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## Socio-economic Determinants of Forest Conservation in Botswana

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### Abstract

In Botswana, due to the pervasiveness of the arid and semi-arid conditions over the country, the conservation of forest and protected areas is crucial to the maintenance of ecosystem services, support income generating activities and livelihoods of the nation. Consequent on these conservation practices are the socio-economic characteristics of dwellers around the forest reserves in the country. This study examined the socio-economic determinant of forest conservation in Kasane forest reserve, Chobe district. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 237 households and a structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was used to elicit information on socio-economic characteristics of people living around the forest reserve and data were collected on their socio-economic characteristics and involvement in conservation practices. The data collected were described using frequency counts and percentages and a probit regression analysis. The results show that showed more females 61.2 % living around the forest, 78.1 % were aged between 20 and 49 with 44.3 % of the respondents having secondary education. About 67 percent of the respondents were involved in conservation practices by setting aside the forest for tree and animal protection. The paper concludes with suggestion for the right combination of policies, public awareness and appropriate conservation approaches in order to sustain KFR preservation. Significant variables include education ( $t = 6.37$ ), occupation ( $t = -426$ ), years of residency ( $t = 5.87$ ), place of origin ( $t = 2.42$ ), and income ( $t = 2.68$ ). There is therefore need for public awareness and appropriate conservation approaches among the dwellers around the forest.

**Keywords:** Botswana, forest conservation, forest reserves