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Original Article

Management and Utilisation of Land Resources to attain Economic Sustainability among Christians in West Ankole Diocese, Uganda

Madelean Ahereza^{1*}, Dr. Johnson Ocan, PhD¹ & Dr. Francis Adyanga Akena, PhD¹

¹ Kabale University, P. O. Box 317, Kabale - Uganda.

* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4364-0978>; Email: madeleanahereza1979@gmail.com

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Economic Sustainability, Under Development, Religion, Land Resources, Agricultural Production.

The study set out to investigate the land resources that are accessible in the West Ankole Diocese, their management and use, and the obstacles that stand in the way of the diocese achieving the targeted level of economic sustainability. Districts of Bushenyi, Sheema, Mitooma, Rubirizi, Buhweju, form the Greater Bushenyi area which are all included in the West Ankole diocese. The study incorporated qualitative as well as quantitative techniques, such as the observation method, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. Using these methods, researchers observed the behaviour of study participants and made inferences about their responses and operations. It was anticipated that the primary conclusions of the results would clarify some shortcomings, highlighting gaps in the methods used for the utilisation of terrestrial resources, which resulted in development imbalances, high rates of malnutrition, and food shortages while other resources remained idle. The reasons for this were further explored, and potential mitigation strategies were put forth. In terms of contribution, this study suggested regulated population expansion, informed instruction in contemporary land use, and a shift in land ownership. The limitations of the study concluded that the problems addressed in this research and the suggestions presented provide the basis for improving the land use practices being conducted. The study looked for novel strategies that, if adopted, would enhance the economic livelihoods in West Ankole Diocese and raise living standards and sustainably generate income. It also identified land resource practices that have contributed to underdevelopment. According to the study, in order to achieve sustainable growth through the use of land resources, the diocese would eventually generate higher economic gains from the resources if the relevant authorities were empowered. The research has been carried out in Uganda for the first time, despite being founded on a review of pertinent papers.

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INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of the populations on planet earth will reside in cities in the next decade. According to the United Nations (UN), this will put cities at risk for social unrest, environmental deterioration, and a shortage of essential services. It has been argued that the economic, social, and environmental planning strategies of civilizations that exemplify "urban sustainability" might mitigate these unfavourable urban trends, according to Basiago (1998:160–165). A theory known as "urban sustainability" has many different foundations. According to Basigo (1998: 168), the various patterns of cultural development found in Curitiba, Brazil; Kerala, India; and Nayarit, Mexico, demonstrate the integration and interconnectivity of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Through the construction of an effective intra-urban bus system, the expansion of urban green space, and the provision of basic necessities for those living in impoverished neighbourhoods, Curitiba has evolved into a more attractive city. By focusing on fair resource distribution rather than consumption, restricting reproduction, and combating racial, religious, and gender divides, Kerala has achieved social cohesion. By creating a blueprint for growth that is favourable to the environment,

safeguards natural systems from urbanization, and includes the public in the process of development, Nayarit has attempted to strike an appropriate equilibrium between industrialization and the preservation of the environment. A thorough analysis of these various models for cultural evolution reveals a plethora of ways that sustainability—economic, social, and environmental—might be achieved in real-world scenarios. Although it is not possible to immediately apply these developing-world examples to cities in the underdeveloped world, they do, in general, highlight the creative policies that any community must support in order to attain "land sustainability."

At the Fifth World Parks Congress, which took place in Durban in 2003, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) introduced the concept of Community Conservation Areas (CCAs). This Congress recommended that the recognition of CCAs be an urgent necessity and a tool for strengthening the management and expansion of the world's protected areas, promoting connectivity at landscape and seascape level and enhancing public support for protected areas Pathak et al., (2004; IUCN, (2005). Specific recommendations were thus made for governments to recognize CCAs as legitimate conservation tools, and to assign them to national and international protected area categories as

appropriate. Today, CCAs guide the establishment and management of community-based WMAs across the world.

