



# Assessing Shea Nut Access in the Savannah and Northern Regions of Ghana

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**Abstract:** The various customary and political paths through which natural resources are accessed have become topical. These issues attract more attention if they relate to access by women to support livelihoods. This paper uses qualitative approaches to describe the nature of access to shea nuts in Ghana. Sourcing information from 300 shea collectors in 15 communities in the Northern Region of Ghana indicated that majority of shea collectors relied on family fields as their main source of nuts instead of communal fields. On the political front it was revealed that shea resources are customarily managed and predominantly controlled by males. Shea trees on communal lands are under the control of traditional leaders while those on cultivated lands are controlled by family heads. The main challenge that collectors faced regarding access to shea nuts was ageing/diminishing shea population which has caused irregular and reduced fruiting.

**Keywords:** Shea access, Informal relations, Northern Ghana, Communal fields

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