A Comprehensive Study of Socio-Economic and Ethno-biological Status of the Mountainous People of Idanre Tribes Ondo State South West Nigeria

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Abstract

The research study examined the comprehensive social-economic and ethno-biological status of the mountainous people of idanre tribes ondo state south west Nigeria. The primary objective to gain valuable insights into their social-economic status and contribute to informed decision-making and policy development aimed at improving their well-being. The study is grounded in both primary and secondary sources. Data acquisition involved the utilization of interview schedules and personal observations, encompassing an evaluation of the general health status and participation in focus group discussions with both male and females from the Idanre community in selected villages of the Idanre Local Government Area. The selection of respondents for primary data collection was done randomly. The result of the research study indicates the Idanre people are unique set of people for their culture, customs, food habits, ethno medicinal status, and mostly an agrarian society. In all 64.58% were males 35.48% female's respondents. The age distribution revealed that the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 38-48 which is about 46.88% this is followed by the ages between 29-39 which is 21.88% . The occupation of the Idanre people is majorly agriculture. In all, arable agriculture was 54 respondents which is 56.23%, while cash crop agriculture was 19 respondents which is 19.79% and this was followed by hospitality and tourism business with 10 respondents which is 10%.

Key words: Mountainous, communities, Tribes, Landscapes, medicinal, plant species

Introduction

Idanre is inhabited by the Idanre people, who are primarily of Yoruba descent. The Yoruba people are an ethnic group native to the southwestern part of Nigeria, and they are known for their rich cultural heritage, history, and traditions. The Idanre people, being part of the larger Yoruba community, share common linguistic, cultural, and historical ties with the Yoruba people in the region. The town of Idanre is located in Ondo State, which is situated in the southwestern part of Nigeria (Emmanuel, et al 2020). The mountainous region of Idanre, situated in Ondo State, Nigeria, is characterized by its breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and historical significance. Idanre Hills is located in the southwestern part of Nigeria, specifically in Ondo State. The hills are part of the ancient Idanre Kingdom and are situated approximately 24 kilometers southwest of Akure, the state capital.Idanre Hills is renowned for its striking topography, featuring a series of

undulating hills and valleys (UNESCO 2007).The hills are part of the extensive Akure-Idanre mountain ranges, contributing to the overall scenic beauty of the area. The mountainous terrain is adorned with lush greenery, creating a picturesque landscape that attracts tourists and nature enthusiasts (Adisa 2010).The region boasts a diverse range of flora and fauna, with various plant and animal species thriving in the hills. The Idanre Hills hold immense historical importance for the Idanre people. The hills served as a natural fortress during inter-tribal wars in the past, providing a strategic advantage to the inhabitants. The ancient town of Idanre, with its unique layout, is nestled on the hills, showcasing the historical settlement patterns of the communit. he Idanre people have a rich cultural heritage that is intricately connected to the hills. The Owa's Palace, a prominent cultural site, is located on one of the hills.The hills are home to several sacred groves, shrines, and historic structures that reflect the spiritual and cultural practices of the community. Idanre Hills has become a popular tourist destination, drawing visitors from within Nigeria and beyond. Notable attractions include the ancient town with its historic structures, the Owa's Palace, the thunder water (Omi Aopara), and the Agbooogun footprint (Adediran,2012). Access to the Idanre Hills involves a journey that combines trekking and climbing. The ascent provides a unique experience, allowing visitors to appreciate the natural beauty of the surrounding.Efforts have been made to preserve the cultural and natural heritage of Idanre Hills. The site has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognizing its cultural significance.The mountainous region of Idanre in Ondo State, Nigeria, is not only a geographical marvel but also a repository of cultural, historical, and natural treasures. The hills play a vital role in shaping the identity and heritage of the Idanre people while attracting visitors eager to explore the unique features of this captivating landscape (Tosun, 2015). The primary objective to gain valuable insights into their social-economic status and contribute to informed decision-making and policy development aimed at improving their well-being.

