

## Reclaiming Ancestral Heritage: The Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and People's Access to Forest Resources

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### ABSTRACT

Climate change poses challenge to the global society. Different measures have been set off in an attempt to address the problem. Among the recent adopted options is the "Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation" (REDD+). However, little evidence exists on how options such as REDD+ may impact on forest-dependent communities. Drawing evidences from a forest-dependant community in Kilosa, this study reveals the impact of REDD+ on community access and benefit from forest resources. The study used a qualitative approach to investigate local people's perceptions of REDD+. About 33 respondents comprising village members, local leaders and forest managers were interviewed. Results from this study indicate that, REDD+ has limited the ways village members used to access and benefit from forest resources and therefore jeopardized their wellbeing. This study concludes that any measure taken to improve forest management should take into consideration forest-dependent communities' contextual situation in order to enhance the wellbeing of community members.

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### INTRODUCTION

Climate change poses a significant threat to human populations (IPCC, 2014). Available evidence indicates that the atmosphere and the ocean have warmed, the amount of ice and snow have diminished and sea level has risen (IPCC, 2014). Governments and civil societies today accept that the problem exists and that more effective measures must be taken to tackle global warming (Griffiths, 2009).

Among the recent adopted options is the "Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation" (REDD+). REDD+ is referred to as a system of financing environmental degradation (Chiesa, 2009). The ultimate objective of REDD+ is to provide incentives to developing countries to reduce the level of their forest losses, and at the same time to promote environmental, economic and social benefits. Basically, the REDD+'s philosophy is based on compensated reduction approach (Peskett 2009). This approach is based on the theory that financial incentives are offered to developing countries to put in place new policies and measures to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation (Angelsen, 2009). In the course of implementation, policies and measures to reduce emission are given either a reward or compensation function. It is assumed that a reward incentivizes a positive change in behavior such as through changed land management practices as implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM); however, compensation would cover foregone opportunity costs such as loss of access to forest products (Peskett 2009: 46).

REDD+ was introduced following changes in the conception about deforestation<sup>1</sup>. Deforestation is currently closely associated with the current problem of climate change especially because it is claimed that the extensive loss of forest cover lowers the capacity of the World to absorb excess carbon emissions from industries and other production sectors (Angelsen 2009). In this regard, there have emerged global strategies to deal with climate change and deforestation in particular. Figieres, and John (2009) argue that the need for global concerns to deal with the problem lies in the realization of the fact that tropical forests are the second biggest stock of carbon on earth after oceans, therefore they contribute to mitigate climate change. It has been recognized that deforestation has huge environmental consequences at the global level (Figieres and John, 2009:61). As a result, conservation of tropical

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<sup>1</sup> The REDD+ policy has also been referred to as a strategy in other literature. In this paper I use the term policy because the REDD+ approach entails both policy decisions and strategies for addressing climate change.

forests became a global issue and is now a hot topic on the agenda of international environmental negotiations (Maradan, 2010).

However, despite the well-stated plans of REDD+, the policy lacks clear explanation on its social aspects. That is, the policy plans concentrate on technical issues but they hardly address socio-cultural issues like access, decision making, gender and benefits. The REDD+ actors claim that community forestry programmes (such as PFM strategies) that are already in several parts of the world serve as the “building blocks” of the REDD+ (Springate-Baginski and Wollenberg 2010). However, the REDD+ plan does not clearly articulate how the rights of local communities will be handled (Griffiths, 2009, Springate-Baginski, and Wollenberg 2010, Aggarwal, 2011).

