

Commodity Marketing and Services Systems' Relationship with Spacio-Economic Interactions in Akure City and Its' Inner Towns and Villages

UGWU LUCY NKEIRUKA (Ph.D)

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Enugu State University of science and Technology, Nigeria

UMAR, TAUHEED IBRAHIM

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Enugu State University of science and Technology, Nigeria

Abstract

Spatio-economic interactions among different categories of people and communities are crucial to the promotion of regional development in different parts of the world. Indeed, spatio-economic interactions involve both the movement of people from one place to another in order to undertake specific socio-economic activities that are capable of generating wealth for the people and the organizations that are involved in such movements and activities. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the commodity marketing and services systems' relationship with the spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages in Nigeria. A simple questionnaire was adopted for the study. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire as well as interview was used to obtain the relevant data from a sample of twenty respondents. The discussion of Findings show that the Agricultural Product Marketing System in Akure and its' Inner Towns and Villages involve all categories of human settlement in the region in our consideration of agricultural product marketing activities and analysis. The study also revealed that the general orientation of the industrial product marketing sub-system in the region is almost the complete reversal of the agricultural marketing sub-system. Conclusively. There is need to intensity the caution that hunters and poachers should exercise restraint in killing animals in the vegetations secondly. The federal and state governments should not abandon the cocoa farmers to their fate. The cocoa farmers should not be left perpetually in the hands of the private cocoa merchants. Rather, the government ought to be involved indirectly in cocoa production through the provision of subsidy on inputs such as pesticides and storage devices.

Keywords: Marketing, services systems relationship, Economic interaction, city, village.

Introduction

Spatio-economic interactions among different categories of people and communities are crucial to the promotion of regional development in different parts of the world. Indeed, spatio-economic interactions involve both the movement of people from one place to another in order to undertake specific socio-economic activities that are capable of generating wealth for the people and the organizations that are involved in such movements and activities.(Ugwu L.N and Umar T.I.,2018). This trend which originated from time immemorial has assumed great prominence in all parts of the world today. In Akure metropolis, commodity marketing has been vital for continuous inter-regional interaction between the city and the inner regions within the metropolis.

Commodity marketing is the totality of all the processes whereby necessary activities which involve the movement of various commodities from areas of production (farms, firms and mining sites) to areas of consumption (markets) where the products are fully disposed off. Thus commodity marketing involves two basic changes; locational changes and changes of ownership. Locational change is brought about by the transfer of commodities from the points of production to the markets. Change of ownership arises as buyers take delivery of the commodities from the sellers in various market transactions. (Umar T.I. 2017)

No doubt, the production of goods over and above domestic needs necessitates commodity marketing in order that producers may earn cash incomes while consumers outside the area of production may satisfy their needs. The price mechanism occupies a unique position in the market economy as the forces of supply and demand interplay to determine equilibrium prices. Thus, the prevailing product prices in the various commodity markets help to determine producer incomes, buyers satisfaction and the level of profits for the entrepreneur and traders. The major commodity marketing functions consist of specialized activities such as selling, buying ,processing storage, distribution (transportation) and marketing. (Akinbode A. 1999)

Each of these functions is important and must be performed efficiency in the overall interest of the society. Not these alone, but also financing, relevant marketing information, risk bearing by both producers/consumers of the various commodities are normal features of commodity marketing today.

Buying and selling are exchange functions which take place at the point at which prices are set. At that point also, change of product ownership takes place. On the other hand, processing, storage and transportation are activities which involve handling, mobility and transfer of title from sellers to buyers. Accurate relevant

information is needed to facilitate standardization, financing and risk bearing. Smooth flow of relevant information enables sellers and buyers of commodities to operate effectively in the various commodity markets where they can maximize their profits and satisfaction respectively. (Akinbode A. 1995).

Another important aspect of commodity marketing is marketing research which has been defined as the symmetric gathering, recording and analysis of data about the problems which inhibit commodity marketing activities. The solution to such problems paves the way for viable marketing transactions and permits free flows of goods from areas of production to the areas where the goods are needed.

No doubt, the structure of commodity markets, at different levels of the society villages, local government area or state is an important influence on the quality of the various commodities that are sold and the proceeds from such sales. No doubt, commodity markets are socio-spatial points at which sellers and buyers converge to undertake exchange transactions. The observation is valid that various commodity markets have existed for a long period of time. The different rates of market evolution in the study area as in many other places especially in the developing world have resulted in the emergence of markets of different sizes, and of varying importance. At this juncture, the introduction of the concept of locational efficiency into our consideration is pertinent. (Akinbode A. 1995).

