NTFPs Collection as an Alternative Source of Income for Poverty Alleviation among Rural Farmers in Egbeda Local Government Oyo State

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Abstract

The study investigated Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) collection as an alternative source of income for poverty alleviation among rural farmers in Egbeda local government of Oyo state.The local government has six(6) rural wards while five(5)wards were selected at random by balloting system and semi-structural questionnaire was administered to 80 respondents. The data collection were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics while Gross margin model was used to calculate the cost and rate of returns of NTFPs.The results showed that males and age range 40-49years were predominate in the study.Furthermore, majority of the respondents had no formal education andalso married. The gross margin analysis per respondent per month shows that the rate of return for vegetable,fire wood,medicinal plant,charcoal,bush meat,honey,chewing stick,forest fruit were profitable business since the rate of return was greatera than 1.Moreover, poor marketing,low demand,price fluctuation, irregular supply of product and transportation are the most challenging factors facing the marketing of NTFPs in the selected area.Government can help in ameliorating these problems by helping to develop the rural area especially by providing good roads that will link our rural area and the forest so as to enhance easy transportation .In addition, people should pay more attention to these enterprise as one of the avenue to address the high rate ofunemploymentin the Egbeda local government and especially Nigeria in general.

Keywords: *Poverty alleviation, Rural farmers, Gross margin analysis, Questionnaires, Unemployment.*

1. Introduction

Wikens(1991)defined non-timber forest products(NTFPs)as all forest products other than timber that are extracted from the forest ecosystems and utilized within the household or marketed or have social,cultural or religious significance.The NTFPs, therefore refer to both tangible forest products that are gathered from the forest by local people for home use(food, fibre and forage)as well as for income generation.

Unlike timber-based products, Non-timber forest product (NTFPs) came from a large variety of plant parts and is formed into adverse set of products. As submitted by Chamberlain (*1998*) NTFPs contribute significantly to local and regional economics; and with the current trend in the trade and use of NTFPs, it is bound to grow substantially over the next decades. Like timber, NTFPs may further be processed into consumer oriented products. Value is added to NTFPs through processing of the products throughthe use of machines, chemicals and other means.

The indigenous people and peasant communitiesmay not have what it takes to sustainably add value to NTFPs. This is because value addition may involve huge capital which may not be easilyaccessible to the rural dwellers. But as submitted by Donovan,*et. al.* (2006) they have started to formSmall and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) to add value to their timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Though, such enterprises credit facilities are available to aid product development, provide incentives for sound forest management, support increased value addition, and promote the formationof human, social, physical and financial capital forsustainable production of timber and NTFPs. In their own study, Peters *et.al.* (1989) estimated thelong term economic returns from the forests managed for Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) intropical forests as greater than the net returns fromtimber or conversion of forest to agricultural use. This proposition attracted many forest conservationists in favor of NTFP management. Many developing countries

like Nigeria have initiated moves to allocate financial and human resources in the promotion of NTFP activities but there have been mixed response regarding impact of NTFP harvesting in forest environment and livelihoods.

Ruiz Pérez, and Byron (1999) were of the opinion that conservation of the world's tropical forestsdepends on finding new products, developing markets and improving marketing systems for NTFPs. Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO,2011) and The Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC,2011and2012) assume that communities will conserve and protect forest resources if they receive tangible benefits from sustainable forest utilization. Lynch (1995) recognized the importance of NTFPs for income generation and food security and Shiva(1995)reposed NTFPs as the "potential pillars of sustainable forestry". The importance of NTFPs notwithstanding, when compared with timber they have historically been neglected by governments particularly in Nigeria. The capacity to promote sustainable use of NTFP and facilitate increased financial benefits to localusers as incentives for forest conservation isconsequently low. This was reposed by Adepoju and Salau (2007) that gaps exist in understandingthe range of products used from forests, their taxonomic classification, socio-economic values, technical packages and the policy contexts for their sustainable use. They were also of the opinion thatpolicy development is still largely disconnected from field experiences (Adepoju and Salau, *op. cit*). Promoting sustainable use of NTFPs through value addition require financial input. This can be achieved through several means, one of which credit facilities plays a vital role.

