# DO FORESTS CONTRIBUTE TO RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN GHANA?

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## INTRODUCTION

The social and economic importance of forests is officially appreciated in Ghana, however, knowledge on how and to what extent forests contribute to rural livelihoods is not well researched and neither are policies to enhance the role of forests in rural development and poverty reduction.

This research estimates the economic importance of forests to rural households to ultimately inform policy debate on the magnitude and trends in forest dependency and also to guide development and use of forest resources for sustainable rural livelihoods.

***Key research question:*** *What is the role of forests in rural livelihoods?*

## METHODS

Annual and quarterly surveys were conducted to gather income data from a random sample of approximately 600 rural households from thirty villages (15 each) in 2 ecological zones in the Wet (Wet Site) and transitional forest zones (Dry Site) (Figure 1) of Ghana from December 2007-November 2008.

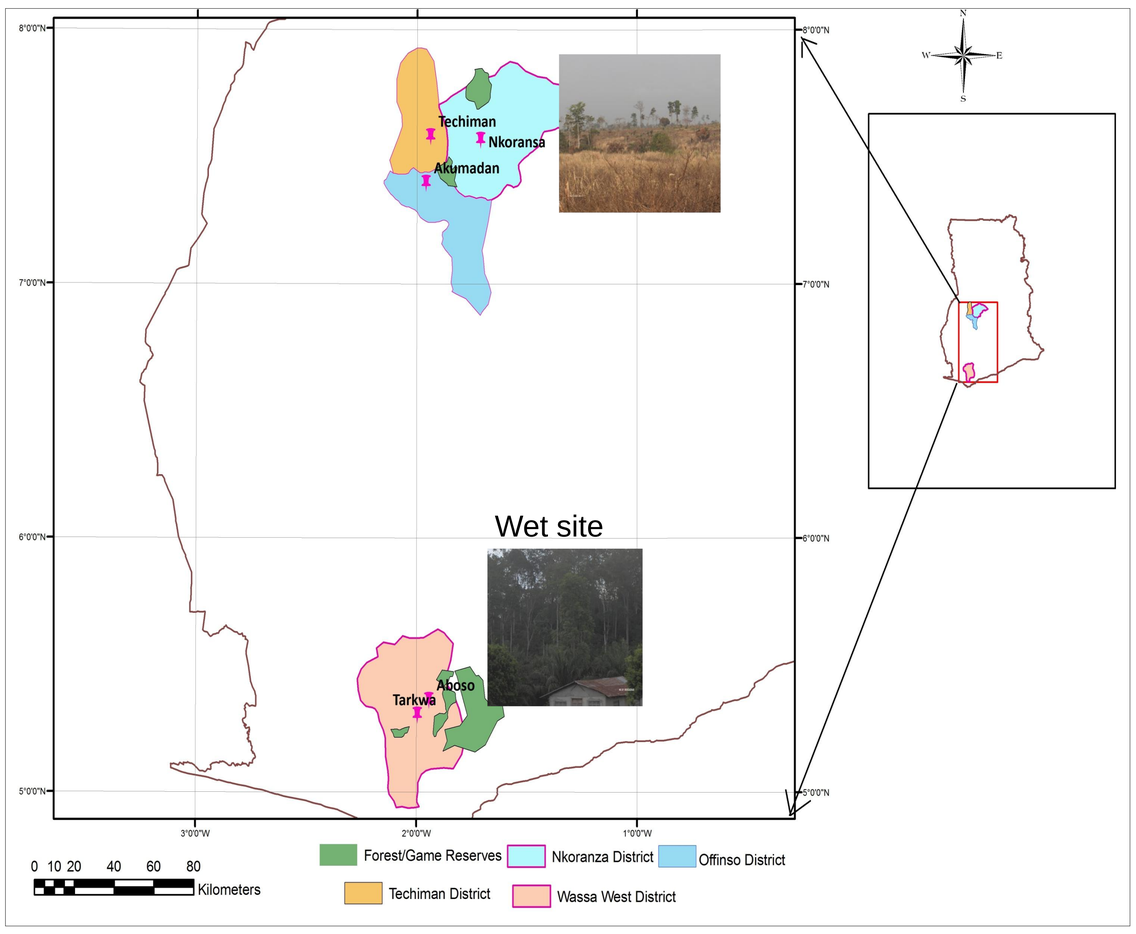



***Figure* 1**: Map of Ghana showing study sites

The PEN prototype questionnaire developed by CIFOR ((**www.cifor.cgiar.org/pen**) was employed for households interviews over 12 months. Village level information, discussions with district forest officers and survey of local forest and agricultural product prices were conducted.

