



Jesus' Example of Prudence in John 6:12: Implication for Curbing Mango Wastage In Ogbomosoland, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Previous researches on Jesus' feeding of the multitude in the four Gospels have focused on the miraculous provision for the needy. However little has been done on Jesus' use of the phrase, "Gather up the fragments...." in John 6:12. The study, therefore, is an exegetical analysis of Jesus' example of prudence in John 6:12 in comparison to glaring wastage of mango fruits in Ogbomosoland, Oyo State, Nigeria. The work employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The researcher observed over a period of three years and personally witnessed how mangoes are being wasted. Eighty copies of two sets of questionnaires were administered to mango farmers (40) and mango consumers (40), while structured interviews were conducted on the agricultural officers (5) and religious leaders (15) resident in the five Local Governments areas of Ogbomosoland in Oyo State, Nigeria. Information gathered was subjected to both content and quantitative analysis. The study affirmed Ogbomosoland produces one of the best mangoes in Nigeria and that there is frequent mango wastage in Ogbomosoland during harvest period due to lack of storage and transportation facilities, and ineffective charitable ministry on the part of the Christians who form a high percentage of the residents of Ogbomosoland. To breed a society that is spiritually balanced, physically healthy and economically prudent, the people of Ogbomosoland, especially Christians, should align completely with Jesus' example of no wastage in whatever form.

Keywords: Prudence, Leftover, Wastage, John 6:12, Charity

1. Introduction

The importance of food to human existence cannot be overemphasized. It is so important that God, in biblical narratives did not create man until all other things, including food, had been created (Genesis 1:1-31). Indeed the saying, 'a hungry man

is an angry man' is normative at all time, for all classes of human existence and cultural environments. There are six classes of food (carbohydrates, protein, fats and oil, minerals, vitamins and water) and nutritionists would insist that all these classes of food must be taken proportionately by individuals for good health and sound mind. This is called a balanced diet or healthy diet. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies avers, "A healthy diet is made up of a variety and balance of different types of food each day, including fruit and vegetables, cereals, tubers, roots, pulses, nuts and animal products. The variety of foods in the diet will usually depend on what is in season and locally available. The amount of food a person requires depends on age, sex and time of life"(19). This definition by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) reveals the beauty in and of creation. The implication is that under normal conditions, whatever man needs to eat, whether a balanced or healthy diet, is locally available in his or her environment. Besides, since all the needed foods are not produced at once because they have their seasons there is the probability that they are available all the year round. The assumption is that all the food nutrients that an African man needs are within his environment, and the same thing applies in other continents of the world. However, due to climatic conditions, some agricultural or food products would grow well in some areas while they would not grow well in other areas. This is the reason, many times for the transportation, exporting and importing of food items from one continent to the other, one nation to the other, one town to the other and within localities.

Mango (*Manifera indicul*) is one of the fruits that are a rich source of vitamins. It is not only a source of vitamins; it is also rich in protein, fats, sugar, pre-biotic dietary fiber, and poly-phenolic flavonoid antioxidant compounds (Ara *et al*, 2169). Ojedokun and Oladejo opine that Mango is one of the two most delicious and admired tropical fruits in the world (1). Apart from the fresh juice which mango is known for, mango's stem bark, stem extract, and mango leaves beverages are also used for medicinal purposes (Singh *et al*, 454). There are about 500 classes of mangoes



worldwide and Nigeria is one of the major mango producers of the world and Ogbomosoland (consisting of five local Government areas), one of the major cities in Southwestern Nigeria, is home to one of the best species. During the period of harvest, February to Early June, mango is plenteous in Ogbomosoland to the extent that fruit sellers and consumers go to Ogbomosoland to buy mango. As a matter of fact, there is a general preference for what is now popularly known as the “Ogbomosoland mango.” However, despite the transportation of mango across the whole country, many more are still left behind, leading eventually to waste. By late June, the indigenes would have started yearning for the mango. If the excess mangoes had not been wasted, there would definitely be mangoes to eat when the fruit is out of season.