Locational efficiency is a concept that needs clarification in relation to commodity marketing in the study area. All factors that influence the range of commodities and services that are available at a given market centre and the relative ease with which they can be assembled at such points are factors which determine the locational efficiency of that market centre. In other words, distances, transfer costs, commodity prices, and the durability of the different commodities assist our understanding of the locational efficiency of commodity markets in a designated region. For instance, given two commodity markets in a designated region, M1 and M2, if M1 is far from the majority of the people that transact market operations (both sellers and buyers) such that transfer costs are high for individual commodities and prices are also high, in each case, relative to M2 then market M1 is less accessible to the consumers and hence its location is less efficient than that of market M2. (fig 1) Thus market M2 will attract more people, sellers and buyers, than market M1. If care is not taken, with time, market M1 might decline while market M2 becomes more prominent as there might be a persistent diversion of sellers and buyers as well as marketing services from M1 to M2. (Akinbode A. 1999)

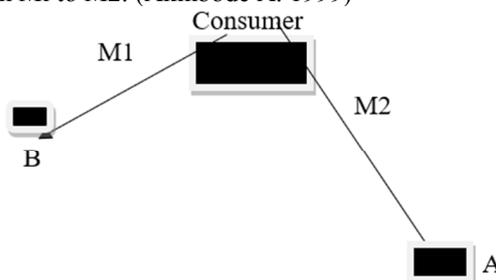


Fig 1: Locational efficiency of Agricultural –product markets.

Furthermore, the concept of locational efficiency as expatiated above incorporates two other fundamental and operationally unique concepts. These are the concepts of spatial accessibility and that of pecuniary affordability. Certainly, the concepts of spatial accessibility is relevant to the determination of the number of commodities, sellers and buyers who operate at a given market centre on each market day as well as the volume of transactions each market can handle and the ease with which such transactions are undertaken. Altogether, these concepts underlie the delimitation of the catchment area of each market centre. The catchment area of a market centre is defined as the area delimited by the longest distance from where both commodity sellers and buyers come to operate at the market centre. (Ugwu L.N. and Umar T.I.,2018).

The ease with which assorted commodities can be conveyed into and out of the center and the availability of marketing facilities and services which the market centre offers to both commodity sellers and buyers are great and impressive. On the other hand, the concept of pecuniary affordability is related to the level of market prices of commodities and services that are available at the individual market centres. In general, if market prices are high consumers tend to reduce the quantity of commodities they purchase.

Also, commodity traders reduce the volume of commodities and services they purchase in certain market centres for sale in other market centres. No doubt, high prices reduce the real incomes of consumers by reducing their purchasing power. This is especially true in a situation where workers' incomes have not increased over an appreciable period of time. Thus both disposable and real incomes of consumers may decline on a relative basis as prices rise. The net effect of this trend is reflected in both the limited range and the declining quantity of commodities and services that consumers can afford to purchase and utilize at given prices. These two concepts are no doubt, basic to the successful operation of commodity markets in any region and especially in our area of study. On the other hand, in a situation of buoyant economy where workers' income rise steadily, production of

diverse commodities tend to increase while the distribution and marketing of these commodities generate substantial activities and revenues for traders and the middlemen. Thus, both sellers and buyers tend to enjoy market boom. Although market prices tend to rise, consumers can accommodate the rise in market prices because of the rise in their own incomes which may be higher than the rise in product prices. (Ugwu L.N .and Umar T.I.,2018).

Thus both intra-urban and peri-urban regions tend to be full of socio-economic activities that are profitable. In a situation of economic prosperity, large markets such as urban - market continue to expand while small markets even in the rural areas begin to develop and enlarge. Sometimes new markets may emerge in rural areas at locations such as road-sides and route-junctions where none existed before. (Akinbode A. 1999).

No doubt, commodity markets serve as nerve centres of regional economic activities and thereby influence both the pattern and intensity of regional development in it significant manner. This is especially true in the current study area. Furthermore, it is part of our primary concern to explain the, rising economic prosperity in the region in recent times. This new era of economic boom has been made possible by the expanding viable commodity marketing activities that take places all over the region. . (Akinbode A. 1999). It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to evaluate the commodity marketing and services systems' relationship with the spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the commodity marketing and services systems' relationship with the spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages in Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. To evaluate the relationship between the agricultural product marketing system and spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages
2. To ascertain the relationship between the industrial products marketing system and spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages
3. To identify the major marketing problems of agricultural and industrial products in Akure and its' inner towns and villages.

Research Hypothesis

1. **H₀**: Agricultural product marketing system contributes to spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages
2. **H₀**: Industrial products marketing system contributes positively to spacio-economic interactions in Akure city and its' inner towns and villages.
3. **H₀**: There are major marketing problems of agricultural and industrial products in Akure and its' inner towns and villages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Listed in table 1.0 arc thirty-three settlements including villages, small and medium towns which constitute about 9.5% percent of the total population of the entire region outside Akure metropolis. Out of these thirty-three small and medium towns and villages, ten comprising four small towns, two medium towns and four villages are selected as the survey sample settlements for close study. The four small towns are Oba-Ilanre and, Ogbese, Ilara-Mokin and Iju while the medium towns are Idanre and Oke. The four villages are Eleyowo, Ibule, Aponmu and Odudu. Altogether, the population of the ten sample settlements, villages, small and medium towns constitute about 40% of the population of the region including Akure metropolis.

