 20 places). The type of activity carried out and the frequency made it possible to retain the women involved in the work. The experience has made it possible to choose women who have been victims of illnesses. A total of 120 identified persons were interviewed through a focus group. Thus, qualitative interviews were conducted with a group of 6 manufacturers, resource persons, to gather information on the history of the activity until saturation. The questionnaire is directly administered to the respondents, which resulted in information on diseases and their recurrence. The functionalism helps to justify the importance of the activity. Dialectic analysis indicates the contradictions associated with the production of attieke. There are two parts to this study. In the first, we analyze the production of the attieke. The second part explains the recurrence of health risks in Koffikro.

1. The importance of the manufacture of attieke

This part of the study describes the stages of attieke production. It also analyzes the causes related to the activity. To achieve this, we asked women: « How do you manufacture attieke? » « What motivates the work of the attieke ? » Here are their answers:

First you have to harvest the cassava and then transport it to the village. The load is heavy, but it has to be done with. Some hire a vehicle for transportation. Then we peel the tubers, wash them, cut them. Then the cassava is transported to the machine to be crushed. The dough collected is transported and fermented. The next day the dough is pressed and kneaded. The semolina is exhausted, dried. A pot is placed on a tripod to prepare the attieke (Y. B, 39 years, K. A, 43 years old).

I have been doing this work for a long time. This is how I take care of my family, my children, myself and support my husband, who has lost his job. The money I earn allows me to pay for the children's school and to deal with the needs of the household. When there are contributions to the village, I pay for myself and my husband. When the holidays (Paquinou, Christmas, New Year), I pay clothes. I'm building a modern house. So every year we plant a lot of cassava. With the work of the attieke, I do not complain, it goes (K. L, 39 years).

This information allows the production of the foodstuff to be reconstituted:

1.1. The stages and actors in the production of the attieke

The first operation begins with the peeling of cassava. Under a tree or a shed, sitting for hours, women whose age is between 25 and 55 years old, remove from a knife the skins (barks) of tubers. The cutting is the second operation. The peeled tuberous roots are sliced into several pieces, always in the sitting position for hours.



Source: survey data, Damo, July 2016

Picture 1: Cassava carving in Koffikro

The third operation is to remove the cut pulps, grains of sand and residues of cassava bark. Women in a curved position rotate and return the pieces of tubers to make

them clean. Pulp Milling is the fourth operation. The washed cassava is transported to the mill to be crushed. The pieces are transferred in a machine that is responsible for processing into pulp. The Spin (fifth operation) succeeds the grinding. The semolina obtained is deposited in empty bags of rice, fermented and then wrung out (sixth operation) the next day. After extraction of the liquid (hydrocyanic acid) it contains, follow the kneading and sieving of the semolina (seventh operation). Seated on stools, the left thighs bent, the women, in a movement oriented counterclockwise, crush the pieces of crushed semolina. Then, in a standing position, they transfer the contents into a container to be sifted, in order to obtain grains, which are applied and put to dry in the sun (good weather).



Source: survey data, Damo, July 2016

Picture 2: Mixing and sifting of cassava semolina

The eighth and last operation is to cook the cassava semolina. The woman prepares the fire. She's laying the tripod. On the pot it is placed an instrument at the hollow bottom. This oven incorporates in its hollow bottom a disc with holes. A contact belt is installed between the kettle and the oven, which avoids steam leakage by other exits than the ones provided. The semolina is poured by shovels. The steam helps, the product changes from its whitish color to the yellowish color, attesting to its homogeneity; That is to say that there is no cassava, no dough or granules, but the attieke ready to be consumed.



Source: survey data, Damo, July 2016

Picture 3: Cooking Semolina



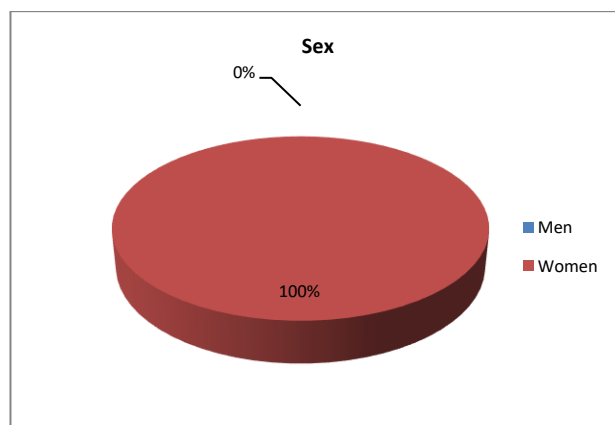
Source: survey data, Damo, July 2016

Picture 4: Finished product of the attieke

Through the stages, the manufacture of the attieke is an organized activity. The manufacturing summary shows that the production of this commodity is a system in which the elements interact and perform functions. From peeling to baking, cutting, washing, grinding, spinning, kneading and sifting, each step is significant. Only one social category is involved in the work.