Materials and Method

Study Area

Idanre is a local government area in Ondo state, Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The LGA is made up of several towns and villages such as Atosin, Ododе, Alade, Owena, Onisere, Akinmoji, Gbalegi, Lisagba, and Ojadale. The estimated population of Idanre LGA is 169,732 inhabitants with the area's major inhabitants being members of the Yoruba ethnic division (Agunbiade, 2015). The Yoruba language is extensively spoken in the area with Christianity and Islam as the most practiced religions in the area. Popular festivals held in Idanre LGA include the MARE mountain climbing festival while the notable landmarks in the LGA include the popular Idanre hills and the Idanre forest reserve. Idanre LGA lies on the foot of the Idanre hills and occupies a total area of 1914 square kilometres. The LGA is characterized by several hills and rocks and has an average temperature of 28 degrees centigrade. The average humidity level of Idanre LGA is 60 percent while average wind speed in the area is 11 km/h.Farming is the major occupation of the people of Idanre LGA with the area being one of the largest producers of cocoa in Nigeria. Trade also blossoms in Idanre LGA with the area hosting several markets such as the Oja Ale and the Alade markets. Other important contributors to the economy of Idanre LGA include tourism, blacksmithing, and textile weaving and dyeing. The LGA also hosts banks, hotels and publicly and privately owned. Idanre, like much of southwestern Nigeria, generally experiences a tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. The wet season typically occurs from April to October, characterized by higher temperatures and increased rainfall. The dry season usually

spans from November to March, with lower temperatures and reduced rainfall. Southwest Nigeria, including Ondo State, tends to have a bimodal rainfall pattern, with two peaks during the wet season. The total annual rainfall can vary, but it is generally relatively high, supporting lush vegetation. The temperature in the region is generally warm throughout the year due to its tropical location. Annual mean temperatures typically range from around 25 to 30 degrees Celsius. The vegetation in Idanre and similar areas in southwestern Nigeria is often characterized by tropical rainforest or derived savanna. Lush greenery, diverse plant species, and dense forests are common features.