Being one of the most recent adopted intervention strategies in forest conservation in Tanzania, the REDD+ leaves many aspects unclear. One important question that arises, that is, what rights do the local people have with respect to access to the forest? Using the Kilosa experience this study is set to explore the influence of the REDD+ over access to forest resources. This study therefore seeks to assess the way the introduction of REDD+ has influenced the life of a forest- dependant community in Kilosa, Tanzania. A particular focus is on access and benefit to forest resources.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In order to explore the impact of REDD+ on a forest- dependant community such as Dodoma- Isanga, this study adopts the political ecology perspective. Political ecology is understood as a multi-disciplinary field that has its roots in neo-Marxism and political economy and has been influenced by social movements theory and post structuralism (Bryant and Bailey 1997). The “political ecology” label has been adopted by political movements for their promotion of an alternative to what they regard as an inherently environmentally destructive capitalist system based on constantly expanding production (Vayda and Walters, 1999: 168).

Political ecologists follow a model of explanation that evaluates the influence of variables acting at a number of scales each nested within another, with local decisions influenced by regional policies, which are in turn directed by global politics and economics (Robbins, 2004:11). Thus, environmental problems ostensible in the third world countries for example, are not simply a reflection of a single factor but an indicator of broader economic and political powers. Deforestation and forest degradation, for example, cannot be sufficiently understood by concentrating only on what is happening at a particular village, but requires a wider analysis of political and economic forces of different levels, particularly national and international levels.

Principally political ecology is a theoretical framework with many concepts; therefore it is crucial to focus on specific concept (s) for analytical purposes when using political ecology. Thus, this study adopts the concept of power. In this paper I will use the concept “*power*” to discuss how policy interventions such as the REDD+ can be best analyzed in relation to its impacts on communities. This is because forest governance is an issue which gyrates around “power” whether in access, benefit or decision making.

Bryant and Bailey (1997: 67) have defined power as follows:

*“Power is primarily understood by political ecologists in relation to the ability of an actor to control its interaction with the environment and the interactions of other actors with the environment”.*

Bryant and Bailey (1997) have noted that power and the resulting inequality play a big role in shaping human-environmental interaction. Again, control over the use of natural resources and capability to influence the actions of other actors vary between the actors and this control is based on power.

There are numerous ways in which an actor may strive for control over the environment of other actors. Bryant and Bailey (1997:38) has noted that the most important way is by discursive means. Here power is linked to “*the attempted regulation of ideas*”. This means that people may use ideas to sway other actors. It has been noted that ideas as never “innocent,” as they either reinforce or challenge social and economic arrangements. And thus, power is partly a matter of “winning the battle of ideas” over human use of the environment since actors typically seek to legitimate the triumph of their individual interests over the interests of others through an attempt to assimilate them to ‘the common good’ (Bryant and Bailey 1997: 40).

Thus, this paper considers influences of REDD+ not likely to be captured without the analysis of power relations embedded in forest governance. This paper therefore considers political ecology as a better tool in an attempt to grasp and analyze power inherent in REDD+ and the associated social impacts.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Dodoma-Isanga village, Kilosa District between 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Respondents were purposively selected, targeting the most strategically placed persons who could provide reliable information for the study. Thus, the village leaders, such as the village chairpersons and Village Executive Officers (VEOs) were our first respondents since they are the ones who first met the REDD+ facilitators for the purpose of introducing the policy in the village. They are also the ones who mobilized people, organized village meetings to discuss the REDD+ issues and even signed the contracts for the implementation of the project in their village. Selection of other respondents for the study was done using the purposive sampling technique. The village leaders assisted the researchers to select individuals who could be potential respondents. These respondents included people who engage themselves in farming activities, charcoal burners, and timber stakeholders. Respondents were selected on the basis of social differences, particularly gender for the purpose of considering the role of social differences in mediating people-environmental resources relations. This was intended to capture the way in which social relations shape the manner in which different social actors' access and take part in the decision-making process. This ensures that issues that affect their forest resource use are taken into account. A total of 33 respondents were selected, out of whom 15 were female and 18 were male.

The process of data generation employed In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In the process, these methods were triangulated, that means, one method was complemented by the other method. A total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with villagers, 2 interviews with Village Leaders, 2 interviews with Kilosa District Officers and 1 interview with Kilosa REDD+ project officer. Three (3) FGDs were conducted.

