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Constraints of Sustainable Forest Management: A Case of Nuba Mountains Region

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Abstract

Sudan like other developing countries has weak strategies, policies and legal frameworks that support the sustainability of natural resource. The criteria of forest resource management were largely carried out informally through local community leaders prior to the colonial era. Recently, governments intervened and withdrew the managing control from villagers and followed new approaches to manage this resource. This study was an attempt to investigate the efficiency of the official forest management system in enhancing sustainable management of forest resource in the Sudan. A field survey visit based on structured interviews in 22 villages covered three types of tenure systems; reserved forests, community forest and natural woodlands. Total sample size was 300 households distributed among units of Rashad locality in Nuba Mountains according to the Principle of Population Proportional to size (PPS). The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The forest reserves in the study areas constitute a basic source of a variety of environmental goods and services most needed by villagers in addition to provide them with critical subsistence, income generation and job opportunity. However, the largest part of benefits were obtained through illegal access, leading to negative impact on forest resources. Moreover, 82.9% from the respondents had no relationship with Sudan Forests National Corporation (FNC), meanwhile only 17.1% had this relationship implying: access to extension services, licenses, establishing relationships, training on awareness, and rights and properties. On the other hand and despite the small area and limited contribution of community forests, farmers possessed a huge experience in the establishment of plantations and their management. Therefore, opposite the expectations of the government multiple use management policy proved to be ineffective in the absence of coordination between all stakeholders. To enhance any development strategy, forest authorities should actively involve local inhabitants and to support these through helping them understand the perceptions, aspirations as well as to give due consideration to their basic needs and integrate indigenous knowledge when developing forest management strategies and plans.

Keywords: Forest management, land use, Nuba Mountains, policy, tenure systems