GARRI PRODUCTION IN IDOMALAND, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Cassava, an edible root crop and a reliable and relatively inexpensive source of carbohydrate, iswidely grown and processed into different foods such as cassava flour and garri. The main thrust of the paper is to irradiate garri production in Idomaland, North Central Nigeria,with a focus on the challenges and prospects of garri production in the area.To achieve this, anthropological and historical methodologies were used to generate data, while the qualitative method was used for the analysis. Supplementary secondary sources were also used. The paper examines the nature of garri production in Idomaland and the challenges of garri production in the area. It also highlights the prospects of garri production in the area. The paper concludes by submitting thatthe government has a role to play in forming strong policies that will favour the production of cassava and processing it into garri, flour, bread, starch among others.

Keywords: Garri Production, Idomaland, Challenges, Prospects

Introduction

Nigeria is currently the largest producer of cassava (*ManihotesculantaCrantz*) in the world with an annual production of over 34million tones of tuberous roots and the largest cassava market in Africa. Cassava plays a food security role in Africa where annual production feeds over 80million people annually.[1] It is the cheapestsource of calories for both human and animal consumption; and defies socio-economic class, religious and ethnic boundaries.[2]Cassava is not only perceived as food but also as a

[1]Read M.Y. Okpekeand S. U. O.Onyeagocha, Analysis of Processing Cassava Tubers into Garri in IsokoNorth Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria in European Journal of Agriculture and Forestry ResearchVol.3, No.5, November 2015, pp. 15-25,retrieved from www.eajournals.org on 14/05/2021; B. A.Adebayo, et al, Quality Management Manual for the Production of Gariin International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, Nigeria, 2012, retrieved from www.iita.org on 14/05/2021;A. O. Kolawole,Training Manual FadamaIII Additional Financing Processing of Cassava into Gari and High Quality Cassava Flour in Nigeria, July, 2017,retrieved https://slideplayer.com on 14/05/2021;J. O.Ijigbade,A. I. Fatuase, and E.T.Omisope, Conduct and Profitability of Gari Production for Increased Food Security in Ondo State, Nigeria in IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), Volume 19, Issue 7, Ver. VI (July. 2014), PP 89-95, retrieved from www.iosrjournals.orgon 14/05/2021.

[2]A. A. Adesope,et al, Economic Analysis of Cassava Flour and Garri Production in Ibarapa Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria in Journal of Applied

rawmaterial for various types of industries. It can beconverted into a large number of products rangingfrom traditional and novel food products to livestockfeeds, ethanol, starch, and its numerous derivatives.Cassava is processed into garri within a production cycle that takes an average of five to seven days this also applies to cassava flour.[3] Two species have emerged as our most popular cultivated cassava, the sweet variety*(Manihotpalmata)*and bitter variety *(Manihotutilissima)*;[4] of these two species, the more widely produced and used for garri production,is the bitter variety*(Manihotutilissimal)*.

In Idomaland, garriproduction and consumption have risen tremendously atabout 10% per annum due to changing consumer preferences, population increase and urbanization.[5]However, it is observed that most people prefer to consume garri produced using modern processing methodsas compared to the one produced using traditional processingmethods.The reason is thatthe traditional methods of processing cassava rootscan result in poor quality products that containunacceptable levels of cyanide, as well as beingcontaminated by foreign matter and disease-causingagents. If people eat these kinds of products, theycan suffer from acute cyanide poisoning, goiter, and a nerve-damaging disorder that makes themunsteady and unable to walk properly.[6]In the light of the above, this research was born to probe the extent of garri production in Idomaland, North Central Nigeria, with a focus on the challenges and prospects of garri production in the area. For the purpose of critically and exhaustively discussing the subject matter, the paper is subdivided into three parts. Part one examines the nature of garri production in Idomaland, while part two is for discussions on the challenges of garri production in Idomaland. Part three, explores the prospects of garri production in Idomaland.