Therefore, there is the need to answer or ask the following questions: Why is the production of one of the best mango species situated in Ogbomosoland? Why is the largest growth and harvest of Mango in Nigeria found in Ogbomosoland? What is the reason for the huge wastages at the peak of production? What is the religious and economic implication of mango wastage to the Nigerian Society? These questions reveal the extent of mango production as well as the extent of mango wastage in Ogbomosoland. The remedy to the issues raised and problem discovered in the production of mango in Ogbomosoland can only be found in Jesus’ example of prudence as exemplified in John chapter 6, verse 12.

2. A Review of Related Literature

Reports of the United Nations Development Programme of 2002 and 2004 show that majority of the countries in the Low Human Development Index Countries (LHDICs) were African nations (Björk 51). The Bad Pillars of development include economy, trade, entrepreneurship and resources (Björk 78). The status of Nigeria remains the same as the Human Development Index (HDI) of 2020 reveals that Nigeria has one of the lowest human development indices with 0.532 and a population of 206, 139,589(HDI). Omorogiuwa, et al aver that agriculture is the backbone of Nigeria’s

economy and if Nigeria will be stripped of poverty and distress, she needs to examine the factors that hinder the development of the agricultural sector, thereby strategizing on moving the agricultural sector forward(145). This idea is supported by Nallari and Griffith that if agricultural productivity is developed sharply, other aspects of the economy would also increase as this is vital for stimulating growth in other parts of the economy (306). Ajakaiye, et al posits:

To create more decent jobs ...Nigeria must consider how to increase productivity in agriculture and non- farm enterprises and devise avenues of attracting youths into the sector. There should also be resolute commitment to raising productivity in the agricultural sector through sustained massive support for agricultural research and extension (as has been done in Brazil, China, India, and Malaysia), mechanization, commercialization of technologies, and enhanced value addition through effective support for agro-processors and agri-businesses(27).

The views of the aforementioned scholars are very real and tenable especially when one looks at the attitude of the Federal Government of Nigeria towards agriculture in the last 42 years (1978-2020); it reveals that agriculture still remains the bedrock of the Nigerian economy. By 1976, the Military Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, insisted that the Nigerian economy would thrive if agriculture is taken more seriously. Hence the launching of "Operation Feed the Nation" in 1976, the "Green Revolution" of President Shehu Shagari in April, 1980, the Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) of January 1986 under General Ibrahim Babangida's administration, the Better Life Programme (BLP) for rural women of 1987, the National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) of 1992, the National Fadama Development Project (NFDPP) of early 1990s, National, Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS) of January 2002 and the Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP) of April 2003 were all geared towards revamping Nigerian economy using agriculture (Philippe; Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe).



Oluwafemi notes that one of the aims for the implementation of an Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) as one of the key drivers of the National Economic Transformation Agenda is to among other things “reduce post-harvest losses, add value to local agricultural produce, develop rural infrastructure and enhance access of farmers to financial services and markets”(13). Nigeria would solve her food crisis if she is not depending on external capitalist economies and the elites who have the monetary power and have great influence in international trades (Oculi 73)). The theories of underdevelopment, comparative advantage, environmental constraints, and the incessant dependence on foreign food aid are usually put forward for food deficits in tropical Africa. Only genuine empowerment of the peasantry, land-tenure policies that recognizes both the small-scale and the large scale agriculture, freer access to commodity markets and agricultural policies that are sensitive to environmental constraints would solve the issue of food crisis (Lofchie and Commins 182).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2014 noted that about 1.3 billion tons (per year) of the edible portions of food produced for human consumption, valued at US \$1 trillion gets lost or is wasted globally (Tielens and Candel 11). Sonesson, et al in a research on food wastage concluded that a certain amount of food was usually discarded in almost all food categories (274). In such cases there may not be much problem. Likewise, Parfitt et al note that food waste generally could occur at any point in the food supply chain (FSC); that is, from the farmer (producer) to the consumer (3065). Tielens and Candel state that “Food waste generally refers to food discarded at the end of the supply chain, by retailers or consumers. Food wastage refers to the combination of both food loss and food waste”(7). Parfitt et al, on the other hand opine that food wastage refers to a situation whereby the food intended for human consumption is discarded, lost, consumed or degraded by pests, or is intentionally fed to animals, or a situation where the value of

food consumed is more than the food needed by the body system(3065). Food wastages could be high to the extent that it adversely affects the economy of the society. Economically, the financial gain is absent. Health wise it affects the growth and development of the citizens, especially the younger generation and this is a pointer to a damaged future for the younger generation. When food wastage is reduced, hunger, malnourishment and poverty are also reduced, and therefore there is food security (Tielens and Candel 7). The definitions of Tielens and Candel and Parfitt et al have bearing on the issue of food security. It connotes that food wastage is directly associated with food insecurity, anywhere in the world.

