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Perception and barriers to commercialisation of non-timber forest products in the Jomoro district of south-western Ghana

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Abstract

The Ankasa conservation area is the most diverse forest in Ghana with about 800 vascular plant species with some species yet to be identified. People living in proximity to forest areas use forest products particularly for subsistence and commercial purposes, however non-timber forest products are more of subsistence and there exist tendencies to commercialise. Despite the potential of non-timber forest products, little is known about households’ perception and barriers to commercialisation of these species. This study therefore assessed households’ perception and barriers to commercialisation of non-timber forest products in the Jomoro district of south-western Ghana. The Jomoro district was purposively selected and convenience sampling was used to select 90 households involved in forest products collection in the Jomoro district namely Cocoa town, Anwafutu, Amoakwa and Anwomakrom. The free-listing method was used to document the kind of non-timber forest products and their purpose of collection. A 5-point likert scale was used to determine the perception to commercialisation of non-timber forest products. The means were estimated from the 5-point likert scale to rank the barriers to commercialisation of non-timber forest products. The results from the study revealed that 18 species were predominantly collected. The majority of the respondents (22 %) were involved in the collection of rattan, followed by bush mango (17.8 %), bush pepper (16.7 %) and 13.3 % of forest collectors were involved in the collection of bamboo, kola and wild mushrooms. All species collected were used by households for food and medicinal purposes other than rattan and bamboo which were used for construction. The outcome from the qualitative analysis revealed that farmers had a positive perception of non-timber forest products as an alternative source of income, employment avenue for rural people, government revenue generation from NTFPs trade and it contributes to household food security. Major barriers to commercialisation of non-timber forest products were lack of packaging and labelling requirements, limited market opportunities and lack of policy to guide the use, management and development of NTFPs. The study recommends education of forest collectors on effective packaging and linking them to dominant NTFPs marketing chains to create market opportunities for their products.

Keywords: Ankasa conservation area, forest products collection, Likert scale