An Overview of the Study Area

The area which forms the subject matter of this paper is located south of the river Benue, in the Benue Trough of Nigeria's Middle

Sciences and Environmental Management, Vol. 24 (9) 1551-1554, September 2020, retrieved from https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jasem on 14/05/2021;Garri Production in Nigeria The Feasibility Report in Market Publishers, retrieved from https://marketpublishers.comon 14/05/2021.

[3]A. A. Adesope,et al, Economic Analysis of Cassava Flour and Garri Production in Ibarapa…

[4]See A. O.Kolawole, Training Manual Fadama III Additional Financing Processing of Cassava…; B.James, Producing Gari from Cassava: An illustrated guide for smallholder cassava processors in International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), PMB 5320, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, 2012, retrieved from www.iita.org on 14/05/2021.

[5]This is taken from a survey of some market centres inIdomaland.

[6]See B.James, Producing Gari from Cassava: An illustrated …;A. O. Kolawole, Training Manual Fadama III Additional Financing Processing of Cassava …

Belt Zone, covering a total of 5,955 square kilometers, and lies within longitude 80º east and latitude 60° and 30º north.[7]It shares common boundaries with Nasarawa State to the north, Tivland (Gwer East and Gwer West L.G.As) to the east, Igedeland (Oju and Obi L.G.As) to the south-east, Ebonyi State to the south, Enugu State to the south-west and Kogi State to the west.The area experiences a tropical climate, while the local vegetation is the guinea savannah type. It is marked by dry and rainy seasons. The rain season begins in April and lasts till October. While the dry season lasts from November to March. The average rainfall is between 1016 and 1524 mm. The area also experiences the dry, yet cold windy harmattan weather between December and February and a short break in rainfall in August.[8]It has a population of about 2.5 million and is inhabited predominantly by the Idoma people, who speak the Idoma language and are predominantly rural and agrarian,who produce, eat and sell whatever that is in excess.[9] The area is good for the cultivation of roots and grains crops like yam, cassava, corn, rice, soya beans, and millets serving as both food and cash crops – a practice that has considerably changed the luxuriant vegetation of the Idoma remote past. The peopleare also involved in other vocations; as in white-collar jobs, art and crafts. The administrative status of the seven local government headquarters has generated jobs and attracted more from other areas for civil purposes, trading and farming.

The Nature of Garri Production in Idomaland

Garri is a granular food product produced by grating cassava roots into a mash, fermenting and dewatering the mash into a wetcake, and roasting the wet material into gelatinized particles. Garrihas a slightly sour taste and it could be white or cream dependingon the variety of cassava used and the processing methodadopted.[10]Garri

[7]Y. A. Ochefu, The Economic Transformation of Idoma Society, 1860 – 1960, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2000, pp.5 – 6. Read also O. O. Okpeh, and Y. A. Ochefu, "The Idoma Ethnic Group: A Historical and Cultural Setting", retrieved from www.idoma.info on 23/04/2015; J. E. Agaba, "Colonial Agricultural Policies in Idomaland 1920 – 1960, in The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria, Makurdi: Oracle Business Ltd, 2007, p.198; _____, "Land Use and the Mode of Production among the Precolonial Society of Central Nigeria", in Benue Valley Journal of Humanities, Vol. 8, No. 1 & 2, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2009, p. 93.

[8]Y. A. Ochefu, The Economic Transformation …, pp.40 – 43; O. O. Okpeh, and Y. A. Ochefu, "The Idoma Ethnic Group: …; A. Okpaga, "The Socio-Political History of the Igede, in Y. A. Ochefu, et al (eds.), A History of the Peoples of Benue State, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2007, pp. 76 – 78.

[9]J. E. Agaba, "Colonial Agricultural Policies in …, p. 198; O. O. Okpeh, and Y. A. Ochefu, "The Idoma Ethnic Group: …; Origins of the Idoma People - Traditional History retrieved from www.idoma.info/history.php on 08/03/2016.