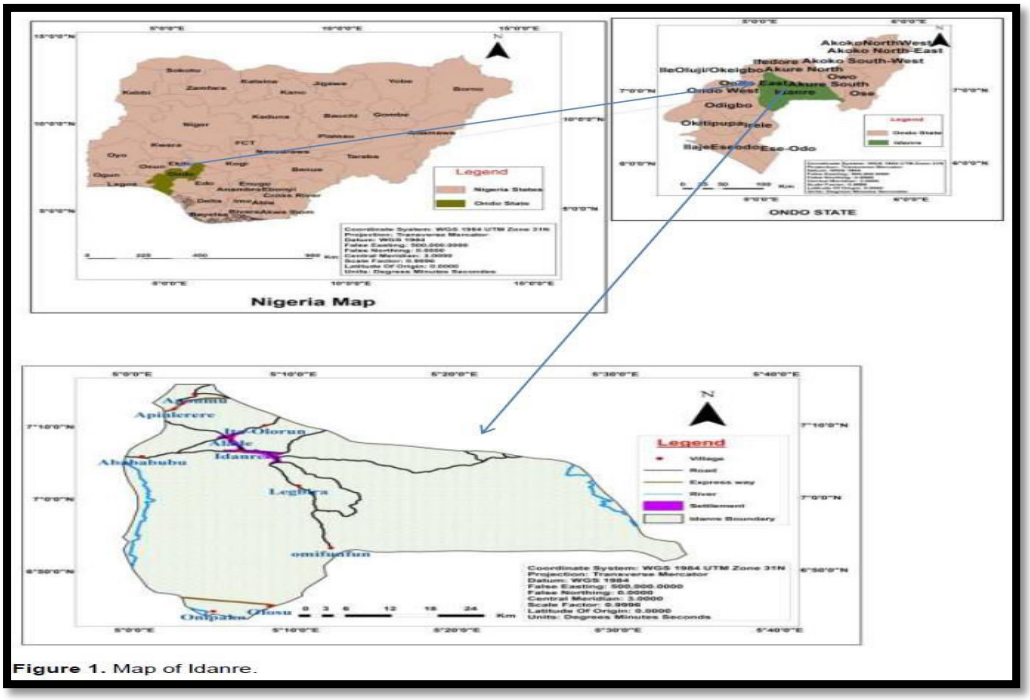

Figure 1, Map of the study area

Data collection

The study is grounded in both primary and secondary sources. Data acquisition involved the utilization of interview schedules and personal observations, encompassing an evaluation of the general health status and participation in focus group discussions with both male and females from the Idanre community in selected villages of the Idanre Local Government Area. The selection of respondents for primary data collection was done randomly. The interview schedules were initially printed in English language, and questions were posed in the local dialect, namely the Yoruba and English languages. The interview schedule consisted of 20 questions. After each interview, a thorough review of the interview schedule was conducted to verify the accurate recording of all information. Additionally, secondary data was gathered from a variety of published and unpublished sources. Thorough interaction was conducted with both male and female respondents to gain insights into cultural norms and group dynamics. Thre traditional were interviewed to gain knowledge of medicinal plants and method of preparatiob

Statistical Analysis

Following the data collection process, the gathered information was organized into tables. Statistical tools such as chart graphs, percentages, and PAST model were employed for analysis.

Results

The result of the research study indicates the Idanre people are unique set of people for their culture, customs, food habits, ethno medicinal status, and mostly an agrarian society. In all 64.58% were males 35.48% female's respondents Table 1.The age distribution revealed that the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 38- 48 which is about 46.88% this is followed by the ages between 29-39 which is 21.88% Table 2. The occupation of the Idanre people is majorly agriculture. In all, arable agriculture was 54 respondents which is 56.23%, while cash crop agriculture was 19 respondents which is 19.79% and this was followed by hospitality and tourism business with 10 respondents which is 10% Table 3. The result of the social and economic life the shown that the people are very productive, 49% are actively in agriculture in the community, while education facilities 63%which means is well distributed in the society, medical facilities 49% Table 4. The result of characteristics indicate that the women in the communities are 100% supported by the man in family up keep, the women have equal right to school with males counterparts 100%, The women have equal right to vote and be voted for with the males100%. The women have and privileges to own properties after marriage 59% and have the right to remarry after devoice 20% Table 5. There are various government scheme available to them but the level of participation is not investigated in this projectable 6. The ethno botanical status of the people revealed the use medicinal plants to treat common diseases is practiced in the area. Common diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, cough, asthma, infertility diseases and epilepsy were treated with medicinal plant species. Leaves, barks fresh stem and roots were the parts frequently used Table 7.The use of wild indigenous wild vegetables by the people were observed. There vegetables are not cultivated but is frequently used. The local names and parts used were recorded Table 8.Common wild fruits consumed the people in the study area were recorded. Chrysophallum albidun, spondia mombin,Diallum guineese are by highly consumed by the people. The primary nutrients were mentioned the quantity of each vary from fruit to the other might vary Table 9.

Table 1, Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Males	Females%
Males	62	64.58
Females	34	35.42
Total	96	100%

Table 2, Age distribution of the respondents

Group	Total	%
18-28	5	5.20
29-38	21	21.88
39-48	45	46.88
49-58	25	45.04

Table 3, Occupation distribution of the respondents

Occupation	Total	%
Agriculture Arable crops only	54	56.23
Agriculture Cash crops .	19	19.79
Hospitality and tourism business	10	10.00
Artesian	7	7.1
Sheep, goat, pigs and hen and trading	6	6.25
Total	96	100

Table 4, Social and Economic life of the women of Idanre

Description	Total	%
Productive	60	40
Education facilities	38	62
Medical facilities	51	49
Means communication	41	59
Cash crop production large scale	12	87

Table 5, Characteristic of social-economic life of Idanre women in the study area

Status	Total	%
Husband contribution to family up keep	100	0
Women have equal right with the males for schooling	100	0
Freedom of women to work after marriage	51	49
Equal rights to vote	100	0
Freedom to remarriage after divorce	80	20
Violence against women	40	60

