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Factor Influencing Local Communities' Satisfaction Levels with Different Forest Management Approaches of Kakamega Forest, Kenya

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Abstract

Satisfaction of communities living close to forests with forest management is essential for ensuring continued support for conservation efforts. However, more often than not, community satisfaction is not systematically elicited, analysed and incorporated in conservation decisions. This study attempts to elicit levels of community satisfaction with three management approaches of Kakamega forest in Kenya and analyse factors influencing them. Three distinct management approaches are applied by three different authorities in the management of Kakamega forest: an incentive-based approach of the Forest Department, a protectionist approach of the Kenya Wildlife Service and a quasi private incentive-based approach of Quakers church mission (QCM). Data for this study was obtained from questionnaire interviews of a random sample of 361 households living within a radius of 10 km around the forest margin. The results of the study showed that the protectionist approach was ranked highest overall for its performance in forest management. Analysis of factors influencing satisfaction indicated that households are influenced by different factors in their ranking of management approaches. Educated households and those located far from market centres are likely to be dissatisfied with all the three management approaches. The location of the households from the forest margin influences negatively the satisfaction with the protectionist approach whereas land size, a proxy for durable assets, has a similar effect on the private incentive based approach of the QCM. In the conclusions, the paper indicates a number of policy implications that can enable the different authorities and their management approaches gain approval of the local communities.

Keywords: Community satisfaction, forest management approaches, Kakamega forest, Kenya, ordered probit