**Table 1: Distribution of FGDs and description of discussants**

Number of FGDs	Description of discussants	Number of discussants
1	Women	8
1	Men	7
1	Charcoal makers/Timber producers	7

The researcher decided to include charcoal makers and timber producers (men and women) because the he found that these were the major users of forest resources in the village.

Additionally, field observation was used as a method of data collection. Field observation helped to understand the implementation of the REDD+ and related activities that different people engage in. First, the researcher participated in one village meeting. The meeting focused on a discussion about REDD+ issues. The researcher was able to observe issues like what kind of people participated in the meeting and the way people discussed issues. Secondly, the researcher was able to observe individuals who were doing patrols in the forest and other activities done in the forest such as opening new farms. Indeed, field observation prompted further questions which required more explanations on how villagers in the village interact with the forest.

On the other hand, document review was conducted in order to gather additional data which would complement primary data. Various documents were reviewed. The documents were collected from Dodoma-Isanga Government offices; Tanzania Forest Conservation Group sub-offices in Kilosa, Kilosa District Natural Resources Department and the University of Dar es Salaam Library.

The process of analyzing data employed qualitative methods. Information from in-depth interviews and FGDs were recorded and transcribed. Transcription was carefully done in order to maintain the original meaning of the information. The researcher applied three processes of qualitative data analysis as developed by Huberman and Miles (1994), namely data reduction, display and conclusion. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, abstracting and transforming the information that was formally in the form of written field notes and transcriptions of in-depth interviews and FGDs. Thereafter, the researcher coded the data to assist him in identifying themes and

sub-themes related to the process of adopting REDD+, influence of REDD+ on access to forest resources. Data display entailed organizing and compressing data. This was required because of the need to show the role of community members in decision making about adopting the policy, the influence of the REDD+ on access to forest resources and on people's livelihoods and their relationships.

## **FINDINGS**

### *Access to Forest Resources prior the REDD+*

Prior the introduction of REDD+ in Dodoma- Isanga, forest management in the village can be categorized into two main periods. The first period is during the state-led (or centralized) management of forest. In this period, it was the government which assumed the ownership and power over conservation of forests in the country. The community was required to abide by the regulations set by the government (Kihyo, 1998). According to oral history in Dodoma-Isanga village, government regulations regarding forest conservation were introduced in 1970. Respondents reported that, in this period, access to forest resources was not very difficult because of difficulties the government faced in enforcing forest regulations.

The second period is during Participatory Forest Management initiatives (PFM). In 2006, PFM initiatives were introduced in the village with the objective of protecting the forest. The philosophy behind PFM strategies is that people are more likely to cooperate in the conservation of forests if they are involved in the process. It was revealed that, the introduction of PFM somehow improved forest management in the village. However, from a focus group discussion, it was revealed that there was ineffective enforcement of by-laws by the PFM leaders that made it unsustainable. On respondent had this to say about PFM:

*“When this project was introduced (PFM initiatives) the forest was in bad conditions as the harvest of trees was too much. People from Kilosa and Morogoro used to come here for timber or for charcoal making. These activities destroyed our forest greatly. So PFM initiatives improved forest conservation and people were following the rules that were established. But later on, after two years or so, the Village leaders relaxed, the village government became corrupt and the committee also became weak. It reached a point that the committee was not making any patrol in the forest. This made people realize that there was no person responsible. So people started to do anything they wanted. They opened farms in the forest, made charcoal and so on. With time, it was just like there had been no PFM initiatives in the village.” (FGD/Male/ 45 years old, on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Dodoma-Isanga).*

From the quote above it implies that as people felt that no one was responsible for monitoring the forest, they decided to pursue their own goals to meet their own needs. This also implies that in the course of poor performance of PFM strategies people were free to access forest resources that they used to enjoy until the introduction of the REDD+.