This study examines the available land resources in the West Ankole diocese, their management and utilisation, as well as the hindering factors for the attainment of economic sustainability. Additionally, the study examines the Management and Utilization of Land Resources to attain economic sustainability among Christians, West Ankole Diocese. West Ankole was created in 1977 by the sub-division of Ankole Diocese. It is located in South-Western Uganda and covers the present-day Greater Bushenyi with five districts. These districts are Bushenyi, Buhweju, Mitooma, Rubirizi and Sheema. It covers an area of 3,395 km². The area is endowed with land resources¹.

According to Lipsey (2006:45), land and other natural resources encompass all characteristics of the biosphere that are directly above or below the earth's surface, such as the near-surface climate, the soil and terrain forms, the surface hydrology (which includes shallow lakes, rivers, and swamps), the populations of plants and animals, the pattern of human settlement, and the physical remnants of both past and present human activity (terracing, water storage or drainage structures, roads, buildings, etc.). Lipsey further defines Economic sustainability as “persistent qualitative and quantitative increase in the productive capacity of a nation in a given period of time. It is accompanied by improved standards of living and economic transformation”. According to Lipsey, Economic stability is the ability of an economy to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely.²

Bhat *et al.* (2006), Opines that Sustainable land management as ‘the use of land resources, including

soils, water, animals, and plants for the production of goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions³. They further assert that Sustainable Land Management comprises measures and practices adapted to biophysical and socio-economic conditions aimed at the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of resources (soil, water, and biodiversity) and the restoration of degraded natural resources and their ecosystem functions.

Stephanie, (2022), defines economic sustainability as when an activity or practice, financial or not, helps to support long-term financial growth while keeping the environment, community, and social factors in mind. He goes on to assert that the main goal of economic sustainability is to create a balance between economic growth and the development of positive change for the environment and humanity.⁴

Oduor (2021), believes that the necessity for a contextualised Christology that is cognizant of the African realities and heritage to make the message of Christ be at home to the indigenous African audience, calls for paramount understanding of these critical issues that would lead to addressing of what he called perennial problems that are faced by African communities. Based on this, therefore, it goes without saying that African people have inherited poor standards of living for a long time, a factor that has also partly contributed to the failure to effectively utilise the land resources they are endowed with!

There are five sections in the article. An introduction is given in the first part. The gaps found during the examination of pertinent documents are covered in the second section. The methodology for

¹ West Ankole Diocesan Magazine, “Consecration of Bishop Johnson Twinomujuni as 4th Bishop”, 28th May 2017 p. 9

² Ibid p. 12.

³ Bhat, Sharma & Qureshi, (2006). *Economic Geography* (ICSSR Research surveys and explorations) Vol 1; Land, water, and Agriculture p. 56

⁴ Stephanie Safdie (2022) *Environmental Technology and Innovation* Volume 31, August 2023, 103178 p. .8

the study is provided in the third part. Part four examined and reported the key findings. The conclusion is given in the fifth section.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Church Commissioners Holding Company Limited, (2010), asserts that the Church has land as a resource and shall be leased to the approved members of the church ministry, community, groups, or associations for purposes of agriculture, forestry, estates development or other socio-economic activities that benefit the community to bring glory to God. If church land is donated to church institutions, then such institutions shall be free from payment of land fees, but the donor church may ask for a token fee. This aims to properly utilise the natural resources the Church is endowed with.

Decentralization stands out as a crucial mechanism that facilitates community participation in the co-management of coastal resources. A study by Kweka (2011), community engagement frequently consists just of information sharing, which is the lower rung on what Bruns (2003) refers to as the "ladder of participation." As stated by Agrawal and Gibson (1999), societies are not homogenous, and for decentralization to be effective there must be explicit institutional structures. The research of Kearney *et al.* (2007), the effective execution of co-management necessitates exceptionally high levels of accountability and transparency among multiple actors as well as the government's willingness to transfer responsibility to the private sector. The coastal resources literature suggests that potential benefits of these processes can include: social and economic development; decentralization and more participatory decision-making processes; reduction of conflicts; increasing welfare of resource users; and increasing financial resources for the state and possible reduction of challenges to its authority (Pinkerton, 1989). Another important process is a government's definition of property rights, which

can assign legitimacy and allocate power to different actors and configurations of actors in these partnerships Kearney *et al.*, (2007; Thiel, (2010).