[10]B. A.Adebayo,et al, Quality Management Manual for the Production of Gari ….; J. O.Ijigbade, A. I.Fatuase, and E.T.Omisope, Conduct and Profitability of Gari Production for Increased Food Security …; M. Y. Okpeke and S. U.

processing involves several steps:sorting/peeling of cassava tubes, washing of peeled roots,the grating of roots to obtain mash,fermentation and dewatering of mash, disintegration and sieving, toasting/roasting,cooling,sieving(grading), packaging and storage.[11]This process generated severalstreams of material which include the peels, the peeled roots, and the processed garri. Idomaland and Nigeria at largehave the potential to be self-sufficientin cassava production, both for food and industrial rawmaterial needs and for export purposes. However, a numberof constraints have been identified as limiting factors to cassavaand its byproducts production. These include problems with research, finance, infrastructure, pestand disease. Addressing at least most of theseproblems is the good first step towards attaining the target of cassava and its byproducts self-sufficiency.[12]

The processing of cassava into garriis one of the major cottage industries in the study area. The garri processing centres are located in every nook and cranny of the towns and villages in the study area. A good number of people, particularly the working class and urban dwellers, obtain their garri from these centres for immediate consumption and storage at home. The surplus garri produced at these centres is sent to other local markets for sale.[13] However, field observations at these garri processing centres revealed a total lack of standardization in the garri production practices employed, leading to different quality of garri being sold to the members of the public. Since the quality of the garri offered for sale or consumed is inextricably tied up with the processing operations and very little information is available on the quality characteristics of garri produced, a comprehensive study on garri production with emphasis on the processing cycle and standardization is highly necessary. Garri production in contemporary Idomaland comprises a blend of

O.Onyeagocha, Analysis of Processing Cassava Tubers into Garri in Isoko …; A. O. Kolawole,Training Manual FadamaIII Additional Financing Processing of Cassava …;Garri Production in Nigeria …; B.James, Producing Gari from Cassava: An illustrated …

[11]SeeA. O.Kolawole, Training Manual Fadama III Additional Financing Processing of Cassava …; B. A. Adebayo, et al, Quality Management Manual for the Production of Gari ….;B.James, Producing Gari from Cassava: An illustrated …

[12]Interviews: EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016; Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August 2018. Also read M. Y. Okpekeand S. U. O.Onyeagocha, Analysis of Processing Cassava Tubers into Garri in Isoko …; Kolawole, A. O. , Training Manual FadamaIII Additional …;J. O.Ijigbade, A. I.Fatuase, and E.T.Omisope, Conduct and Profitability of Gari Production for Increased Food ….; A. A. Adesope, et al, Economic Analysis of Cassava Flour and Garri Production in Ibarapa …;Garri Production in Nigeria The Feasibility Report …

[13]Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016; Interviews: EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016; Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018.

traditional and modern processing methods. The table below showsthe steps and distribution of labour in garri production and processing in contemporary Idomaland.

Steps and Distribution of Labour in Garri Production and Processing in Contemporary Idomaland

S/N	Step	Method and Process	Gender
1.	Harvesting and sorting cassava to get the best	After harvest, some roots may be damaged or rotten. These are sorted to select the wholesome roots for processing; only healthy roots (without rot or other damage) are processed.	All
2.	Peeling and washing the cassava roots	The roots are peeled to remove the outer brown skin and inner thick cream layer and washed to remove stains and dirt.	All
3.	Gratingthe cassava roots into mash	As part of the process to remove the cyanide and make the root safe to eat, the peeled cassava is grated into a mash or pulp.Mechanized graters are often used to produce a sufficient quantity of cassava mash to meet market demands and standards.	Men and women
4.	Dewatering of the mash and fermenting it	This completes the process of removing cyanide from the cassava mash. The water content in the mash is reduced using hydraulic press. The bags are then left to drain and ferment for a few days.	Mostly men
5.	Granulating/sifting the wet cake into grits	The cake is manually or mechanically reduced in size to produce fine	Mostly women

