



# Community Engagement in Natural Resources Management: A Review of Community-Based Natural Resources Management to Identify its Opportunities and Challenges in Tanzania

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## ABSTRACT.

In Tanzania and most other African nations, the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) method has gained widespread support from decision-makers and national leaders as a key component of natural resources management. Nonetheless, much study is required to smooth the application of this bottom-up approach. The extent to which CBNRM is implemented in Tanzania is reviewed in this study by outlining an understanding of the approach and highlighting its prospects and difficulties based on the literature reviews and three case studies chosen from Tanzania. The findings showed that the CBNRM approach has several advantages that provide community members a sense of agency and accountability which results in more successful natural resources conservation. This paper recommends Tanzania government to put much emphasize on empower CBNRM by create awareness among local community so as to overcome identified challenges on its performance.

**Keywords:** *Community Based Natural resource Management, Conservation and local communities*

## 1.0 Background information

Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) has become an important tactic in Tanzania's attempts to promote sustainable development and conservation. Many CBNRM programs that support local involvement and management have focused on the nation's different ecosystems, such as forests, animal reserves, and coastal regions (Sostenes, 2020). Research from Tanzania, like that done by Reid, (2016) emphasizes the value of community participation in natural resource management and shows how it can promote both ecology and social systems as the conservation tool.

Tanzania confronts several obstacles in putting CBNRM into practice, despite its inherent promise, effective institutional frameworks and ambiguous property rights are only two examples of governance challenges that have been well reported as barriers to the success of CBNRM programs (McKinley et al., 2017). Also Community-led conservation initiatives are further hindered by socioeconomic constraints such poverty, disputes over land ownership, and restricted access to resources and markets (Milupi et al., 2017). These difficulties draw attention to how complicated CBNRM is in Tanzania and emphasize the necessity of all-encompassing strategies that take into account both the ecological and socioeconomic aspects of the problem. But also Tanzania's CBNRM programs provide a number of chances to improve local livelihoods and conservation results despite of these challenges. The promise of community-based methods to ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation is demonstrated by Poncian and Jose (2019), especially in terms of encouraging sustainable resource use and reducing conflicts between humans and animals. Furthermore, research by Tarimo and Olotu (2020) emphasizes how CBNRM uses ecotourism and sustainable agriculture to create jobs and revenue.

For the success of Community Based Natural Resources Management approach in Tanzania a guidance of policies and practices thorough analysis of CBNRM is necessary, given the intricate interaction between possibilities and obstacles (Kyessi, 2019). Therefore this review seeks to offer insights and add knowledge into practical approaches for improving community engagement, correcting governance deficiencies, and optimizing the socio-economic advantages of CBNRM programs by combining data from a variety of research. In addition, it looks for best practices and important takeaways from Tanzania's current CBNRM initiatives. This will help shape future policy developments and interventions that support more equitable and sustainable approaches to natural resource management. Tanzania may get closer to accomplishing its development and conservation objectives while maintaining the welfare of its people and ecosystems with the help of such an extensive assessment.

### ***1.1 Understanding Community Based Natural Resources Management in Tanzania***

In Tanzania, Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) is a decentralized approach to sustainable development and conservation that prioritizes local people in natural resource management decision-making (Nyangoko et al., 2022). Communities are enabled in this approach to manage and make use of the ecosystems around them in a way that strikes a balance between ecological preservation and socioeconomic need, for the promotion of community ownership and management of natural resources, CBNRM projects in Tanzania often entail cooperative efforts involving local communities and other stakeholders, Jacob and Brockington (2020).

The study by Phelan *et al.*, (2020) noted that CBNRM acknowledges the inextricable connection between livelihoods and conservation through active community participation in natural resource management choices. CBNRM improve socioeconomic well-being and environmental sustainability and recognizes the essential role that communities play in maintaining their ecosystems while simultaneously noting that these resources are necessary for communities to be able to support themselves. CBNRM aims to enhance regional livelihoods while maintaining ecosystem integrity and biodiversity through sustainable agriculture, community-based ecotourism, and the ethical harvesting of non-timber forest products (Muttaqin *et al.*, 2019), as well as through community capacity building, information sharing, and participatory procedures.