Mango, like other fruits is seasonal and if not treated very well before storage, it becomes highly perishable (Guiamba 17). Scholars hold different views for this wastage. Coursey postulates that mechanical injuries that agricultural products suffer at harvesting, packaging, transporting and storage, especially extreme heat and cold at times, usually lead to economic losses as it reduces the market values of the products(492). Corroborating Coursey's claim Akinnifesi, et al opine that careful selection of propagation techniques, postharvest handling and commercialization of products are core principles that must be taken care of in indigenous fruit trees production(420). Hence Coursey and Akinnifesi are saying that if agricultural produce such as mango are not handled well at propagating, harvesting, packaging transporting, storage and marketing, there would be wastages and economic losses. Indigenous fruit trees reduce the poverty level of the local farmers when handled carefully (Akinnifesi, et al. 419).

The Yoruba of southwestern Nigerian hold food in high esteem. Two of the Yoruba proverbs are '*Ebi kii wonu, koro mi ran wo*' and '*eniti ebi n pa ko gbo y'ago*'. The two literally mean you cannot do any other thing when you are hungry. These correspond to the English proverb, 'a hungry man is an angry man.' Hence, traditionally, whatever offence a Yoruba man commits as a result of hunger is usually forgiven. A Yoruba man can enter another person's farm to take what he and his



household would eat as long as he is not selling it. In fact, the stealing of a food item as a result of hunger is usually overlooked (Ogunleye). The Yoruba people would also say, '*ohuntia o je, la'gbakini a o ta*' literally, what we're going to eat comes before what we are going to sell. In other words, food comes before any other thing (Oyekan). The Yoruba people do not believe in measuring the food a person eats. They would say, '*mojesu, mojeru, enua yo lomo*' literally means, no matter the volume of what you eat, when you are full, you will stop eating. The interpretation is that it is not ideal to measure what an individual would eat. Let the individual eat to his or her satisfaction (Sangodele). As long as the individual is in need of what to eat, they continue to give as long as the person is not taking the food to exploit for commercial purpose hence the saying, '*a fun ni je, kii fun nii ta*' which literally means he who give you food for subsistence would not give you food for commercial purpose (Olayinka). So, foods of all classes are very important to the Yoruba, and they are ready to help their neighbours in times of lack of food. However, wastage, especially food wastage among the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria is considered a serious offence before God and also a cultural taboo. In cases where an individual has eaten to his or her satisfaction, the leftovers should not be wasted. A moral virtue that is usually inculcated into the Yoruba man/woman from childhood is, '*ounje a maa sepe fun eniyan.*' It literally means that food curses the waster. This has a serious religious implication among the Yoruba people. They strongly believe that anyone wasting food would be cursed by God, and such a person would never be satisfied and continue to live in abject poverty. Therefore, a high level of caution is usually taken against wasting of food. This is the reason why the Yoruba man has cultivated the habit of reusing leftover food. They sometimes eat contaminated food so as not to waste such a food (Orowale).

The advent of the Southern Baptist Missionaries in Ogbomosoland in the 1850s brought about some developments such as beautification of the environment, provision of good roads, provision of healthcare and educational facilities. These

