

AN INQUIRY INTO THE DISTRIBUTION AND EXPLOITATION STRATEGIES OF THE CANE BELT OF LAGOS MEGA-CITY

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Abstract

Resource mapping is an essential tool for sustainable resource exploitation. This is more important in a place like Lagos with its population pressure. The resource in focus in this paper is the cane belt of the mangrove forest of the state that is been exploited for household furniture not only by the peasants but by medium scale industrialists. The aim of the study is to carry out a preliminary investigation into the sources of this resource, the market outlets and the demographic characteristics of the entrepreneurs. The primary data for this study was derived from cluster sampling, of forty-one respondents who are in the cane business. Ten cane producing community leaders were also interviewed. The Secondary data were obtained from relevant government agencies that include, Centre for rural development, Ministry of Economic Planning and Agriculture. The research indicated that six local government areas and seventeen communities are involved in the business. The local governments are: Ikorodu, Alimoso, Ikeja, Kosofe, Ibeju-lekki and Eti-Osa. The market is located in the state, some West African countries and Europe. The resource is presently as provided by nature in the wild. There is no attempt at cultivation. Also the paper indicated that there is massive encroachments on this belt by urban built-up. The belt is not only a resource for making furniture but is also a repository for urban run-offs. The paper therefore recommended the need for policy formulation to protect the cane belt, develop a sustainable exploitation strategy and carry out a study for a cultivation scheme in order to ensure continuous availability.

Keywords: Resource mapping, Cane belt, Exploitation strategies, Lagos

Introduction

That poverty is endemic in Nigeria is an understatement. That Lagos as a mega-city is grappling with inefficient resource exploitation and an environmental crisis is not a controversy. That some efforts are been made by the state government to identify and increase the stock of available resources is a statement of fact. That such effort is complimented through identification and taking of inventory of a natural biotic-resource is the aim of this paper.

Resource mapping is a fundamental step in development. Sustaining a natural urban resource is often problematic. This is more so where there is rapid growth of built up areas eating voraciously away at the natural vegetation belts. Green areas are been taken over by housing estates and drainages are filled up to erect offices, commercial shops, churches, mosques and motor parks.

It is when resources are identified and evaluated that appropriate exploitation strategies could be formatted. Lagos state is blessed with numerous natural resources and the vegetation cover is one of them. Some of these are the wealth in swamps. The people have identified and have been exploiting these resources overtime albeit in an uncoordinated, unsystematic and often in a non sustainable manner.

The focus here is on the Raffia and the Stilt-Rooted shrubs of the mangrove forest of the state that are of immense economic use through their fabrications into various items forms of furniture. The objectives therefore include:

- (a) The identification of the spatial distribution of the cane belt in the area.
- (b) Estimation of the quantity available in terms of area coverage.
- (c) Derivation of some socio-demographic attributes of the artisans involved in the exploitation
- (d) Analysis of the current exploitation strategies and
- (e) Suggestions on sustainable exploitation.

These objectives if achieved will provide the framework for continuous mapping of the spatial distribution and the building of inventory databank. The relevant socio and demographic attribute will provide a relevant adjunct for developing strategies for sustainable exploitation of the plants.

