

# SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING OF *Gnetum africanum* (AFANG) AND BUSH MEAT IN IKOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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## ABSTRACT

The study is a socio-economic analysis of the trade in *Gnetum africanum* and bush meat in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State. It determined the socio-economic characteristics of respondents, costs and returns in the trade, the marketing constraints as well as the relationship between the respondent's volumes of trade. The respondents were selected from the ten wards in the study area. Data were obtained on some socio-economics variables which include, age, sex, marital status, occupation and number of years in business. Other parameters investigated were the costs incurred, revenue made from the trade as well as constraints inherent in the business. The study revealed that, majority (75%) of the respondents were males in their economically active years (16-45 years). Also, there existed division of labour that would have enhanced labour efficiency. The study further revealed that, there was some occupational integration amongst the respondents given the number of part-time traders (48 percent). There was also a significant relationship ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the respondents' number of years in business and their volume of trade. The benefit-cost ratio indicated that the trade in bush-meat earned higher than *Gnetum africanum* trade. The marketing constraints include higher transportation cost, inadequate storage and preservation facilities amongst others. The study therefore recommends amongst others, the construction of access roads to reduce marketing costs, the provision of storage and preservation facilities to minimize loss of production from these forest products.

**KEYWORDS:** Marketing, Forest Products, Non-timber Product, *Gnetum africanum*, Bush-meat.

## INTRODUCTION

The enhancement of the economic well being of any society requires the optimal use of available resources within the society. Trade has been a veritable tool in organizing linkage between different sectors of the economy to achieve greater productivity vis-avis improvements in the overall efficiency of the economy (Omoluabi and Abang, 1994).

The forest is known for the provision of Timber products, according to Omoluabi (1994) and Okafor *et al* (1994) are biological materials (fauna and Flora) other than industrial wood derived as sawn timber, wood chips and wood-based panel and pulp. Therefore, NTFPs include *Gnetum africanum* (Afang), *Capillobia* (cattle stick) wild animals (Bush meat) and other products. These products have been reported to have high economic value. Omoluabi (1994) had estimated a total volume of these NTFPs produced in Cross River State over time to be N826.64 million comprising N94.34 million non-trades, N393.19 million trades within the state and about N339.06 million exported outside the state. These estimates are indications of great economic potential of the trade in the area, if appropriate resources management techniques are adopted to enhance sustainable production and exploitation.

A study by Balogun (1994) indicated that there has been an increasing growth trend in NTFPs. Also, Bisong (1994) reported that about 41 percent of the income of farm families in this area is derived from forest products which consist mostly of NTFPs. The seasonality of food crop production most often results in labour surpluses during off season. Thus, the occupational integration of food crop production and harvesting of NTFPs such as *Gnetum africanum* (afang), bush meat could enhance the efficiency of labour and also provide income that could often be reinvested into primary activities of these rural areas thus alleviating rural liquidity problems (Omoluabi 1994).

Despite the prominent role played by NTEFs in general and *Gnetum africanum* and bush meat in particular in

the socio-economic lives of rural inhabitants of the state, there appears to be relatively few studies that have specifically demonstrated the relevance of bush meat and *Gnetum africanum* on the rural setting. This study is therefore, aimed at determining the contributions of this two NTFPs in the growth of the rural economy of Ikom. It will also highlight some of the socio-economic characteristics which influence the trade in bush meat and *Gnetum*. Attempts were made to estimate the cost and returns in bush meat and *Gnetum* marketing and the possible factors that militate against the growth in bush meat and *Gnetum* marketing.

## METHODOLOGY

The study covered the ten (10) wards in Ikom Local Government Area comprising Ikom Urban, Olulumo, Southern Etung, Ofutop, Akparabong, Northern Etung, Nkum Nde, Abangum, Innain and Nta Nselle. The area is situated in the North Central Senatorial District of the state and also in the Tropical High Forest Zone of the country. It has a great potential for the following NTFPs, *Gnetum africanum*, "Bush meat", bush mango, *Capillobia* that is cane ropes etc. the inhabitants are predominantly farmers who are engaged in food and cash crop production as well as timber.

Structured questionnaires were administered to 1000 respondents on the average of 10m (ten) per ward to elicit information on factors such as age, sex, marital status, primary occupation and educational level, expense incurred and returns accruing from the market of the NTFPs as well as the marketing constraints from the trade.

A frequency distribution (descriptive statistics) and a chi-square analysis (inferential statistic) were used in data presentation and analysis respectively. The frequency distribution were used to determine the age limit of respondents, sex, marital status, primary occupation, types of NTFPs traded on. A simple ratio was used to determine the cost-benefit relationship of the NTFPs trade while a chi-square

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analysis was used to show the relationship between volume of trade in monetary terms and number of years in business of respondents.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The study revealed that 93 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 16 and 45 years while only seven percent were above 46 years (see Table 1).

This study indicates that, majority of the respondents were in their economically active years and were capable of carrying out the arduous task involved in the NTFPs marketing. The study also revealed that marketing of NTFPs cuts across all the groups.

This study also revealed that majority of the respondents (75 percent) were males while the remaining 25 percent were females (Table 1). This indicates that, the harvesting of *Gnetum Africanum* and hunting of wild game (bush meat) is mostly carried out by the males as this requires a lot of physical effort and bravery.

Majority of respondents (59 percent) were married while only 32 percent were single (Table 1) this indicates that majority of the respondents have family responsibilities, hence, the trade in these products become inevitable in providing additional income to sustain the family. On the other hand, the wives of respondents also help in the marketing of these NTFPs especially where the males are directly involved in hunting and harvesting of bush meat and *Gnetum africanum*. These results in a division of labour that seeks to enhance labour efficiency.

