

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL VALUES AND TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE OF MANGROVE FORESTS BY MOA AND MAHANDAKINI COMMUNITIES IN TANGA, TANZANIA.



Contact details

Name: **Marcelina Felix Mushi**
 University of Dar es Salaam, Institute of Marine Sciences
 P.O.BOX 668 Zanzibar.
 E-mail: mercymushi276@gmail.com
 Tel: +255753741254

Supervisors

1. Mwanahija S. Shalli
2. Mwita M. Mangora

INTRODUCTION

- Mangroves are tropical and sub-tropical woody trees or shrubs that occur naturally in brackish waters or estuarine wetlands in intertidal zones (Tomlinson, 1986).
- Traditionally, mangrove forests in Tanzania provides variety of goods and services that support livelihood of coastal communities and they are closely associated with deeply held historical, communal, ethical, religious and spiritual values.
- This study explores and broadens the understanding of social values linked to mangrove forests, and give the importance of traditional governance in managing mangrove forests in Tanzania using Moa and Mahandakini communities as study sites.



Objectives of the study

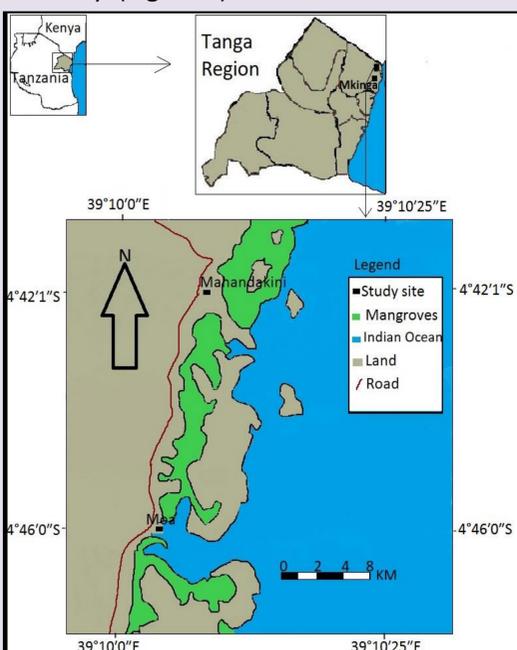
- To identify and assess utilization patterns of mangrove forests in Moa and Mahandakini coastal communities.
- To assess the perceived importance of rules, norms and taboos linked to the cultural significance of mangroves to communities of Moa and Mahandakini.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of study area

The study was conducted in Moa and Mahandakini communities which are in Mkinga District, Tanga (Fig. 1). They are located in the Northern East coast of Tanzania, two to three hours drive from the city. (Figure 1).



Research Design

- A mixed research design was adopted for data collection in this study.
- Nominal group technique and key informant in depth interviews was used to collect qualitative data while quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires.



i) House hold questionnaires ii) Nominal group discussion



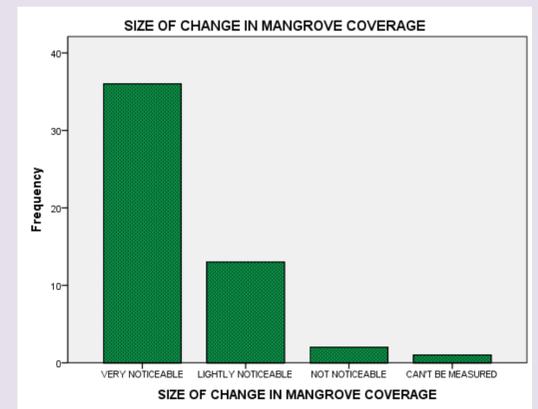
iii) In depth key informant interview

"Society is defined not only by what it creates, but by what it refuses to destroy" (African proverb).

PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Mangrove changes

Moa and Mahandakini communities collectively appreciate good changes to mangroves by 81.2% and 86% respectively. Changes were good and very noticeable (Figure 1). Reasons behind the changes are existence of mangrove restoration volunteers in both sites, obedient to local rules and regulations as well as community being aware about the importance of mangroves.



B. Mangrove use patterns

Results from HHQ conducted reveal some differences of social values of mangrove forest in the two communities. Therefore, this voice out for consideration of multiple values of mangroves and not only economic value.

C. Roles of taboos and norms

Increase cultural understanding, enhance management messages, effects traditional taboos and norms to conservation and they also influence behaviors. **37 sacred mangrove forest** were reported during Nominal Group discussion.

CONCLUSION

Valuation of economic values of natural resources can never be enough to judge the wellbeing of mangroves and values ascribed by local communities. Moreover, understanding of origin, ongoing history and spiritual extended powers are the only ways one can integrate local traditions with conservation context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As Shukla and Gardner (2004) suggest this study also recommends incorporation of Traditional Knowledge skills in formal education system.
- Local communities should be assisted with technical support to enhance their conservation volunteering works.
- This study calls for more researches to point out the degree in which traditional governance play in conservation of natural resources.

REFERENCES

- Shukla, S. and Gardner, J.S. (2004). "The role of traditional ecological knowledge in education for community-based resource management" 15p.
- Tomlinson, P. B. (1986). The botany of mangroves. Cambridge tropical biology series.

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INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCES (IMS)