Area of Study

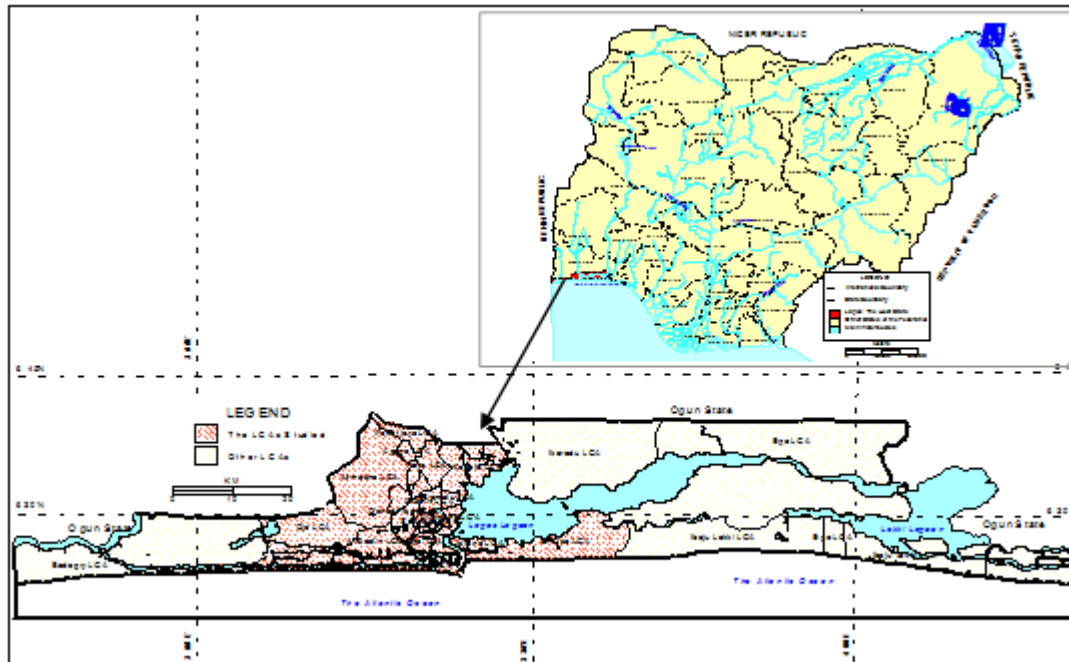
The area of study is situated within the geographical area now named Lagos- Mega-City. This includes the whole of Lagos State and some local governments like Ado-Odo, Ota, Ibafo in Ogun State. The Lagos mega city project is a tripartite arrangement between the Federal; Lagos State and Ogun State governments.. A mega city according to the definition of human settlements experts is a city with a minimum population of 10 million and above. In this league of cities are New York City (16million), Sao Paulo (17million), Mumbai (18million), London (12million.), Tokyo (26million), Los Angeles (13million), Beijing (12million) Cairo (10million) and Shanghai (12million).

Lagos State is sandwiched by latitudes 6° 22’N and 6° 42’N and It straddles longitudes 2° 42’E to 4°

20’E. It is bounded in the North by Ogun State and in the East by Ondo State. It shares an international boundary of about 45 kilometres with the Republic of Benin while the vast, deep blue Atlantic Ocean constitutes the approximately 180 kilometres long Southern limit. It rightly resembles an inverted anvil (see map 2).

Although the total land area is just about 3,577 square kilometres, yet creeks, lagoons and estuaries constitute nearly 800 (22%) square kilometres. However, reclamation is reducing the size of water surface in a significant way, for example Apapa area, Lagos-Epe strip, Maroko and Osborne parcel of land. Nevertheless, it is not only man that is reclaiming surface, the Sea is also claiming more space for itself in the process of coastal erosion as being witnessed in the gradual etching away of parts of the Bar Beach.

Fig 1 Map of Study Area



Soil and Vegetation Distribution

Soil type greatly determines the difference in the vegetation of the State. The interrelationship is so high that the two are hereby treated jointly. The soil types could be broadly classified into three types, which coincide broadly with three flora belts:

(1) The zone of recently laid unconsolidated coastal beaches along the coast line which merges into lowland sandy plains of light grey sandy soil. The soil is very porous. This zone covers the western half of the State. It is the most dominant in Badagry, Ojo, Lagos Island, and extends inland in most areas of the state. Often the coastline beaches are just sands supporting no vegetation cover. The most dominant plants are the coconut palm along the beaches while weeds, tall grasses, shrubs and woody plants cover the sandy plains.

(2) The second zone of hydromorphic and organic soil covering the lagoon depressions. It is muddy clay which changes to swampy water logged group along the lagoons. It covers about 50% of the total land area of the State, since it is the most dominant along the ubiquitous creeks and lagoon edges. Extensive communities of raffia palm dominate this zone. Also prevalent are oil palms, mangrove shrubs, stilt-rooted trees with dense undergrowths and climbing plants.