### *Land Use Issues in Dodoma-Isanga Village*

In order to better understand the influence of REDD+ on access to forest resources in the village, it is important to trace the history of the village especially on issues of land use. Agriculture has been the main livelihood activity in the village for decades. The Wasagara who are the majority in the village are traditionally cultivators. However, non-availability of enough land for farming in the village has been a long-term problem. Land scarcity in Dodoma-Isanga is a historical phenomenon that can be traced back to the colonial era. According to oral history, when the colonialists came in the area, they pushed the inhabitants from the plains to the upland. The colonialists established sisal plantations in the low-lying area. The upland area where Dodoma-Isanga village is located is less fertile compared to the low-lying areas. After independence the government nationalized the plantations and later on sold one of the farms to an Arab investor, while the other farm remained under government ownership. In an interview with the chairperson of Dodoma-Isanga village, he said that the village has 364 households; however, out of these only 175 households have two hectares and above each while the rest (189 households) have less than two hectares of farm land each. According to him, land for agriculture is not enough considering the fact that the village population is growing. For example, in 1995 the village had 760 inhabitants. By 2016 the village population had risen to 1308 inhabitants (Dodoma-Isanga Village reports).

In order to deal with the problem of land scarcity, villagers had two options: one is expanding farming to the forest and the other, to rent farm land from the Arab farm (investor). It was reported that when the owner of the farm known as *Mwarabu* failed to operate it about 15 years ago, he started to rent the farm to villagers and other rich people from Kilosa and Morogoro. The landlord rents an acre for Tshs 40,000 (equivalent to USD 20) or Tshs 50,000 (USD 25) per year. It was also evident that sometimes the landlord demands villagers to pay in kind- a person is supposed to pay a certain quantity of beans or maize per acre after harvest. This is not affordable to some of villagers. During a focus group discussion with women, one member had the following to comment on the matter:-

*“Availability of farmland is a real problem here as farmland is not sufficient. There is scarcity of land. Most of us depend on the Arab farm. If you rent one acre, after harvest you have to pay two sacks of maize or beans. Previously, we were paying one sack, but this year the farm owner said that people must pay two sacks. Apart from that you are not allowed to use a hand hoe in his farm; you must hire his tractor for forty thousand tsh per acre. If you cannot afford that, he won't allow you to rent his farm. Who can afford this? So we really have big problems here”. (FGD/Female/40yrs old, on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, Dodoma-Isanga)*

This case shows how scarcity of land for agriculture in the village forced people to rent farmland. It seems that the landlord has been taking advantage of the land problem. The situation gave him the opportunity to exploit the villagers by increasing the rent and forcing people to hire his tractor for cultivation. This resulted into failure of most villagers to rent the *Mwarabu*'s farm. Through interviews and observation it was evident that most people who were renting the farm were non residents as most of them came from Kilosa and Morogoro.

Having failed to afford renting farm land from *mwarabu*, most people in the village depended on the forest as the only alternative to expand their farmland. People were opening farms in the forest despite the fact that it was illegal to do that. They were able to do this because there was weakness in the enforcement of laws on the part of the village government; hence people used that opportunity to expand their farms beyond the forest borders. Again, some village leaders were corrupt, so they were offered bribes so as to permit some people to obtain pieces of land in the forest area.

#### *Access to Forest Resources under the REDD+*

As shown before, prior to the REDD+ people used to access forest resources more freely due to weaknesses in law enforcement observed in the previous forest management initiatives. However, with the adoption of the REDD+ things changed. The REDD+ has established conservation strategies that have ensured limited access to forest resources with the aim of protecting the forest. In Dodoma-Isanga the REDD+ was introduced in 2012.

