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CHALLENGES OF NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS MARKETING IN KIRFI, BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

NTFPs played significant role in food and medical care; feeds for their domestic animals and materials for local construction such as cutlasses and hoes handles, saplings and thatch for building constructions. They also trade with non-timber forest products to generate cash income. However, challenges abound in seasons, collections and marketing of NTFPs, therefore, challenges of NTFPs in Kirfi, Bauchi State was investigated. A purposive sampling method was adopted. A total of 165 semi-structured questionnaire with close and open ended questions were purposively administered to the followings in the order harvesters/collectors (55), Processors (55) and Marketers (55) of NTFPs in the study area with only 160 retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages. The result on seasonal availability of forest products showed that, rainy season had 48(30%) and dry season 112(70%) respectively (Table 1). The result of challenge in the collection of NTFPs by households in the study area showed that, Majority (27.5%) of the respondents reported poor roads as the major problem faced by households that collects and sale NTFPs in the study area. This is followed by scarcity of NTFPs with (25.0%); inadequate finance with (18.8%) coupled with insecurity with (12.5%) and high cost of transport (16.2%) respectively (Table 2). The result on the challenge of marketing NTFPs in the study area showed that, poor market accessibility, (27.5%); low pricing, (25.0%); lack of storage facilities, (18.7%); inadequate buyers (12.5%) and inadequate grading, 16.5% respectively (Table 3). In conclusion, NTFPs played significant role in food and medical care; feeds for their domestic animals and materials for local construction such as cutlasses and hoes handles, saplings and thatch for building constructions. They also trade with non-timber forest products to generate cash income. However, challenges abound in seasons, collections and marketing of NTFPs. Based on the above challenges, the followings are recommended; Non-Timber forest products occupy a significant place in the economy of rural dwellers in the study area; there is need for government to increase their funding for tree planting campaign in order to augment the natural forest. The people of the communities should also be encouraged to embark on planting of economic trees to support some cottage industries located in the area which can help to reduce rural-urban population drift and the prevailing unemployment by providing raw materials for crafting and carving industries. Enrichment planting and planting on farms and around the houses to reduce pressure on NTFPs in the wild.

Keywords: Challenges; Non Timber Forest Products; Kirfi; Marketing

Introduction

Forests provide products for different uses at households and industrial levels. These products are grouped into timber and non-timber products. The non- timber forest products are product of biological origin, other than wood, derived from forest for income and sustenance. The non- timber forest products may be sourced from wild or forest plantation. Several million household worldwide heavily depend on non- timber forest product for subsistence or income. A huge number of industries also depend on non -timber forest product for raw materials. Non-Timber Forest Products are utilized for various purposes in Kirfi, Bauchi State. They include game animals, fur-bearers, nuts, seeds, berries, mushrooms, oils, sap, foliage, pollarding, medicinal plants, peat, mat, fuel wood, fish, insects, spices, and forage. Utilization of these products aids in poverty alleviation of rural populace. The list of NTFPs cannot be exhausted and its distribution depends on geographical region and climate which dictates the type of vegetation in an area just like the tropical forest trees (Agbogidi, 2003, 2010).

Although timber products are highly valued worldwide, the NTFPs which play an important role in sustaining livelihoods of communities living around forest areas, but have been given minimum attention. Although NTFPs may not be the most important income generating products for local people living close to the forests, they contribute significantly to household income, food security, and household healthcare as well as, provision of multiple social and cultural values (Akani and Okonta, 2003; Akani, 2013).

The utilization of NTFPs varies from one place to another depending on the economic and cultural contexts. In developed countries, for instance, NTFPs are usually used for cultural and recreational purposes, biodiversity conservation, and rural economic development. In developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia, they are mostly utilized for subsistence and income generation. In the developing nations, NTFPs are therefore considered a safety net that fills the gaps due to a shortfall in agricultural production or other forms of emergencies (Clark and Sunderland, 2013).

Economic estimates of approximately USD 90 billion per annum have been set for NTFPs worldwide, and approximately one-third of the same is consumed in the local economy without entering the market. Most researchers have observed that, rural households in Nigeria derived up to 80% of their incomes from the sales of NTFPs In addition, FAO, (1995, 2000, 2002) reported that, over 70% of the country's households depend directly on fuelwood as their main sources of energy with daily consumption estimated at 27.5 million

kg/day. Thus, harvesting and processing of NTFPs in many areas in the country have shifted from subsistence exploitation and sales at the local markets to international cross-boundary trade. For example, in the high forest zones of Eastern and Western Nigeria, harvesting of game meat and snails for sales are now major income generating activities almost all year round while in the Savannah zone of Central and Northern Nigeria, honey, fuelwood, locust bean seeds, gum arabic, and charcoal production generate lots of incomes for the rural households (Falconer, 1990; Olajide, 2003; Jimoh and Adebisi, 2005). Similar contributions of NTFPs to rural wellbeing have been reported in other African countries including Kenya and Tanzania (shackleton and Shackleton, 2004). Despite the above, marketing of NTFPs are faced with alots of challenges but these challenges are not documented in the study area and hence the need for this study.

