

CONTRIBUTION OF NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS (NTFPs) TO THE ECONOMIC LIVELIHOODS OF TEGERES SUB-COUNTY COMMUNITIES IN KAPCHORWA DISTRICT

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Abstract

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) embody all biological matter of wild plants and animals other than timber extracted from forests and woodlands. Firstly, they help to fulfill households' subsistence and consumption needs in terms of e.g. energy and nutrition as well as medical and construction purposes. Secondly, they serve as a safety-net in times of crises (e.g. income shortages from other income sources, e.g. crop failure) and thirdly, some NTFPs provide regular cash income (Angelsen and Wunder, 2003). The study aimed at identifying and assessing the contributions of NTFPs to the livelihood of local communities in Tegeres sub-county. Three hundred and seventy eight (378) respondents were selected using simple random sampling. A total of 15 NTFPs are extracted from Mount Elgon National Park by the local communities of the sub-county. These products comprises of medicinal plants, wild mushrooms, wild roots, bamboo shoots, manure, bamboo stem, fire wood, salt lick, reeds, wild vegetables, flowers, water, beans/banana stackers, honey, clay and grass. The study further revealed that 77.7% of the respondents utilise NTFPs domestically. Few households were selling the products with majority earning UGX 10,000-50,000 monthly (USD 3.03-15.5). The result also indicated that 94.4% of the people noticed that NTFPs extraction from Mount Elgon National Park has a positive impact on their livelihood. According to the respondents the availability of NTFPs has reduced despite all the controlled measures put in place to ensure sustainable utilisation. The study concluded that people of Tegeres sub-county, utilise NTFPs which they extract from Mt. Elgon National Park. The incomes generated are low to majority and can't cater for a larger proportion of their daily needs, thus the study recommended that there is a need to improve on areas such as value addition on the extracted products before reaching the market, good market accessibility.