-Who are the producers then?

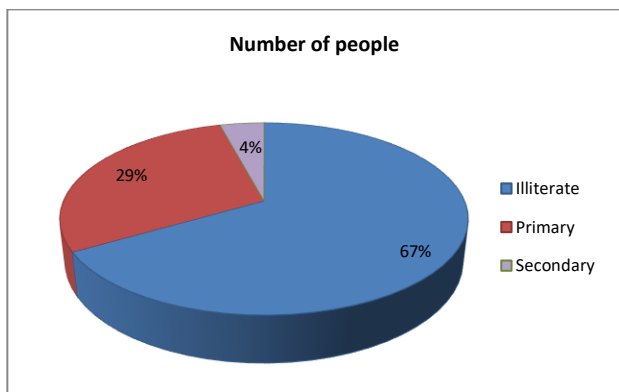
These graphs show the characteristics of the actors



Source : Survey data, March 2016

Chart 1: Gender distribution

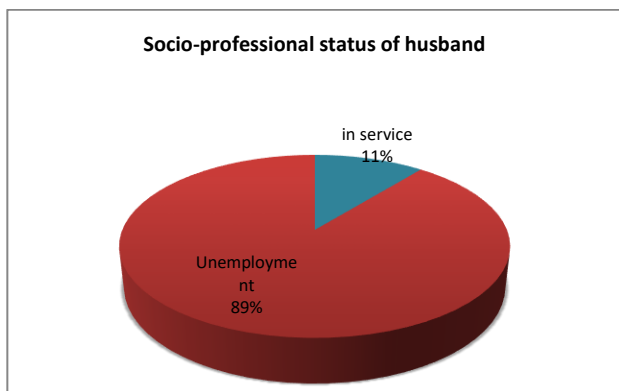
This information shows that 120 women, or 100%, are engaged in work. No man is involved in the production. In clear, the manufacture of the attieke is reserved for the women. So from harvesting to cooking, they are the only ones to carry out the activity.



Source: Survey data, March 2016

Chart 2: Distribution by level of education

The data indicate three categories of actors. 80 women, or 67%, are illiterate. 35 people, about 29% have reached the primary level. When 5 women, or 4% of the producers, attended the first cycle. The illiterate are the most numerous.



Source: Survey data, March 2016

Chart 3: Professional situation

From this data, 107 women (89%) have unemployed husbands. When those of 13 producers (11%) are in service. Clearly, the husbands of most of the women lost their jobs. The analysis shows that the social categories are all indigenous Baoulé. The women in the activity manage a household. They are therefore married and have plantations, from which cassava tubers are extracted. The working instruments (machete, knife, bowl) are minor creative, because traditional. All in all, women mainly use the tools of the Baoulé community. In the face of difficulties, the reaction was to question their social environment. They appeal outside when the solution to the problem is slow to arrive. We therefore understand that they have opted for the median invention like the grinding machine.

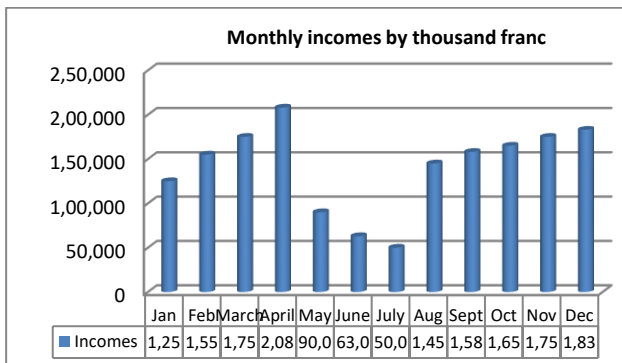
1.2. The logic related to the activity

If women are involved in the production of attieke, it is that they perform functions in this population. We distinguish two essentially:

-The economic value of the activity

The data below compiled in this graph is explicit:

