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## Baobab Production and Utilisation in Kilifi County, Kenya: Assessment of Information and Training Needs

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### Abstract

The baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata* L.) occurs naturally throughout the drier parts of sub-Saharan Africa and has traditionally been used as a food source. The fruit pulp in particular is of high nutritional value, featuring high contents of vitamin C, minerals, as well as prebiotic and antioxidant functions. However, in Eastern Africa the species is regarded as underutilised as its potential for improving local diets and livelihoods is not yet fully exploited. Baobab management and processing for value addition and marketing initiatives are scarce while extension services currently do not address sustainable baobab management, processing and utilisation activities. This study investigated the gaps in knowledge and information relating to the management of baobab trees and utilisation of baobab products in rural communities in Kilifi County, Kenya. 120 households were selected using a systematic random sampling technique. Preliminary results demonstrate that although the majority of households (69.2%) owned baobab trees on their farms, most farmers only had limited knowledge on baobab tree management for the entire production cycle from nursery establishment to post-harvest treatment, on the various types of products that can be obtained from baobab trees including their value, as well as on potential marketing pathways. The study revealed that only 34.2% of respondents have been involved in making one or more baobab products, and less than 10% engaged in any form of baobab management practises. Only 15% of the respondents used the baobab fruit pulp as a source of food despite its valuable nutritional properties. Over 70% of the sampled households did not receive any kind of agricultural information, indicating the potential for improving current practises. The study will guide the development of tailor-made extension materials and trainings which will address the gaps of information and knowledge and enable communities to successfully adopt sustainable baobab management and processing techniques and technologies.

**Keywords:** Baobab (*Adansonia digitata* L.), information needs, training needs assessment, underutilised plant species

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