

Assessment of Mchuchuma river management practices for enhancing sustainability of water resources in Ludewa District

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Water resources are vital for daily household use and for socio—economic development. Globally, water is declining due to various natural drivers such as climate change and anthropogenic effects that degrade water sources. Mchuchuma River in Ludewa District, Njombe Region, Tanzania is apparently shrinking and is raising concerns to riparian communities, as it affects their livelihoods. The need to assess management practices for enhancing sustainability of water resources in Mchuchuma river basin evolved from fears that various local community activities in the river catchment threaten the sustainability of the river. The proposed coal mining and thermal power generation projects at Nkomang'ombe Village within the river basin add to the fears. The study was conducted in Masasi Division in Ludewa people and both qualitative and quantitative tools were used to gather primary data for the study. Subsequently, various literatures were analysed through Content Analysis Method. The study revealed remarkable dependence by the riparian community on Mchuchuma River and its floodplain whereby people engage in livelihood activities including; dry season crop production, livestock rearing and riverine fishing. Of these activities, subsistence dry season crop production is the dominant one. It is indeed confirmed that these activities threaten the sustainability of water resource and the river in general. The existing management structures, which rely on water supply-driven approaches, are apparently ineffective in handling the pressure of communities on the riverine resources. This situation has contributed to unsustainable utilization and management of the river basin. The study recommends more effective management of the Mchumchuma river basin.

