

THE NEXUS OF PRIVATE, STATE AND CUSTOMARY TENURE REGIMES: ASSESSING THE RIGHTS OF ARTISANAL FISHERS IN THE KAFUE FLOODPLAINS OF ZAMBIA

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Abstract

Zambia is endowed with approximately 12 million hectares of water in form of rivers, lakes, and swamps and 8 million hectares of wetlands (IAPRI, 2015; Haller & Merten, 2008; Musumali et. al., 2009). According to the SADC fact sheet of 2016, Zambia produces 106,798 tons of fish annually and employs about 325,000 people. The contribution of the fisheries sector to rural economic growth and commerce provide significant economic opportunities for the rural poor (Musumali et. al., 2009). Despite such natural endowments, Zambia remains one of the poorest countries in Africa. This socio-economic situation in the country is worse in rural areas of the country. There is increasing evidence that secure access to land based resources is a prerequisite for livelihood security and development (FAO, 2013; Bugri, 2008).

This study investigates the state of marine and property rights within three fishing camps under customary jurisdiction of Muwezwa (Namunyona and Musozya) and Shakumbila (Namucheche) chiefdoms. The study further investigated the extent to which customary laws is recognised as an integral part of the legal framework. The fishing camps are occupied by local communities that have lived in the area based on customary norms and traditions without any documentation. This is despite the area becoming a hive of economic activities supporting both the local economy and nationally. The Kafue floodplains also attracts private companies who acquire land for tourism purposes.

The study involved quantitative and qualitative methods. We collected information using a household survey in the selected villages. The survey was structured to collect detailed information on household main activities, socio-economic characteristics. The survey included questions regarding the property and marine rights of permanent and seasonal residents in the sampled villages.

Key Words: Tenure security, customary land, marine resources, livelihood security