*Jesus' Example of Prudence in John 6:12: Implication for Curbing Mango
Wastage In Ogbomosoland, Oyo State, Nigeria*

missionaries brought with them so many things, including seeds of fruits to see whether they would germinate and grow well. One of the seeds they brought was the seed of this mango that now thrives well in Ogbomosoland. The missionaries started planting it in other parts of Yorubaland. Unfortunately, though they germinated and grew, the yield from other parts of Yorubaland would not do well (Segilola). The missionaries took the seedlings of the mango to Jos, the capital of Plateau State, Northern Nigeria, it would not grow well. The missionaries later found out that the soil of Ogbomosoland was the reason for the good yields and taste. Information has it that the missionaries, in order to have this mango in Jos, started exporting Ogbomosoland soil to Jos and they did plant the mango seed on the Ogbomosoland soil they exported to Jos. However, the harvest was not exactly as the one in Ogbomosoland (Segilola). The missionaries, having done everything they could to make the mango of the same taste available in other parts of Yorubaland to no avail used another method. They got helicopters and broadcasted the mango seed in all Ogbomosoland. Hence, the mango tree is available in every nook and crannies of Ogbomosoland, and the reason for plenty production. Most indigenes who are mango farmers do not cultivate, they simply harvest most times. In fact, they would sometimes cut down mango trees when they want to plant other agricultural produce or build houses. For some, the mango trees are an inheritance from their parents, and they do not replant at times as the seeds now also germinate through natural broadcasting; that is, planted by the throwing away of the seed of the fruits eaten (Orowale).

A close look at the rate of harvest reveals that, in spite of the various exports of Ogbomosoland mango to other parts of Nigeria, the production could still be made available for about three months after harvest. However, this is not the case. In spite of the high yield and good production being realized in Ogbomosoland every year, the demand for exotic fruits in Nigeria is still high. It is very glaring even for any traveler



travelling from the West to the North via Ogbomosoland to see how mangoes are being wasted during this period. Heaps of rotten mangoes are usually seen by the roadside.

The Bible is against wastage of any kind. According to the Old Testament, God detests food wastage. The gleaning legislations of Deuteronomy 24:19-22 and Leviticus 19:9, 10; 23:22 (cf. Ruth 2:2-23) are made to provide for the needy. The gleanings include those produce that are forgotten, fell off the harvest, grew in the corner of the field or those products that were overlooked at harvest and carelessly left at the corner of the Field (Kent 281). Nevertheless, Walter notes that the gleaning of the ears of corn after the harvest cannot be left to waste away and that the leftover should be taken care of to the extent that if the cost of gathering them is high, it should be pastured (2). In the New Testament, some of the parables (parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, parable of the talents prodigal son, etc.) and miracles of Jesus (the feeding of the five thousand), reveal that nothing should be wasted or lost – humans, animals and plants.

3. Jesus' Attitudes towards Wastage in John 6:12

John 6: 1- 15 is one of the nine meal scenes in the Fourth Gospel (Kobel 73). It tells of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. It is so important that it is the only miracle of all the miracles of Jesus that is recorded by all the four gospel writers (Matthew 14: 13-21, Mark 6: 35-44, Luke 9: 10-17, and John 6: 1-15). The place of the miracle is described variously as desert, Bethsaida and other side of the Sea of Galilee in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John respectively. However, the 'lonely place' must be Bethsaida, a well-known small fishing village on the Northern East shore of Galilee, since John in 6:1 noticed that the place lay across the lake (Fryer, 1987:33). The event took place shortly after the death of John the Baptist. Jesus decided to retract to a lonely place in order to rest and in order to allow the people to rest (Mark 6:31). The people had heard all that Jesus was doing and they wanted to hear more. The Synoptic gospels record that the disciples wanted Jesus to send them away but Jesus

would not. The Gospel of John has been chosen for this study because of the different way in which the story is told.

Firstly, it is only in the Gospel of John (6:5) that Jesus noticed that the people were in need of food. "Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" Neither the crowd nor the disciples asked Jesus for anything, but Jesus himself noticed that they were in need to survive. Secondly, the phrase in John 6:6, "This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do" can only be found in John. He had a plan for the feeding of the people. White et al (2010: 5) notes that Thomas Aquinas compares this act of Jesus to that of Abraham as to allow others to learn something from the tested. Thirdly, it is only in the Gospel of John (6:12) that we see the gathering of the fragments left over as an imperative. Jesus says, "..., Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost." In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 14:20, Mark 6:43 and Luke 9:17) the authors notify that the twelve baskets of fragments leftovers were taken care of just like in the Gospel of John (6:12). Morris believes that Jesus asked his disciple to gather the leftovers to show the preciousness of the food. but Carson opines that to gather the leftovers was a Jewish custom (313, 10).

