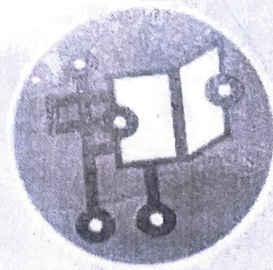


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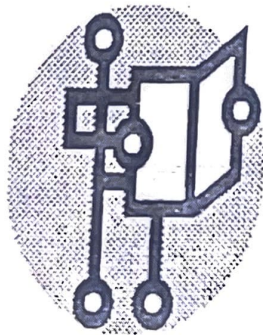
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PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF NEEM TREES (*AZADIRACHTA INDICA*) AMONG YOUTH FARMERS IN DUTSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Desertification in the Northern part of Nigeria has claimed hundreds of hectares of farm land has been successfully combated in the recent years by the planting of Neem trees. The study therefore assessed the youths' perceived benefits of Neem Trees in Dutse Local Government Area of Jigawa State, Nigeria. Three stage sampling technique was used to collect data from 120 youths' Neem farmers and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviation and charts. The study revealed that majority (74.2%) of the respondents were married, 95.8% muslim, with mean age of 30 years, farm size of 4 hectares, 12 years farming experience, monthly income of ₦21,904.18 and 23.4% having formal education. The major source of awareness of Neem tree was through family, friends and neighbors (91.7%). Major perceived benefits of Neem tree were firewood and charcoal making (99.2%), making cow haulage transport system (98.3%), cover and shade tree (94.2%), erosion control and burial tool (92.5%). Respondents' indigenous knowledge of Neem tree use includes skin diseases and gastro-intestinal infections in ruminants (57.5%), for grains and cowpea storage (92.5%). Major constraints on Neem use were lack of subject matter specialists (100.0%), poor extension contact (97.5%), dosage knowledge (85.8%). In conclusion, Neem tree was however perceived with a wide range of usefulness among the respondents. It is therefore recommended that extension service delivery on utilization of Neem tree in the state.

Keywords: Perceived, Benefits, Neem trees, Youth, Farmers

Introduction

Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) is a tree in the mahogany family *Meliaceae* is an ancient native of India and Pakistan growing in the tropical and semi-tropical regions (Greencleanguide, 2012) and was brought to West Africa in the 1920s. Neemtree has been planted at Mecca for shade and it is often used as a shade tree and wood source in Africa Communities (Obara et al., 2004). The tree has been used for thousands of years as a homeopathic, cosmetic and health aids (Sharma et al., 2007) with both traditional and scientific proven antibacterial, antiviral, anticancer, antimalarial, contraceptives and dermatological application (Subapiya and Nagini 2005). According to Yadav and Tarafdar (2004), Neem can be used as a natural soil amendment or bio-pesticides to maintain agricultural yield with fewer synthetic inputs, in water and land remediation, for timber, for nutrition, as well as in various industrial processes. Tewari and Vongadow (2005) posited that Neem tree is useful in many contexts; notably each of its parts is also useful, bark, wood, leaf, flower, seed kernel, seed oil, and extracted compounds. Agwu (2001) affirmed that, the leave are considered most sustainable and easily accessible Neem resources, particularly in the areas where the typical evergreen shed leaves

annually, followed by fruits/seeds including extracted oil, and then bark/wood, which can be often be sustained through pollarding or coppicing as it is good agent against desertification.

Desertification in the northern part of Nigeria which has claimed hundreds of hectares of farm land, leaving hunger, homelessness and poverty in it wake has been successfully combated in the recent years by planting Neem trees, but has reduced poverty, empowering women and youths on the economic importance of the tree through improving educational infrastructure, teaching and learning aids in the communities (Vanguard, 2012). The tree has been adopted as said in many parts of the north especially the North West where the temperature is very high as it serves the purpose of a cooling shade for vast majority of the people. Jigawa among the northwestern states is noted for high level of stone with extreme temperature day and night. Youths in vast area within the state adopted planting the tree simply because it is very common and very hardy compared to other economic trees. The seeds are propagated in different ways, transplanted and in some cases the branch are propagated as stems.

