EFFECTS OF LOCUST BEANS PROCESSING ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PROCESSORS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.

BY

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ABSTRACT

The Processing of Locust Beans including Fermentation, Marketing, and Distribution as a means of Livelihood which plays a vital role in the socio economic status of the processors. This study assessed the effects of locust beans processing on the socio-economic status of processors in Kwara State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select 240 locust bean processors for this study. A structured questionnaire was administered to gather data on the respondents' personal characteristics, public disposition, constraints to locust beans processing, and socio economic status using Udai Pareek's scale. Proximate (Moisture content, Dry matter content, Fat content, Ash content, crude fibre content, crude protein content, carbohydrate content, Fe(mg/100g) and Ca(mg/l00g) analysis of locust bean was carried out using standard laboratory methods. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, Chi-square statistic and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Results reveal that 35.3% of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years, 46.3% were widowed, 88.6% belonged to the Yoruba ethnic group and 75.2% had Formal education. The Public perception of the respondents were that the processors were usually dirty ($\bar{x}$ = 3.70), wretched ($\bar{x}$ = 3.60), smells ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54) and have no other means of survival ($\bar{x}$ = 3.34). The results of the Udai Pareek's scale showed that 54.2% of the respondents are in the lower middle class. The major constraint faced in locust bean processing were low market prices ($\bar{x}$ = 2.82) and inadequate water supply ($\bar{x}$ =2.82). Proximate analysis indicated that *Iru Woro* had higher dry matter (41.48g/100g), fat (14.23g/100g), protein (13.64g/100g), carbohydrate (10.84gi100g), iron (161.19mg/100g) and calcium (9092.24mg/100g) content compared to *Iru Pete*, which had higher moisture (63,56g/1 ()0g) and ash (2.35g/100g) contents of the two samples analyzed. PPMC results revealed significant ($p<0.0l$) relationship between public disposition of locust bean processors (r = 0.45),

constraints faced in locust bean processing (r =-0.15), and their socio-economic status. In conclusion, the negative stereotypes, and disposition of the public towards locust bean processing influence the economic empowerment and socio-economic status of the locust bean processors. Therefore, it is recommended that sensitization campaigns be conducted to promote the benefits of the locust bean industry and dispel negative stereotypes by empowering the processors which could help to enhance the socio-economic status of the processors.