The survey captured information on all sources of income, both cash and subsistence in all areas of activity: forestry, subsistence agriculture, cottage industries, formal and informal wage employment, transfers and remittances an so on. The data has been analyzed descriptively.



**Plate 1: PEN team in a village meeting**

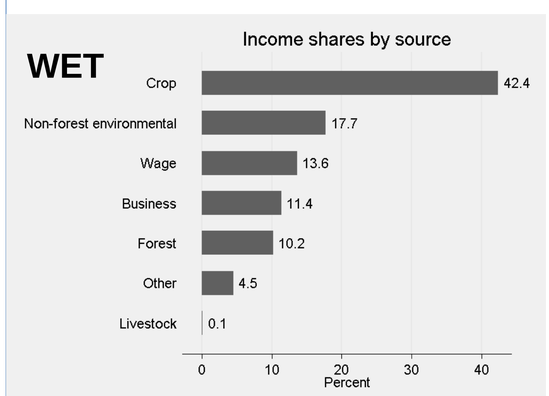


**Plate 2: PEN enumerator interviewing a household head**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## RESULTS



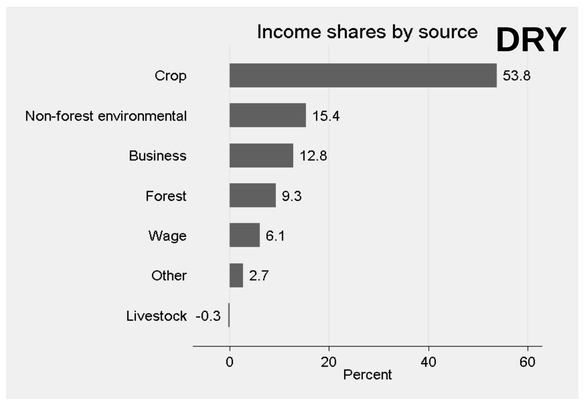
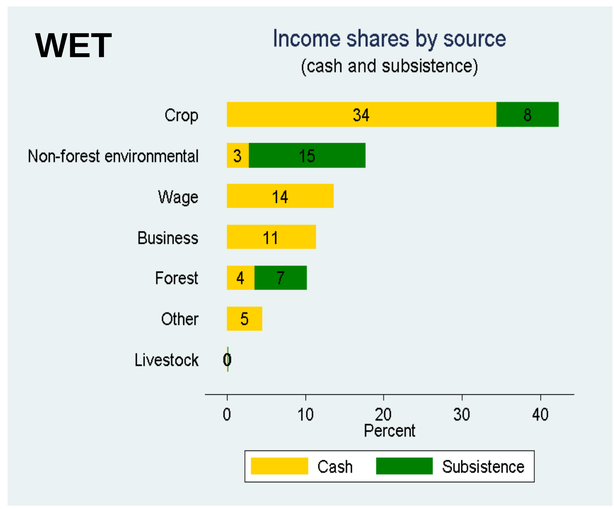




***Figure 2:*** Total income by sources



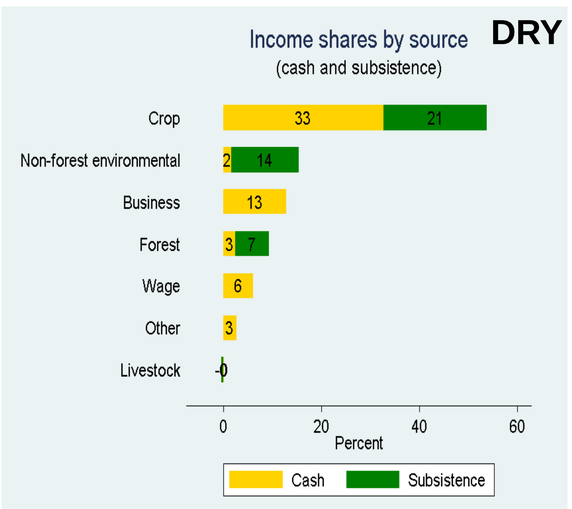
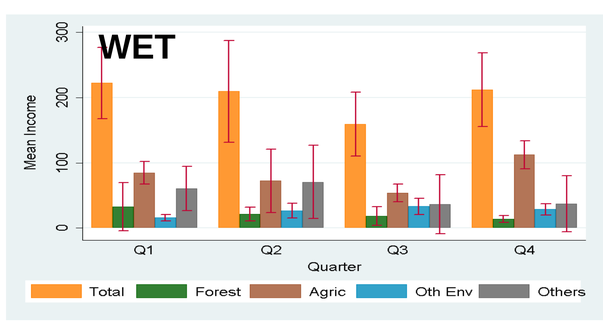




