



## **Impacts of Community-Based Forest Management on Governance in Selela Village Forest Reserve, Monduli District, Tanzania**

**<sup>1</sup>G.E. Mbeyale, <sup>2</sup>N.M. Dugilo, and <sup>3</sup>L.P. Lusambo**

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Forest Resource Assessment & Management  
Sokoine University of Agriculture*

*<sup>2</sup>Catchment Forest Project, Monduli*

*<sup>3</sup>Department of Forest & Environmental Economics  
Sokoine University of Agriculture*

*Correspondence: [mbeyale@sua.ac.tz](mailto:mbeyale@sua.ac.tz)*

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is based on the analysis of the impacts of Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) on forest governance in the western part of Monduli District in Tanzania. The objective was to assess the impacts of CBFM on accountability, transparency, power relations and equitability. Primary data collection involved use of PRA techniques, governance assessment and mapping, multi-stakeholder analysis, checklists, structured questionnaire, and participant observation. Secondary sources such as government reports were used. Microsoft excel and SPSS software were used to analyze quantitative data. Content and Structural-Functional Analytical tools were applied on qualitative data. A logistic regression analysis model was developed to identify socio-economic factors, influencing performance of institutions in Selela Village Forest Reserve. Accountability, transparency, and equitability statistically ( $p < 0.05$ ), increased the odds of good governance by factors of 5.575, 0.325 and 3.036 respectively. The findings revealed poor transparency in revenue collection and administration, which is attributed to an “elite capture”, which is a formation of a new “social class” of corrupt and irresponsible elites. Strategic, institutional and structural powers were observed in the study area. The study concluded that CBFM has negative impact on forest governance; and recommended periodic assessment of CBFM activities.

**Key words:** Community-Based Forest Management – accountability – transparency - equitability - power relations - Tanzania.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background information**

During the last four decades Tanzania like many other African countries has experienced several macro and sectoral policy changes in which various forest management institutions emerged, either by design or as a necessity, determining both the management of forests and livelihoods of forest resource users and other stakeholders. These changes have affected the management of renewable resources particularly forest resources. The changes include political, socio-economic and cultural. The changes necessitated reforming of the previous forest property and management regime, encourages and rewarding active participation of communities, NGOs (both local and international) and private enterprises in sustainable forest management. In Tanzania, Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) is one of the institutional arrangements for operationalizing Participatory Forest Management (PFM) and implementing the national forest policy (URT 1998). CBFM is fundamentally based on the devolution of responsibilities, rights and authority from the state to local communities (Mallik 2000, Larson 2005, URT 1998).



There has been a long history of CBFM in Tanzania. CBFM in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa has been well adopted and documented over the past two decades (Blomley and Iddi 2009, Richards *et al.* 2009). Of the estimated 33million hectares of forest land in Tanzania, 57% (around 19 million hectares) is largely unprotected and lies outside government forest reserves (URT 2001). In the mid-1990s a number of pilot activities were started in northern and western Tanzania, which for the first time allowed the transfer of forest ownership and management responsibilities from central to village governments. Following these successfully and well-documented PFM pilot projects (Wily 1997); other forest areas were brought under community based forest management. Notable examples include the Duru-Haitemba in Manyara region, Mgori in Singida region and part of South Ruvu Forest Reserve in Coast region (Wily and Mbaya 2001, Bromley and Iddi 2009). To-date, Tanzania has one of the most advanced community forestry jurisdictions in Africa as reflected in policy, law and practice (Wily 2000, MNRT 2020).

