

**Livelihood implications of non-timber forest products trade in Ogun State, Nigeria.**

**By:**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study assessed Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) trade in Abeokuta South Local Government Area of Ogun State through personal interview of 100 marketers with semi-structured questionnaires to get information on their socio-economic and business characteristics. Data generated were analysed and presented using descriptive statistics (Tables and percentages) and budgetary technique. The result shows that 52% of the NTFPs handlers were females, 62% are within age 21-50, 71% are married; 39% had primary school leaving certificate, 32% holds Senior School certificate, 16% had tertiary education while 13% had no formal education. The major occupation of the respondents are trading (36%), farming (34%), hunting (22%) and civil service (8%). The major NTFPs handled by the respondents are medicinal and cosmetic plant products (25%), food products and fuel wood (20% each) and extractive products (16%). Forty two percent got into the business by inheritance, 28% entered through training while 30% entered on both. Majority (66%) are not aware of any governmental restriction on the collection and utilization of NTFPs in the area, the highest mean income (₦29,794.12) while the lowest mean income (₦13,981.25) comes from fiber. The study concludes that NTFPs are important natural resources providing sustainable source of livelihood (>\$2/day) for the residents of the study area and recommends state-wide inventory of NTFPs to provide databank for planning and enforcement of appropriate forest laws and regulation to ensure sustainable utilisation of the available NTFPs resources in Ogun state.*

**Keywords:** Non-timber forest products, Livelihood, Trade, Abeokuta, Sustainable.

### **Introduction**

There is a wide range of non-wood forest product and services differing in their source, nature, characteristics and utilization. Their conservation, management, utilization, trade and socio-economic roles present a complex array of problems and potentials. From time immemorial these product and services have contributed greatly to human welfare and progress. Once designated as Minor Forest Product (MFP); these important group of forest products have recently been receiving increasing recognition and attention. Depending on the scope and coverage they are grouped and defined differently. The term Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) generally includes all tangible products other than timber, fuel wood and charcoal derived from forests or any land under similar use as well as woody plants. The term Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) includes all tangible products other than timber and includes wood energy (fuel wood and charcoal). The other term in use, non-timber forest benefits, includes, in addition to all tangible products other than timber, environmental and socio-cultural services. It is often contended that if oils and chemicals obtained by destructive distillation of wood is treated as non-wood forest product, then wood energy should also be so treated and the differentiation between NWFP and NTFP becomes redundant.

Non-Timber forest products include a number of products under the broad categories of food and food additives, fodder, fiber and flosses, (biomass) fertilizer, physiochemical and aroma chemicals, oils, latex, resins and other exudates, organic construction materials, decorative articles, and animal products. A large number of items of our everyday use such as medicines, perfumes, suntan lotions, nail polish, mouth wash, hair conditioners, toiletries, cheese, chewing gum, ice cream, soft drinks, juice drinks, peanut butter, edible nuts, breakfast cereals, culinary herbs, canned fish, dairy desserts, fancy bags decorative buttons, chess pieces, golf balls, paints, corrosion inhibitors, fungicides and a host of others, contain varying proportion of NTFP.

Apart from the crucial importance of NTFP in the daily life and welfare of local communities in meeting their diversified subsistence needs as well as providing additional income and employment many items of these products have social and cultural roots. Some of these products are among the oldest traded commodities whereas other are known only locally within traditional systems of use. Non-timber forest products support local craft production. Activities related to collection and primary processing of NTFP lend themselves suitable for equitable participation of women. They provide raw material to support processing enterprises such as essential oils, gum rosin and pharmaceuticals. Small scale units of these are amenable to be linked to

central refining and further processing units. Processing of NTFP into consumer products can result in considerable value addition. They are in many cases an important sources of foreign exchange earnings. Under natural conditions, non-timber products can be managed along with timber in an integrated manner, thus increasing overall productivity. Their proper management can support conservation of genetic wealth and variability some of them can also be grown as pure or mixed crops and under agro forestry systems. Often non-timber product can be harvested without cutting down trees or destroying forests. They are therefore, environmentally more friendly. Overall non-timber forest products have strong linkages and complementarities with component activities of environmentally sound and sustainable development of forestry.

Development of non-timber forest products can go a long way in providing additional rural employment and household income, and thus contribute to a better livelihood to the rural people.

Constraints to the Development of NTFPS

There is general absence of inventory of NTFP, and their planning often lacks scientific basis. The extent of variation in the nature, quality, characteristics and uses of the products compounds the problem. Products which do not contribute significantly to the national economy, tend to get less attention.

Exploitative commercialization of NTFP in some countries results in the collectors or extractors of products receiving only insufficient incentive to manage the resources sustainably.

Finally, there is lack of clear and appropriate policy support for NTFP development in spite of their positive attributes and potential.

Material and Methods

Primary data were collected through the use of semi-structured questionnaires administered on 100 randomly selected marketers of NTFPs in the study area while secondary data were sourced from already published journals, books and internet facilities. Data generated were analysed and presented using descriptive statistics and budgetary technique.

