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Local Communities’ Dependence on Ntfps in Kakamega Forest: Analysis of Economic Value, and Determinants of Participation and Extraction Levels

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Abstract

The study assesses the types and quantities of direct non-timber forest products (NTFPs) extracted by the local people living around the Kakamega Forest in Western Kenya. It further analyses the factors that influence a household’s decision to participate in NTFPs’ collection and the level of extraction undertaken. The results of this study are derived from a stratified sample of 370 households who were interviewed with a semi-structured questionnaire. The quantities of the different products obtained by extracting households are valued at the average market prices to obtain their financial values. The results of the study indicate that the forest generates a substantial economic value to the local people. It was found that this value is comparable to that of the common crop enterprises in the research area. A Heckman two-stage regression model is used to analyse the socio-economic, institutional, and geo-physical factors that influence the household decision to participate in forest extraction and the quantities of the different products obtained. Proximity to the forest edge, the form of forest management approach, age and education level of the household head, household private land holding and participation in forest conservation activities are the main factors influencing the household decision to extract NTFPs from the forest. The level of extraction for the participating households is influenced by their proximity to the forest, the household size, participation in forest conservation activities and whether the household uses the extracted forest products as a source of income. The study concludes by highlighting some important policy inferences for sustainable use and conservation of Kakamega Forest.

Keywords: Forest extraction, Gross Margin. , Heckman model, Kakamega Forest, nTFPs