		granules of greater surface area – known as grits.	
6.	Frying/roasting the grits to form edible garri and spreading the garri in a thin layer and allow it to cool	The grits are then roasted or fried in a hot frying tray or pan to form the final dry and crispy product. It is important to make sure the taste and smell are acceptable to local consumers.	Mostly women
7.	Sieving/grinding the garri to break larger granules	The garri is sieved to separate coarse particles, with a standard size sieve to produce fine granules. A grinder is used to break the large granules into smaller ones.	Mostly women and children
8.	Packing the garri in airtight bags and storing properly	The garri is weighed and then packed for marketing.	Men and women
9.	Marketingof the garri	The garriis conveyed to market mostly on market days, as most of the markets in the area are periodic in that they are not open for operations every day.	Men and women
10.	Loading and offloadingthe garri	Loading and offloading the garri into and from vehicles especially those in big bags or sacks, are done by loaders/porters.	Men and boys

Source: Authors Field Work, 2019

Most Idoma communities produce garri andhad their own garrimarkets but, on the whole, five major garrimarkets stand out as the most important. These are Onyangedde market at Onyangeddein Ohimini Local Government Area,Adoka Central market at Adoka and Ogoli market atOgoli-Ugbojuboth in OtukpoLocal Government Area,EkeOlengbecho market at Edumoga in OkpokwuLocal Government Area,Orijo market at Utonkon in Ado Local Government Area.The reason is the existence of specialist producers

of garri, arising from variations in natural and human resources bases, which dictated economic interdependence and as a result, improve and promote production andtrade of garri, and market in the area.[14]Even though these markets are periodic in all ramifications, theyact as daily markets, as traders also transact business in them on a daily basis. The only difference is that there are more people from different villages and towns and a variety of goods and services on a market day. This implies that their activities are a daily affair as against a onetime temporary or contract that only occurred in an interval. This is so because even in places where full-fledgedperiodic market still exists there are a handful of activities that go on, on non-market days. This is evidence during harvest seasons, especially good seasons when crops produce at their peak and as such lead to surplus and low prices. As a garri hub, the markets attract garri producers from far and wide who bring their produce for better bargains and traders come from across the country to make purchases.[15]Goods and services are available at lower prices and in large quantities and variety for exchange on market days compared to non-market days. Apart from low prices and the large volume of goods and services, periodic markets are a beehive of activities on market days, with sellers and buyers from within and outside the community.[16]

Challenges Associated with Garri Production

There are a lot of challenges associated with garri production in Idomaland, although every community has major issues to deal with. However, the issues common to almost all places are; poor research/information culture, pest and diseases, lack of mechanization, paucity of funds (finance), poor infrastructures, insecurityandinsufficient financial support from the government.

*1. PoorResearch/Information Culture:*There is more togarri productionthan just following the steps in processing cassava into garri.Producers need to know how to select the right variety and tubers to get optimum yield, the best time for processing cassava into garri, best production and storage practices to reduce loss, and how to partner with the right middlemen/traders to get the best price

[14] This is taken from a survey of some area and market centres in Idomaland.Also see S. A.Omanchi, "*Changing Patterns of Market Centres in Idomaland of Central Nigeria, 1900 – 2000"*, Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, Benue State University Makurdi, 2019, 214 -220.

[15]Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016.

[16]Interviews: EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016; Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018.

for their product.[17]However, limited access to research/information stands as a root challenge most small-scale and large-scale garriproducers face today in Idomalandwith most producersmissing out on new and improved processing methods which greatly limits their output. Producers located in remote places suffer more since they have no means to access information due to the inability to afford and operate technological devices.Equally, illiteracy of producers is a worse case because they are unable to process important information which makes no difference. An average garri producer in the study area to a large extent still makes use of traditional method of processinggarri and this constitutes a major setback to the development of garriproduction in the area and by implication the entire country.