Forest policy URT (1998) provides incentives for the sustainable management of unreserved forests by village governments, for instance following this legal devolution of rights and responsibility to village governments, villages can harvest timber and forest products, collect and retain revenue accrued from the forest as an incentive to them. Devolution of power to villagers engaged villagers in formulating and use of village bylaws, planning and decision making in forest management (Kajembe *et al.* 2004). Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) approach is believed to be a proper way forward for alleviating pressure in forest reserves. It is generally premised to improve forest governance, forest stock and livelihood of the surrounding communities. However, despite the fact that CBFM has been adopted for more than 3 decades, there are relatively few qualitative and quantitative studies for justifying CBFM as an appropriate

management option for improving the conditions of forest governance for. Governance is an evolving concept whose basic elements are widely recognized although its bounds and scope remain contested. While academic debates continue, the concept is being shaped and operationally defined through various initiatives using indicators to measure, monitor and assess governance at different levels. It was therefore worth analyzing the impacts of community based forest management on the forest governance of local population at Selela Village Land Forest Reserve (SVFR) in order to answer the question whether CBFM has impact on forest governance or not.

The main aim of this study was to assess the impacts of CBFM on forest governance at SVFR. Specific objectives include: To assess the impacts of CBFM on accountability, transparency, equitability at SVFR and the embedded power relations. SVFR is a unique habitat that host various plants, animals and high catchment values to which the adjacent communities cannot live without. The forest contains remarkable levels of biodiversity importance. In addition, this forest is a corridor for wild animals from Ngorongoro Conservation Area to Manyara National Park.

### **Governance**

Kajembe (2006) defined governance of forest resources as the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say in the management of forest resources. Oyono (2002) argued that the democratic decentralization of forest resource management is a lever for good governance and for sustainable development. This means that, if the powers transferred by the state through decentralization are used democratically at the local level, environmental justice should emerge and in turn, should generate a high sense of ecological responsibility at the community



level. If on the other hand, local governance is detrimental there is environmental injustice, local communities will contribute to the accelerated and irreversible degradation of resources.

UNDP (1997, 2004) shows that governance is good when it subscribes to the following nine characteristics: participation, strategic vision, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity building, effectiveness & efficiency and accountability. Accountability is imperative to make public officials answerable and responsive to the entity from which they derive their authority. This requires establishing criteria to measure the performance of public officials. Transparency refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations and decisions. Thus, it both complements and reinforces predictability. However, it is important to scrutinize broader governance issues affecting power relationship between higher state officials and local village government.

### **Power relations**

Power relations are analyzed in the context of institutions, practices and organizations. Multi-stakeholders' analysis is carried out to analyze the differences in interests and power relations, with an intention to identifying who is affected by whom and who can influence the current patterns of forest resource management and conflicts. With reference to the analysis of power relations by various authors (Rath 1997, Nuijten 2005, Mafo 2006, NRC 2000), three categories of power relations rooted in people's livelihood has been analyzed and discussed. The categories include strategic, government or institutional and domination or structural power (Mbeyale 2009). UN (2004) commented that evolving institutions should be able to deal with power dynamics within communities and guarantee accountability and transparency for them to gain legitimacy among local people. Ultimately the challenge is to ensure that

decentralized authority is more accountable and transparent than centralized authority has been.

### **Institutional change in forest management**

Institutions are referred as the rules of the game in a society, stable, valued, and recurring pattern of behavior and include procedures that shape how people act, their status or legitimacy (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 1992). In consequence they structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social or economic. Institutions may be formal or informal: where formal institutions stipulate rules such as constitutions, laws and property rights, while informal institutions are generally agreed upon arrangements or rules of behaviour such as sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct (North 1991). Experience in Tanzania has revealed that moves towards decentralization can be explained as the experience-induced outcome of failed centralised management over forest resources and evidence of worsening poverty–environment linkages (Kajembe and Kessy 1999). In this context, CBFM is expected to improve poverty – environment linkages through empowerment of local institutions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Description of the study area**

Selela Village Forest Reserve is under the management of two villages namely Selela and Losirwa which are adjacent to the forest reserve. They are located in Monduli District (about 120 km in the western part from Monduli town), Arusha Region. Selela Village Forest Reserve lies between 3°10' N and 3°20'S and between 36° 00E and 35°50'W, with an altitude of 600m above sea level. SVFR was selected because of its importance and uniqueness. SVFR is low-land high forest which represents unique habitats that host various plants, animals and high catchment values to which the



adjacent communities cannot live without. The forest contains remarkable levels of biodiversity importance. In addition, this forest is a corridor for wild animals from Ngorongoro Conservation area to Manyara National Park. The reserve covers 1190 ha and has been under Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) scheme since 1994. Rainfall pattern in the area is of semi-arid to sub-humid climate and the annual rainfall ranges between 700 and 800mm.

