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Local Knowledge of Indigenous Tree Uses and Management in Rural Communities in North Kordofan State, Sudan

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Abstract

Forests and trees are important to rural communities in Sudan for providing them with food, shelter, wildlife habitat, fuel and daily supplies. This study was conducted in North Kordofan State, which is facing degradation of the forest resources and sand-dune formation. The main objective of this research is to explore and investigate the indigenous knowledge in using forests and trees and their relationship to culture and social knowledge in rural communities. The analyses were based on data collected from June — October 2005 in two localities in Kordofan State (Sheikan, Ummrawaba). Structured questionnaire was randomly distributed for 90 respondents between male and females as 61 % and 39 %, respectively.

The results found that 51 % of the indigenous knowledge source is inherited and 49 % is locally acquired. Also found that 13 medicinal trees (e.g. *Acacia nilotica*) were used for traditional medicinal treatments. They are used for treating about 16 human diseases (e.g. malaria, dysentery etc). People rely on forests and trees to provide them with fruits, leaves, seeds, pods, fibres and gums for their foodstuff and drinks. Ten tree species (e.g. *Boscia senegalensis*) are used by local people as famine food during drought periods. According to the cultural importance of forest, local communities use some trees in delivery (12 tree species), circumcision (10 trees species) marriage (5 trees species) and death. Some tree species (14 tree species e.g. *Adansonia digitata*) are believed to cause devil spirits if people sleep under, cut or climbed them. Other trees are used as ritual activities (religious belief) such as *Salvadora persica* used as brush tooth. During dry season, 19 tree species (e.g. *Acacia* spp.) are used as fodder for animals.

The study recommended that, local knowledge should be included in various strategies for forest conservation and management. Also, concluded that the practices of local knowledge by rural communities play positive roles in forest resources utilisation and conservation in the area.

Keywords: Forest resources, local knowledge, Kordofan, rural community, tree uses