In order to facilitate data collection, a simple questionnaire was designed. Attention is focused on rural-urban marketing activities and services. Again, interest is centered on the products and services that the sample settlements provide for Akure city and the products and service which the city, in turn, offers, these small and medium towns and villages. Some twenty-one questions arc posed in this section of the questionnaire. These questions seek to probe the sources of supply of the diverse goods that are conveyed into the city from the sample settlements on a regular basis. Also, the pattern of inter-market distribution of the products is of genuine concern to us while the economic benefits accruing form the market transactions to both the traders and transporters involved arc also part of our consideration.

Table 1.0 Major settlements (Villages, Small and Medium Towns) in Akure’s inner Region

s/n	Akure-owo Road	Akure-Ilesha road	Akure-Idanre road	Akure-Ondo road	Akure-Ado-Ekiti road
1	Akure City	Ita Oniyan	Ogbunigburu	Alademhin	Odudu
2	Oba-Ile	Ipinsa	Adosore	Aladenika	Itaogbolu
3	Igbatayo	IIlara-Mokin	Araromi-Adosure	Aponmu	Iju
4	Araromi	Mariwo	Olugede	Oloruntedo	
5	Eleyowo	Ero	Ita-Oloorun		
6	Ajebamidele	Ipogun	Alades		
7	Ajgunle	Ibule	Idanre		
8	Ago-Abo	Igbara-Oke			
9	Bolorunduro				
10	Alayere				
11	Ogbese				
Total	11	8	7	4	3
					Grand Total= 33

Source: compiled by the author from Topographical maps, Akure N.E, N.W,S.E and S.W sheets.2018

Discussion of Findings

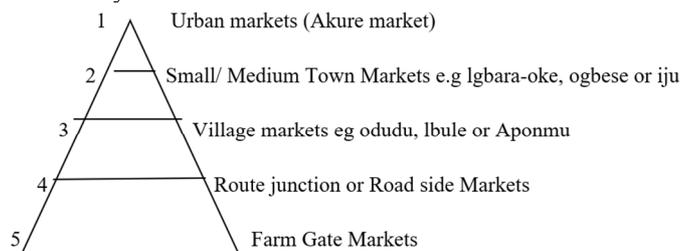
The Agricultural Product Marketing System in Akure and its’ Inner Towns and Villages

The agricultural product markets in the region can be classified into at least five major categories viz farm - gate markets, route intersection/junction markets, village markets, medium town markets and large urban markets. This classification of agricultural product markets makes it possible to involve all categories of human settlement in the region in our consideration of agricultural product marketing activities and analysis.

No doubt, a number of farmers prefer to sell and indeed do sell their farm products on the farm to buyers who invariably convey the produce to the various, village and urban markets to sell. These are usually itinerant traders who collect the farm products from the various farms, farm-steads, hamlets, villages, small and medium towns for sale in Akure metropolis commodity markets. This way the farmers are relieved from the burden of transporting their produce from the farms to the villages.

In the remote rural areas, the junctions of two or more bush paths signify favorable collection points of large-scale farm products. Furthermore, the intersections or junctions of two roads usually favour the growth of agricultural product markets, these roads have become important throughout the region especially in the last one decade as the population has increased tremendously all over the region . Road side agricultural product markets are found along the Akure – Ilesha express highway at Igbara- Oke and Isharun in Ifedore Local Government Area. Also, Odudu and Ita-Ogbolu are prominent roadside agricultural product markets along Akure-Ado-Ekiti express way. The various villages in the region are important agricultural product markets. Odudu, Ibule. Eleyowo and Aponmu are all important agricultural product markets that are located at accessible points within the large-scale agricultural area that the region has become. Each of these village markets handles, every market day, large volumes of agricultural products as large-scale buyers come from different places especially Akure metropolis to convey these products in large quantities into the metropolis. Similarly, all the six small and medium towns in the survey are large agricultural product markets. Indeed, each of these towns serves as a major collection centre for the agricultural produce of their respective immediate hinterlands within the region of study. As a small percentage of the agricultural produce that comes to each town is retained/consumed in the town, the greater percentage is transported to Akure metropolis which has a greater need for all the produce. Indeed, Akure metropolis has the largest urban agricultural product markets in the region.

Fig. 2. below illustrates the hierarchical structure of the agricultural product markets in the inner region of Akure metropolis - our area of study.



The pyramidal structure of the markets reflects only the numbers of each type of markets. Although not all farmers sell their products in the farms yet the number of farm-gate markets in each village or small towns is

indeed large. Thus, there are many farm-gate markets hence the broad base of fig. 2.0 while the routine-inter section junction markets are fewer than farm gate markets, the former are more numerous than the village markets in the region. In turn, the village agricultural product markets are more numerous than the small and medium town markets. In terms of the quantity of products that is handled and hence the proceeds accruing at each market level, the urban agricultural product markets are rated first followed by the town markets, road-side markets down to the farm-gate markets.