### **Data collection and analysis**

Data was collected using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, governance assessments, mapping and multi stakeholders' analysis. In this case PRA was useful as the study was done in a rural setting where it was necessary to capture data from the community members, from those with formal education and those who never attended formal education and across gender. Under such an environment PRA has been found to be a powerful tool particularly for socio-economic data type (Mbeyale 2009).

### **Governance assessment**

Governance assessment was done by using governance indicators which was developed the researchers based on the World Resources Institute protocol on assessing forest governance (Davis *et. al*, 2013). The developed indicators include transparency, accountability, power relations and equity. These indicators measured local governance in terms of performance and institutional quality. Twenty respondents from each village were selected. The criteria for the selection was based on their level of participation in the forest management e.g. in meetings, forest patrols and membership in village natural resources committee. Each respondent was asked to give a mark from 0 to 20 for each indicator. The scores were summed up for each indicator and then divided by 20, hence obtaining an average score for each indicator.

### **Governance mapping**

Governance mapping in this study was based on the presence of local community decision-making and indicators of good governance (Accountability, transparent, power relations and equity). This method used visual aids such as maps, diagrams, charts constructed by a group of community members that allowed mutual sharing of information. The participants were able to see from one point to another, and discussed, checking and corrected each other and reached a consensus. This method comprised of members of a community (about 15 to 20 people in order to have a good control of the group by the researcher). The group had drawn a map of their village and inserts forest resources at their respective positions and marked potential conflict areas. There were a balance of gender and age in order to tap as much experience as possible from different age groups and gender with reference to forest governance and resource utilization, management, access and degradation. These maps were used as a tool for group discussion in the village and with government officials in discussions mainly on, transparency, accountability, power relations and equitable resources utilization, planning, and accessibility by local communities.

Moreover, multi- stakeholders' analysis was carried out to examine power relations. In this study, stakeholders refer to persons, groups and organizations that are found to be active players and interest in the system. They can be categorized into resource users (those who are using the resource for either subsistence or for profit making), regulators (those organizations found regulating resource utilization such as the central and local government officials) and facilitators; those found facilitating the communities in different ways mainly Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

Secondary sources such as government reports were used. Data collected through PRA techniques were analysed with the help of local communities in the PRA groups.



Microsoft excels and SPSS software were used to analyze quantitative data. Content and Structural-Functional Analytical tools were applied on qualitative data. A logistic regression analysis model was developed to identify socio-economic factors, influencing performance of institutions in SVFR. Two-tailed t-test, chi square test at 5% level of significance was used to test if there was a significance change on governance of local communities as impacted by CBFM between year 2004/05 and 2007/08.  $H_0$  was rejected where  $P > 0.05$ .

### ***Analysis of the impacts of CBFM on forest governance***

About 30-40 factors were identified to affect the performance of common-pool resources in particular forest management regime (Davis *et. al* 2013). Accountability, transparency and equity are wide terms. However not all of the factors are independent to each other. Some of them are empirically correlated. According to Agrawal (2001) currently there is no reliable way of assessing the degree of correlation among these and other variables that have emerged as important. Moreover, because the effect of some variables and interaction effects among variables may also affect outcomes. Any careful analysis of sustainability of the commons needs to incorporate interaction effect among variables. In this case the researcher needed to explicitly take into account the relevant variables that might affect success then the number of selected cases must be larger than the number of variables.