Furthermore, mostagricultural research institutions in the country don't work efficiently and effectively. Most of the institutions don't have clear coordination or direction of work. Most of the researches ends up on shelves and don't help to change the current situation. Most farmers, who are considered as end-users of these researches, can't put into practice the data from research facilities[18]and cassava farmers, the producers of the main ingredient in garri production are not immune to this or exception. Likewise, the services of agricultural extension workers and other mediums are hardly available to inform the rural farmers on new developments in the sector. Even where this is available, these workers lack up-to-date knowledge about the latest technology in vogue.[19]The limited access to research/information manifests in the form of very low annual yields and output levels from the farmsand production centres. It is therefore axiomatic that an improvement in the physical conditions of the feeder roads in the study areawill ineluctably lead to improved agricultural extension services and, by implication, improved agricultural and garrioutput.It is imperative to note that the

[17]Interviews: EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016; Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018.

[18] See Z.Agu, Problems of agriculture in Nigeria and possible solutions, retrieved from https://www.legit.ng on 25/05/2021.

[19] Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016. Also see A. A.Adeniji et al, Cassava Development in Nigeria: A Country Case Study towards a Global Strategy for Cassava Development, retrieved from http://www.fao.org on 25/05/2021; V. A. Okwoche and B. C. Asogwa, Impact of Extension Services on Cassava Farming in Benue State, Nigeria in International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology Vol. 2 No. 6; October 2012, retrieved from http://www.ijbhtnet.com on 15/07/2021; S. T. Tofi, R. I. Tondo and F. E. Egbe, Information Needs of Cassava Farmers In Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria in Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 2981, retrieved from https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac on 15/07/2021.

predominant human activity in these localities is agriculture and therefore an improvement in agriculture, through efficient transportation network, will constitute a laudable step to rural development.

2. Pest and diseases: Cassava is the main raw material in garri production. However, cassava production is plagued by various diseases and insect pests. Pests and diseases including the ACMD, CBB, the mealybug (which has been greatly controlled), green spider mite (GSM), and the large grain borer which attacks dry chips of cassava in storage.[20] In the 1997 season, the various diseases and pests considered to be most important in seven cassava-producing states were: mosaic disease, bacterial blight, leaf rollers, termites, anthracnose, root rot, mealybugs, spider mites, whiteflies, rodents, and stem girdlers. In different areas of the cassava production zone, one or more pests and/or diseases are important.[21]White ants (termites) destroy stems that are planted before they sprout. Some areas appear to be very prone to this problem. A higher plant population (12–13 000 plants/ha) is used to compensate for those that would be lost. Various chemical control measures are recommended, but the need for safe use and high costs restricts their use among many small farmers who grow cassava in mixtures. Also, the menace of rodents is a regular occurrence in the field.[22]

*3. Lack of Mechanization:*Mechanization of garri production is a process of introduction and development of mechanized support of all kinds at various levels of garri production in order to reduce manual labour and improve quality.Field observations at thegarri processing centres in the study area revealed a total lack of standardization in the garri production practices employed, leading to different quality of garri being sold to the members of the public.This is because garri producers in Idomalandto a large extent still rely on crude tools for production and storage and this can inadvertently affect productivity.Large-scale garri producers in Idomaland are faced with the following constraints to mechanization include: credit accessibility, the inability of entrepreneurs to set up manufacturing and repair services, lack of improved infrastructure, inadequate complementary inputs due to high costs, such as electricity and fuel, inadequate legal capacity to protect the rights of owners of machinery, and poor implementation of policies.

[20]A. A.Adeniji et al, Cassava Development in Nigeria: A Country Case ….
[21]A. A. Adeniji et al, Cassava Development in Nigeria: A Country Case ….
[22]A. A.Adeniji et al, Cassava Development in Nigeria: A Country Case ….