A number of prominent large commodity markets have developed in different pans of Akure metropolis over the years. A wide variety of both agricultural and industrial products are offered for sale daily in each of these major commodity markets. The daily markets are listed against the different quarters within Akure metropolis in which they are located in table 2.0 below.

Table 2.0: The Daily Commodity Markets in Akure Metropolis

S/NO	Markets	Location
1	Erekesan market	City centre
2	NEPA Market	Arakade junction with Hospital Road
3	Isikan market	Isikan Quarters
4	Iralepo market	Iralepo quarters
5	Adedeji market	City centre
6	Horo market	Oke- Aro
7	Isolo market	Isolo quarters
8	Araomi market	Araromi quarters
9	Osodi market	Osodi quarters
10	Owode market	Owode quarters
11	Ijoka Road market	Ijoka quarters
12	Shagari market	Federal housing Estate
13	Akure shopping complex or	Along Owo-Ilesha Express highway
14	Onyearugbulem market	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

Apart from these major commodity markets, which are located within Akure metropolis area, there are other important commodity markets which are located within the Akure's inner region,- all of which serve Akure metropolis effectively as sources of food products, bush-meat, forest products and fibre products among others. However, these are not daily markets but periodic markets which hold every four days. Such notable markets include Ogbese, Alade Idanre, Aponmu, Igbara-Oke, llara-Mokin and Iju-ltagbolu markets. They are veritable sources of large scale supply of many valuable agricultural products which Akure city dwellers require on daily basis. These small and medium towns are among the sample settlements which are selected for in – depth investigation in the different Local Government Areas within the inner region of Akure metropolis. The numerous agricultural products that are available for exchange in the region can be classified into at least five major groups, as tubers and root crops, fruits, vegetables, forest products and bush-meat (Table 3.0).

These five major groups of agricultural goods are produced, processed and exchanged locally within the region. Grains constitute a conspicuous absence from this list of agricultural products. While the trade in these major categories of agricultural products involves the movement of these diverse products from the farms through the farmsteads, villages, the small and medium towns to the large urban markets within Akure metropolis, the trend in the trade of the grains involves, by and large, a averse movement of the products from the metropolis to small and medium towns, villages and farmsteads.

Table 3.0 contains the list of products in each of the five major groups of agricultural products that are produced largely for the market in the various villages, small and medium sized towns throughout the region. Column 2 of table 3.0 consists of tubers and root crops; that are grown mainly for the market in the different settlements. The most important two or three crops that are grown in each sample village or town are recorded for each settlement. Thus yams, cassava and cocoyam which are produced in large quantity in Oba-Ile are recorded while only yams and cassava are produced for the market in Eleyowo. While male farmers specialize in the production of the food crops such as yam, cassava, cocoyam, plantain, banana and citrus fruit, female farmers specialise in growing assorted vegetables which include tomatoes, okro and numerous species of leaf vegetables. The specialty of children is fetching of firewood and basket weaving for sale. In addition, children collect leaves, ropes, palm fruits and snails from the forests - all of which they sell for little cash income to offset part of their school or apprenticeship expenses as the case may be.

Table 3.0 Types of Agricultural Products in Akure's Inner Region

S/No	Samples settlements	Tubers and roots	Grains	Fruits	Legumes & vegetables	&	Forest products	Bush –meat
1	Oba-Ile	Yam, cassava	Maize & rice	Plantains & citrus fruits	Okro & assorted vegetables	&	Woods leaves & ropes	Grass-cutters & antelopes
2	Eleyowo	Cassava, Yam	Maize & rice	Plantains & banana	Assorted vegetables okro	&	Woo, ropes & leaves	Deers and grass -cutters
3	Ogbese	Yam and cassava	Maize & rice	Plantains & banana	Vegetable & tomatoes	&	Wood, leaves & herks	Grass –cutters & rabbits
4	Ibule	Yam, cassava	Maize & rice	Plantains & citrus fruits	Okro vegetable	&	Wood and leaves	Grass- cutters & rabbits
5	Ilara Mokin	Cassia, Yam	Maize	Plantains & citrus fruits	Tomatoes and leaf vegetables	&	Wood ropes & leaves	Rabbits, grass cutters & antelopes & antelopes
6	Igbara Oke	Yam and cassava	Maize & rice	Plantains & citrus fruits	Vegetables & tomatoes	&	Wood, leaves & roots	Antelopes & deers
7	Idanre	Yam, cassava	Maize	Plantains & banana	Vegetables & pumpkins	&	Wood & leaves	Grass –cutters & rodents
8	Aponmu	Cassava, Yam	Maize	Plantains & banana	Vegetable & okro	&	Wood & leaves	Antelopes and grass cutters
9	Odudu	Yam and cassava	Maize	Plantains & banana	Vegetable & okro	&	Wood & leaves	Grass cutters & rodents
10	Iju	Yam, cassava & cocoyam	Maize & rice	Plantains & citrus fruit	Vegetable & okro	&	Wood & leaves	Grass-cutters & rodents

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

Obvious from table 3.0 above is the preponderance of a few major food products such as yams and cassava which are produced virtually in all the sample villages and towns. Indeed, it is a pride for a man to be a large - scale farmer in a community, village or town, such a farmer can raise his head high in pride. Such a successful farmer will not only be able to feed his family well all year round but will also earn enough cash income to provide the basic non-food socio-economic needs for his dependents.

