

Assessment of the Harvest-Based Initiative in Tanzania's protected areas: addressing management issues and challenges

Jovine Nachihangu¹, Catherine Masao¹, Cuthbert Nahonyo¹, upendo richard², Khalfani Kiondo³, and Lilian Mulamula¹

¹University of Dar es Salaam

²The University of Dodoma College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

³College of African Wildlife Management Mweka

August 26, 2023

Abstract

Harvest-based Initiatives (HBI) are local communities' responsible use of wildlife resources to raise living standards and reduce unlawful activities in protected areas. It includes fishing, beekeeping, local hunting, and other resources. Although it has the potential for conservation and supporting livelihoods, it is not well-known in some areas of Tanzania. This study examines the implementation and management of HBI in the Ugalla game reserve and the challenges it encounters to ensure the sustainable utilisation of wildlife resources. We gathered data from 141 trade union members using a semi-structured questionnaire pre-tested with 30 members. Data collected included general characteristics, criteria for joining a union, participation in HBI, and challenges faced. We performed a reliability analysis test and a validity check to ensure the questionnaires are trustworthy and the data collected was accurate. Descriptive data were analysed using percentages, and the Chi-square test (X²) and generalised linear model were used to determine differences and factors affecting community decision-making satisfaction. Qualitative data from professional and trade union leaders were analysed using content analysis. Results showed significant involvement of trade union members in decision-making and a strong correlation between membership and satisfaction. Challenges faced included corruption, closing fishing camps, poaching, change of game reserve managers, hunting companies, and awareness of game reserve laws. Local communities set conditions for HBI participation and exclude those without legal access to wildlife resources. If there are any issues regarding the practice, then they are addressed through negotiation between the trade union and the game management. Additionally, groups that share the same ethnicity tend to adhere to established norms, taboos, traditions, and historical practices in managing wildlife resources to sustain the well-being of their local communities. Therefore, regulations are needed for local communities' use of resources in protected areas for their livelihoods and support of conservation.

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