World Bank (2004) defined poverty as a condition of insufficient resources or income where in its most extreme form is the lack of basic human needs such as health services, education, drinking water and so on. The distribution of extreme poverty by occupation category further revealed that agricultural and forestry contributed the highest percentage (64.7%) of national poverty in Nigeria. These millions of small scale farmers are entrapped in self-reinforcing cycle of poverty, low income leading to low saving which in turn leads to low investment and consequent low comsumption, low health status, low productivity and eventual persistence of poverty (World Bank 1996).Social indicators which include illiteracy level, health, nutritional status, housing, water, sanitation and access to credit reveal the incidences ,depth and severity of poverty in Nigeria. These indicators are compressed into Human Development Indicators (HDI) as reported by Zanna (2000) and Salvia (2007).

Ensuring a thriving agricultural economy is critical for reducing poverty, enabling food security and managing natural resources in a sustainable fashion. Past attempt to alleviate poverty in Nigeria which yielded minimal fruit can be grouped into two distinct areas: Pre-SAP, SAP/Post SAP. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN),Free and compulsory Primary Education (FCPE), Green Revolution, Low cost Housing, River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP),Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS),Strategies Grain Reserves Programme (SGRP),Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), and Rural Banking Programme (RBP) were all Pre-SAP Programme mostly designed to take care of employment generation, enhancing agricultural output and income, and stemming the rural-urban migration tide.SAP/Post-SAP Programme includes:Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE),Better Life Programme (BLP),People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Community Banks Programme ,Family Support Programme (FSP) and Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). The Obasanjo regime established the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001, under this scheme such as Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS), Capacity Acquistion Programme (CAP), and Natural Resources Development Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)(Ali,2006).These programme were geared toward the alleviation of poverty but made little or no impact on the people due to implementation. Its,therefore, becomes pertinent to examine Non-Timber Forest Product collection as an alternative source of income for poverty allieviation among rural farmers. A case study in Egbeda local government area of Oyo state.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Area

This study area is Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo state, Nigeria with an average population 319,388people.It is sub-divided into eleven ward and they are Erunmu, Aiyede-Alugbo, Odo Oba, Lekesumu, Ayiwogbo, Olodo, Ayepe, Wakajaye, Osegere, Alakia and Adegbayi, Olubadan and Egbeda. The town is located on latitude 7°21″N -8°Nand Longitude 4° 02″E - 4°28″Ewith a landmass of 420.75 square metres. (Lawal,*et al.*2011).

2.2 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A structured questionnaire was administered among males and females who were involved in the extraction and marketing of NTFPs in five (5) wards out of six (6) rural wards which was purposively random sampled. These wards are Erunmu, Ajiwodo, Olodo, Osegere Awaye, Egbeda, Ayede Alugbo.

A total number of 80 questionnaires were distributedto the farmers using stratification sampling method and returned. Altogether, 20 questionnaires in Erunmu, 13 in Ajiwodo, 18 in Osegere, 14 in Egbeda and 15 questionnaires in Ayede based on the existing estimated population.

2.3 Data Analyses

Simple descriptive statistics such as mode, standard deviation, percentages and tables were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Gross margin analysis was used to calculate the cost and returns of NTFPs.

The following models were used to determine the profitability

Gross margin (π) = Total revenue (TR) – Total cost (TC)

Rate of Returns (ROR) = $\frac{\pi}{TC}$ (Yusuff, 2004)[2]

In determining the constraints of NTFPs, four point likert scales was used.

To make inferential statements, the mean score was compared with the critical mean 2.5. If the calculated mean is greater than the standard critical value, the hypothesis is rejected otherwise, it is accepted (Yusuff, 2004)[1].

