

Socio-Economic Implications of Rural Energy Exploitation and Utilisation on Sustainable Development in Gombe State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This study examined female farmers' rural energy supply and use pattern in rural communities in Kaltungo Community in Gombe State, Nigeria. The study revealed that fuel wood is the primary source of fuel and females are responsible for its collection. Farmers' average weekly collection, time spent, number of days, distance covered and amount collected were 53.3 kilograms, 17hours, four days and 11kilometres respectively. Collection strategies developed include Short Span of Trek (SPOT) with Low Frequency (LF) is 13.3% while Short Span of Trek with High Frequency is 20 %. Thirty percent belong to Long Span of Trek with Low Frequency and Long Span of Trek with High Frequency occurred among 36.67%. All farmers stored fuel wood for consumption, sale and barter traditionally. Constraints to effective and efficient rural energy supply and use identified were education, labour, capital, time, credit, decreasing fuel wood availability, and contact with extension. The study concluded that farmers' participation in fuel wood production and utilization is frequent and continuous. However, the depletion of the woodlands combined with persistent dependency on fuel wood pose a serious problem for household energy provision and the environment. Woodlots and access to alternate, affordable, renewable, energy system would reduce the pressure on the forests and amount of time and efforts women devote to obtaining fuel wood. Therefore further research and development of an integrated energy package using community based participatory mechanisms become imperative for sustainable rural development in Nigeria.