In recent times, cassava has appreciated remarkably in value and prominence throughout the region as has been the case in many areas of inter-tropical Africa. Indeed, cassava has proved to be reliable crop under difficult situations. It is a vigorous crop that can compete successfully with many tropical weeds. Thus, it can survive with little or no assistance/care of the cultivator. Not this alone but also, cassava can be used to produce several types of meal including garri, eba, fufu, popogarri and lafun. These characteristics have accounted for the growing popularity of cassava in many areas throughout the tropical lands of Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America including our study area. No doubt, cassava is competing favorably with yam both as a major staple food and a major cash earner in parts of the study area especially in the derived savanna lands.

Fortunately, farmers in these areas have devised the strategy of planting cassava stems on farmlands from which yam and corn have just been harvested. No doubt, the fruits especially plantain and banana have become prominent food items in recent times, unlike before independence when these items were taken occasionally as refreshment by a relatively small percentage of the educated population in virtually every village or town.

On the other hand, the cash crops like cocoa and kolanuts have special arrangement for their processing, handling and marketing. Cocoa beans are bought from individual producers in the farmsteads, villages and towns - that is, the sample settlement by itinerant cocoa buying agents who collect the cocoa beans and assemble them in a small or medium town like Idanre, Ilara-Mokin, Igbara-Oke, Iju or Ogbese. From each of these relatively big cocoa trading centres, larger consignments of the cocoa beans are conveyed into the depots of various cocoa merchants in Akure metropolis who in turn arrange to export the beans overseas especially to Britain through the port of Lagos. Cocoa trade in the study area has been subject to varying government policies over the years. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s the Western Nigerian Marketing Board was responsible for the marketing of Nigerian cocoa in the world market. But in the 1980s, the Cocoa Commodity Board was set up by the Federal Government to replace the Marketing Board. No doubt, the performance of the Cocoa Commodity Board fell far below the expectations of the farmers. Thus cocoa farmers in the South Western Nigeria - the leading cocoa producing area in Nigeria unanimously demanded the disbandment of the Cocoa Commodity Board. Since the demise of the Cocoa Commodity Board, the government has not put in place any other cocoa marketing outfit. This means, in effect, that cocoa marketing has been left in the hands of private individual merchants and their buying agents. Thus, the last two decades had witnessed private initiatives marketing of cocoa beans in southwestern Nigeria including our study area. Thus over period, when the independent cocoa agents dominated the activities of cocoa market, the fortunes of cocoa farmers in southwestern Nigeria including our study area have been subjected to wide fluctuations in prices and incomes of cocoa farmers. Thus, in years of boom, cocoa prices are so high that virtually every cocoa farmer earns high incomes from the sale of his cocoa beans. But such years were followed by several years of severe depression in the world cocoa market. The result is that most cocoa farmers tend to neglect their cocoa farms after one year of very low cocoa prices in the world market. Indeed, as a result of persistently low cocoa prices, most cocoa farmers, in our area of study, have shifted their

attention gradually to the production of other commercial crops such as kolanuts, cashew nuts, tea, coconuts and citrus fruit all of which the author call internal or domestic cash crops since the markets for them exist in Nigeria. Also, greater attention has been given to plantain and banana production in many communities blowing the depression in the cocoa market.

Kolanut another significant cash crop of the region is, however, different from cocoa in that its major markets are within Nigeria - the major towns and cities throughout the country. Thus, like cocoa, kolanut collectors/buyers go to the different farmsteads, villages and towns buying small consignments of kolanuts. These consignments of kolanuts are assembled at designated depots usually in the small and medium towns all over the study area. From these depots, even larger consignments are conveyed in trailers and trucks to various places in the northern states.

Finally, the last column of table 3.0 indicates the different types of bush meat that are popular in each sample village and town. The entire region lies in the tropical rainforest area, which is characterized by stratified layers of vegetation that forms the highest layers of the forest.

However, owing to centres of intensive cultivation, the tropical rainforest has given way to derived savanna vegetation that is characterized by predominant tall grasses with scattered trees. Indeed, a profoundly diversified variety of games or animal species is found both in the tropical rainforests and the derived savanna that has replaced the forest in certain localities. For instance, the bush pig, the elephant and buffalo that are natural inhabitants of the tropical rain forest are found in large numbers in the inner region of Akure metropolis - the study areas. Also deers antelopes, grass -cutters and a large variety of snakes, rabbits, snails and rats are abundant throughout the forests and the savanna lands. Thus, farmers and especially hunters have abundant harvests of games virtually all year round.