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondent

The table 1below shows that most respondents were male (58.8%), which shows that male involved in the collection of NTFP than females (Das 2005). It also identified that respondent who were between the age of 40 to 49 years (43.8%) collect NTFP than others followed by youngsters of age 30-39 years (21.3%) respondents of < 30 (18.8%) and (16.3%) were 50-59 years. It also revealed that the height number of respondents were Married 70%, 17.5% Single and 6.3%were Divorced and Widow. The study area being a rural one, (36.3%) of the respondents had no formal education, (30.0%) had primary education, (27.5%) secondary education, NCE/HND/B.Sc. (6.3%) indicating a low level of education. This is in agreement with earlier work by Usman,*et al* (2006) which shows that 83.3% of Garcina kola (a NTFP) sellers in Ibadan were not having formal education. However their engagement of farm practice in the study area could be considered with the maximum years of experience of 1-19 years (68.8%).

Table 1: Socio-Economic Variables

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	Std Deviation
Gender				
Male	47	58.8	Male	0.495
Female	33	41.2		
Total	80	100.0		
Age (years)				
<30	15	18.8		
30-39	17	21.3	40-49	0.978
40-49	35	43.8		
>49	13	16.3		
Total	80	100.0		
Marital Status				
Single	14	17.5		
Married	56	70.0	Married	0.703
Divorced	5	6.3		
Widow	5	6.3		
Total	80	100.0		
Education				
No formal	29	36.3		
Primary	24	30.0	No formal education	0.947
Secondary	22	27.5		
NCE/HND/B.SC	5	6.3		
Total	**80**	**100.0**		
Number of Children				
1-2	8	10.0		
3-4	50	62.5	3-4	0.736
5-6	18	22.5		
Above 6	4	5.0		
Total	80	100.0		
Experience (Years)				
1-19	55	68.8		
20-39	21	26.3	1-19	0.488
40-59	1	1.3		
Above 60	3	3.8		
Total	**80**	**100.00**		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 2 shows the availability of the product in the study area, 46.3% of the respondents often get their NTFPs weekly, 37.5% daily, 16.3% monthly. The study shows that the products were more available weekly.

Table 2: Availability of the product

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	Std Deviation
Daily	30	37.5		
Weekly	37	46.3	Weekly	0.706
Monthly	13	16.3		
Total	80	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 3 revealed that most of respondent (65.0%), often sell their product every day, while (31.3%) once a week, (3.8%) once a month.

E-ISSN 2281-4612
ISSN 2281-3993

Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies
MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy

Vol 3 No 6
November 2014

Table 3: Selling of product

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	Std Deviation
Every Day	52	65.0		
nce a Week	25	31.3	Everyday	0.562
Once a Month	3	3.8		
Total	80	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4 shows that (38.8%) of the farmers get their NTFPs in medium scale while (36.3%) in small scale and 25% get theirs in large scale respectively, indicating that most of the traders were operating at medium scale level. This might be attributed the inadequate finance to operate at large scale level.

Table 4: Scale of Products

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	Std Deviation
Small	29	36.3		
Meduim	31	38.8	Meduim	0.779
Large	20	25.0		
Total	**80**	**100.0**		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 5 shows that (71.3%) of the respondent do not have any other business apart from NTFP collection while (28.8%) of respondent have other business, This shows that majority of them (71.3%) were operating at full time traders on the NTFPs. These findings were not too different from the finding of Miah () in the studies of 170 families in enclaves of chunati wildlife sanctuary, Bangladesh.

Table 5: Business

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	Std Deviation
Yes	23	28.8		
No	57	71.3	No	0.455
Total	80	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 6 revealed that (56.3%) of the farmers have association while (43.8%) of the respondents do not have association in the study area. Belonging to an association will enhance access to marketing information and determination of prices was discussed during their meetings. This is in-line with Usman (2003) who found that 87% of fresh fish traders in Kogi state belong to association.