Table 6, Government schemes in Idanre Local government area

Scheme to support the people	Description of the schemes
Loan for registered small scale business for women in Idanre the federal bank of trade	Financial assistant by the federal to rural people in the help them expand their business.
Approved cooperative society by the government for both male and females in the communities	The state government approves cooperative rural people to be able to raise to start business in the rural areas
Building markets for community by the local government authority	The local government authority build markets in the rural villages
Construction of feeders roads to the local communities in the local government area	The state government through the local government aothurity construct and maintain feeders roods to villages toenable bring out their agricultural products there by reducing waste and hunger
Palliatives to local residents by the federal government through the state government to reduce the impact economic hardship	The federal government the the federal ministry of humanitarian services provide palliatives to the rural people in villages and clans
Provision of free vaccination , anti-natal for children and pregnant women in the communities	Federal government through the state ministry of health provide free vaccinations for children and free anti natal for pregnant women
Provisions of free education for primary and secondary schools in idanre communities by the state government	The government through the local government authority provide free education for boys and girls in the communities
Training of women for job creation and small scale business.	Some NGO train women on job creation
Provision of social amenities by NGO and philanthropist	NGO and philanthropist are in the primary source of medical equipment in rural areas, they also provide water in the boreholes equip solar energy as a source of energy

Table 7, Ethno botanical status of the people in the study area

Name of plant species	Family	Uses	Parts used	Method of preparation and use
Avicennia africana	Acanthaceae	Typhoid fever	Leaves	Boil take twice daily
Acalypha wilkesiana	Euphorbiaceae	Gastro-intestinal diseases	Leaves	Boil and use it to bath for the kids and drink from it
Ananas comosus	Acanthaceae	Typhoid fever	Leaves	Boil with pap water and take twicw daily
Aframomum melegueta	Zingiberaceae	Weak erection and low libido	Seeds	Seeds are grinded and soak in fresh palm wine a bottle) or dry gin

Alstonia capensis	Apocynaceae	Malaria, stomach disorder	Barks	Soak in water and use twice daily
Blighia sapida	Sapindaceae	Typhoid fever, epilepsy	Barks,roots	Leaves Are soak in pap water and use,barks are boiled and use
Canna indica	Cannaceae	Typhoid fever		Use by adult males, soak in palmwine or dry gin
Costus afer	Cannaceae	Strength loss		Soak in water and ta
Carica papaya	Caribaceae	Typhoid fever, Appendix, malaria		Seeds are grinded soak in wine or dry gin, leaves is boil with the leaves of cashew, and mango and take twice daily
Cynometra vogelli	Fabaceae		Leaves	Soak in water or dry gin and take twice daily
Dialium guineense	Fabaceae	Typhoid fever	Bark, leaves	Soak in water and take before food once daily
Garcinia kola	Clussiacae	Asthma, cough	Fruits, roots,	Daily Fruit id dry and grinded add palm oil and lick The roots are soak in clean water and use
Gossypium hirsutum	Malvaceae	Infertility diseases	Leaves	Soak in water and take twice daily
Ficus exasperate	Moraceae	Blood pressure, malaria	Leaves	Soak in water and take twice daily
Hannoa undulata	Simaroubaceae		Leaves	Soak in water and take twice daaily
Kigellia africana	Bignoniaceae	Malaria	Barks, fruits	Fruits are cut in smaller sizes and boil with pap water, the roots are soak in water overnight before use
Murida lucida	Rubiaceae	Typhoid fever	Leaves	Boil the leaves and take twice daily
Musanga cecropioides	Urticaceae	Lactation, typhoid fever	Bark, leaves	Soak both in clean water and take twice daily
Piper guineense	Piperaceae	Weak erection, early ejaculation	Leaves -	Boil the leaves take twice

Raphia hookeri	Arecaceae	Chest pain and infetiliy diseases	Root	Half glass cup daily for leaves and root decoction. One shot daily for the tincture.
Vernonia amygdalina	Asteraceae	Malaria	Leaves	Sqeezed with and take twice daily

Table 8, Wild Indigenous vegetables consumed by the people in Idanre

Wild indigenous vegetables	Family	Local names	Parts used
Solanum americanum	Solanaceae	Odu	Leaves, sterm
Solanum nigrum	Solanaceae	Efo-odu	Leaves, sterm
Thaumatococcus daniellii	Marantaceae	Ewe eran	Leaves
Talinum triangulare	Portulacaceae	Gbure	Leaves, sterm
Solanecio biafrae	Asteraceae	worowo	Leaves, stem
Ipomoea batatas	Convolvulacea	Odunkun	Leaves
Corchorus olitorus	Tiliaceae	Ewedu	leaves
Myrianthus arboreus	Urticaceae	Ebiseghe	Leaves,stem
Piper guineense	Piperaceae	Uziza	Fruits, leaves
Ocimum gratissimum	Lamiaceae	Efinrin	Leaves