(3) The third zone is the reddish and brown loamy soils of the upland areas. This is found in the northern part of the State, areas west of Ikeja through Ikorodu to the north of Epe. This soil type was derived from deeply weathered quartzite and sand stone formations. Alluvial deposits often add some few millimeters to the soil's thickness. Parts of Ojo and Agege, Epe and Ikorodu areas of the State having this soil type are extensively cultivated. This area supports growth of dense tropical forest where such trees as Teak, *Triplochyton Scieroxylem* (Arere) *Bancalea diderrichil* (opepe) *Chlorophora excelsa* (iroko) and *Terminahia* (idigbo) abound.

One recent vegetation type fast becoming very dominant in the State is the water hyacinth. It arrived at the coastline in early 1985. It propagates rapidly through the fresh water creeks where it has since then become a nuisance to fishermen and water commuters.

Method of Data Collection

The primary data for this study was derived from cluster sampling, of forty-one respondents who are in the cane business in six areas namely: Ikorodu, Alimoso, Ikeja, Kosofe, Ibeju-lekki and Eti-Osa. The sampling was with questionnaires (see Appendix 1) personally administered by trained field enumerators. Ten community leaders were also interviewed in the cane producing areas with the questionnaire in appendix 2. The Secondary data was obtained from relevant government agencies that include, Centre for rural development, Ministry of Economic Planning and Ministry of Rural Development and Agriculture. It also includes base maps and Statistical data.

Data and Analysis

The summary of the responses of the major producers in each community is provided in Table 1. The respondents indicated that four out of the ten of them have direct access to the international market; they are also into local sales. The total material input quoted is 134 bundles per week. A bundle consists of about 25 cane stems of about 3 metre lengths weighing between 15kg and 30 kg depending on whether they are wet or dry. Each of these bundles costs between N1, 000 and N1, 500 thereby raising an aggregate income of about N203, 000 per week for the ten producers.

Nine out of the ten augment their supply from outside the community, mostly from Edo, Rivers, Delta, Ondo and Ogun states. Most of the areas of harvesting are one acre on the average. This is a result of fragmented land ownership, pressure and use. There is no unbroken parcel of extensive land that harvesting could take place. This is aggravated given the fact that the plant is still obtainable in the wild; there is no deliberate, coordinated and scientific cultivation strategy. Only three of the respondents claimed to have attempted cultivation of the plant, but without any notable success.

The product is utilized mainly for Furniture like Chairs, Beds, Tables, Shelves, Mirror stands and Baby cot. Other items include sieve, thatch roof, fish trap and animal cages. To produce the items there, are other local and imported materials that are

combined. The local ones include Rafia, Plywood, Bamboo and Lianas. The sundry imported materials are Nail, Saw, Glue, Gas and Burner, Bolts and Nuts.

The major requests from government are for credit facility for the expansion of their trade, transportation and accessibility, facilitating market linkages and networks locally and internationally. They are also requesting for further skill acquisition training so as to be able to produce items that are durable with internationally appeal. Other appeals are for research into efficient cultivation practices that will enable them to increase their supply. They are justifiably worried that reliance on the yield from the wild will make the trade un-sustainable, thus leading to a dead end for their livelihood. They are conscious of the

fact that rapid expansions of built area through reclamations by sand-filling of the swamps will soon deplete all the present patches of cane belt. Currently the sources of supply are rapidly shifting to the Niger Delta.

The other major challenge is that all the producers have no ownership rights whatsoever over the areas of their harvest, hence their sources of raw materials are at best precarious and left to the whims and caprices of the indigenes or whoever has bought the land from them. This is a major hindrance for any experiment at cultivation.

Table 1: Major producer of cane materials

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	
1	MARKET	Local &	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		International	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
		Qty (Bundles)	30	7	5	15	40	8	10	8	9	15	147	
2	INCOME	Price (N,000)	40	10	7	20	50	12	12	13	14	25	203	
		Outside Community	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9
4	AVAILABILITY SIZE	0>1 acre	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		1≤ 5 acre	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		> 5 acre	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	BY PRODUCTS	Furniture	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		Sieve	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	8	
		Thatch Roofing	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	6	
		Fish Trap	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	5	
		Cage	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	
6	CULTIVATION	Yes	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	
		OTHER LOCAL INPUT												
7	OTHER LOCAL INPUT	Rafia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		Ply Wood	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	
		Bamboo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		Lianas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
8	EXTERNAL MATERIAL INPUT	Nail	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		Saw	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		Glue	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
		Gas and Burner	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	9	
		Nuts &Bolts	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	9	
		9	REQUESTS	Credits & Subsidy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		Transportation/ Access	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	

