



Impact of Community Forest Management on Women's Livelihoods in Rural Rwanda: A Survey Study

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Abstract

Community forests in Rwanda have been established as part of conservation efforts, but their impact on local livelihoods, particularly for women, remains underexplored. A mixed-method survey approach was employed, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. The sample included 200 women from 10 randomly selected villages across Rwanda's rural areas. Women reported increased access to non-timber forest products (NTFPs) as a significant positive outcome of community forest management, contributing an average income increase of 35% compared to pre-management levels. However, challenges such as limited market access and lack of education on NTFP value remained. Community forest management has had mixed effects on women's livelihoods in rural Rwanda, with notable improvements in income from NTFPs but persistent issues that require targeted interventions. Policy-makers should prioritise enhancing market infrastructure for NTFPs and providing education on their economic value to support sustainable development. community forest management, women's livelihoods, non-timber forest products, rural Rwanda

Keywords: *Community forests, Rwanda, Participatory GIS, Gender equity, Community participation, Forest management, Rural development*

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