Taking these factors into consideration the factors affecting the performance of local institutions under study were analysed by developing a logistic model to test the likelihood of governance factors which affect the performance of local institutions. Institutional performance as a dependent variable was determined by developing a cooperative index as the measure of community under study to participate in cooperative management of SVFR. Composite index is a multi-variance index

comprising of five variables each having score of 1 for presence or score of 0 for absence (Farrugia 2007).

Composite index

#### **Accountability**

- disposal of powers and duties
- Existence of rules governing use of forest resources
- local enforcement of the rules
- possession of adequate and quality of knowledge regarding what is at stake.
- who is responsible and how responsibilities can be made accountable.

(Clearly demarcated line of responsibility)

#### **Transparent**

- Openness (free flow of information)
- Actions and decision-making process are open to scrutiny of others
- avenue to claim accountability are accessible to all
- Reporting, audited accounting,
- existence of ledgers, receipts books (books of accounts).

#### **Equity**

- Legal frameworks are fair and enforced impartially
- The governing mechanisms (e.g., laws, policies conflict resolution forums, funding opportunities, etc.) distribute equitably the costs and benefits derived from conservation
- Public service promotions are merit-based
- Fair avenues for conflict management, non-discriminatory remedy to justice
- Equal access rights to forest resources.

Total score for each variable is 5.

Performance of local institution = f (accountability, transparency and equity).

The logistic regression model was developed to test factors affecting the performance of local institutions.



The logistic regression model specification was of the form,

$$\frac{\text{Ln}p(Y_i=1)}{1-p(Y_i=1)} = \beta_0 + \sum \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \sum \beta_k X_k \dots (1)$$

Where:

- $Y_i$  = dependent variable, performance of local institutions;
- $X_1 \dots X_k$  = independent variables ( $X_1$  = Accountability;  $X_2$  = Transparency;  $X_3$  = Equitability;  $X_4$  strength of local leaders);
- $\beta_0$  = Constant term of the model without the independent variables;
- $\beta_1$  to  $\beta_k$  = Coefficient of independent variables showing marginal effect (positive or negative) of the unit change in the independent variables on dependent variables and these were used in developing prediction equations on performance of local institution.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Impact of CBFM on forest governance

**Table 1: Factors influencing performance of institutions in forest management of SVFR.**

Variables	$\beta$	S.E.	Wald	df	sig.	Exp( $\beta$ ) (odd) (ratio)
Accountability	1.718	0.667	3.207	1	0.164	5.575 NS
Transparency	1.123	0.627	6.644	1	0.73	0.325 NS
Equitable distribution of resource	1.111	0.451	6.063	1	0.014	3.036 *
Constant	-18.229	4.193	18.905	1	0.002	0.05

#### Accountability

Accountability after the introduction of CBFM showed positive regression coefficient value of 1.718 and the odds ratio of 5.575 (Table 1). These results indicate that the likelihood of good governance in CBFM increases by a factor of 5.575 for every unit change. This implies that increase in accountability increase people's participation in the management activities and environmental justice arises. Increase in odds ratio of participation in CBFM activities was not statistically significance ( $p=0.164$ ). The results for accountability in Table 1 shows that the factor has the highest multiplicative factor as compared to other factors. The size of the magnitude of the regression coefficient shows how important

#### Factors influencing good governance (performance of institutions) in forest management of SVFR

Governance factors observed to influence good governance under CBFM include accountability, transparency and equitability. Table 1 summarises logistic regression results for the study villages. Logistic regression model was found to fit on the data significantly with P value ( $P=0.002$ ) for a constant (Table 1). The model Chi-square = 190.371 was significant ( $P<0.05$ ) indicating that the independent variables could explain well the dependent variables. The -2 log likelihood (-2LL) values of 115.10 also implied the model fitted the data well. The overall percentage of the correct predictions was 90% which show better goodness of fit; moreover, insignificant factors were removed from the prediction.

accountability is in this case that if it changes being positively correlated could significantly improve the overall forest governance.

