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A Study of Climate Change Impact on Non-timber Forest Products as it Affects Food Security in Ohafia Nigeria

GERALDINE OGECHUKWU IBE¹, AMIKUZUNO JOSEPH², LILIAN EZENWA³

¹Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Forestry and Environmental Management, Nigeria

²University for Development Studies, Climate Change and Food Security, Ghana

³Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Environmental Management and Toxicology,

Abstract

Increased vulnerability of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) to climate change shocks has had serious negative consequences on the food security of rural dwellers that depend on them to enhance their livelihood outcomes considering the unstable national economy which scourge the people irrespective of gender composition. This study assesses the perceived impact of climate change on the yield of NTFPs and its resultant effect on the livelihood of the people in the area. A stratified-simple random technique was used to select 9 villages out of the 26 villages in Ohafia L.G.A. The strata were 3 villages in the urban location, 3 villages in the semi-urban location and 3 villages in the rural location, so as to ensure a representative picture of peoples' views. A total of two hundred and sixteen (216) households were interviewed using a well structured questionnaire. Data obtained were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Large proportion of the respondents (72.2 %, 64.4 % and 40.3 %) showed that increased temperature, heavy rainfall and loss of farm land are the reasons for decreased yield in NTFPs from 2013 to 2016. Majority of the respondents (88.9 % and 58.3 %) opined that climate change has reduced fruit yield and increased price instability of NTFPs. Over 35 % said climate change has led to forest species' scarcity between 2013 and 2016. (54.2 %) have no access to safe drinking water, (25.5 %) have made very low sales from NTFPs, while 3.2 % have faced starvation and 29.6 % faced health challenges. 60.6 % perceived NTFPs' yield decrease. There is an indication on the drastic decrease in NTFPs' yield in the last 4 years, even as a source of income. Climate change influence on the availability of NTFPs will affect the income status and food security of rural dwellers that depend on it. Vulnerabilities could be reduced through campaign on embracing climate change plans, funding through government and foreign countries' collaboration, re-training extension workers, cash donations and training the rural dwellers. It is pertinent that local policy makers formulate policies and design strategies aimed at mitigation through a consolidated effort using modern approaches and techniques.

Keywords: Climate change, food security, livelihood, rural dwellers