A total of 92 percent of the respondents had attained various levels of education while only eight percent had no schooling at all (see Table 1). It indicates that most of those

involved in the trade are literate. The study also revealed that of this percentage, about eight percent had attained the tertiary level of education. This may imply that over time. The trade in these NTFPs has become attractive to the more educated persons in the area.

Table 1 also indicates that 52 percent of the respondents were full-time traders of *Gnetum africanum* and bush meat while 48 percent did it on part time basis. Income derived from this trade by this group of respondents is often reinvested into their primary economic activities. This confirms the findings of Ormoluabi and Abang (op cit) of the existence of occupational integration amongst the participants in the trade.

This study also revealed that 46 percent of the respondents were engaged in bush meat trading, 43 percent traded in *Gnetum africanum* while only 12 percent were engaged in both (Table 2). The higher percentage of the respondents in bush meat trading may be due to the greater number of males who are also involved in the hunting of these animals as a result of the increasing demand for bush meat.

Table 2 shows that, 47 percent of the respondents had been in the business from 1 to 5 years while 31 percent and 22 percent had between 6 to 10 years and more than 10 years experience respectively (Table 2). This reveals that majority of the respondents were relatively new in the trade. This was also an indication that new entrants were being attracted to the trade.

The study also revealed that 56 percent of the respondents made use of motor vehicles in conveying their products to the dispersal points, while 33 percent made use of head portorage as their means of transportation (Table 2). The use of the latter means of transport may be as a result of inaccessibility of the roads that lead to the sources of these products in the state.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	frequencies	percentage
<b>Age range</b>		
16-25	29	29
26-35	49	49
36-45	15	15
Over 46	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	75	75
Female	25	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	59	59
Single	32	32
Divorce	5	5
Widow	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational level</b>		
No schooling	8	8
Primary education	38	38
Secondary education	46	46
Tertiary education	46	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Main occupation</b>		
Trading	52	52
Civil servant	14	14
Farming	24	24
Others	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Products traded</b>		
<i>G. africanum</i>	42	42
Bush meat	46	46
Both	12	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Experience in business</b>		
1-5 years	47	47
6-10 years	31	31
Over 10 years	22	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Transportation means</b>		
Motor vehicle	56	56
Motor cycle	7	7
Head haulage	33	33
Bicycle	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Constraints faced by respondent</b>		
High transport	34	26.15
Storage	16	12.30
Price fluctuations	47	37.70
Preservation	29	22.31
Other	2	1.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: field survey, 1997

**Table 2:** Revenue and Cost Estimates in (N) of *G. Africanum* and Bush Meat Marketing

Product	Total revenue N	Average revenue N	Total cost N	Average cost N	Net revenue N	Average net revenue N	Benefit cost ratio
Bush meat	439,250	8,800.93	284,500	5,268.52	190,750	3532.42	1.67
<i>Gnetum africanum</i>	436,750	7,538.79	241,500	4,163.79	195,250	3375.00	1.50

Source: computed from field data (1997).

#### Costs and returns in *Gnetum africanum* and bush meat marketing

The study revealed that a respondent makes an average revenue of N8,800.93 per week in bush meat marketing and incurs average cost of N3,532.11. On the other hand, the average cost of marketing *Gnetum Africanum* was N163.79 per person week while the average revenue per week

was N3, 374.00. The benefit cost ratio indicated that the trade in bush meat ranked higher than that of *Gnetum Africanum* (Table 3). This may be attributed to the higher prices which may be due to the increasing demand for bush meat as a delicacy in the area in particular and the state in general. It also explains why the respondents appear to be more involved in the trade than in the marketing of *Gnetum Africanum*.

**Table 3:** Chi-Square Analysis of Results of Relationship between Marketing Experience and Volume of Trade

Volume of trade	1-5	6-10	11-20	Critical obtained value $X^2$	-
Years in business	20	26	1	-	-
1-5	20	26	1	-	-
6-10	10	15	6	9.47	20-31
Over 10	4	8	10	-	-

Source: computed from field data (1997).

#### Relationship between respondents' volume of trade and years in business

The Chi-Square analysis indicated that there was a significant relationship ( $P < 0.05$ ) between number of years in business of respondents in the NTFPs trade and the volume of trade in monetary terms (Table 3). This implies that, the longer the period a respondent has been in the business, the more contacts he or she would have. Therefore, experience is an important factor in NTFPs marketing.

#### Marketing constraints faced by respondents

The study revealed that price fluctuation was the major constraint (37.7 percent) faced by respondents in NTFPs marketing in the area, followed by high transportation cost (26.15 percent), inadequate storage and preservation facilities accounted for 13-30 percent and 22.31 percent

respectively of the marketing problems during the rainy season and the resultant higher prices for them and the incessant harassment of the traders by wild life conservation task force amongst others. This was reported by 1.5 percent of respondents.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### CONCLUSION

This study examined the contribution of *Gnetum africanum* and Bush meat to the socio-economic well-being of the people in the study area. It affirmed a positive contribution in spite of the constraints faced by the respondents in the trade on these products. It also observed that the trade in NTFPs is lucrative and therefore, supports earlier reports by Omoluabi and Abang (1994).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should provide access roads into the interior of these areas to make for ease of transportation which could reduce the marketing cost vis-à-vis the prices of these products.
2. To improve upon the supply of leafy vegetables, especially gnetum, farmers should be encouraged to incorporate them in their cropping system.
3. Research should be carried out on the development of early maturing and high yielding varieties of this vegetable to enhance its sustainable supply.
4. Adequate storage and preservation facilities should be provided to reduce post-harvest losses given the high perishability of these NTFPS.
5. Research should be encouraged in the area of domestication of those wild animals to safeguard them against extinction as a result of increasing poaching activities in the area.

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