Table 6: Association

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	STD Deviation
Yes	35	56.3		
No	45	43.8	Yes	0.499
Total	80	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 7 shows that (96.3%) of the respondents have personal savings to finance their business, (66.3%) get theirs through grants (21.3%) through loan from relatives while, (3.8%) through loan from Bank. They finance their business

E-ISSN 2281-4612
ISSN 2281-3993

Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies
MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy

Vol 3 No 6
November 2014

through personal savings.

Table 7: Business Finance

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	Mode	Std Deviation
Personal Saving	77	96.3		
Loan from Bank	3	3.8		
Loan from relatives	17	21.3	Personal	1.099
Grants	53	66.3	Savings	
Total	80	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table 8 below shows the summary of the gross margin analysis and the profitability of the NTFPs in Erunmu,The Profit margin for vegetable, fire wood ,medicinal plant, charcoal, Bushmeat, Honey, chewingstick, forestfruit, were 13050, 1550, 4500, 40499.75, 22799.70, 24799.55, 5280.38, 3144.6 respectively. The rate of return for vegetable, fire wood, medicinal plant, charcoal ,Bush meat, Honey, Chewing stick, Forest fruit were 1.903114, 1.223022,1.818182, 2.173897, 1.878591, 1.494011,1.172827, 1.192975,The results shows that for Erunmu the ROR for the selected NTFPs were greater than 1 meaning that the trading business of NTFPs were profitable business.

Table 8: Gross margin analysis per respondent per month for Erunmu

NTFPS	Cost price(N)	Selling price(N)	Profit margin(N)	Rate of Return (ROR)
Vegetable	14450	27500	13050	1.903114
Fire wood	6950	8500	1550	1.223022
Medicinal plant	5500	10000	4500	1.818182
Charcoal	34500.25	75000	40499.75	2.173897
Bush meat	25950.30	48750	22799.70	1.878591
Honey	50200.45	75000	24799.55	1.494011
Chewing stick	30552.95	35833.33	5280.38	1.172827
Forest fruit	16295.40	19440	3144.6	1.192975

The table 9 below shows the summary of the gross margin analysis and profitability of the NTFPs in Ajiwogbo. The profit margin for vegetable, fire wood, medicinal plant, charcoal, Bush meat was 2299.55, 2097.8, 2124.7, 3769.59, and 3199.6 respectively. The rate of return for vegetable, fire wood, medicinal plant, charcoal, Bush meat were 1.151282, 1.162592, 1.738949, 1.313338, 1.140331 respectively, It is a profitable venture.

Table 9: Gross margin analysis per respondent per month for Ajiwogbo

NTFPS	Cost of price (N)	Selling price(N)	Profit margin(N)	Rate of Return (ROR)
Vegetable	15200.45	17500	2299.55	1.151282
Fire wood	12902.20	15000	2097.8	1.162592
Medicinal plant	2875.30	5000	2124.7	1.738949
Charcoal	12030.41	15800	3769.59	1.313338
Bush meat	22800.40	26000	3199.6	1.140331

The table 10 shows the summary of the Gross margin analysis and the profitability of the NTFPs in Egbeda. The profit margin for vegetable, medicinal plant, Bush meat, Honey, Forest ʻfruit were 3302.99, 1869.6, 1305, 19879.7, 28449.89. The rate of return for vegetable, medicinal plant, Bush meat, Honey, Forest fruit were 1.117836, 1.364416, 1.12061, 1.66001, 1.399016 respectively, Hence, Honey is the most profitable one among the selected NTFPs in area.

