



Firewood Collection Practices and Forest Conservation in Ethiopian Villages: A Qualitative Assessment of Sustainable Programmes Over Five Years

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Abstract

Firewood collection is a critical resource for cooking and heating in rural Ethiopian villages, yet it poses significant environmental challenges to forest conservation. The research employed semi-structured interviews and participatory observations among villagers to understand practices, perceptions, and challenges related to firewood collection and conservation efforts. A notable theme emerged regarding the adaptation of traditional gathering methods by village members towards more sustainable techniques, with a significant reduction in illegal logging activities observed over time. The findings suggest that community-led initiatives can effectively promote sustainable forest management through adaptive firewood collection practices. Policy makers should support and incentivize local communities to continue implementing these innovative conservation strategies for long-term environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Ethiopia, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Ethnography, Community Forestry, Participatory Action Research, Conservation Ethics, Sustainable Development Principles*

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