

The role of women enterprises for the conservation of Kakamega forest, Kenya

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Abstract

Aim: This paper seeks to demonstrate how local women's community-based entrepreneurial activities have enhanced the management and conservation of Kakamega Forest. Past studies showed that Kakamega Forest in western Kenya faced rapid deforestation. Local people are often blamed for this problem. However, this paper argues that local people have traditionally played important roles in sustaining the forest environment.

Method: A questionnaire survey was administered to 149 women who belonged to various entrepreneurial/conservation groups called *chamas* near this forest.

Findings: We found that many of these women found opportunities to earn more income from forest conservation activities. For example, about 58% of the respondents were involved in the cultivation and domestication of indigenous/medicinal plants that they harvested from the forest. These activities led to the conservation of indigenous species and, at the same time, eased ecological pressure on the limited forest resources. Also, about 19% of the respondents were involved in making eco-friendly *jikos* or cooking stoves for business purposes. This effort reduced fuelwood harvesting from the forest.

Implications/Novel Contribution: The novel contribution of this research is that it seeks to investigate how women's community-based entrepreneurial activities have enhanced the management and conservation of Kakamega Forest. As we do not yet know to what extent women networking and entrepreneurial activities have contributed to forest conservation.

Keywords: Kakamega forest, Conservation, Sustainability, Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION (FIRST LEVEL HEADING)

Recently, the Government of Kenya has recognized important roles local forest communities play in managing forest resources ([Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2007](#)). The Forestry Act of 2005 promotes co-management of forests with local communities ([Government of Kenya, 2005](#)). However, in any given community, men and women have different opportunities, motivation and capabilities to involve themselves in collective management or conservation actions ([Pandolfelli, Meinzen-Dick, & Dohrn, 2007](#); [Salam, 2016](#)). [Kabutha and Humbly \(1996\)](#) reported that rural women manage as much as 74% of Kenyas smallholding farms and natural resources through their daily life activities. Their participation in forest management is vital to its success and sustainability.

Objectives of Study (Second Level Heading)

Recently, the Government of Kenya has recognized important roles local forest communities play in managing forest resources ([Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2007](#)).

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LITERATURE REVIEW (FIRST LEVEL HEADING)

There are different types of ecological activities (Papavasileiou, 2015). The types of activity are characterized as ecological administration or activity in nature or eco-the executives, for example direct activity in the condition, utilization activity, the cognizant or non-cognizant acquisition of specific items, influence by people or gatherings to others on ecological issues, political and legitimate activity (Papavasileiou, 2015).

MATERIALS AND METHODS (FIRST LEVEL HEADING)

Study Area (Second Level Heading)

Local people used the forest for collecting fuel wood, grass for thatching and medicinal plants. They also performed important religious ceremonies there. This forest is protected as a national reserve and managed by the Kenyan Wildlife Service. It is primarily old-growth forest, supporting rich biological diversity (Singer, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (FIRST LEVEL HEADING)

Commercial Production and Processing of Medicinal Plants (Second Level Heading)

The first part of the survey asked our respondents to explain their commercial medicinal plant production and processing activities. We then analyzed how these activities contributed to the conservation of Kakamega forest. About 58% of the respondents were involved in the cultivation and domestication of indigenous/medicinal plants that they harvested from the forest. We found that women from about 26 households near the Kakamega Forest established Muliru Enterprise, a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) with the support of ICIPE. It is a medicinal plant processing facility at Isecheno village in the southern part of Kakamega Forest. It processes plant materials from domesticated and cultivated *Ocimum kilimandscharicum*, *Ocimum suave* and *Lippia ukambensis* (indigenous traditional medicinal plants). It also manufactures medicinal and pest control products. The purified essential oil is used in the production of Naturub balms and ointments. These products have received wide acceptance in the Kenyan market and are competitive with major international brands.

CONCLUSION (FIRST LEVEL HEADING)

Overall, we found that Kakamega women are central to the success of sustainable management of Kakamega Forest. This study highlighted some of the entrepreneurial activities Kakamega women are involved in the conservation of Kakamega Forest. About 58% of our respondents were involved in commercial cultivation and processing of medicinal plants. Their involvement in business activities heightened their appreciation of forest biodiversity. Other women were involved in apiculture and sericulture activities which enhanced conservation and production of bees and silk moth species from Kakamega Forest.

Table 1: Seizure of cannabis by all agencies in Bangladesh in 2018 (Regional percentage)

Region	Dhaka	Mymensingh	Chattogram	Rajshahi	Khulna	Barisal	Rangpur	Sylhet
Percentage	36.39%	2.67%	25.89%	6.99%	3.82%	1.05%	9.16%	0.39%

Source:xxx

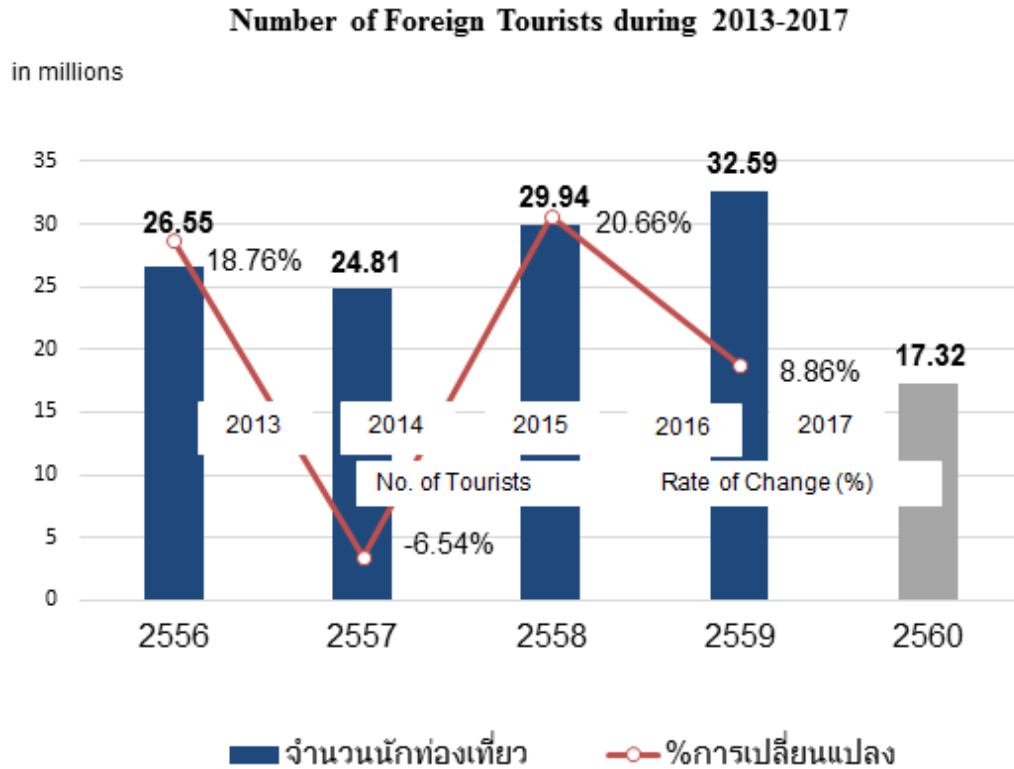


Figure 1. Seizure of yaba by all agencies in Bangladesh in 2018 (Regional percentage)

- All references must be according to APA 7th Edition reference style.
- Minimum number of references must be 25-30.
- Cited references must be from the last 5 years.
- All references must have proper DOI's.

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