However, two things can be noticed. Firstly, in the Synoptic gospels the fragments left over were picked. The verbs used are ἤραν, (aorist active third person singular of αἶρω) and ἤρθη (aorist passive third person singular) in Matthew, Mark and Luke respectively. This has the idea of literally picking something by an individual so as not to waste it or for reuse by or for another person. In the Gospel of John 6:12 the verb, συναγάγετε (verb imperative aorist active 2nd person plural) is used for the taking care of the fragment left over. It is from the Greek verb συνάγω meaning to gather or to bring together. The same verb is used in Matthew 13:30 and Luke 15:13 in the parables of the Prodigal Son and the parable of Weeds and the Wheat. "In secular Greek the verb is documented in the passage in commercial usage in the sense of "yield



as a total sum” and in the translation account with the meaning “collect” in the life of Greek associating” (Balz and Schneider). It has something to do with economic value. The Prodigal Son came back and was welcomed by the father because the father would not want to lose him. Again, it was economical for the farmer to get rid of the weeds than lose the wheat. Jesus gave the command to gather the leftovers so that the leftover, might probably be useful at another time.

Secondly, the gathering of the baskets of fragments left over was a command, an order from Jesus unlike what it is in the Synoptic Gospels. The command was given so that “... nothing may be lost” (John 6: 12b). 5,000 men were present, and the synoptic gospels recount that women and children were not counted. The disciples did exactly as Jesus commanded. A disciple is not just a disciple because he listens to his master. He is a disciple because he is ready to imitate and follow the steps of his master with the aim of becoming like him (Walker 93).

4. Methodology and Findings

Personal interviews were conducted on six Ogbomoso indigenes whose ages range from 56 to 92 years. This was carried out to elicit information on the advent of the mango production in Ogbomoso since there are no documents on how Ogbomoso became the center of mango production in the South Western Nigeria. Information garnered form part of the review of the previous work on the study. Eighty copies of two sets of questionnaires were administered to mango farmers (40) and mango consumers (40), while structured interviews were conducted on the agricultural officers (5) and religious leaders (15) in the five Local Government areas (Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South, Ogo-Oluwa, Surulere and Oriire) of Ogbomosoland in Oyo State, Nigeria. A total of 38 (95%) mango farmers affirmed mango wastage during production. Another 36 (90%) agreed that they make profit. However, all (100%) the mango farmers affirmed that they often make only about 50-60% of the total profits they ought to be making every year. In other words the farmers claimed that they are

Jesus' Example of Prudence in John 6:12: Implication for Curbing Mango Wastage In Ogbomosoland, Oyo State, Nigeria

losing so much income every year, mainly because of the wastage. Finally, 30 (75%) claimed that the government does not give them any incentives as mango farmers.

Agricultural officers in the five local government areas claimed that unlike other agricultural produce, mango does not need any special attention in Ogbomosoland. To them mango farmers "do not undergo any form of stress" since mango is an annual crop and requires little or no special attention like spraying of insecticides or pesticides. They however claimed that they have tendered the request of the farmers for incentives and processing of mango fruits in Ogbomosoland to appropriate quarters. Mango consumers within Ogbomosoland claimed that mango is usually very cheap during the period of harvesting. Some claimed that they can never use their money to buy mangoes, though they are not mango farmers. They affirmed that they usually eat more than enough mangoes during production periods.

Mango consumers in Ogbomosoland claimed that mango is usually very cheap during the peak of harvesting. They however averred that they usually were not always able to buy in large quantity because it perishes easily, since there were no storage facilities.

Some religious leaders were interviewed on what the church is doing to curb the wastage. All the church leaders claimed that they knew there used to be gross mango wastage in Ogbomosoland but they have never seen the need to curb it. Almost all the religious leaders have preached from John 6:12 several times but had not given it much application as it is affecting mango production in Ogbomosoland.