Based on the fact that the tree is an economic tree, the youths being majorly farmers at their capacity

resulted into the use of the tree based on the indigenous knowledge and ideas at their disposal for agricultural and medicinal purposes. Younger people everywhere are key agents for social change, economic development and technical innovations, as they have aspirations and want to participate fully in the development of their societies. They have potentials to overcome some major constraints in expanding agricultural production in the country because; they are often more open to new ideas and practices than adult farmers (Lyocket *al.*, 2013). According to Dauduet *al* (2009) youths have the potential to overcome some of the major constraints to expanding agricultural production and processing in developing countries such as pest and diseases control, storage, feeding, genetic improvement, protection against predators and search for new ideas and knowledge because they are often more open to new ideas and practices than adult farmers and they play an important role in awareness raising on different subjects. It is on the premise that the study poised to assess the perceived economic benefits of Neem tree among Youth farmers in Dutse local government area of Jigawa state, Nigeria. Specifically, described the socio-economic characteristics of the youth farmers,

identified the perceived economic benefits of Neem tree, determined indigenous knowledge of the youths on the benefits of Neem tree and identified the constraints of the youths in using Neem bye-products in the study area.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Jigawa State, Nigeria. Jigawa State is situated in the North-Western part of the country between latitudes 11.00°N to 13.00°N and longitudes 8.00°E to 10.15°E . The State has a total land mass of approximately 22,410 square kilometers with twenty seven (27) Local Government Areas (Jigawa Wikipedia, 2014 and National Population Commission, 2006). The topography is characterized by high land areas which is almost 750 meters. Soil tends to be fertile ranging from sandy-loamy with many pockets of Fadama and alluvial plains suitable for the cultivation of rice, sugar-cane, millet, vegetables, sorghum etc. Jigawa State is predominantly an agrarian state with over 80% of the population involved in agriculture. The major rain fed crops grown in the state includes millet, sorghum, cowpea, groundnut, cocoyam, soya beans. Dry crops include sugarcane, hot pepper, okra, tomatoes, onions and spinach while the predominant economic trees are

Neem, Date palm, Eucalyptus and Shea-butter.

Three stage sample technique was used in selecting the respondents for the study. The first stage was a purposive selection of Dutse local government due to the predominance of Neem tree in the area. Second stage involved a random selection of six communities from the selected local government. And lastly, twenty (20) youth farmers were randomly selected from each of the selected communities to make a total sample size of one hundred and twenty respondents for the study. Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through interview schedule with the assistance of well-trained enumerators. Data were described using frequency counts, percentages, means score, standard deviation and charts.

Results and discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Results in Figure 1 shows that majority (85.9%) with mean age of 30 years, (95.8%) Muslim with only 23.4% having formal education. This implies that they were not so educated. Also, majority (74.2%) of the respondents were married with household size of 1-5 persons (63.3%), average farm size of 4.4, 12 years farming experience with

average monthly income of 21,904.18. Also indicated in the Figure 1 was no extension contact as signified by majority (75.8%) of the respondents.

Source(s) of information of the benefits of Neem tree among the respondents

As shown in Figure 2, the major source(s) of information/awareness about the benefits of Neem tree is the family/friend/neighbors (91.7%) which imply that these benefits are indigenous knowledge that the youths gained from parents and relatively followed by radio programmes (4.2%) while other sources (4.1%) are either Television, Extension agent or others.