Table 10: Gross margin analysis per respondent per month for Egbeda

NTFPS	Cost price(N)	Selling price(N)	Profit margin(N)	Rate of Returns (ROR)
Vegetable	28030.31	31333.3	3302.99	1.117836
Medicinal plant	5130.40	7000	1869.6	1.364416
Bush meat	10820.00	12125	1305	1.12061
Honey	30120.30	50000	19879.7	1.66001
Forest fruit	71300.11	99750	28449.89	1.399016

The table 11 shows the summary of the Gross margin analysis and the profitability of the NTFPs in Osegere. The profit margin for vegetable, fire wood, medicinal plant, charcoal, Bush meat, Honey, Chewing stick, Forest fruit were 3369.59,1970.3, 2960,3324.85,3550,10241,1680,2699.75.The rate of return for vegetable, fire wood, medicinal plant, charcoal, Bush meat, Honey, Chewing stick, Forest fruit, were 1.656788, 1.488908,1.397315, 1.20878, 1.25, 1.518987, 1.923077, 1.224041.Hence Chewing stick is the most profitable among the selected NTFPs in the area.

Table 11: Gross margin analysis per respondent per month for Osegere

NTFPS	Cost price (N)	Selling price (N)	Profit margin (N)	Rate of Returns (ROR)
Vegetable	5130.41	8500	3369.59	1.656788
Fire wood	4029.80	6000	1970.2	1.488908
Medicinal plant	7450.00	10410	2960	1.397315
Charcoal	15925.15	19250	3324.85	1.20878
Bush meat	14200.00	17750	3550	1.25
Honey	19750.00	30000	10241	1.518987
Chewing stick	1820.00	3500	1680	1.923077
Forest fruit	12050.25	14750	2699.75	1.224041

The table 12 shows the summary of the Gross margin analysis and the profitability of the NTFPs in Ayede. The profit margin for vegetable, fire wood, medicinal plant, charcoal, Honey, Forest fruit were 3752.98, 3608.18, 2110, 14859.55, 2099.75, 1199.75. The rate of return for vegetable, fire wood ,medicinal plant, charcoal, Honey, Forest fruit were 1.856776, 2.233503, 2.416107, 1.702897, 2.272383, 1.666435. Hence Medicinal plant is more profitable in Ayede.

Table 12: Gross margin analysis per respondent per month for Ayede

NTFPS	Cost price (N)	Selling price (N)	Profit margin (N)	Rate of Returns (ROR)
Vegetable	4380.35	8133.33	3752.98	1.856776
Fire wood	2925.15	6533.33	3608.18	2.233503
Medicinal plant	1490.00	3600	2110	2.416107
Charcoal	21140.45	36000	14859.55	1.702897
Honey	1650.25	3750	2099.75	2.272383
Forest fruit	1800.25	3000	1199.75	1.666435

The table 13 below shows the constraints of the study Area,The mean constraints for poor marketing, low demand, price flunctuation, transportation,and irregular supply of product were 2.95, 2.84, 2.99, 3.19, 2.59. Hence, transportation has the highest and the most challenging factors facing the marketing of NTFPs in the selected area.

S/N	Challenges	SA 4	A 3	U 2	D 1	Mean	Remark
1	Poor marketing	22	39	12	7	2.95	A challenge
2	Low demand	14	46	13	7	2.84	A challenge
3	Price fluctuation	10	61	7	2	2.99	A challenge
4	Transportation	28	42	7	3	3.19	A challenge
5	Irregular supply of product	7	42	22	9	2.59	A challenge

4. Conclusion

The study shows that NTFPs collection was profitable business, as shown in the result of the value of gross profit and rate of return. This shows that the business is both feasible and viable. Engagement of NTFPs in the study area was found to be gender skewed with those involved not having access to loan despite its lucrative nature.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings so far, NTFPs extraction in the study area can serve as an alternative source of income. It is therefore recommended that:

- People should pay more attention to the enterprise as one of the avenue to address the high rate of unemployment in the rural areas.
- Government should assist in giving soft loans to individual or co-operative who are involved in the business.
- Government should provide good road that will link our rural areas and the forest so as to enhance easy transportation.
- Government should provide adult education to the farmers so as to enhance their education thereby increasing their access to information with regards to their business of NTFPs extraction/production. This will go a long way in assisting them to adopt new innovations.

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