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Access to Livelihood Resources, Development Strategies and Conservation of River Basins Resources in Rural Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper engages with the debate in the literatures on access to livelihood resources and livelihood diversification to show how differences in people's access to resources results in differences in the choices of development (livelihood) strategies (DST) that people pursue for the enhancement of their livelihoods in river basin areas of Tanzania. It also links the findings with policy initiatives related to the conservation of natural resources. The study uses quantitative data collected through a cross-sectional survey conducted among the households residing along Kilombero River and Simiyu River in Tanzania. Pre tested questionnaires were administered to different household members who are above 18 years of age and are involved in different economic activities. The survey data were supplemented by qualitative data gathered through focus group discussions in the surveyed areas. A multinomial logit model is used to investigate how access to social and financial capitals affect the choices of DST among different people. Findings show that differences in people's access to social and financial resources results in differences in the choices of DST that people pursue for the enhancement of their livelihoods, though the former seems to be more important in Kilombero, and later more important in Meatu. In Kilombero, access to social capital is an important factor for people to diversify their activities away from traditional pastoralism, an activity that is not environmentally friendly. In Simiyu, access to financial capital raises the likelihood to participate in off-farm activities instead of the activities that make enormous use of RBR, for example traditional pastoralism and irrigated farming. These findings imply that people without access to these forms of capital have to rely on the RBR and other natural resources like seasonal land for their survival. This has implications for people's wellbeing and the status of natural resources that are used.

Keywords: Access to livelihood resources, Conservation of River basins resources, Development strategies, Financial capital, Informal social relations, Livelihood framework, Rural Livelihoods, Social capital, Tanzania