The introduction of REDD+ in Dodoma-Isanga worsened the problem of land scarcity. This is because under the REDD+ expanding farm lands towards the forest is no longer possible due to strict by-laws established by the REDD+. This situation has created a dilemma to people of Dodoma-Isanga because they can neither afford renting the *Mwarabu*'s farm nor expand their farms towards the forest. During the focus group discussion one respondent commented:

*“Apart from not having enough land for cultivation here at the upland area, we don't get enough harvest. At least we get some cassava. However, when there is a prolonged drought even cassava becomes bitter, you see..... But in the forest area the land is very fertile. In lowland areas of the forest, people get a good harvest. In those areas even with little rainfall, people can still harvest; that's why many people are moving to the area. But after the introduction of the REDD+ the forest is protected so all those who had opened farms over there, are required to leave the place and return to the village. And that means there should be no more opening of farms in the forest. This situation has worsened the problem of hunger in this village.” (FGD/Female/35yrs old, on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, Dodoma-Isanga)*

The above evidence implies that some decisions about Forest Management did not take into consideration local people's problems as the later are not adequately consulted on how to address unresolved problems as in the case of Dodoma-Isanga Village. In view of this, the local community may misunderstand forest management initiatives; they may find the initiatives as conflicting with their own interests; that is, the way they can benefit from forest resources. Basically, these contradictions are brought about by forest management initiatives such as the REDD+.

Although the initiatives are not bad in themselves, the interventions of the initiatives are exclusive, as they generate the emerging contradictions.

As part of making REDD+ effective, the village council in collaboration with the REDD+ developed a forest management plan. The plan articulates how the forest will be conserved and utilized. A set of by-laws embedded in the plan, is used to regulate how different social actors interact with the forest. In the initial process of developing forest management plan, villagers were asked if they were willing to participate in the process. Most of people supported the idea and gave the village council the mandate to lead the process and give them feedback for every stage of the process.

According to the chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee, under the REDD+ arrangements, the Dodoma-Isanga village council prepared a forest management plan that began to be used in June 2014. The plan has a number of by-laws stipulating how forest resources in Dodoma-Isanga should be accessed and used. The by-laws stipulate a number of prohibitions and penalties for those who contravene them. Also, the Natural Resource Committee has set an enforcement unit to ensure that the by-laws are adhered to on behalf of the Village Council.

The forest management plan including the by-laws was developed for the purpose of improving forest management in the village. From interviews and informal conversations with villagers, this management plan has contributed to the improvement of forest management as opposed to the previous management strategy (CBFM); forest management. One respondent noted that:-

*“Before REDD+ was introduced in this village, the situation of the forest was very bad. By then you would find people burning the forest and the bushes for the purpose of clearing farms, opening new farms, especially beans farms. When a person cultivates an area next year she/he opens a new farm in a new area. The trend of deforestation was very bad. Currently, yes there are people who still continue felling trees, but they are few and they are doing it very secretly. Since the responsibility of protecting the forest is for every village member, people fear to access forest illegally because if any person sees him/her doing so his/her can report such a person to the Natural Resources Committee and that person will be penalized. In this way REDD+ project has contributed to forest conservation” (FGD/Male/45yrs old, on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, Dodoma-Isanga).*

From the above testimony it is evident that prior to the introduction of the REDD+ in the village livelihood activities related to felling trees were many to the extent that it threatened forest conservation. It also shows that though people still continue with such activities, at least it is lower compared to the period prior to the REDD+. Thus, the introduction of the REDD+ in the village has had some improvements in conservation of the forest.