The following table shows the monthly incomes of 2016



Source: Survey datas, January – December 2016

The analysis shows that the work of cassava is essential for women in Koffikro, because it is a source of wealth. The daily experience and the observation of the land allow to argue that the activity is scattered in Ivory Coast, because perceptible everywhere. It is exercised by the different social groups. According to the field data, the manufacture of the attieke is daily. Transparent plastics (40 kg) containing the foodstuff are stored and then disposed of in the local market at Diabo, Djebonoua, Beoumi. However, the attieke follows another route, since it is transported outside Côte d'Ivoire (Burkina, Mali, Niger, Guinea). This is the justification for the words of Aka (2013a):

When the attieke is shipped to neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Guinea Conakry and Liberia, it is transported in a van, taxi or private car to the International Bus Station (GRI) of the destination country where Find the coaches or at the airport. Because of its economic growth, Côte d'Ivoire attracts nationals from neighboring countries. The latter adopt the same eating habits as the Ivorian people and when they return to their countries of origin, they consume Ivorian products including attieke and banana.

To understand the economic importance of making the attieke, let us take the example of a woman. If we assume that it produces twenty five (25) bags per week, and that they are sold at five thousand (5000) FCFA (unit price), the monthly income is estimated to be one hundred and twenty Five (125000) FCFA.

The data confirms an evolutionary downward trend in earnings. In fact, from January to April, incomes have risen, due to the dry season. This period is conducive to the harvesting of tuberous roots, the drying of semolina and the cooking of attieke. Conversely, the months of May, June and July are characterized by rains. They make the slopes impracticable for the transport of tubers by vehicles and tricycles. The gloomy weather does not facilitate the drying of cassava flour, the vanning and the preparation of semolina, which justifies the decrease of

the incomes. From August to December, we see an increase in earnings, as the dry season settles, leading to normalization of work. According to Krabi and Desamoi (2015) : *"In Côte d'Ivoire, the attieke is the subject of important transactions and is the source of income for many modest, poorly organized women of study who have made her production a full-fledged activity"*

- The socio-cultural value of the activity

On the question, here are the respondents comments:

My husband worked before at the industrial zone of Bouaké, today he is unemployed to help him I am obliged to do the attieke. With attieke we manage to pay our electricity water bill. It doesn't feel like my husband's unemployment. Children eat hungry and go to school as if their dad is in office (K. P, 44 years old).

With incomes of the attieke, we celebrate the feast of beauty. We help our village's association. When in the community, I am asked to send money because there is a problem, I give for me and for Sir. I take care of the family. I pay luxury loincloths, chains for the holidays. In any case, it's okay (A.L, 52 years old).

There are a number of factors that explain women's involvement in this work. We distinguish in the first place the precarious living conditions. According to the data, the husbands of 107 producers are unemployed. This respondent attests:

My husband does not earn work, we had more means to do our need that's why I made the attieke to be able to help my family (Y. B, 48 years).

My husband worked before at the industrial zone of Bouaké, today he is unemployed to help him I am obliged to do the attieke. With that, we can pay our electricity bill. It doesn't feel like my husband's unemployment. Children eat hungry and go to school as if their dad is in office (K. P, 57 years old).

These women are involved in the manufacture of attieke, because of poverty. Alone, in the face of adversities (different needs), they are forced to work. The situation of impoverishment lived is not specific to this fringe of the population, because it is perceptible throughout Côte d'Ivoire. The proliferation of small trades, grouped under the term of informal activities, justifies the state of poverty among the populations. Thus, whether in urban or rural areas, the manufacture of traditional soap, attieke, street restoration, the sale of fruit and shoemaking are all activities that expose the employment situation in the country. Since the structural adjustment programs imposed on Côte d'Ivoire, following the crisis of the years 80, key sectors have been sold off to multinational companies. Examples of water and electricity are an illustration. This economic cure demanded by the funders, resulted in redundancies, unemployment, dislocation of families in the modest populations. We mentioned above, that social and cultural are rejected on the periphery of the economic machine. In the Face of precarious living conditions, the