According to Johnson, Constance, & Chrysostom, (2021), the ethical utilisation of resources, requires an upsurge in both the number and variety of stakeholders for the establishment of different kinds of collaborations. The last thirty years have seen a change in the governance of natural resources, along with other natural resources, from centralized state management to systems based on the transfer of authority and responsibility to local government, communities, and non-state actors. These methods are frequently referred to as "co-management" or "grassroots management." The ecological history of 70 years of British colonial rule in Kenya was further investigated by Johnson & Francis (2022), who also identified some of the environmental issues facing the post-colonial Kenyan state. These challenges are reflected in the country's rapid deforestation, the alarming loss of its wildlife heritage, which is made worse by the threat of poaching and disputes in humans and wildlife.

Lipsey, (2006), commented that all kinds of rural land use involves; agriculture, pastoralism, forestry, wildlife conservation and tourism⁵. This is capable of making Christians realise meaningful income if they practice all of these with a purpose and vision. Lipsey (2006) further asserts that land includes the land itself, the soil surface, and things on the soil which are enjoyed with it as being part of the land by tenure. He mentions examples like rivers, streams, lakes, lagoons, and creeks growing, and trees like palm trees as being fixed to it artificially like houses, buildings, and structures. It also includes any state, interest or right in it over anything which land denotes.⁶ Despite all that land, their right use for sustainability remains a challenge to the common man in the West Ankole diocese.

⁵ Lipsey, C (2006) p. 32

⁶ Lipsey, C (2006) p. 32

The Church of Uganda land policy (2010) provides the “water rights” that “the water source within the church land benefiting the community will or shall not be interfered with by an occupier of such land.” This occupier is to reasonably use the water for domestic, small-scale agriculture or pastoral purposes as long as this does not cause pollution or depletion of the source.⁷

In analyzing the barriers to the efficient use of land resources, Lipsey (2006:34) notes that increased fertility and longer lifespans have resulted in population pressure on land, which has reduced the amount of land available for productive use. Additionally, the quality of farmland is declining in many areas due to over cropping, soil pollution, and excessive grazing. In accordance with (FAO,2013:44), which reinforces his claim, there is a clear constraint on land resources at the moment; degraded land makes up 16% of arable land and is continuously rising. The technology and management required to supplement traditional land management approaches are not always accessible, and these systems are either failing or becoming inappropriate. The main causes of this quandary are the outcomes of unparalleled rate of population expansion and the increasing burdens it imposes on land. FAO (2013) additionally points out that, growing population pressure on the land leads to land degradation, nonetheless the paper also maintains that the issue is reversible by simply shifting to management technologies. The researcher claims that it is still unclear if there are any other approaches that may be used to address these problems without solely depending on technological problems that are unachievable for all land users! This implies that the land resource can be managed well by people using it as long as they look at their practices that are unbecoming, do away with them, and practice ways that are within their means, as can be discussed by them.

Wu and Cho, (2007:12), stated that local land use regulations reduced land development by 10 percent in western states between 1982 and 1997. This is equally true to the note that land regulations in Uganda do not allow immediate progress. For example, Wu and Choo further point out clearly that assumptions of ownership by the state and its subsequent disbursement of leaseholds and freehold titles have disadvantaged poor and marginalised groups that may have broader access to resources and more security under customary arrangements. This lowers the utilisation of land resources. Their view is supported by Marc, (2013:12), asserting that when competition for land resources escalates, women are squeezed out of resources, and yet they are the majority. It further points out that rural women are subjected to exclusionary pressure from male relatives or community members as soon as a natural resource gains commercial value on the international commodity market, control and decisions over that resource pass swiftly from rural women into the hands of men. When and if compensatory measures are enforced, rural women are less likely to be direct recipients; in any case, monetary compensation is short-lived and cannot replace the many ways that women value and benefit from land.

Additionally, the Church of Uganda Land Policy (2010) further provides that there has been a lack of a properly documented land management ownership system or land policy, which has hampered wealth creation from such vast and valuable land resources owned by the Church. In addition, there has been limited appreciation of land as a commercial and economic heritage for the Church by Christians. This, accordingly, has made some shrewd people take advantage of the absence of a policy to misuse, encroach on, claim, or even sell church land in some areas of this diocese.