Addressing these issues should be the policy objectives of the federal, state, and local governments.[23]

*4. Paucity of funds (Finance):*One of the major factors limiting garri producers from making a reasonable living is the lack of funds. In Idomaland about 65% of garri producers are considered small-scale producers. Some of this stems from the lack of funds to expand to large-scale production. Despite their importance for the domestic economy and due to the sector's productivity limitations, more than 50 percent of small scale garri producers live below the poverty line of US$1 a day.[24]Getting loans from the banks is not an easy exercise, as majority of these people do not have collateral for the banks. The various informal credit facilities and associations which provide loans have limited capital to meet the people's financial demands.[25]This leads to the producers struggling to make a living, asking disinterested family members to take part in production instead of hiring proper human labour, and affecting productivity overall. Lack of capital also prevents potential garri producers from venturing into garri business.Garri production is labour and capital intensives and for garri producers to reduce manual labour and improve quality of production, adequate financing is vital.

*5. Poor infrastructures:*This is another major challenge facing not only the garri production or agricultural sector but also the economy in general throughout Nigeria. Farm produce, garri inclusive in the area lie in waste in remote areas and this is mostly because farmers/producers encounter difficulties in transporting their farm produce/finished products to the available market to sell as there are no storage facilities to help preserve agricultural produce especially perishable produce from rotting. Good roads don't exist and most remote areas find themselves cut-off from the rest of the urban and

[23] Interviews: Adah Okoh, 70, Trader/Farmer, interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018; Interviews: Ogenyi Emmanuel, 74, Ex-serviceman, Makurdi, April, 2016. Also read A. Ocholi1, Z. T. Nyiatagher, and T. Atim. Socio-economic and Market Analysis of Gari in Benue State Nigeria in Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science Volume 7 ~ Issue 9 (2019) pp.:25-33, retrieved from www.questjournals.org on 15/07/2021;D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: A Case Study of Otukpo LGA,Benue State, Nigeria in Sustainable Food Production ISSN: 2624-876X, Vol. 6, pp 12-23 retrieved from www.scipress.com on 15/07/2021.

[24] Interviews: Priscilla Ejeh, 50, Farmer, interviewed in Ugboju, October, 2016; Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August, 2018. Also read A. Ocholi1, Z. T. Nyiatagher, and T. Atim. Socio-economic and Market Analysis of Gari …D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

[25]Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016;Interviews: ObandeOnazi, 60, Trader/Farmer; Adoste Peter, 56, Trader, both interviewed in Igumale, April, 2016. Also see P. Ogiji, The Food Basket Myth: Implications for Food Security and Agricultural Policy Reform in Nigeria, Markurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2004, p.65;D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

market centres.[26] For garri and other agricultural produce marketing to be efficient, transportation for moving the products from the rural areas where they are produced to the urban areas must be in good shape. Most of the roads in the area are in very deplorable conditions.

The problem is made worse by the lack of appropriate garri processing tools, implementation, and equipment. Besides this, the equipment available is often too expensive for the average garri producer. Most producers depend on rudimentary, labour, and time-consuming hand tools such as knives, hand graters, buckets, basins, pans, and firewood for garri production.[27] Other factors include lack of industrial drive due to poor government policy and high cost of production. Traditional processing methods, which give poor/low product yields; current practices of use of mixed varieties and methods in processing create problems in product quality consistency; finished product safety not guaranteed as a result of non-availability of standards, poor product packaging and storage, and poor/low productivity as a result of low use of modern equipment.[28] This implies that the substitution of capital for labour is low, that is, the production process is more labour intensive. The use of modern equipment is not common among rural garri producers either because of non-availability, and where they are available, the high cost of renting/hiring one is highly exorbitant.The solution lies in the provision of incentives, machinery, and government policies to confront these challenges faced by garri producers.Garriproducers must be given adequate attention in order to improve the economy; and small-scale farmers/garri producers must be adequately supported to ensure the nation's food security as well as improving their standard of living.

