FACTORS INFLUENCING CHARCOAL MAKING IN MUTOMO SUB-COUNTY IN KITUI COUNTY-KENYA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Charcoal making is currently one of the main concerns in Kitui County. This is because the rate of deforestation and environmental degradation due to wood harvesting has tremendously increased especially in Mutomo Sub-county of Kitui County and little is known to what factors contribute high production of charcoal within the County. The main purpose of this study was to determine factors influencing charcoal making in Mutomo Sub-County in Kitui County. The researcher was guided by the following research objectives: to examine the determinants of charcoal making in Mutomo Sub-county in Kitui County, to determine the effects of charcoal making in Mutomo Sub-county in Kitui County and to establish the enforcement of Kenya's policy and legal framework in addressing charcoal making in Mutomo Sub County in Kitui County The study employed a survey research design. The sample size of this study consisted of three hundred and seventy five (375) Households representatives, key informants from the Ministry of Agriculture, and Kenya Forest, Kenya Wildlife Service officers within Mutomo Sub-County. Questionnaires and interview guide were used as main instruments of data collection. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to process the data. From the analysis the following key findings were made: traditional charcoal making method is widely used in Mutomo Sub-county. The major determinants of charcoal making in Mutomo Sub County include poverty, increase in population growth, unemployment and urbanization. The effects of charcoal making included soil erosion, reduced rains, depletion of forests and woodlands, economic effect, increased source of income to some family members. Policies were found not to be effective in addressing charcoal making issues due to weak structures and corruption issues. The following recommendations were given: the government should promote the use of more efficient domestic stoves which could be constructed by the local labour force and which would help to reduce the quantity of charcoal necessary for daily domestic consumption. One such stove, the Kimaki jiko, is already used in Kenya. There is also need for tree farming areas to be established, in which charcoal may be produced using more efficient and modem charcoal making technology, such as the brick furnace.

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