In the West Ankole diocese, the Church and its institutions have no properly documented

⁷ Church of Uganda land policy (2010),

ownership rights and have often been faced with challenges of land grabbing where those who seem to have realised the need for such documents have processed them, come up and grabbed their land. I feel there should be some protective measures to guard those Christians who have not developed to the level of attaining land titles to keep on their land and use it economically well to attain development.

Lipsey (2006:34) makes it clear that “there is bound to be conflict over land use. The demand for arable land, grazing, forestry, wildlife, tourism, and urban development are greater than the land resources available”.⁸ In developing countries, these demands become more pressing every year. The population dependent on the land for food, fuel, and employment will double within the next 25-50 years. Even where land is still plentiful, many people may have inadequate access to land or to the benefits from its use. In the case of scarcity, the degradation of farmland, forest, or water resources may be clear for all to see but individual land users. Lipsey (2006:34) highlights an additional reason pertaining to the disproportionate movement of economically active males to urban areas, thereby leaving women, children, and the elderly to assume the agricultural load. According to him, the situation is frequently exacerbated by government policies of urban bias, such as cheap food prices, which favour the urban dwellers and their employers but often penalise the food producers, who are commonly a less organised and less vociferous political constituency. This lowers the number of would-be capable food producers, and to make matters worse, when produced food reaches the market in urban areas, very low prices are offered to the producers. This has promoted a growth in per capita consumerisation, which has further increased the demands on land resources, leading to over-

utilisation of land resources and hence reduced output.⁹ Lipsey, (2006:34) is supported by Franzel, (1999), who argues that the Socio-economic factors affecting the adoption potential of improved tree fallows in Africa” by asserting that the problem of land resources under stress has physical, social, and political causes. At the national level, short-term political gains have often been made at the expense of long-term environmental damage; decision-makers often face inordinately difficult decisions when trying to increase production to alleviate poverty and feed people, at the same time, conserve resources to stave off environmental degradation¹⁰.

This means that here, decision-makers forfeit long-term sustainability for immediate needs. This is also true for subsistence-level land users who have little choice but to seek immediate benefits for survival. The solution here cannot be technology for all land users who do not have access to it due to a lack of information and financial resources. The best alternative would be the role of human institutions and land use policies that must be adapted to face the challenge posed by these rapidly changing conditions.

In an attempt to normalise the situation for proper utilisation of land resources, Steiner, (2008:46), identified some strategies for proper land use. To begin with, he said clearly focused aims, objectives, and target areas are set right from the substantial gross roots participation and control over decision-making, as distinct from mere consultations by planners. According to the researcher, there is a need for the availability of appropriate resources, training and powers oriented towards planning as a process rather than towards the plan as a product.¹¹

Church of Uganda Land Policy (2010) provides that all squatters on church land “shall get certificates of

⁸ Lipsey (2006) p. .34

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Franzel, S. 1999. Socioeconomic factors affecting the adoption potential of improved tree fallows in Africa. *Agroforestry Systems* 47:305-321.

¹¹ Steiner, A (2008) *‘Africa’s natural resources key to powering prosperity’*, Environment and poverty times, Kenya p. .46

occupancy from the board of trustees and diocesan land committee in order to regularise their stay and use church land” if these squatters are to be evicted; they will be served with a (3) three months’ notice of the vacation. This, according to me, is a good strategy in two folds; one, it will guard the churches against land grabbing by the occupants and also prevent the squatters from putting permanent establishments that may cause conflicts upon eviction.

Marc (2013:19) recommends that governments, investors and development and human-rights organisations need to intervene to protect local food production and the interests of rural women and their communities in the context of corporate land investments.

*“Government needs to make robust interventions to improve women’s rights to land and natural resources, invest in support to women food producers and their ecologically sound food production approaches and firmly regulate investments to protect women’s food systems and the environment. Investors need to support women’s small-scale ecologically sound food production, work in a way that enhances rather than depletes the natural resources base and ensure that women are involved in decision-making and their interests are addressed. Development and human-rights organisations need to work with rural women to strengthen their production and build their collective choice and influence”.*¹²

According to the researchers, if this is done, it will enable the rural women to be strengthened to shift the balance of power in their favour by defining possibilities, making choices, and acting on them. This starts from having the power within that enables people to have the courage to do things they never thought themselves capable of. When women are faced with rightful actors such as large and national governments, it involves the power that women get from working alongside others to

bargain for higher benefits, especially in terms of pay from their land proceeds.