6. Insecurity: Garri production depends not only on cassava but also on other factors and the conditions prevailing in the society. If there is no security of life and properties like the current situation in Nigeria, people will not cultivate cassava talk more of processing it into garri that will lead to capital accumulation and mobilization and

[26]Interviews: EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016; Interviews: Priscilla Ejeh, 50, Farmer, interviewed in Ugboju, October, 2016. Also read A. Ocholi1, Z. T. Nyiatagher, and T. Atim. Socio-economic and Market Analysis of Gari …;D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

[27]Interviews: ObandeOnazi, 60, Trader/Farmer; Adoste Peter, 56, Trader, both interviewed in Igumale, April, 2016.

[28]Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016.Also read A. Ocholi1, Z. T. Nyiatagher, and T. Atim. Socio-economic and Market Analysis of Gari …D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

thereby, leading to food insecurity in the area, the state by extension, and the nation at large.[29]Consequently, the governmentat all levels should always secure the life and properties of the people to boost economic sustainability and agricultural production and in turn, enhance garri production. Political stability and a peaceful atmosphere encourage agricultural production, trade, and economic sustainability.

*7. Insufficient Financial Support from Government:*Lapses encountered in garri production puts producers in situations where they need financial support to enable them toproduce, expand and improve their yields. As earlier stated,there are various micro-financing institutes in operation today in Nigeria but so many producers still cannot access them and others encounter delayed financing.[30]Also, the use of modern equipment is not common among rural garri producers either because of non-availability and where they are available, the high cost of renting/hiring one is highly exorbitant. Financial support either by government or private financing will go a long way in helping producers acquire best practices, equipment, and cassava tubers for easier and high-quality garri products.[31]

Prospects of Garri Production in Idomaland

*1. Job Opportunities:*Garri production is an important sub-sector of agriculture sector that provides direct and indirect jobs to many individuals in the society.In other words, it providesdirect and indirect jobsfor the producers/tradersand their subordinates/partners who are constantly trained and retrained to acquire the necessary skills required in promoting the expertise in garri production and trade.This implies it is a source of livelihood as a lot of producers/traders in the various communities produce and tradedgarri. The production and sales of garri also employ and utilize a variety of services such asfirewood vendors and fetchers of woods, grinders/graters, loaders/porters, ironworkers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and transporters among others.All these add to the number of people who made their living from garri production and trade in Idomaland.[32] By extension and implication, thereforegarri

[29]Interviews: Priscilla Ejeh, 50, Farmer, interviewed in Ugboju, October, 2016.
[30]Interviews:EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016.Also see P. Ogiji, The Food Basket Myth: …;p.65; D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

[31]Interviews: Priscilla Ejeh, 50, Farmer, interviewed in Ugboju, October, 2016;Interviews:EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016.
[32] Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August 2018; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October,

production and tradein Idomaland plays a decisive role in reducing the number of crimes and vices, notably theft, armed robbing, kidnapping, fraud and prostitution.Garriproduction and trade in Idomalandare valuable because they create a lot of employment opportunities for a large number of people from the area and neighbouring towns thereby reducing the unemployment rate and its attendant social effect of armed robbery and other crimes.[33]

*2. Food Security:*The term *food security* as a concept has evolved significantly over time. Food security is a situation in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.[34] This implies the state of having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritionally adequate, and safe food. It connotes that food is available at all times; that all persons have means or access to it; that it is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality, and variety; and that it is acceptable within the given culture. Only when all these conditions are in place can a population be considered food secure.[35] This clearly shows that garri, a type of carbohydrate food that you get from processing raw cassava and serves as a major staple meal of many West African countries; especially Nigeria has the potentials and hascontributed in ensuring food security to the nation. This can be sustained, if the government at all levels can create an enabling environment for agriculture and garri production to strive.