Indeed, Akure metropolis continues to have abundant supply of a great variety of bush - meat daily .The bush -meat are brought to the various agricultural commodity markets within the metropolis such as Oja-Oba, Isikan, Osolo, Iloro, Araromi and ijoka. From each of these major agricultural commodity markets, various educational health and other institutions such as schools, hospitals, hostels and restaurants purchase the complements of their business requirements. Alternatively, some institutions have their regular supplies of the different types of bush-meat. Usually, these institutional suppliers either purchase their bush meat from some of the major markets or get supplies directly from the hunters who kill the animals. No doubt, some hunters in the various communities go into the bush daily to hunt the games, they do so day and night. This is the main source of supply of bush meat to the villages, small and medium towns in the study area. Alternatively, the institutional suppliers of bush meat may themselves go into the major commodity markets within Akure metropolis and in the villages and small towns to purchase the bush-meat and supply to the institutions. However, the greater, the number of exchanges the higher is the price of bush-meat. In other words, the institutions which buy bush-meats directly from the hunters pay less than those that buy from the middlemen or bush-meat traders as both middlemen and traders must have gotten their supplies either from hunters or hunter's agents in the first instance. In the survey of agricultural product marketing system within Akure's inner region, three categories of people are crucial to the meaningful analysis of the diverse marketing services that provide vital links between rural areas and the various small and medium towns and Akure metropolis. These are drivers who operate their vehicles in conveying large-scale bulky agricultural products from one place to another within the region; the traders who roam the entire region buying and assembling diverse agricultural products for onward transportation into Akure metropolis, play a very important role in making the market system effective. Lastly, there are the farmers both full-time and part-time farmers who grow these diverse products. Table 4.0 contains basic data about the influence which farmers exert on the various agricultural activities. Indeed, farmers, agricultural product traders and the middlemen as well as drivers were interviewed during the field survey. Table 4.0 gives the number of both full-time and part-time farmers who were interviewed in each sample village and town in columns 3 and 4. The major agricultural products which are grown for the market are indicated in column 5 while column7 states the frequency of supply of the products by the farmers to the various markets. Lastly, column 8 indicates the main agricultural product markets within Akure metropolis to which the produce of these farmers are conveyed.

No doubt, the operations of the full-time farmers have contributed positively to the effective functioning of the commodity markets in the various communities throughout the study area. This is why it is possible to get regular supplies of various agricultural products for a greater part of the year in the different communities.

There has emerged within the study area, a distinctive group of farmers who specialise in cultivating valley lands or fadamas that is, low-lying water-abundant plains to grow special crops such as vegetables, pepper, onions, okro, sugar cane, tomatoes and even plantain, banana and yams. This group of farmers has succeeded in raising several crops of the products that were being grown only once a year under arable agriculture. Various communities in the study area need more of this category of farmers who can make agriculture a full-time viable activity all - year round. Both the communities, the local and state governments should encourage them by providing processing and storage facilities to enable the farmers enlarge their production appreciably. Certainly, this is a realistic step towards the attainment of food security in the various communities and hence in the nation

at large.

Table 4.0 Pattern of Influences of Farmer Activities on Commodity Markets

s/no	Sample settlements	Full-time farmers	Part-Time farmers	Major produce sold	Location of major markets	Frequently of supply
1	Oba-Ile	5	8	Plantain and yam	Oba-Ile and Akure	Week during growing season
2	Eleyowo	10	2	Cassava, yam palm products and bush-meat	Eleyowo Oba-Ile, Akure	Every days time
3	Ogbese	6	3	Yams, cassava	Ogbese and Akure	“
4	Ibule	7	“	Plantain, cocoa	Ibule, Iara - Mokin and Akure	“
5	Ijara Mokin	4	2	Yam and plantain	Iara -Mokin	“
6	Igbara- Oke	8	4	Citrus fruit, cocoa and palm product	Igbara-Oke and Akure	“
7	Idanre	5	3	Yams, and plantain	Idanre, Owena and Akure	“
8	Aponmu	7	-	Yams, palm product and cocoa	Aponmu and Akure	“
9	Odudu	6	1	Yams, palm product and cocoa	Odudu and Akure	“
10	Iju	7	2	Yams, palm product cocoa and bush meat	Iju, Ita Ogbolu and Akure	“
Total	10	65	25	7	11	“

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2018

It was revealed that there are two categories of full-time farmers- full time farmers and full time subsistence farmers. The latter is fast disappearing. Virtually every farmer in the area of study transcends production of food for himself and his family alone to include production for cash income for non-food socio-economic needs such as school fees for the children, putting up a residential building for the family and effective participation in diverse community and/or religious obligations.

Industrial Product Marketing System in Akure and its’ Inner Towns and Villages

The study revealed that the general orientation of the industrial product marketing sub-system in the region is almost the complete reversal of the agricultural marketing sub-system. Agricultural products originate in the farms and farmsteads from where they are transported to the route-intersection/junction, roadside and village markets .The reverse is the case with respect to the movement of industrial products such as clothing material, tinned food items, kitchen ware, soft and hot drinks, building materials and medicaments.

