

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF ARAKANGA FOREST RESERVE (A PERI- URBAN FOREST) TO
LIVELIHOODS IN ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out at Arakanga Forest Reserve, Abeokuta, Ogun State to determine the contribution of the reserve to livelihoods of the people in the neighbourhood. Four (4) communities were selected, they are, Ajegunle, Ibode-Olude, Ilugun-Titun, and Mawuko to determine the poverty line among the respondents. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered with 100% valid rate of return. Stratified Sampling method was adopted. The settlements were divided into strata and from each village; households were randomly selected to get the respondents. The result of data analysis shows the gender of the respondents, with female having the highest of 53% over male of 47%. Also, the age distribution of the respondents shows age bracket 41 -50 years have the highest with 42% while ages 61 – 70 years recorded least age with 1%. On marital status, married respondents accounted for 86%. The household size with 5 – 6 members recorded the highest respondents with 44%. Also, on educational level, respondents with no formal education had 52% while only 7% had Tertiary education. The poverty line calculated indicated that 15% of the respondents from the study area were poor because they live below the calculated poverty line based on the income of the respondents. Therefore there is poverty within the neighboring communities of Arakanga Forest Reserve. It is therefore believed that they will depend on the forest reserve and exploit various forest products for sustainability. The household asset owned by the respondent shows that majority of the respondents cannot afford luxury items or assets such as Cars (89%), Electrical generator (71%), and Gas Cooker (99%). The distribution of respondents based on the livelihood activities they engaged in was also determined, 24% engage in firewood collection, 24% were staff of the reserve, 21% engage in Leaves collection, 11% in Geological material extraction, 8% in Hunting activities, 7% in Snail gathering and 5% in medicinal plant collection. The earnings and total income of various activities were also recorded. These show the proportion that forest activity (which includes firewood, snail, medicinal plants, leaves, hunting activities), wages and geological material contribute to the various locations. Forest activities contributes 17% in Ajegunle of the total income, in Ibode-Olude it contributes 15%, also in Ilugun-Titun of total income it contributes 18% and in Mawuko 15%. Firewood collection was also found to be the most promising in terms of dominant use and the least is hunting activities. The study further recommends that livelihoods of people can be improved by implementing well articulated policy measure that will improve the quality of life of people through livelihood activities.