The findings can be grouped into three. Economically, money is lost. Mango farmers and sellers are making profits at a decreasing rate. The government does not see any reason to come to the aid of the mango farmers and they are invariably losing a probable income through wastage. Health wise, when unused mangoes are left to litter the environment, they constitute nuisance and breed flies which are detrimental to human health. From the religious perspective, the inaction of the Christians in Ogbomosoland calls for an examination into their compliance with Jesus' teachings



and examples. Definitely, Christians have the opportunity to form associations whereby they would either be making it available for free distribution in evangelism, sell at lower prices for communities who do not have, or come together to establish a mango processing factory within Ogbomosoland . However, they did not do any of these.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

Mango production in Ogbomosoland outdoes those being produced in other parts of South West, Nigeria in quality and in quantity. However, at the peak of its production, so much of it is usually been wasted. This wastage is usually done by human factor. Apart from the fact that the Yoruba culture detests food wastage, Jesus' example in John 6:12 indicates that wastage is ungodly and uneconomical. There is therefore the need to look at Jesus who would not encourage the wasting of God's miraculous provisions. Only God knows why he has allowed this mango specie, which is rarely found in other parts of Nigeria, to do well on Ogbomosoland, and it should be used to better the lots of the consumers, the producers and the nation at large.

To curb mango wastage in Ogbomosoland, there is the need for food wastage intervention. This will be made possible firstly, by the provision of good transportation system. The provision of good roads is a must if Mango production would be improved and made beneficial to the citizens of Nigeria. Farmers need trucks and not cars to transport Ogbomosoland mango to other parts of Nigeria. Most peasant mango farmers may not afford this but the government can assist in such a way that the trucks are available and farmers would just be paying tokens that would enable them to make their profits without much wastage and stress. Secondly, the Federal and State governments would greatly help and encourage mango farmers if good storage facilities are provided. That mango is one of the food products that do not have high percentage of durability is not an exaggeration. It perishes quickly. Since mango production in Ogbomosoland is usually in large quantity to the extent that it would

**Jesus' Example of Prudence in John 6:12: Implication for Curbing Mango
Wastage In Ogbomosoland, Oyo State, Nigeria**

compete favourably with the international market, the Nigerian government, at the State and Federal level should make storage facilities readily available to farmers. This will reduce wastage to a great extent. Thirdly, the establishment of factories for the processing of the mangoes in Ogbomosho is a necessity. This would probably be one of the best ways to reduce the high cost of mango production, and higher profit for the mango farmers. The problem and stress of transportation would be minimized to a large extent. Fourthly, it is true that mango production in Ogbomosoland seems to be without much stress since it is a perennial crop, cultivated by the mango farmers' parents. Yet, the government and religious organizations need to make incentives available to mango farmers as well as intending mango farmers. This will aid larger production to the extent that Nigeria would be a mango production competitor in the international market. Religious organizations in Ogbomosoland should do more in using mango for charity during the harvest periods. Instead of watching the mangoes getting rotten due to lack of storage facilities and transportation, religious organization should form cells whereby mangoes would be taking to other towns, and State of the Federation as charity.

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Appendix

A. Questionnaire for Mango Farmers

1. Mango is usually being wasted during production. Yes/ No
2. Do you make so much profit? Yes /No
 - a. I make : a. 10- 20% profit b. 30-40% profit c. 50-60% profit d. 70-80% profit e. 90-100% profit
3. Any incentives from the government?

B. Questionnaire for Mango Consumers

1. Do you enjoy the eating of mango during its harvesting? Yes/No
2. Usually costly at the period of harvesting. Yes/No
3. Usually cheap at the period of harvesting. Yes/No
4. Do you have storage facilities for mango? Yes/No
5. What type(s)?
 - a. Refrigerator b. Others
6. Any hindrances to enjoying mango consumption?
 - a. Inadequate supply of electricity for storage
 - b. Non –durability of mango.

C. Structured Interview for Agricultural Officers

1. Any incentives for the farmers?
2. Any request from them? Yes/ No
3. What are the requests?

D. Structured Interview for Religious Leaders

1. How do you see mango production in Ogbomosoland?
2. Do you think that the farmers and the consumers are enjoying the production and consumption to their satisfaction? Yes/ No
3. Explain the reasons for your response in question 2.
4. Do you think there are wastages during mango production in Ogbomosoland? Yes/No
5. If yes in question 4, what is the Church doing to curb the wastage?
6. What is your understanding of Jesus' "Gather up the fragments...." in John 6:12?