women of Koffikro can only rely on their will. They have thus used a spirit of creativity or invention, engaging in the work of cassava, a source of income. Dramane (2014)² confirms the precariousness of employment. According to the author, the World counted in 2013, 75 million of young people unemployed. 38 million of these young unemployed live in Africa. In total, Africa has 200 million inhabitants between 18 and 24 years of age, or 40% of the working population. The unemployment rate among this population is double that of adults. These young people with no professional prospects are a *"lost generation, threatening social cohesion"*. For Agepe³, the unemployment rate is estimated at 5.3%. But this figure does not find the approval of union officials. Boga⁴ challenges the definition that Agepe gives of employment. For him, only sustainable and durable activities that provide for the needs of the family deserve to be withheld. As a result, any precarious and ephemeral employment, maneuvering work, cabin managers, street sweepers, in short the 'I'm doing ' are not jobs. Jobs without a declaration to the CNPS⁵, without social security and without a pay report, should be counted among those created or exercised. Clearly, unemployment is a worrying situation in Côte d'Ivoire, as elsewhere.

Secondly, the implication of this social category in the activity is also justified by the social needs to be met. This respondent attests:

With income of attieke, we celebrate the feast of Passover. We pay our association dues. Per month, I can earn 150,000 FCFA. That's what I'm celebrating Paquinou. Last month I sold my attieke at 162,000 FCFA. With that, I'm paying for the Christmas party and the first of January. I also pay the good loincloths, the chains for me and the kids, which I keep. When there is the feast, we dress in the village (K. T, 43 years).

Among the needs are those that are physiological. In fact, incomes allow women to provide education for children. For example, school fees, supplies and lodging are taken into account. Twice a week, they travel to the duty stations (Abidjan, Botro, Sakassou) to support them through sums of money (accommodation, clothing, food). They also intervene in health costs, household water and electricity bills. Income is also intended to enrich the family's clothing heritage. This is why loincloths of names (Kita, Dutch), adornments (gold, silver) are purchased for the celebration of ceremonies, including the feast of Yams and puberty (atoungle). The implication of cassava incomes in the socio-cultural life of the population is shared by many societies, including the Odjukru. Esso (1979a) confirms:

As for the agent of the attieke, they are intended to provide gold jewel, loincloths of values, bowls and

² Dramane Aidara, Specialist on Employment Development Strategies (International Labor Office of Dakar)

³ Agency for studies and promotion of employment (Côte d'Ivoire)

⁴ Boga Dago Elie, Président of the central dignity

⁵ National social insurance case

luxurious plates. Odjukru women have always been regular customers of Nzema gold jewel merchants... The woman uses her money to help the man take care of the children's schooling, for small household expenses. But mainly, it uses it to feed the family treasure. Some women, after each sale, returned from Abidjan with a full of loin cloth or jewel.

In the third place, activity is a factor of social integration. The work of cassava has allowed several women to change their social position. They have invested in construction. Thus, many producers have paid for land and built houses. They are solicited for money and in-kind support to the village community. The example of this fringe of the population, the company of the attieke is for the woman Odjukru, the means to integrate at least to hold its place in a society, where politically it is marginalized, in the sense that it does not for instance part of the Assembly Village politics, the supreme organ of democratic decisions, based on age-classes. It is integrated by its economic power (Esso, 1979b). Despite this socioeconomic importance, the manufacture of attieke has resulted in situations of discomfort.

2. The constraints associated with the activity

This part of the study analyses the health risks associated with the activity. On the question, respondents argue:

The work of the attieke is not easy. You have to go early to the field, dig up the cassava with difficulty. After that, you have to sit down to peel, cut out the pulp and then wash. It is still necessary to sit down to knead and sift. We have pain all over the body. We cough too, and then the eyes also hurt (B. A, 32 years; K. K, 48 years old). We distinguish joint pain caused by the intensity of the movements. In its study the socio-health impact of cassava exploitation in Odjukru countries, Adalia (2005a) Explains how joint diseases occur. According to the author, the repetitive movements and the intensity of the work (direct causes) are at the origin of the disease. During the activity, the women, the slightly inclined forward are seated on stools. They peel and shred the cassava pulp. In the same position, for hours, they knead and sift the semolina. The posture adopted during the weeks exposes them to joint diseases including osteoarthritis. Kra⁶ says:

The spine is used to facilitate movements and not to support the loads. When a woman is carrying tubers, that part of the body undergoes pressure. The action causes friction at the vertebral level, which in the long run causes cervical, dorsal and lumbar pain. Also, when the peasants bend during the clearing, the mounding, the cuttings, the weeding, the spine is solicited. Thus, repetitive bending movements cause lesions, resulting in lumbar pain commonly referred to as "kidney ailments." To raise the load, women bend, thus seeking the spine, which is not

advisable. Because the essential function of this part is to restore the balance of the body, the movements and not to perform bending movements from front to back. These women should rather flex their legs, made to support the loads (weight). But the opposite is happening at home. In this way, the poor distribution of energy causes joint diseases for sure.

