

The role of indigenous knowledge in the future management of the Mangrove Bio- Diversity in Msambweni Division of Kwale District Kenya

This thesis presents the findings of a study on the role of indigenous knowledge in the management of the mangrove bio-diversity in Msambweni Division of Kwale District on the Kenyan south coast. The central problem was to describe indigenous knowledge and analyse its role in the mangrove environmental management. The study also intended to identify the existing knowledge which is utilized in the management of the mangrove ecosystem and to describe perceptions towards the present day institutional location of the mangrove management responsibility and how these influence management of the ecosystem.

The study was carried out among the residents of the area between Gazi and Vanga, the majority of whom are Wadigo, a sub-group of the Mijikenda ethnic group. Data collection methods included key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observation, the survey method and the use of secondary data. Qualitative methods of data analysis were used. These were supplemented by descriptive statistical methods of analysis to analyse the impact of various variables on the conservation of the mangrove bio-diversity. Accordingly, indigenous knowledge, the institutional location of natural resources management responsibility and the coordination among stakeholders are found to have an influence on the success of conservation efforts.

Findings from the study show that mangrove biodiversity is threatened through excessive harvesting of trees, poaching and pollution. The local community also feels they have been alienated from the mainstream activities touching on the management of the mangrove bio-diversity. They, therefore, do not see the value of conserving the mangrove ecosystem and bio-diversity, especially in cases where government officers are seen to abet the depletion of the resources.

Although this is dismissed by the environmental management bodies, this study recommends that it is important to include the local community in the management of natural resources. The people who, live in close proximity with the resources are the ones who stand to lose most should the resources be depleted. **M.A Thesis 2000**