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## **2.0 Methodology**

This paper is based on a thorough analysis of secondary data that includes a broad range of sources, including books, journals, conference reports, seminar papers, published and unpublished literature, government department reports, and policy documents. The study uses a qualitative research approach and focuses especially on explaining and characterizing the data that was gathered. The data was examined using thematic analysis method, with the main objective being to evaluate opportunities and challenges that facing Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) as a natural resource management approach. In addition three cases practice Community Based Natural Resource Management in Tanzanian were examined to further enhance and improve our comprehension of the challenges and opportunities of Community-Based Natural Resources Management.

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## **3.0 Results and Discussion.**

### ***3.1 Selected Case Studies on the opportunities and challenges of Community Based Natural Resources Management Practices in Tanzania***

Tanzania illustrates several best practices in community resource management, showcasing the successful integration of environmental sustainability, social engagement, and economic prosperity despite of the challenges facing this. The following are case studies to highlight this scenario.

#### *Case study 1: Community-based marine conservation and fisheries management*

Initiatives that are community-based and aimed towards the conservation of marine life have flourished in coastal villages in Tanzania, such as Pangani. By incorporating local fisher folk in decision-making and patrols, overfishing can be reduced, which in turn leads to increased fish populations and better reef health. These activities help reduce the amount of pressure that is placed on marine resources by empowering communities through education and other means of subsistence. This integrative strategy helps to maintain marine ecosystems while also improving the wellbeing of the population.

#### *Case study 2: Sustainable community based natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods.*

The Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT) in northern Tanzania is a model of sustainable community-based natural resource management and through promotion of sustainable livelihoods. Traditionally, pastoralist, agro-pastoralist, and hunter-gatherer communities have inhabited the semiarid and arid regions, employing sustainable land management practices that sustain both their own livelihoods and local wildlife. However, challenges such as limited essential services, threats of land alienation, and resource degradation undermine the resilience of these resource-dependent livelihoods. People are empowered to secure their natural resource and land rights, thus enhancing their livelihoods. This empowerment represents a fundamental step toward a more equitable and sustainable society. Ultimately, improved livelihoods, secured land and natural resource rights, and practiced sustainable resource management are sustainably endured.

#### *Case study 3: Ecotourism and community development*

Ecotourism has emerged as a key driver of economic growth and societal improvement in the Maasai communities of northern Tanzania. Initiatives such as the Ngorongoro Conservation Area empower Maasai villagers by providing work possibilities 'an economic benefit', while also promoting the conservation of wildlife and the preservation of cultural traditions 'environmental and social benefits'. Creating a cycle of sustainable development that is to the advantage of both the natural environment and the Maasai communities, tourism revenue helps in funding educational and health services.

#### ***3.1.1 Lesson learn from case studies***

The effectiveness of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in resource management is evident in three case studies. Both highlight the significance of empowering local communities with decision-making authority over natural resources, underscoring CBNRM's role in poverty reduction through collaborative regulatory frameworks. However, a distinction arises in the financial resources allocated for successful management of these community resources as well as disputes over land tenure and resource rights.

### **3.2 Opportunities of Community Based Natural Resources Management in Tanzania**

Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) presents several benefits. It combines the objectives of conservation with the generation of economic prospects for rural populations. This synchronization aligns with three core beliefs: firstly, that local community is naturally more adept at preserving natural resources; secondly, that individuals will participate in conservation endeavors only if the advantages surpass the costs involved; and thirdly, that people are more likely to conserve resources that directly affect their well-being (Mawi and Mashene 2020).

In Tanzania, Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programs produce a variety of advantages, showcasing their vital contribution to promoting sustainable development and conservation endeavors by empowering local communities and engaging them in decision-making processes concerning natural resource management. This empowerment cultivates a feeling of ownership and accountability among community members, resulting in enhanced conservation methods and increased resilience to environmental adversities (Poncian and Jose, 2019).

Through a variety of livelihood options, CBNRM helps to reduce poverty and promote economic empowerment in rural communities. CBNRM projects create revenue and job possibilities through programs including sustainable agriculture, community-based ecotourism, and the sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products. This enhances the socioeconomic well-being of the local populace. (Frey *et al.*, 2021).