Table 2 summarizes survey results for assessment of the impact of CBFM on forest governance for the study villages. Discussion with respondents indicated that prior to the establishment of CBFM in Selela, the district forest authority organized awareness creation campaigns to assure that villagers understood the meaning of CBFM as indicated by 92% (Table 2) of respondents. The communities adjacent to SVFR are also aware that Village Natural Resources Committee members (VNRCs) are accountable to the communities.



**Table 2: Impact of CBFM on forest accountability, transparency and equitability.**

Variables	Village			Chi( $\chi^2$ )	P value	
	Selela n=24	Losirwa n=26	All villages n=50			
<b>Transparency:</b>						
Before CBFM	Medium	0.0(0)	3.8(1)	(2(1)	1.327	P = 0.520
	Low	100(24)	96.2(25)	74(37)		
After CBFM	Medium	20.8(5)	30.8(8)	26(13)	0.646	p = 0.422
	Low	79.2(19)	(69.2(18)	74(37)		
<b>Accountability:</b>						
Before CBFM	Medium	0.0(0)	3.8(1)	2(1)	4.100	p = 0.129
	Low	100(24)	88.5(23)	94(49)		
After CBFM	High	8.3(2)	0.0 (0)	4(2)	5.552	P = 0.136
	Medium	91.7(22)	92.3(24)	92(46)		
	Low	0 (0)	3.8(1)	2(1)		
<b>Power relations</b>						
Before CBFM	Medium	8.3(2)	3.8(1)	6(3)	0.451	p = 0.502
	Low	91.7(22)	96.2(25)	94(47)		
After CBFM	High	25(6)	7.7(2)	16(8)	4.011	p = 0.135
	Medium	75(18)	88.5(23)	82(41)		
	Low	0.0(0)	3.8(1)	2(1)		
<b>Equitable distribution</b>						
Before CBFM	High	4.2(1)	0.0(0)	1 (2)	1.490	p = 0.222
	Low	95.8(23)	98(26)	98(49)		
After CBFM	High	69.2(18)	20.8(5)	46(23)	9.900	p = 0.000***
	Medium	30.8(8)	79.2(19)	54(27)		

**Key:** Number in parentheses denotes frequency

The study revealed further that VNRCs have the responsibility to take care of the forests within their jurisdiction. These committees exist in each village, but they have stopped patrolling and not paying attention to the forest due to a number of reasons including: First, village chairman and few councilors are grazing illegally inside the forest, in many cases run into conflict with those VNRC members who seems to adhere to the regulations. In general, the village chair and the councilors are relatively higher in the village administrative hierarchy and therefore they have more institutional powers as compared to the VNRC, hence the VNRCs have less decision making power and cannot deal with them such cases. Secondly there is no incentive on the part of the committee members to be actively involved since those who are patrolling the forest are not remunerated for the work and time spent in the forest. Thirdly, the committee members are afraid to ruin their relationship with the rest of the communities' leaders. Fourth, Maasai communities always put more value on their livestock than on any

other thing, so they are ready to risk their lives by fighting with the VNRC members or any group of people involved in patrolling the forest for the sake of their livestock.

The study also revealed that 80% of the respondents interviewed admitted that there was illegal grazing in the forest reserve. Furthermore, observation on the ground and discussion with the villagers as well as transect walks conducted in the area, demonstrated that grazing has been rampant all over the forest including in the Catchment areas as a result the ecological functions of the forest especially hydrology has been gradually deteriorating. For instance, it has been observed that water lodged species like *Cyperus ajax* have started to become extinct. Similarly, irregular water flow has been observed too. The plausible explanation of haphazard grazing is due to the fact that there is no sustainable land use plan and forest management plan to show where to graze and places for forest conservation.