*3. Economic Stability:*Apart from the provision of jobs and food security,garri production and trade is a major revenue earner for the economy and plays a crucial role in economic stabilization.Also, the white powdery substance found on the ground (i.e. starch) after dewatering andfermenting of the grated cassava mash, if properly harnessedis asource of revenue that can be producedin commercial quantity and sold as edible starch or industrial starch thereby contributing meaningfully to the employment level and living

2016. Also see D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

[33] Interviews: EjahAdoko, 85, Farmer, in interviewed in Adoka, August 2018; Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016. Also see D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

[34] S. A. Omanchi and G. F. Abutu, *"Agricultural Practice in Benue State and Its Implications on Food Security",* in *Kwararafa Journal of Contemporary Research*, vol. 3, Number 1, October, 2016, Jos: Vast Publishers, 2016, pp. 181 – 191. Also see B. C. Asogwa, J.C. Umeh and P. I. Ater, Technical Efficiency Analysis of Nigerian Cassava Farmers: A Guide for Food Security Policy, retrieved from https://ageconsearch.umn.edu on 15/07/2021.

[35]S. A. Omanchi and G. F. Abutu, *"Agricultural Practice in Benue State and Its* …, pp. 181 – 191. Also see B. C. Asogwa, J.C. Umeh and P. I. Ater, Technical Efficiency Analysis of Nigerian …

standard of the people.[36]Economic stability enables other macro-economic objectives to be achieved, such as stable prices and stable and sustainable growth. It also creates the right environment for job creation and a balance of payments. This is largely because stability creates certainty and confidence and this encourages investment in technology and human capital.[37]It is not merely confined to a single individual sector of an economy but embraces all its facts. In order to ensure economic stability, a number of economic measures have to be devised and implemented.In modem times, a programme of economic stabilization is usually directed towards the attainment of three objectives: (i) controlling or moderating cyclical fluctuations; (ii) encouraging and sustaining economic growth at full employment level; and (iii) maintaining the value of money through price stabilization. Thus, the goal of economic stability can be easily resolved into the twin objectives of sustained full employment and the achievement of a degree of price stability.[38]

In Idomaland, over 80% of the population engages in food crop production as small-scale farmers on an avalanche of rich arable land. Also, about 70% of the cassava produced in Idomaland is processed into garri using a blend of traditional and modern processing methods in converting cassava tubers into garriresultinggarri been the most commonly traded cassava product in the area.[39] The question then is how can the current level and methods of production be improved on? The solution lies in the provision of incentives, machinery, and government policies to confront these challenges faced by garri producers. If this is properly done it will boost economic sustainability and agricultural production and in turn enhance garri production and trade, which is a major revenue earner for the economy of the area and by extension the entire country.

Conclusion

[36]Interviews: Clement Owoicho, 55, Trader, interviewed in Onyangede, October, 2016; Interviews: Priscilla Ejeh, 50, Farmer, interviewed in Ugboju, October, 2016. Also see D. Ani, H. Ojila and O. Abu, Profitability of Cassava Processing: …

[37]See Stability and growth in the Global Economy,in Economics Online, retrieved from http://www.economicsonline.co.ukon 08/07/2021.

[38]See Smriti Chand, Economic stabilization: Monetary Policy, Fiscal Policy and Direct Controls, retrieved from http://www.yourarticlelibrary.comon 08/07/2021.

[39]Interviews:EnyiAgasi, 60, Farmer/Trader, interviewed in Utonkon, September, 2016. Also see S. A. Omanchi and G. F. Abutu, *"Agricultural Practice in Benue State and Its …*, pp. 181 – 191;M. O.Odey, "Policies and Performances of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Sectors of the Economy of Benue State Since 1976: A Comparative Analysis in M. O.Odey, et al (eds.) Agricultural and Environmental Issues in Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Rt. Hon. Austin IgojiAwodi, Makurdi: Oracle Business Limited, 2009, p.2.

In conclusion, Idomaland has a good environment for garriproduction and it has favourable market to absorb the production. There is need to improve the quality of garri produce in the area tocompete with others produce from other parts of the country and adaptation of modern garri technologies to ease labour in production and enhance nutritional qualities in garri processing andproduction. Government has a role to play in forming strong policies that will favour cassava production and processing it into garri, flour, bread, starch among others as it is beingpracticed in the advanced world.