Also in Tanzania, CBNRM is essential to ecosystem management and biodiversity protection. CBNRM programs contribute to the overall health and resilience of ecosystems throughout the nation by preserving biodiversity, restoring damaged ecosystems, and protecting important habitats by fusing traditional knowledge with contemporary conservation strategies. (Kegamba *et al.*, 2022).

By encouraging adaptive and sustainable resource management techniques, CBNRM strengthens communities' ability to withstand the effects of climate change and environmental shocks. CBNRM projects promote communities' resilience and capability to prosper in a changing climate by enhancing their capacity to respond to and cope with environmental problems through programs including community-based disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. (Muttaqin *et al.*, 2019).

CBNRM programs in Tanzania encourage inclusive involvement and teamwork among community people, which promotes social growth and cohesiveness. CBNRM initiatives improve social cohesion and solidarity by fortifying social networks, encouraging communication, and cultivating trust among stakeholders. This lays the groundwork for initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development and promoting peace. (Villamayor-Tomas *et al.*, 2018)

Lastly, Through giving women the chance to access resources, take part in decision-making processes, and profit from income-generating activities, CBNRM programs in Tanzania support gender equality and women's empowerment. CBNRM initiatives empower women, improve their socioeconomic standing, and advance social justice and gender equality in communities by advocating for gender-inclusive approaches to natural resource management. (Delgado-Serrano *et al.*, 2018).

### **3.3 Challenges of Community Based Natural Resource Management in Tanzania**

Many obstacles impede Tanzania's Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) from being sustainable and successful. Inadequate institutional capacity and governance issues are major obstacles to the effective implementation of CBNRM. The implementation of CBNRM initiatives is frequently hampered by institutional flaws and bureaucratic inefficiencies at the local level, despite efforts to transfer decision-making authority to local communities (Selemani, 2020).

Under CBNRM plans, disputes over land tenure and resource rights pose significant obstacles to the sustainable management and fair distribution of natural resources. Conflicts and tensions within communities are typically caused by conflicting claims to land and resources, which are sometimes made worse by historical injustices and competing interests. This undermines the efficacy of CBNRM activities (Gross-Camp *et al.*, 2019). Also inability of local communities to get technical assistance and financial resources limits their ability to carry out and maintain CBNRM initiatives. The scalability and long-term viability of CBNRM initiatives are limited because many communities lack the financial resources and technical expertise necessary to carry out conservation and livelihood enhancement activities, despite the potential economic benefits associated with CBNRM (Kisingo and Kideghesho 2020).

Moreover, the comprehensive and integrated strategy supported by CBNRM principles is compromised by insufficient coordination and collaboration among stakeholders. The need for better coordination and synergy among stakeholders is highlighted by the fact that fragmented efforts and competing agendas among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities can lead to duplication of efforts, lost resources, and subpar outcomes. (Nzunda and Manyanda, 2023).

Additionally, the effective involvement and representation of disadvantaged groups in CBNRM decision-making processes might be hampered by socio-cultural variables such as gender inequality and conventional power dynamics. Social inequality and marginalization are sustained when women, youth, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups encounter obstacles to participation and may be disproportionately impacted by decisions on resource management (Krietzman, 2019).

## 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 4.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, this review highlights the multifaceted landscape of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) in Tanzania, elucidating both challenges and opportunities within the framework. The findings underscore the significance of CBNRM initiatives in promoting sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, and community empowerment. However, various challenges persist, ranging from institutional constraints and limited capacity to conflicting interests and inadequate financial resources. In conclusion, this comprehensive review highlights the multifaceted landscape of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) in Tanzania, elucidating both challenges and opportunities within the framework. The findings underscore the significance of CBNRM initiatives in promoting sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, and community empowerment. However, various challenges persist, ranging from institutional constraints and limited capacity to conflicting interests and inadequate financial resources.]

### 4.2 Recommendation

This review recommends that addressing the identified challenges while capitalizing on the outlined opportunities is imperative for realizing the full potential of CBNRM in Tanzania. This necessitates concerted efforts from policymakers, practitioners, communities, and other stakeholders to foster an enabling environment for sustainable natural resource management in Tanzania. By embracing these recommendations, Tanzania can advance towards a more equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable future for its people and ecosystems.

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