

Beyond Superstition: Rainmaking Rituals as Embodied Indigenous Knowledge for Climate Adaptation in Southern Zambia

M, u, k, u, k, a, B, a, n, d, a, ,, C, h, i, l, u, f, y, a, M, w, a, n, s, a

| Abstract

Background: A significant research gap persists within the Arts & Humanities regarding the role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in

climate adaptation. This perspective focuses on rainmaking rituals as a critical, yet often marginalised, form of embodied knowledge for agricultural communities in Southern Zambia, considering the period from 2021 to 2026. Purpose and objectives: This perspective piece aims to clarify key conceptual debates, move beyond reductive 'superstition' narratives, and identify the practical implications of these rituals for community-based adaptation. It seeks to outline a focused agenda for future interdisciplinary scholarship and informed policy engagement. Methodology: The analysis employs a qualitative, conceptual methodology, synthesising insights from recent scholarly literature, policy documents, and field reports from Southern Zambia published between 2021 and 2026. Key insights: Rainmaking rituals are reconceptualised as complex, embodied systems of ecological observation, social cohesion, and adaptive practice. They constitute a lived epistemology that guides agricultural timing, seed selection, and communal labour organisation in response to climatic variability, offering a vital complement to scientific forecasting. Conclusion: The paper concludes that effective climate adaptation in Southern Zambia requires context-specific approaches which take seriously the empirical foundations of indigenous ritual practice. Future research must engage more deeply with the lived experience and environmental logic embedded within these systems. Recommendations: Scholars should pursue collaborative, longitudinal ethnographic research to document the specific ecological indicators and decision-making processes within rainmaking practices. Policymakers should create formal mechanisms to integrate such embodied indigenous knowledge into local and national climate

adaptation strategies. Key words: Indigenous Knowledge Systems, climate adaptation, rainmaking rituals, Zambia, embodied knowledge, Arts & Humanities Contribution statement: This perspective provides a structured conceptual analysis that reframes rainmaking rituals as embodied indigenous knowledge, proposing a clearer agenda for scholarly and policy engagement to support climate adaptation in Southern Zambia.
