

Socio-economic determinants of participating in riverbank cultivation at the household level in the Upper Kafue River basin in Kitwe District, Zambia

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Abstract

Riverbank cultivation is a valuable agricultural practice that performs essential functions including socio-economic along the Upper Kafue River Basin in Kitwe, Zambia. Even though riverbanks are considered the most endangered ecosystems globally, they continue to face degradation through cultivation, putting pressure on land use. This study assessed socioeconomic determinants of participating in riverbank cultivation at the household level. Open-ended questionnaire was administered as the main data collection tool. Questionnaire survey data were collected from 244 households living in thirteen unplanned compounds. This was complemented with transect walks. Data was then analyzed using the logistic regression model to establish socio-economic drivers that significantly drove river and stream bank cultivation. The findings from the study show that riverbank cultivation promoted livelihoods of the poor, household head's age positively influenced riverbank cultivation, unprecedented levels of poverty, unemployment and education level strongly contributed to household's decision to cultivate on riverbanks for them to be food secure and generate income. Larger family households had higher demand for food consumption putting more pressure on riverbank cultivation for food provisions. Unclear land titles stood out as major challenge households faced, whilst male household heads had entitlement to agricultural land. Declining soil fertility led to low agriculture productivity driving households to cultivate riverbanks where soils were more productive throughout the year. The current land-use and agricultural policies are indifferent towards riverbank cultivation in Zambia, with the effect of encouraging the practice. The study recommends strengthening the enforcement of laws governing riverbank cultivation.

Keywords: Agriculture expansion Land use, Semi-arid environments, Sustainable livelihoods, Wetlands