**Results**

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents (N=100)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48	48.00
Female	52	52.00
<b>Age</b>		
Under 20 yrs	8	8.00
21-30yrs	10	10.00
31-40yrs	24	24.00
41-50yrs	28	28.00
51-60yrs	10	10.00
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	10	10.00
Married	71	71.00
Widow	19	19.00
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Non- formal education	13	13.00
Primary	39	39.00
Secondary	32	32.00
Tertiary	16	16.00

Field Survey, 2013

**Table 2: Business characteristics of respondents (N= 100)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Major Occupation</b>		
Farming	34	34.00
Hunting	22	22.00
Trading	36	36.00
Civil service	8	8.00
<b>Type of NTFP Collected</b>		
Fiber products	8	8.00
Food Products	20	20.00
Medicinal and Cosmetic plant products	25	25.00
Extractive Products	16	16.00
Animal and animal products other than food	8	8.00
Fuel wood	20	20.00
Miscellaneous products	3	3.00
<b>Mode of Entry into the business</b>		
Inheritance	42	42.00
Training	28	28.00
Both	30	30.00
<b>Awareness of Government restrictions on collection of NTFPs</b>		
Yes	34	34.00
No	66	66.00

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 3: Average Monthly income accruable from NTFPs Trade in the study Area

Estimated monthly income	No	Minimum (₦)	Maximum (₦)	Mean (₦)	\$ Equivalen t /day
Fiber	8	4,800.00	38,500.00	13,981.25	2.91
Food products	20	3,500.00	40,000.00	22,791.67	4.75
Medicinal and Cosmetic plant products	25	8,500.00	50,000.00	29,794.12	6.21
Extractive products	16	1,500.00	56,000.00	22,100.00	4.60
Animals and animal products other than food	8	1,650.00	43,000.00	21,750.00	4.53
Fuel woods	20	4,500.00	42,700.00	21,182.50	4.41
Miscellaneous products	3	25,000.00	30,000.00	27,500.00	5.73
Income from Alternative occupation	16	5,000.00	45,000.00	28,481.25	5.93

Source: Field survey, 2013

## Discussions

Table 1 shows that majority (52.6%) of the NTFPs handlers are females while only (47.4%) are males. This shows that there is female gender dominance in NTFPs collection, processing and marketing in the study area which is in consonance with the findings of Olawumi, *et al*, 2013 where a 60% of the chewing sticks processors were female. In terms of age, about 37% of the respondents, are within age 41-50yrs, about 32% are within 31-40yrs, 13% of the respondents are within 21-30yrs and just about 8% of the respondents are below 20years of age (Table 1).

According to Poulsen (1981), People within the age of 41-50yrs are involved in NTFP collection as shown in the table above. This age range of the respondents depicts active working population involvement in the business and this will enhance their productivity in the business in line with the report of Olawumi, *et al* (2012) that most of the chewing stick marketers in Ogbomoso metropolis of Oyo state are within the economically active age group which is expected to enhance their business demands. From Table 1, it is shown that most NTFP handlers are married (76.3%), 13.2% are single while about 8% are widow. The implication is that most of the respondents are people with responsibilities and that the income made from the business is used in sustaining their dependants as opined by Olawumi, *et al* (2012). In terms of religion, most (57.9%) of the respondents practices Islam while 42.1% practices Christianity. Table 1 further show that majority (39.5%) of the respondents are school certificate holders, while primary school holders are 34.2%, non formal education are 2.6%, tertiary institution graduates are just 23.7%. This implies that all the respondents have one form of education or the other which is expected to impact positively on their business which is in agreement with Banjo, *et al* (2012) that both traditional and modern education are important in development and efficiency in grasscutter farming in Ogun waterside Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Table 2 shows that the major occupation of the respondents are trading (45%), farming (36.8%), Civil servants (13.2%) and Hunting (5.3%). Non timber forest products collection can be approximately said to be subsidiary occupation for most of the respondents as against the earlier report in a previous study by Olawumi, *et al*, (2012, 2013) where trade in chewing stick; an example of Non Timber Forest product was either sole or major occupation.

Table 2 shows that majority (44.7%) of the NTFPs handlers in the area are involved in the medicinal and cosmetic plant products, (21%) are involved in food products, fuel wood handlers are (15.8%) this is in line with the findings of Awe, *et.*, 2011 that among the reasons households collect non timber forest products are food security, self employment, income generation and continuity and it also agrees with earlier reports by Andel (2006) and Jimoh and Haruna (2007) that NTFPs are used as food and food condiments by rural households. Table 2 also reveal that 55% of the respondents got involved in the business by inheritance, 34% are trained and only few (about 8% by both inheritance and training). Table 2 in addition, reveals clearly that there is no governmental restriction on the utilization of non-timber forest products in the area (87%) only a few (13.2%) indicated

that there is no governmental restriction on the utilization of non-timber forest products in the area. This corroborates the reports of Osemeobo and Ujor (1999) that Most of the NWFP are treated as intangibles with free access and little restriction. The average income generated by non timber forest products traders in the study area ranges from ₦ 13,981.25 (\$2.91) and ₦ 28,481.25 (\$5.93) a day depending on the type product handled as shown in Table 3. According to Kusters, *et al.*, (2006) assessments of non timber forest product (NTFP) trade has a positive impact on local livelihoods as depicted in the current findings that handlers earns over two U.S Dollars a day .

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that NTFPs are important natural resources providing sustainable source of livelihood (>\$2/day) for the residents of the study area and recommends state-wide inventory of NTFPs to provide databank for planning and enforcement of appropriate forest laws and regulation to ensure sustainable utilisation of the available NTFPs resources in Ogun state and Nigeria as a whole.

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