Table 9,Fruit trees common in the study area

Fruit trees	Family	Uses
Chrysophyllum albidum	Sapotaceae	1. Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)- This vitamin is essential for immune function, skin health, and acts as an antioxidant. 2Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene) Important for vision, immune function, and skin health. 3. Vitamin K Vital for blood clotting and bone health. 4. Vitamin B-complex (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, B12): These play various roles in energy metabolism, nervous system function, and cell division.

Dialium guineense	Fabaceae	1. Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid): Known for its role in immune function and as an antioxidant. 2. Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene):** Important for vision, immune function, and skin health. 3. Vitamin K: Essential for blood clotting and bone health. 4. Vitamin B-complex (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, B12)These vitamins play various roles in energy metabolism, nervous system function, and cell division.
Dacryodes edulis	Burseraceae	1. Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid) Known for its antioxidant properties and essential for immune function. 2. Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene) Important for vision, immune function, and skin health. 3. Vitamin K Essential for blood clotting and bone health. 4. Vitamin E (Alpha-Tocopherol) An antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage. 5. Vitamin B-complex (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, B12) These vitamins play various roles in energy metabolism, nervous system function, and cell division.
Monadora myristica	Annonaceae	Nutmeg is known for its warm, slightly sweet, and nutty flavor. It is commonly used in both sweet and savory dishes, including baked goods, custards, sauces, and certain meat dishes. In addition to its culinary uses, nutmeg has been used in traditional medicine for its potential health benefits, although it should be consumed in moderation due to its potency.
Spondia mombin	Anacardiaceae	1. Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid) Known for its antioxidant properties and essential for immune function. 2. Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene) Important for vision, immune function, and skin health. 3. Vitamin K Essential for blood clotting and bone health. 4. Vitamin E (Alpha-Tocopherol) An antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage.

		5. Vitamin B-complex (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, B12):** These vitamins play various roles in energy metabolism, nervous system function, and cell division.
Vitex donania	Lamiaceae	1. Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid) Known for its antioxidant properties and essential for immune function. 2. Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene) Important for vision, immune function, and skin health. 3. Vitamin K Essential for blood clotting and bone health. 4. Vitamin E (Alpha-Tocopherol) An antioxidant that helps protect cells from damage. 5. Vitamin B-complex (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, B12)These vitamins play various roles in energy metabolism, nervous system function, and cell division.
Treculia Africana	Moraceae	1. Proteins Seeds are a good source of protein, which is essential for various bodily functions, including muscle development and repair. 2. Fats The seeds contain fats, including both saturated and unsaturated fats. These fats contribute to energy storage and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. 3. Carbohydrates Carbohydrates in the form of starch are present in the seeds and serve as a source of energy. 4. Dietary Fiber The seeds may contain dietary fiber, which is important for digestive health. 5. Minerals Seeds may contain minerals such as potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, and calcium, which are essential for various physiological processes.

Discussion

The Idanre community, distinguished as a unique tribe among the Yoruba ethnic groups in southwestern Nigeria, is renowned for its rich culture, traditions, attire, cuisine, rituals, and festivals, among other facets. According to Punam (2021), demographic data reveals that men constitute 64.58% of the population, while