***Figure*** 3:Total income sources indicating level of subsistence



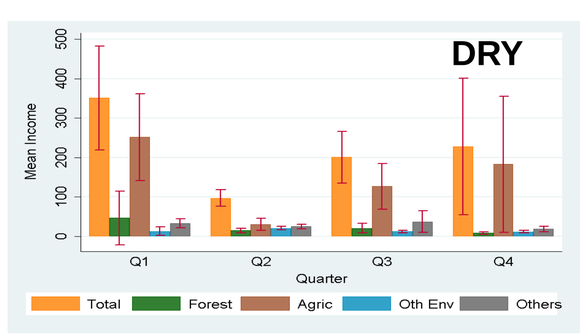
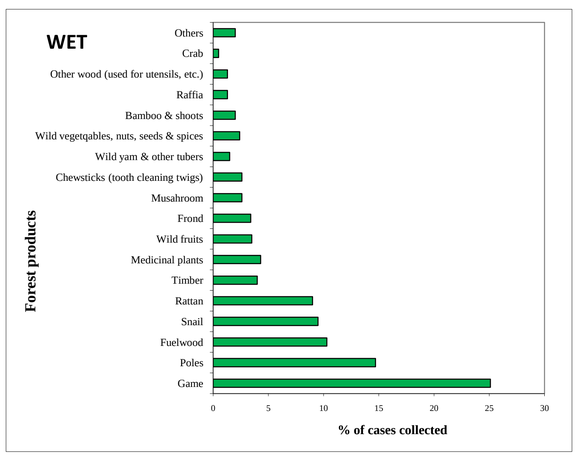




***Figure 4:*** Seasonality Income shares



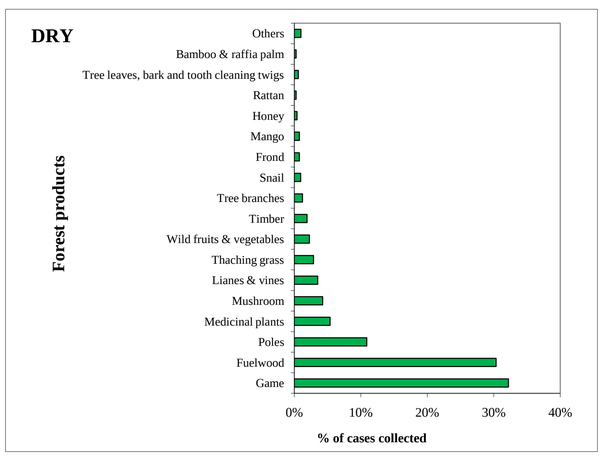




***Figure 5:*** Forest products collected

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

1. Agriculture is the predominant livelihood activity contributing up to 50% of total annual household income in both the wet and dry forest zones. It also the key contributor of cash income to the farm household.
2. The non-forest environment (fallow, farmlands, etc.) is the key source of environmental products.
3. Forests contributes up to 10% of total household income. However, environmental income ( i.e. non-forest environment and forests) is the second largest contributor of household income (i.e. 30 & 25% for wet and dry respectively)
4. Households rely on environmental resources mainly for subsistence.
5. Forest and other environmental products are harvested throughout the year. Collection peaks in the first quarter when there is less agricultural activity.
6. There is higher reliance on game, poles and fuelwood.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ❑ Environmental income trends do not follow seasonal agricultural trough but depends primarily on labour availability
- ❑ Environmental creaming at the non-forest area for poles and fuelwood provides opportunities for developing this area with short rotation tree species for these products for cash and subsistence purposes, particularly in the dry area.



**Plate 3**:Truck of fuelwood - Dry site

- ❑ At the wet site small scale gold mining influences non-forest income which calls for pragmatic steps to effectively control these activities that have significant destructive impact on water and land resource



**Plate 4**: Small scale gold mining - Wet site