Furthermore, in the study forest, rampant grazing and encroachment were observed to



have major influence on the forest species since species like *Cyperus ajax* has started to disappear. Illegal grazing has been observed in 12 plots out of 28 plots which is equivalent to 42.9% of the area surveyed. Moreover, 150m inside the forest from the boundary were turned into rice farms and 48% of the interviewed respondents admitted that there are irregular water flows. Such impacts on the forest resources may result into decline in forest area, deterioration of forest structure, ecological function of the forest and loss of

gene pool. Similar observation was reported by Munishi *et al.* (2002). Consequently, if this situation continues without any measures being taken the ecological function of this forest will be jeopardized. Similarly, the VNRC has no decision making powers as reported by 60% of the interviewed respondents. If the powers transferred by the state to low level of authority are not used democratically, environmental injustice emerges. Plate 1 shows rampant grazing in SVFR.



**Plate 1: Illegal Grazing in Selela Village Land Forest Reserve**

### **Transparency**

The study results demonstrate that CBFM transparency has a positive regression coefficient value of 1.123 and the odds ratio of 0.325 (Table 1). These results indicate that the likelihood of good governance in CBFM increases by a factor of 0.325 for every unit change in this variable. This implies that increase in transparency increases the likelihood of good governance and participation in the management of SVFR and environmental justice arises. Increase in odds ratio of good governance was not statistically significance ( $p= 0.073$ ). Similarly, the results from governance mapping and assessment demonstrate that transparency is below average as indicated

by 74% of the respondents interviewed (Table 2). These results imply that there improvement in terms of transparency before and after CBFM is insignificant.

Transparency is built on the free flow of information. The processes, institutions and information should be directly accessible to those concerned with. Moreover, enough information should be provided to understand and monitor institutions and access to audited accounting. However, this is not the case in Selela. There are two investors namely Intercons and Adventure Sport and Leisure dealing with hunting and photographing in SVFR. Furthermore, each year about 43 to 45 tourists were coming in to enjoy the scenery of the forest. Current





laws prescribe that 20% of the camping fees should go to the community conservation fund and the investors must also assist in development projects at the village level with the participation of local communities. Tourists were paying 10 USD per person per night to the villages. Local people affirm that money is being paid to the village as indicated by 90% of the respondents interviewed.

Unfortunately, villagers are not aware of how much revenue accrued from the forest, village leaders and village natural resource committee (VNRC) do not have ledgers to report on revenue and number of tourists visiting the forest per season. All these transactions are not known to the villagers. Furthermore, some members of VNRC also are not aware of how much money was generated from the forest and how much is supposed to go back to the management activities of the forest. Key informants informed the researcher that village chairman and few village councilors control all the transactions related to ecotourism activities as well as revenue received from the investors. Moreover, the decision-making power has also been taken over by these few people. Due to lack of transparency in the exercise of power by the existing village leaders, the village council and VNRC in turn failed to follow government procedures for transparent revenue administration. The absence of accounting procedures such as receipts and payment vouchers make it difficult to accurately assess the situation. But the analysis of conflicting speeches, review of documents in different offices and observation enabled the researcher to reconstruct the reality.

The weakness of the Village Natural Resources Committees (VNRC) and village government led to the formation of a new "social class" of corrupt and irresponsible elites. These leaders who see themselves as authorities because of their institutional power have generated a social class of irresponsible elites. This has been observed to have negative impacts in the SVFR,

because it built a sense of mistrust and discourages other community members to participate in the forest management. It should be noted that, in general the lack of transparency in revenue management has generated conflicts among individuals and groups, which made the community to design strategies to have illegal access to forest resources. This shows negative impact in forest governance. Oyono (2006) reported similar observation in Congo and in Cameroon.

According to UNDP (1997) transparency means sharing information and acting in an open manner and it allows stakeholders to gather information that may be critical to uncovering abuses and defending their interests. Transparent systems have clear procedures for public decision-making and open channels of communication between stakeholders and officials, and make a wide range of information accessible.

### ***Equitability***

Equitability after CBFM has positive regression coefficient value of 1.111 and the odds ratio of 3.036 (Table 1). These results indicate that the likelihood of good governance increases by a factor of 3.036 for every unit change in this variable. Besides the results was statistically significant ( $p=0.014$ ). Furthermore the results in Table 2 indicate that equity scored higher level of good governance than other variables. This was also supported by 69.2% of the respondents who said equity after CBFM was high than before (Table 2). These results indicate that there was improvement in terms of equity with respect to distribution/sharing of benefits under CBFM. Moreover, the results were statistically significant ( $p=0.0001$ ).