	Market linkage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
	Training	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
	Cultivation	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
	Land Tenure/provision	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7

Table 2: The Distribution of the Cane Belt

S/N	LGA/LCDA	COMMUNITY	No of Resp.
1	IKORODU	Bayeku, Majidun, Offin, Isawo, Ijede, Majidun, Igbokuta, Igbe Road, Igbe Road,	10
2	ALIMOSO/ AMUWO	Agboju	9
3	KOSOFE	Mende	8
4	IKEJA	Ikeja	2
5	IBEJU-LEKKI	Eleko	2
6	ETI-OSA	Obalende, Ajah, Langbasa, Ise	10
		TOTAL	41

Analysis of the Distribution of the Outlets

There are six local governments' areas with seventeen communities' where clusters of cane products outlets could be found in the study area. The local governments are Ikorodu, Alimoso/Amuwo, Kosofe, Ikeja, Ibeju-Lekki and Eti-Osa. The communities are as listed in table 3. Forty-one respondents were interviewed, with Ikorodu and Eti-Osa local governments having the highest (10) while Ikeja and Ibeju-lekki has the lowest (2).

Characteristics of respondents

Only seven out of the forty-one respondents are females. In terms of educational qualifications

six had no access to formal education, nine had primary school, only three had education beyond secondary school while the majority, twenty-three had secondary school education.

Origin of the Artisans

The artisans in this trade come mostly from the Niger Delta. Besides the Eleven indigenes from Lagos state and the lone respondents from Imo, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ghana; 25 (61%) of the total is from Delta and Edo. Of this only 7 are operating as a medium scale enterprise, the rest are small scale

Origin	Lagos	Delta	Edo	Imo	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	Ghana	Total
Freq	11	18	7	1	1	1	1	1	41

The Market Outlets

The product has outlet in the state, the country, West Africa, South Africa, India and Europe. The outlets and the frequency of mention is in table 3 below.

Table 3 Distribution of the Market Outlets of the Cane Products			
Local	Frequency of Mention	International	Frequency of Mention
MARYLAND	8	ENGLAND	2
AJAH,	2	BELGIUM	1
ALIMOSHO,	1	GERMANY	1

BOUNDARY	1	CHINA	2
BADAGRY,	2	USA	2
BADORE	1	HOLLAND	1
DELTA	3	SOUTH AFRICA	1
EBUTE-ERO	3	INDIA	1
ELEKO BEACH	2	GHANA,	4
IDUMAGBO	2	REP. OF BENIN	3
IDUMOTA,	3	TOGO	1
IJORA,	2	I/COAST	1
IKEJA,	3		
IKOYI,	1		
IPODO,	1		
ISOLO	1		
LAGOS	13		
LEKKI,	1		
NIGERIA	4		
OJO	1		
OKE ARIN	7		
OSHODI	2		
VICTORIA ISLAND,	1		

Expectedly many local outlets were mentioned, for the international markets West and South Africa, India, China USA and Europe.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This preliminary investigation indicated that this is a significant resource within an urban environment that is neglected. It is providing employment for large number of people, largely from the Niger Delta and South West and mostly with secondary school education. But beyond been a renewable resource it is also protective of the environment in the sense that the areas of growth in the state are the repository of urban run-offs. The areas are currently dwindling due to aggressive expansion of urban built up. There is no government assistance or policy framework to provide enabling environment for protection and sustainability of the resource exploitation.

It is hereby suggested that there should be a policy statement for the protection of the green areas that is growing the plant, for economic and environmental reasons. There should also be a research drive for cultivation of the plant so that the industry will not go into extinction due to depletion of the raw material. The plant grows faster than the other tree plants that are the substitutes for furniture making; therefore it will provide a more viable source of raw material for the industry.

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