Whereas enacting these by-laws for the purpose of managing forest resources in Dodoma-Isanga, on the other hand, the village by-laws influenced the way villagers accessed forest resources. Respondents pointed out that access to forest resources under the REDD+ has been more difficult compared to the past one; they considered by-laws established by the policy as limiting their ways of benefiting from the resources. In a conservation with a group of young men who were engaged in brick making, it was revealed that REDD+ has affected not only access to trees for commercial purposes such as charcoal making and timber production, but also for building materials. A famous charcoal maker, had the following to say:-

*“The situation in this village is very difficult. If you want to cut tree for charcoal making you are required to pay Tsh10,000 per tree, now how many sacks of charcoal do you expect this tree to produce? Consider also the fact that the price of one sack of charcoal is Tsh 5,000 and you must also pay a tax of Tsh 1000 per sack of charcoal. What I see here is that they are indirectly prohibiting us from using forest resources. Under this situation you cannot make any profit. Nowadays my life has become very difficult and not only me as even other people who depend on the forest, their life has become more difficult. Agriculture is also unreliable, so there is no any relief”.....(IDI/Male/27yrs, old, on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, Dodoma-Isanga)*

The above testimony shows that people had been making a living from accessing forest products; however, the forest management plan introduced under the REDD+ has made it difficult for them to access forest products. It seems that the plan has introduced many levies to some of forest products to the extent that people who used to

benefit out such products, find no more profit in engaging themselves in such activities. This has also limited their ability to meet basic needs.

The following example illustrates the experience of Bwana J, a timber producer whose household life changed to better through access to forest resource.

***Case Study: Influence of the REDD+ on Household Economy***

Bwana J was one of the most successful timber producers in Dodoma-Isanga village. His wife was engaged in cultivation and making local beer. He began timber production in 2005. Before that his main production activity was agriculture. He said that he decided to engage himself in timber production because of decline in agricultural productivity. This decline was due to changes in rain pattern. When he began timber production, he did not abandon cultivation. During the rainy season he cultivates his farm though he has reduced the area he used to cultivate. Previously, he used to cultivate 4-5 hectares but since he started timber production, he has reduced the area for cultivation to 2 hectares. In most cases it is his wife and children who do the farm activities.

When he started timber production, he had no capital; he only had a saw. At the beginning he had no withdrawal license. He was just doing it illegally. He agreed with his friend who had knowledge in timber production to start the activity. Bwana J's friend had also no license. However, in 2008 they were caught by village leaders and paid a fine. Since then Bwana J and his friend decided to request for a license from Kilosa District and they obtained it. So, they produced timber and sold them to fellow villagers or to traders who came from Kilosa. At that time the price per timber ranged from Tsh1000 to 1500 depending on size. They sold their timber at the village because they had no means of transporting logs to Kilosa. Also, they had no market connections in towns like Kilosa. So, this was the only way that they could sell their timber. Bwana J informed me that since 2011, the price of timber has risen to Tsh 2000 and Tsh3000 depending on the size of timber.

Bwana J had five children three of whom were in primary school while two were in secondary school. He pays Tsh 650,000 as school fees for the two children who are in secondary school. This is about 65 percent of his annual income. Timber production has improved the living condition of his family. Before he engaged himself in timber production, he had a house made of poles, muddy walls and thatched with grass. But by the time of this study he was living in a better house made of bricks and iron roofed. He had also bought a grinding machine. He also added that timber production has enabled him to pay school fees for his children. Since the harvest from the farm is poor nowadays, he also uses the money earned from timber production to buy food and meet some other household needs such as kerosene and clothes.

When this study was underway, Bwana J had stopped timber production about three months earlier. He said that he decided to stop timber production because MKUHUMI policy introduced very difficult conditions that made him unable to continue with the activity. He said if you want to produce timber you must obtain a permit from the village government and pay a tax of Tsh 500 to 1000 per timber depending on the size of timber. He added that even if one can afford to pay the tax, the permission does not allow you to make more than 50 pieces of timber. The permit also is given at certain intervals. If say, one obtained a permit in October, you wouldn't be given another permit until after 5-6 months. Apart from the village taxes, (he added) you have also to pay the District taxes that range from Tsh 350 to 1000 depending on the size of timber. So with those conditions he no profits from the activity so he decided to stop the business.