Lung ailments are also among the diseases. They are generated by the gases. For Adalia (2005b), the burning of firewood used in the baking of cassava semolina produces smoke, a mixture of gaseous products and solid particles, of varying colors is toxic to the organism. Similarly, under the action of fire, water vapor emanating from the transformation of cassava into attieke contains oxalique⁵ and cyanhydrique⁶ acids. These gases are depositing at a frantic speed in the airways. Foreign bodies, they prevent the normal functioning of the alveoli. Some organisms (microphages) intervene to destroy these elements outside the organism, which causes the cough, in the woman, involved in the manufacture of the attieke. These pathologies are recurrent.

A factor, the low level of education justifies this persistence. According to data, 80 women are illiterate, when 35 people have the primary level (elementary). According to the latest population and habitat census (RGPH) of the 267167 inhabitants of the Bounkani, 84.3 % of this population is illiterate and the city of Bouna notes an illiteracy rate of 84.6 % (AIP, 2016). It is also the position of Koffi (2011) which argues that in Côte d'Ivoire, the illiterate population represents a very significant proportion in society with a rate oscillating between 57% and more. She is dynamic and is confronted with the use of French in her attempt at the quest for well-being. The low level of education does not allow them to be aware that the intensity of the work, the excessive and repetitive movements cause joint problems. They also do not know that inhalation of gases (smoke, water vapour) causes lung disease. They do not know that some plant species such as acacia, Teak, bété wood are toxic. For Laurent Aké-Assi and Ballee Pity, the green wood of the rubber is toxic, as is the Bété wood. These are the chemical substances contained in rubber and mansoïne, for Bété Wood. It is a dangerous poison that the Bété used to poison their arrows. Tali is a species mainly found in Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon. Its bark provides a deadly poison. It should be remembered that the most harmful foods are those that are directly smoked and braised (smoked fish and various chickens and fish that are "stung" with rubber wood cut green (Fatima, 2013). The use of teak and Asia exposes them to lung ailments, as smoke is constantly inhaled by women during cooking.

In addition to these pathologies are some diseases related to the consumption of raw cassava whose diabetes. This is the justification for Ranivontsoarivony's (2001) assertion:

We report the story of a young Comorian aged 24, a large consumer of raw cassava and malnourished since

⁶ Traumatologist, Bouaké University Hospital Center

childhood. The patient had diabetes mellitus by chronic calcified complicated pancreatitis of onset retinopathy and neuropathy. Protein deficiency associated with raw cassava consumption could be recognized as a factor in fibrocalculeux pancreatic diabetes.

What lesson can we learn from this study?

The survey on the measurement of living standards carried out in 2015 showed that the incidence of poverty declined by about 51% in 2011, to 46% in 2015 (APA, 2015). Despite this ' ' economic embellishment ', people with modest incomes live in poverty.

The housewife's basket is dwindling from days to days. That is why vulnerable populations, convinced that employment-related political discourses are decoys, engage in informal activities. The example of the manufacture of the attieke is an illustration. If the political authorities are disarmed in the face of ever-increasing unemployment, they do not also frame, and do not sufficiently sensitize women who are largely illiterate in the face of the risks associated with the production of the foodstuff. The proliferation of ' small trades ' in Côte d'Ivoire shows that the policy of the use of the wing. As a result, a deconstruction of this policy is indispensable for the sustainable resolution of the issue of population impoverishment.

Conclusion

The precarious living conditions led the women of Koffikro (Bouaké) to involve in cassava producing, especially its manufacture to get attieke. As activity, it become more important for the largest of the population. Indeed, this commodity is a source of wealth because it provides women with substantial financial gain. The incomes of the activity allow to meet the socio-cultural needs and promote social integration. Despite its economic and socio-cultural values, this activity worries by recurrent health risks, linked to the low level of education of women and the lack of supervision and awareness of the authorities. Aka (2013b) confirms that "these traditional producers with low education level, without adequate training are organized as well as poorly to make the daily production of the attieke, a full-fledged work, source of income for the family, but also for the national economy".

That is why a critical analysis or deconstruction of employment policy in Côte d'Ivoire is necessary.

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