Perceived economic benefits of Neem Tree among the Youth farmers

Using mean score and standard deviation, the youths saw the most benefit of the Neem tree in firewood and charcoal making for the purpose of domestic cooking and this serve as one major occupation for some of the youths (0.97 ± 0.96) ranking first, then in the manufacture of cow haulage transport system (0.88 ± 0.94) because most of the indigenous people believed in using this animal powered transport and so also as a cover crop to provide shade at home and farm to reduce heat intensity (0.86 ± 0.93). Both used as erosion control and the

ives for Muslim burial (0.81 ± 0.90) ranked fourth. They are erected as barriers (0.80 ± 0.89) to control cattle grazing on farm land and protection at home against wind force to reduce desertification (0.79 ± 0.87). Also, the respondents agreed that Neem is a good source of green/organic manure (0.56 ± 0.75), medicinal for gastrointestinal problems in ruminants (0.57 ± 0.74) although the specified dosage is not ascertain and finally mulching (0.50 ± 0.71) among others (Table 2).

Indigenous knowledge of the Youth farmers on the benefits of Neem Tree

It can be seen from Figure 3 that majority (92.5%) of the respondents agreed that the leaves and seeds of the tree when soaked in water at high concentration can be used to spray arable crops like cowpea, soya-beans or vegetables for insect attack. Greater percentage (90.8%) of the respondents agreed that it can be used to control termites attack on wood or houses and farms but the only thing is that the treatment has to be done at intervals. It is also effective for manpower which is a very common condition amongst men, fever and piles (81.7%) although other additives must be included to boost the efficacy. About 75.0% agreed similarly that it is an agent of food preservation on the farm for grain crops, but

they could not explain the duration the treatment can take before it can be consumed. Also, majority (60.0%) agreed that it could be used for abortion of pregnancy at the early stage, while 57.5% of the respondents agreed that the leaves are soaked to help ruminants and or dried with seed and mixed with share-butter for curing dermatophylosis in ruminants and dogs. Almost average of the respondents (49.2%) supported that the outer layer can be used as source of farm rope.

Constraints of Youth farmers on Neem tree

Results in Figure 4 showed that the most serious constraint is lack of subject matter specialists (100.0%) who could advise them on the quantity and how to make further research on Neem tree through research institutes, Universities and NGOs. This is because of lack of extension contact with the youths (97.5%). The implication of this is that there is no synergy between the respondents and research and also lack of research institutes in the study area (only NIFOR is available as a sub-station). There is lack of understanding to translate the idea into meaningful dosage (85.8%). This was followed by lack of qualitative and quantitative education (75.8%) to help the respondents to comprehend and understand the dosage (40.8%). The cultural difference (36.7%)

among the Hausa and the Fulani
were not seen as major constraints.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the study, it could be
concluded Neem tree is an
economic tree that has wide range
of usefulness like firewood and
charcoal for cooking, shade tree
and agent of erosion control and
control for nomadic grazing. It is
also good as green manure/organic
manure, highly medicinal for wide
range of conditions like;
preservative purposes at home and
farms, source of manpower for
men, for gastro-intestinal control
and dematophylosisin ruminants.
Also, there were little or no
extension services available to the
youths to link them with research
institution. The study
recommended provision of
adequate trained men and women
extension agents by government to
reduce the wide ratio of extension
agent and farmer in the state and
linkage between the youths and
research centres as well as health
stake holders for effective
determination of the optimum
dosage of the Neem required at
different level of use.