Contrary to the period prior to MKUHUMI policy, the rules and regulations were less strict compared to the period of MKUHUMI policy. He gave an example that prior to MKUHUMI policy he was paying the tax only to the district officers and there was no tax at the village level as opposed to the period under MKUHUMI policy. In those days (he added) some district officials were corrupt, so he sometimes did not pay tax but instead bribed leaders and therefore earned more from timber sales. Under MKUHUMI policy more taxes have been introduced and these are more restrictions in timber trade too. Bwana J said that under this policy it is even more difficult to

bribe people who are concerned with the forest because there are many people involved in supervision. So, he stopped timber business because it was not profitable. He added that it is like the policy is indirectly restricting timber production because of rules introduced.

The abandonment of timber production has affected the livelihood of his family. He said that he was not sure if he could manage to pay school fees and other school expenses for his children. He added that, this year the harvest was very low so his family was experiencing food scarcity. However, he pointed out that he can afford to meet basic needs of the family such as food and clothing through income earned from the grinding machine.

Bwana J said though he had benefited from timber trade, he was also aware of the negative impact of the activity. He said that timber production and other forest exploitation activities had affected the forest very much. For example, most parts of the forest are left open and certain (types of) tree species which are most preferred for timber production are scarce. Such species are muninga and mkongo. He added that though MKUHUMI policy has affected his life negatively, it has merits in the village. For example, the MKUHUMI policy has stopped bush burning which was a very common method of clearing farms. This practice contributed to forest destruction a lot. So the regulation of harvesting forest resources that MKUHUMI policy has introduced are commendable because they ensure that the forest remains for future generations.

The case of Bwana J demonstrates how access to the forest has changed the living standard of his family. It represents many families whose lives have improved through the exploitation of forest resources in the village. The case implies that, regulations of forest use under the REDD+ have become so strict that they challenged the way Bwana J used to benefit from the forest. For example, the introduction of new taxes (such as village taxes) and other payments which were not there prior to the REDD+ as issues which made him stop timber production.

During a focus group discussion with charcoal makers in the village, it was pointed out that there had been an increase in exploitation of forest resources in the past few years due to a fall in agricultural productivity. The reason for the decline in agricultural productivity is uneven rainfall that has resulted into poor harvest making people turn to the forest to meet their basic needs. Therefore, limited access to the forest that has been introduced by the REDD+, has affected their livelihoods because they don't have an alternative way of compensating their losses in agriculture.

During interactions with the village members, there was a general dissatisfaction with the REDD+; though villagers accepted the REDD+ expecting that they would be paid for carbon. Later on villagers realized that, the process of payment is not such simple. Again, the amount paid could not enable a family to meet its need for example to meet its daily needs to the next payment. In the focus group discussion, one respondent commented that;

*"Last year we received an initial payment and we were told that further payments would be made annually based on the measurements of carbon in the forest. A total of Tsh 12,791,722/- (equivalent to USD 6,393) to the village which was to be divided among 256 households. This means every household received 50,000/- (USD 25). Do you think this money can meet all the needs of the family till next payment? This is impossible. I think we made a mistake to accept the conditions of REDD+. This land including the forest is our heritage. Our forefathers lived here even before colonists. But now look at us, we can even hardly manage to get a meal despite the fact that all this forest is ours. There is a need to sit down and discuss this. We need to retain the control of our ancestors' forest". (FGD/ Male/15<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, Dodoma-Isanga).*

From this quote it implies that, though village members in Dodoma- Isanga accepted the idea of having the REDD+ as a strategy for improving forest management and enhance carbon intake; they later on realized that there was a contradiction between what they expected and what happened during the implementation of the project. As a result, some felt that the REDD+ has limited the way they used to benefit from the forest. Thus, some started to think that there is a need to reclaim their ancestral heritage- return to the old days where they were comparatively benefiting more from the forest, the period prior the introduction of the policy.