women make up 35.42%, with the highest age distribution falling within the 38-49 age range. The primary occupation of the community revolves around agriculture, encompassing both arable and cash crops. Arable crops cultivated include cassava, yams, pepper, and melon, while cash crops such as cocoa and oil palm are also prevalent. This discovery aligns with Asogwa's (2012) assertion that men predominantly engage in farming activities as a means of income generation and to support their families. The tourism industry serves as a means of livelihood, with locals utilizing the natural landscapes to enhance their living standards. The Idanre community emerges as a prominent tourist destination, embodying the historical, cultural, and social evolution of the region. However, tourism managers in Idanre often face challenges, including disturbances and occasional threats from local community members. To mitigate such conflicts and ensure managerial success, it is imperative for local communities to participate in the planning and execution of tourism strategies for the cultural landscape (Fadamiro and Adedeji, 2016). Akanbi (2003) underscores the untapped potential of tourist resources in Nigeria, particularly in Ondo State, where many resources remain unexplored, with some at risk of erosion by natural elements. Sustainable tourism development addresses concerns regarding the environmental impacts of rapid and unregulated tourism growth (Sharpley, 2009). In the Idanre communities, approximately 49% of the population has access to medical facilities, indicating the provision of healthcare centers across most of the communities. Despite the availability of medical facilities, community members continue to rely on medicinal plants for addressing common ailments such as typhoid fever, malaria, cough, infertility, asthma, and dysentery. Many of these medicinal plant species are cultivated around their residences. The practice of utilizing plants for both preventive and curative purposes has a rich historical background, often referred to as traditional or herbal medicine, with origins dating back 4,000 years before the advent of modern medical systems (Okoli et al., 2007). Medicinal plants are defined as those containing compounds with medicinal properties within some or all of their parts (Sofowora et al., 2013). In China, there is a longstanding tradition of using plants for disease prevention and treatment, passed down through generations (Ezekwesili-Ofili and Okaka, 2019). Residents of Idanre were noted to incorporate various wild indigenous vegetables and fruits from their forest into their diet. The nutritional compositions of these wild foods differ from one plant to another.The cultural legacy present in Idanre encompasses several remarkable phenomena. Among these is the enigmatic "unreadable letters," believed to be a mysterious script carved onto the rock surface (Idanre, 2016). Despite its discovery, this script remains undeciphered to this day (ibid., 2016). Another intriguing feature is the Agbogun footprint, a spectral imprint resembling a mythical shoeprint capable of fitting individuals of any foot size (Idanre, 2016). Legend attributes this imprint to Agbogun, the first Oba (King) of Idanre, serving as a witch and wrongdoer detector (Olorunipa, no date).The Arun River, situated in a tranquil corner of the hill, originates from the hot recesses of Aghagha Hill (Adisa, 2010). Revered for its purported healing properties against various illnesses and as a site for spiritual purification (Idanre, 2016; Adisa, 2010), the Arun River holds a significant place in local beliefs.The ancient palace and courtyard atop the hill once hosted court meetings of the Oba, featuring historical monuments chronicling Idanre's history (Adisa, 2010). From the vantage point of Aghagha hill, one can behold sweeping views of the Idanre settlement and prominent rock formations like the Orosun hill (Olorunipa, no date).Lastly, the Owa's Palace stands as a historic structure where the Owa (King) resides and where traditional rituals and festivals of Idanre are held (The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 2008). These elements collectively contribute to the rich tapestry of cultural heritage woven throughout Idanre, reflecting its profound historical and spiritual significance.

Conclusion and recommendations

The rise in population, economic growth, and the introduction of diverse employment opportunities and income-generating programs by government organizations has reshaped the employment landscape among the Idanre people. Consequently, their dietary and lifestyle habits have gradually transformed, losing some of their original characteristics.

1. Encourage diversification of livelihoods beyond agriculture, exploring opportunities in tourism, handicrafts, and other income-generating activities to reduce dependency on traditional occupations.

2. Invest in vocational training programs and educational initiatives to equip community members with relevant skills for emerging economic sectors and improve access to quality education for children and youth.

3. Improve access to essential infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and clean water to enhance living standards and facilitate economic activities in rural areas.

4. Facilitate access to microfinance loans, grants, and business development services to empower local entrepreneurs and stimulate small-scale enterprise development.

5. Develop community-based conservation strategies to protect and sustainably manage indigenous plant species and ecosystems, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern conservation approaches.

6. Establish repositories and documentation centers to archive traditional plant knowledge, oral histories, and cultural practices, ensuring the preservation and transmission of indigenous wisdom to future generations.

6. Promote collaborative research initiatives between scientists, ethnobotanists, and local communities to explore the therapeutic potential of medicinal plants, validate traditional healing practices, and develop evidence-based healthcare interventions.

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Picture 1 *Blighia sapida*

Picture 2 *Vernonia amygdalina*

Picture 3 *Carica papaya*

Picture 4 *Morinda lucida*