The plausible explanation is that after CBFM the two villages were receiving revenues accrued from the forest. Likewise, observations showed Selela village has established camping site in the forest which also generates some income. In addition, tourists coming to SVFR are paying revenue



to the villages. For the time being one secondary school and two primary schools are in place. For the two schools the investors contributed 25 million TAS. and income generated from tourist for three years was about 3700 US dollars.

Furthermore, under this arrangement, villagers take full ownership and management responsibility. Likewise, the established social services cut across gender. Every villager/member of the community is free to access the resources in the forest so long as she/he follows the laid down procedures. This acts as a motivation to the communities has major positive impacts in the peoples' participation in forest management. Observations indicated that conservation activities are being undertaken by both men and women in a democratic way and one third of VNRC members are women. VNRC committees have 15 members each. Equity in forest resources management entails fair sharing of information among the parties, the chances for everyone to participate in discussion and settle agreements that are understood and acceptable by all (e.g. the sharing of resources, management benefits and responsibility) (Grazia 2003).

Similar studies related to forest governance in participatory forest management have indicated elite capture, poor accountability, transparency and poor distribution of benefits (Amanzi 2020, Mbeyale 2009, Blomley and Iddi 2009, Ostrom 1990, Ostrom 1992). There are many reasons which are attributed to the poor forest governance in CBFM but the most important ones are attributed to the fact that whenever the forest yield substantial flow of benefit, the more robust monitoring particularly by external observers is needed to deal with corruption and possibility of elite capture or patron-client relationship among the locals and external agents who can jeopardize the governance systems and resources sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Despite the fact that there have been some efforts to improve forest governance through implementation of Participatory Forest Management instead of centralized management system particularly through CBFM, it appears that CBFM has both negatively and positively impacted on forest governance. This also shows that CBFM is not a panacea to redress all the forest governance challenges. There are always some flaws that need strategic intervention. The factors that have shown negatively impacted on governance are accountability and transparency. Accountability with the highest multiplicative factor (5.575) indicating how important the fact is in terms of redressing the forest governance. This shows that accountability at SVFR need close scrutiny, monitoring and strategic actions. Though it appears that the community is aware of their role and how they should make the VNRC accountable but the committee is weak and cannot execute their function which is attributed to the presence of elite capture, and rampant corruption. Since SVFR is strategically located with many potentials and resources flows, the management is highly contested with several resource users with competing and incompatible interest. This will definitely make accountability difficult resulting into poor governance and resources degradation. The accountability problems are highly connected with the transparency issues. The presence of elite capture definitely exacerbates poor transparency. The results for equitable distribution of resources show that CBFM has some positive impact as there are reasonable flows of financial and physical resources to the village community. However due to poor transparency it is apparent that the community is not getting a fair share of the resources that could be distributed to them.



## Recommendations

There is a need for external stakeholders particularly the district officers and participating NGOs if any to intervene in mediating the relationship among local resource users with incompatible and conflicting interests to be able to restore forest governance in its proper position for sustainable forest management in order to achieve the intended goal for implementing CBFM which are improve forest governance, forest stock and livelihood of the surrounding communities.

The study recommended periodic assessment of CBFM activities. The assessment can monitor the trend on the change of forest governance and create workable environment that welcome other CBFM actors to take their responsibility. This can help in checking inadequacy of devolution of the responsibilities, rights and authority from the state to local communities in order to have significant positive impact on governance.

Community- Based Forest Management should improve forest governance in management of forest resource base in SVFR through improved accountability and transparency. Moreover, VNRC need to be empowered and educated so as to know their right and responsibilities under CBFM and should ensure every villager is fully involved in the management of the forest reserve under CBFM.

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