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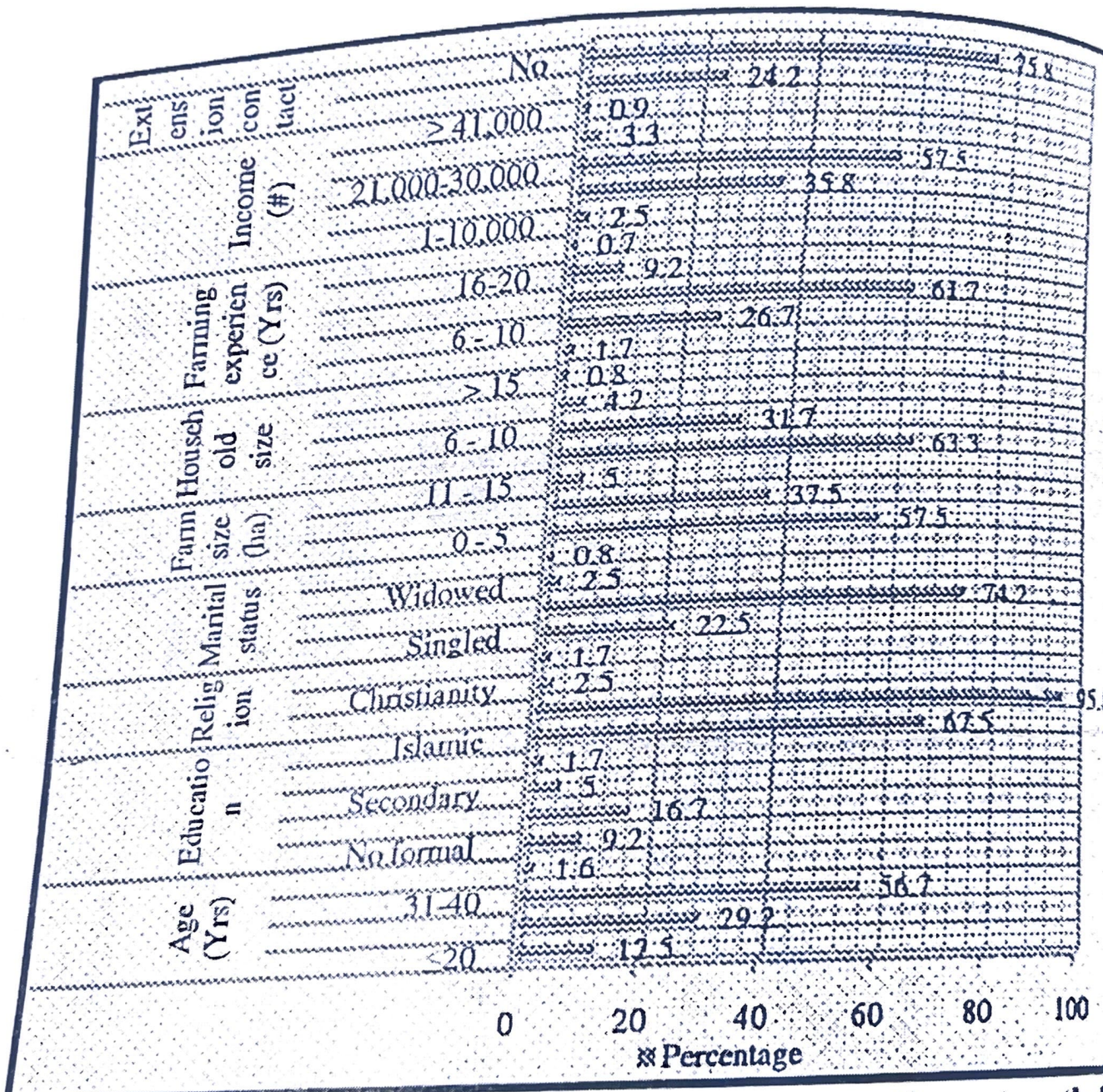
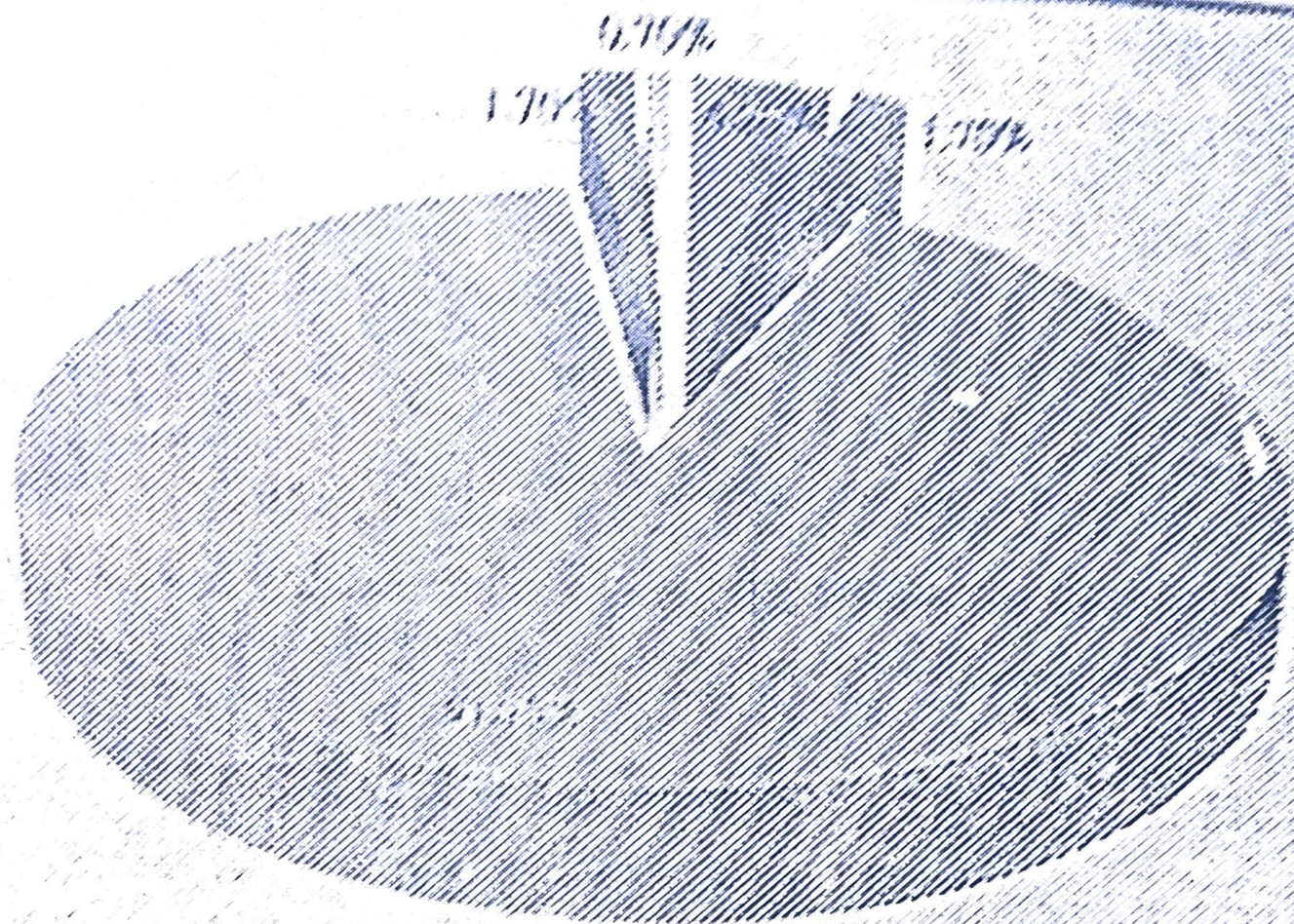


Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents according to their socioeconomic characteristics
Source: Field survey, 2016

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**PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF NEEM
TREES (AZADIRACHTA FARMERS
IN DUTSELOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA OF JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

Table 2: Perceived Economic Benefits of Neem Trees

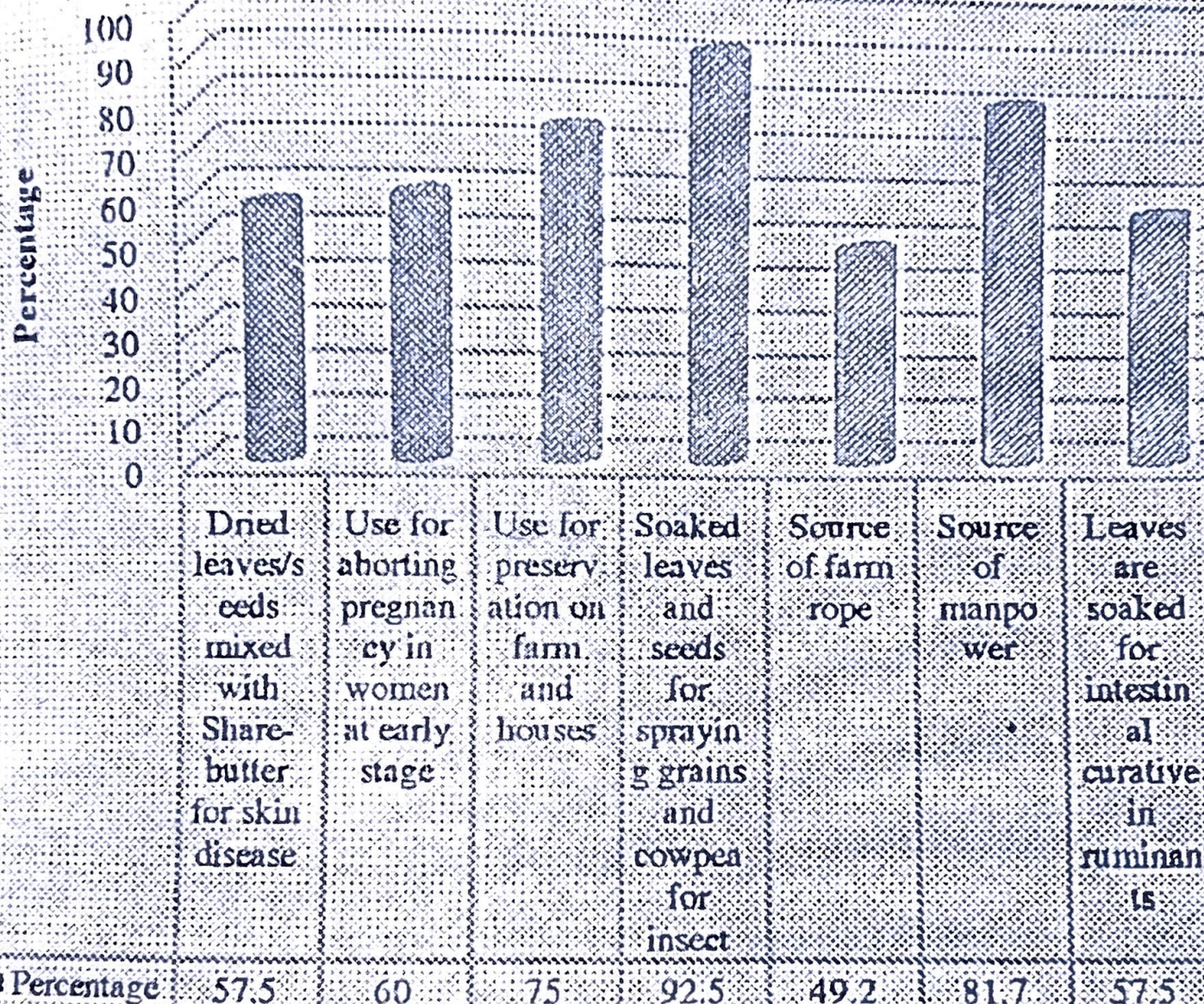
Variables	Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Ranking
Use of leaves for Mulching	0.50 $\pm$ 0.71	9 th
Gastro-intestinal regulator in ruminants	0.57 $\pm$ 0.74	8 th
Cover crops and shade to reduce heat	0.86 $\pm$ 0.93	3 rd
Wind break and desertification	0.79 $\pm$ 0.87	6 th
Source of organic/green manure	0.56 $\pm$ 0.75	7 th
Wood for construction of animal transport	0.88 $\pm$ 0.94	2 nd
Reduce soil erosion and other land degradations	0.81 $\pm$ 0.90	4 th
For erecting barriers to prevent grazing	0.80 $\pm$ 0.89	5 th
Useful in Muslim burial rite	0.81 $\pm$ 0.90	4 th
Firewood and charcoal making	0.97 $\pm$ 0.96	1 st

Source: Field survey, 2016

SD= Standard deviation

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PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF NEEM TREES (AZADIRACHTA FARMERS IN DUTSELOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA



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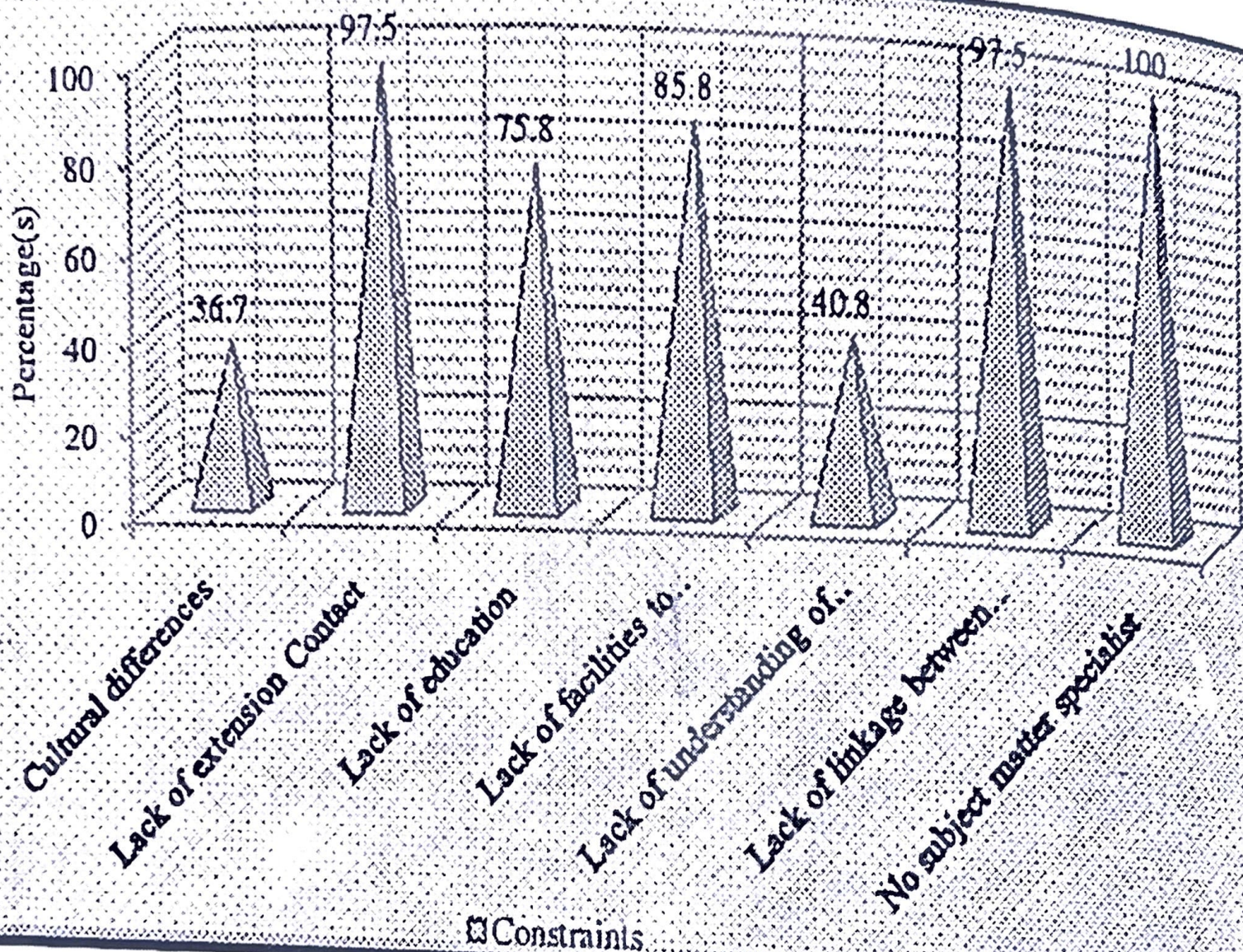


Fig. 4: Distribution of respondents according to constraints on Neem Tree
Source: Field survey, 2016