At least 80 percent of these industrial goods pass through Akure metropolis from where they are distributed to the various communities throughout the region through the marketing system. The remaining 20 percent of the various industrial goods can be accounted for by itinerant sellers who convey such industrial goods to the various communities from outside the region without passing through Akure metropolis. Also, various individuals as well as small and medium business enterprises go outside the region to Edo, and eastern states as well as to Lagos, and even the northern states to purchase various industrial products which they convey directly to their respective home towns or villages without involving Akure metropolis in the chain of transactions. Some of these business enterprises, however, maintain contacts with the bigger organizations in Akure metropolis for a more regular and reliable supply of their wares since they cannot travel out regularly for these supplies.

Unlike with agricultural products, most of the traders who are not vehicle owners use commercial vehicles especially the buses that convey agricultural products to the metropolis to convey their manufactured products back into their respective small and medium towns and villages within the region. On the other hand, the traders or businessmen and women who have vehicles convey their wares of industrial products from the city to their individual villages and towns in their private vehicles. Thus for major industrial product there are wholesale facilities in Akure metropolis which make it possible for (dealers, or the large-scale dealers from within the region to procure adequate supplies of the various industrial products they desire to get.

The Major Marketing Problems

The various categories of people who are involved in the marketing of both agricultural and industrial products in the region encounter a number of problems which tend to militate against their success. These people include the traders, their middlemen, women, buyers/consumers and market staff.

Table 5.0 briefly sets out these problems. Inadequacy of storage facilities constitutes one of the most formidable problems of agricultural marketing in all parts of the region of study including even the metropolis. Many agricultural products get rotten or decay fast under the humid tropical environment that exists throughout

the study area. First, the delicacy products such as vegetables, pepper, tomatoes and okro are the worst hit. These products deteriorate fast and unless they are disposed off quickly after harvests, large scale spoilage may not be averted. The only effective and lasting solution to this nagging problem is the development of a processing strategy or technology that will make it possible to grind and store the products such as vegetables, pepper and tomatoes in cans. This way the good flavour of the products can be preserved for as long as possible. Next the products such as yam, cassava and plantain which are more preservable under the traditional system of storage deserve better storage devices that will make them retain natural flavour for as long as they are stored. Turning each of these products into powder before conning will ensure that the products are durable. No doubt, good processing of the agricultural products enhances their storability which is one of the conditions for the attainment of food security in the region. As at today, much of the agricultural products especially food products get rotten and waste away partly on the farms and partly in transit from the farms through the different marketing chains to the urban markets. This problem is universal throughout the region and is fast becoming more serious as the volume of output of each product tends to increase significantly yearly.

Another prevalent problem in the different agricultural product markets throughout the region is the variability in agricultural product prices. Virtually every product price varies unpredictably. Column 4 of Table 5.0 presents the views of the respondents on the agricultural product prices in the 11 communities in the study area. In Oba-Ile product prices are described as unsteady while the notion at both Eleyowo and Ogbese is that agricultural product prices are unpredictable. Sellers at Ilara Mokin lamented that agricultural product prices were inherently low and so gave little or no margin of profit to both farmers and farm product traders. The views of farmers and sellers at Igbara-Oke confirm the assertion that agricultural product prices were variable. Agricultural product prices were referred to as high but variable in Idanre, Aponmu, Odudu and Iju. The profound variability in agricultural product prices means that farmers cannot base their projections of future farm outputs on the current prices. Planned or projected future production can be nullified by an unexpected fall in product prices. Similarly, agricultural product traders can hardly plan their business using the price index of agricultural products. Not this alone, consumers need to adjust their budget from time to time owing to wide variations in the prices of agricultural products which they purchase from time to time. The price variations affect significantly their real income. As food is essential, adjustment in family maintenance budgets may mean fore-going certain non- food items that were previously budgeted for. In virtually every market, agricultural product sellers and in some cases, buyers complain about various levies that were charged either by the market authorities, the Local Government Authorities or the community that maintains the markets. These levies are regarded as additional costs that sellers and buyers find difficult to bear. Column 6 of table 5.0 describes these levies by the most appropriate words in each community. Thus while the levies are seen as moderate in Oba-Ile, Eleyowo, Ibule, and Iju, they are described as high in Ilara-Mokin, Odudu, Ogbese and Igbara- Oke. In both cases, most sellers and buyers and in a few cases farmers too either want the levies reduced or removed completely if possible. The impact of transport fares on the movement of people from the various communities to Akure metropolis (on both sellers and buyers) is similar to that of price variations especially falls in product prices. The effect of high transport fares is reduction in the real income of traders who react by increasing the price per unit of their products. In column 7 of the table 4.0 under reference, the rates of transport fares are moderate in Oba-Ile, Eleyowo, Aponmu and Odudu whereas they are high elsewhere in the study area. Yet another market problem in the region is the universal unhealthy physical environments of the market. Apart from a few places such as Oba-Ile, Igbara-Oke and Iju with bearable market environments, the level of sanitation in most agricultural product-markets in the region is very poor. Most markets are muddy during the rainy season while they are heavily dust –laden during the dry season. Thus, these market environments are unbearable virtually all-year round. Lastly, lack or shortage of bank credits for both farmers and agricultural product sellers/traders tend to retard agricultural enterprises in the region. In a few communities, bank credit facilities are not at all available. In a few other communities where limited credit facilities are available probably through community banks, the interest rates as well as the bankers' insistence on the provision of collateral securities for loans preclude runny farmers and agricultural product traders from taking advantage of such loans to improve their agricultural enterprise.