Materials and Methods

Location of the Study Area

Kirfi Local Government Area is situated in the North Easthern part of Bauchi State. The Local Government Area shared common boundaries with Gombe to the east, Alkaleri to the north, Darazo to the south and Ganjuwa to the west. The Local Government Area lies between latitude $10^0$39'and $39^0$37' north and longitude $10^0$31' and $56^0$03' east (Fig.1 and 2). It has its population estimate put at 179,400(NPC, 2006). The predominant ethnic groups living in the area are Hausa, Bure, Fulani, Sayawa and Jarawa. Major occupations of the inhabitants include farming, hunting, business, civil services, crafting etc. (Nigeria National Bureau of statistics 2010).

Figure 2: Map of Bauchi showingKirfi Local Government area.

Results and Discussion

Challenge of Seasonality of Forest Products

The result on seasonal availability of forest products showed that, rainy season had 48(30%) and dry season 112(70%) respectively (Table 1).

Table 1: Challenge of Seasonality of Forest Products

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Rainy season	48	30
Dry season	112	70
Total	**160**	**100**

Field Survey (2022)

The high percentage recorded of dry season on seasonal availability of forest products implied that, forest product are affected by seasons as they are mostly seen in the markets during the dry season. This means that during the rainy season most of NTFPs will be growing to maturity and will only be ready for harvest and on ward transportation to the market for sales in dry season. This is therefore one of the challenges of marketing NTFPs in the study area. The findings of the study corroborates Zaku *et al. (*2022a, 2022b) on his studies of Sonkpa forest reserve and Gashaka-Gumti National Park respectively.

Challenge of NTFPs Collection

The result of challenge in the collection of NTFPs by households in the study area showed that, Majority (27.5%) of the respondents reported poor roads as the major problem faced by households that collects and sale NTFPs in the study area. This is followed by scarcity of NTFPs with (25.0%); inadequate finance with (18.8%) coupled with insecurity with (12.5%) and high cost of transport (16.2%) respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Challenges of NTFPs collection in the study area

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Insecurity	20	12.5
Inadequate finance	30	18.8
Scarcity of NTFPs	40	25.0
Poor roads	44	27.5
High cost of transport	26	16.2
Total	**160**	**100**

Field Survey (2022)

The high percentages recorded of poor roads, scarcity of NTFPs, inadequate finance, high cost of transportation and insecurity implied that, they are the challenges of NTFPs collection in the study area. The major problem is that the NTFPs providing plants are highly been over exploited and are scarce and cannot go round adequately to the households. One has to travel long distances before sighting them. The findings of the study agreed with the submission of Shackleton and shackleton, (2004).

Challenge of marketing NTFPs in the study area

The result on the challenge of marketing NTFPs in the study area showed that, poor market accessibility, (27.5%); low pricing, (25.0%); lack of storage facilities, (18.7%); inadequate buyers (12.5%) and inadequate grading, 16.5% respectively (Table 3).

Table 3: Challenges of marketers NTFPs in the study area

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of buyer	20	12.5
Lack of storage	30	18.75
low pricing of NTFPs	40	25.0
Poor market accessibility	44	27.5
In adequate grading	26	16.25
Total	**160**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The high percentages recorded of lack of buyer, storage, low pricing of NTFPs, Poor market accessibility and inadequate grading on challenges of marketing NTFPs in the study area implied that, they are the challenges of marketing NTFPs in the study area. One of the challenges of marketing NTFPs is having ready buyers and the need to preserve them when they are not sold. The roads from forest to most markets are bad and most NTFPs donot have standards or grades for prices, all these pose serious challenges to the marketing of NTFPs in the study area. The above corroborates the findings of Tee and Amonum, (2008) respectively.

Conclusion

NTFPs played significant role in food and medical care; feeds for their domestic animals and materials for local construction such as cutlasses and hoes handles, saplings and thatch for building constructions. They also trade with non-timber forest products to generate cash income. However, challenges abound in seasons, collections and marketing of NTFPs.

Recommendations

Based on the above challenges, the followings are recommended; Non-Timber forest products occupy a significant place in the economy of rural dwellers in the study area; there is need for government to increase their funding for tree planting campaign in order to augment the natural forest. The people of the communities should also be encouraged to embark on planting of economic trees to support some cottage industries located in the area which can help to reduce rural-urban population drift and the prevailing unemployment by providing raw materials for crafting and carving industries. Enrichment planting and planting on farms and around the houses to reduce pressure on NTFPs in the wild.

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