## DISCUSSION



This study was motivated by the fact that REDD+ has been introduced in order to deal with climate change challenge; However, little is known about how such policy may influence livelihoods of people particularly the forest-dependent communities. Thus, this study was carried in an attempt to capture the ways in which climate change mitigation options particularly the REDD+ may affect community's access to forest resources.

In Dodoma- Isanga village, access has been discussed based on different historical eras of the village. The study has shown that, people of Dodoma-Isanga have been benefiting from forest resources in a variety of ways. However, their access to forest resources has been influenced by a number of factors. One of the very important influences is the adoption of REDD+.

When the REDD+ was introduced people in Dodoma-Isanga expected that, the policy would improve their access to forest land. Again, people expected a good payment from carbon trade. However, during the implementation of the policy, village members realized that the policy established rules and regulations which made it more difficult to access forest resources and expand farm lands to the forest. Village members realized also that payment from carbon trade could not enable families meet their needs.

As findings from this study has indicate that power relations shapes how resources are utilized. As Bryant and Bailey (1997:40) has observed that "power is partly a matter of winning the battle of ideas" over human use of the environment since actors typically seek to legitimate the triumph of their individual interests over the interests of others through an attempt to assimilate them to "the common good". The introduction of the REDD+ in Dodoma-Isanga for example, was not by force, but through making people believe that their everyday livelihood activities (such as timber production, agriculture) has negative impact on climate and therefore they need to adopt different practices which are environment friendly. Such an idea influenced the decision making of the Dodoma-Isanga people pertaining to forest management. In this way, the powerful actors are able to enhance their power over the environments of other actors. The use of power to influence the way other actors interact with the resource manifests itself in that, though the REDD+ policy claim to contribute to climate change mitigation it has a hidden agenda in it. It has been noted that developed nations have shifted discussions on climate change from concerns about establishing emission reduction targets (by developed nations) to the contributions of deforestation and forest degradation to emissions (Madeira, 2008). Therefore, instead of reducing their industrial emissions, developed nations are encouraging developing nations and communities in particular to reduce deforestation to ensure that the developed nations balance their industrial emissions with carbon intake from forests. Consequently, while developed nations continue with their industrial production, forest-dependent communities are restricted to utilize forest resources to meet their basic need in the name of conserving the earth. This is how power manifests itself in the way REDD+ works with poor forest-dependent communities.

Thus, introduction of the REDD+ in the village negatively affected the community's access to the forest which served as an important source of livelihoods. This resulted into a general dissatisfaction with the policy. As it has been indicated in the findings, some village members started to consider the need to recuperate the control of the forest that their ancestors used to enjoy- a call to "reclaim their ancestral heritage".

Other studies conducted on REDD+ suggests that, the policy poses more threats to communities than benefits as it was assumed in the REDD+ plans (see Scheba and Rakotonarivo, 2016; Scheba and Scheba, 2017; Lund et al. 2017; Benjaminsen and Kaarhus, 2018). Lund et al. (2017) for example concluded that large investment by donors in REDD+ in Tanzania have benefited mainly government departments, academia, consultants and conservation NGOs. Additionally, study by Scheba and Rakotonarivo (2016) shows that REDD+ was unable to prevent land use conflicts and risks of economic and physical displacement. This calls for the need to rethink forest governance policies such as REDD+.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that many people of Dodoma-Isanga realize the importance of conserving the forest. Thus, they perceived the conservation plan introduced by the REDD+ is not bad in itself. However, one problem that can be observed here is that the REDD+ and the government in particular, did not develop alternative income generation activities nor did prepare people to develop alternative ways to meet their daily needs.

This paper argues that, for a long-time forest dependent communities have been considered as passive actors in conservation process. As a result, many interventions geared to the improvement of forest governance including the REDD+ have resulted into conflicts with local interests thus affecting the manner in which local communities can improve their livelihoods. Thus, any measure taken to improve forest management should take into consideration

conditions of the forest- dependent communities such as helping the communities develop alternative sources of livelihoods.

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