Table 5.0 The Major Marketing Problems

s/n	Sample settlement	Inadequate storage facilities	Variable products prices	Poor level of environmental sanitation	Market levies	Transport fares
1	Oba- iie	Spoilage of goods owing to lack of storage facilities	Unsteady prices	Bearable sanitary market environment	Moderate	Moderate
2	Eleyowo	“	Market prices unpredictable	Alternately muddy and dusty market environment	High /moderate	High
3	Ibule	:	Inherently low product pries	Bearable market environment	High	High
4	Ogbese	“	Unpredictable market prices	“	High / moderate	Moderate
5	Iiare mokin	“	Inherently low product price	“	High/ moderate	High
6	Igbara oke	“	Variable prices	“	High	High
7	Idanre	“	High but variable prices	Filthy market environment	Low	High
8	Aponmu	“	”	“	Low	Moderate
9	Odudu	“	variable prices	Bearable market environment	Moderate / high	Moderate
10	Iju	“	variable prices	Bearable market environment	Moderate / high	Moderate
Total	10					

Sources: Researcher’s Fields Survey 2018.

The last of column of Table 5.0 highlights the problem which the lack of credit facilities poses to the expansion of farmers' and farm product traders' enterprises. Even where credit facilities are available, high interest rates may create a level of disincentive which discourages expansion in small scale farm enterprises. However, where credit facilities are available at affordable interests, some farmers certainly take due advantage of this opportunity to expand and develop their agricultural enterprises appreciably.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Intra-regional market system has been seen as a medium for the spatial distribution and the sale of agricultural and industrial products throughout Akure's inner region. In general, agricultural products of a profoundly diversified variety move from the farms and farmsteads through the villages and the small and medium towns to Akure metropolis. On the other hand, the industrial products move in a reverse manner from the metropolis through the medium and small towns to the villages and the farmsteads. Over the years, both agricultural and industrial product marketing subsystems have become efficient in distributing virtually every product in such a way that consumers got virtually whatever they want and at the places where they want them. However, a number of marketing problems persist in the region. These problems include lack or inadequacy of processing and storage systems to keep agricultural products in good conditions for longer periods of time than hither-to. Not this alone, but also wide variations in agricultural product prices adversely affect both farmers and agricultural product traders in using the price index to plan their enterprises. The insanitary physical environments in which most of the markets are located are repulsive to all categories of people, traders, buyers and the communities. Also, all categories of people do complain about the market levies in various communities. Although these levies are meant for the improvement of the various markets, yet they could be reduced to alleviate the financial burden on the common people. Another problem is that of high transport fares, appropriate drivers and motor vehicle owner unions could be addressed to by the appropriate local government authorities to take wise decisions on transport fares in the different communities from time to time.

There is need to intensity the caution that hunters and poachers should exercise restraint in killing animals in the vegetations. The young animals ought to be spared while only the mature animals are killed. This idea has been accepted with respect to plants and therefore should be applied to animals. The federal and state governments should not abandon the cocoa farmers to their fate. The cocoa farmers should not be left perpetually in the hands of the private cocoa merchants. Rather, the government ought to be involved indirectly in cocoa production through the provision of subsidy on inputs such pesticides and storage devices. Not this alone, the government should continue to liase between the world market and the cocoa farmers in order to secure good prices for the nation's cocoa output. This is the only way the interests of cocoa farmers can be

protected and their hopes of better life fulfilled. Finally, local government authorities and the different communities can do much to influence the establishment of more banks especially community banks that will be able to give soft loans to small and medium scale enterprises. Thus farmers and agricultural product traders will benefit from such loans to improve their enterprises.

Reference

- Akinbode, A (1995) ‘ Locational efficiency of River- Bank Agricultural Product Markets: Examples from Benue, Kogi and Edo-State, Chapter two in perspectives on National Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria Edited by Akinbode, A et al.
- Akinbode, A. (1999) ‘Spatio-functional characteristics Of Agricultural-product market in Esanland’, International journal of Environment and Development. 2(2):40-46.
- Umar,T.I. (2017) An Analysis of the Degree of quality of indigenous Building Materials used in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria. International Journal in physical and Applied sciences Vol.04, pp 34-45
- Ugwu L.N. and Umar T.I. (2018) Investigating the Role of Population Mobility in the Development of Akure Metropolis and Its’ Neighbouring Towns and Villages International Journal of Academic Research in Environment & Geography 5(1): 30-39 E-ISSN: 2313-769X HRMARS