

## **ROLES OF WOMEN IN NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS PROCESSING IN IKOLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study evaluates the roles of women in Non-Timber Forest Products processing in Ikole Local Government Area, Ekiti State. Purposive sampling technique was employed for the selection of the sampled site based on the prevalence of NTFPs in this area. Four representative communities including Ijesa-Isu Ekiti; Oke-Ayedun Ekiti; Oke-Ako Ekiti and Ikole Ekiti were selected. One hundred and twenty copies of a semi-structured questionnaire were administered to 30 respondents from the selected communities. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square  $X^2$ . The result revealed that the majority (86.67%) of non-timber forest products processors are female, (38.33%) are between the age brackets of 31 to 40 years, (68.33%) are married, (55.00%) with a household size of 5 to 8 persons, and 63.33% are involved in farming activities as major occupation. This study prioritized and identified four major NTFPs processed in the study area (Table 3). The result of Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) calculated at ( $p= 0.05$ ) revealed a significant relationship between Gender, Household size and NTFP processing, while Age and NTFP processing showed no significant relationship. The major challenges to NTFP processing are start-up capital and high transportation costs. Consequently, it was thereby recommended that there should be adequate training for women involved in NTFP processing on sustainable resources management to prevent wastage during processing. Also, incentives to improve processing mechanisms should be provided by the government and other relevant bodies to ease the stress involved in processing some NTFPs.

**Keywords:** Ikole, NTFPs, Processing, Roles, Women