Lipsey (2006: 20), argues that the total area of dry land in a country is almost completely free, but the supply of fertile land is not fixed. According to him, considerable care and effort are required to sustain the productive power of land; if farmers can lower their income, they may not provide the necessary care, and the land fertility may be destroyed within a short time. In contrast, high earnings from farming provide the incentive to increase the supply of arable land and improve the quality of land.

This is true to the fact that if the available dry land resources could be turned into useful lands, say through irrigation, their productive capacity could increase. This would go a long way to enable farmers to have extensive land for economic use and realise increased proceeds from it.

Clayton, (1993:78), proposes that land tenure and rights of access to resources are very important factors in rural planning. In Zimbabwe, for example, the historical legacy of unequal land distribution, rights and planning continues to undermine efforts to plan and develop rural areas. Confidence to produce and to invest can only be used on reliable rights to use the land.¹³ They assert that

“...these rights must be clear, well established, and protected by law. Good husbandry is promoted by the security of the use of the same patch of land over the long term: enforceable rights to invest in the resources and garner the eventual returns on the investment. At the same time, a market in land, leasing or some other customary allocation of use must be flexible enough to accommodate population growth and grant access to land to those willing and able to use it”.

We can argue that a good strategy where those who have access to resources require adequate security of tenure as applying to the smallholder and

¹² Marc W (2013) Oxfam briefing paper “Promises, power and poverty” Chicago

¹³ Clayton, D. (1993) “Land, culture and the future of rural communities”. Harare p. 78

nutritional companies, to individuals and communities. In this, security means robust rights, adequate duration, and legal certainty.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The research study was conducted in the West Ankole Diocese, which is one of the thirty-eight (38) Dioceses that make up the Church of the Province of Uganda. Out of twenty-five Archdeaconries, this research covered only Mitooma Archdeaconry, represented by three parishes of Mitooma, Kyankukwe and Ijumo. These society faces increased land threats that the church may now consider changing her policies on land lease. Years ago, people would not believe that Women could own land while in their community, Chappell & Di Martino, (2006). The results of this project may provide insight into workers' perceptions of safety in currently assumed high-risk environments that are typically considered safe by the general public. With the changes regarding collaborative ownership of church land safety concerns have the potential to impact both the professional and personal needs of the community.

Population Size

The study population sample size was 88. This was brought by adding the number of respondents from three Parishes in Mooma Archdeaconry. This involved making a subset of subjects that were representative of the people (population). In this study, non-probability sampling techniques through purposive sampling were used to enable the researcher to select respondents who were experienced and knowledgeable enough to bring out the required data. This was done along with another specific and purposive sampling whereby some respondents from selected churches were selected. The sample sizes were made larger in order to overcome possible weaknesses of unpredictable biases, possible low returns in terms of cooperation,

and guarding against losing information due to poor memory over time and among the respondents.

Data Collection

The researchers obtained data through questionnaires, interviews, documentary items and discussion groups in order to gather the information from the selected respondents. Primary sources of data enabled the researcher to have first-hand information, which gave the researcher a true reflection of the situation on the ground. Secondary sources of data enabled the researcher to get data originally collected for other purposes but of great benefit to the research undertaken.

Strategy Data Analysis

Data analysis were guided by the objectives of the study and research questions. The researcher collected and transcribed data before analysis. The collected data was arranged in accordance with categories of respondents. The data was edited and coded for accuracy and completeness of the information given. Qualitative data from the questionnaire was analysed by descriptive statistics and presented in the table for interpretation. Data from interviews was interpreted and discussed alongside that from questionnaires. The researchers used the following methods of data presentation: classification, tabulation, graphs or pie charts, codes, categories, and themes. Then, a conclusion and recommendations were made in reaction to the study.

STUDY FINDINGS

Gender

Of 88 respondents, 59 (67%) were male, while 29 (32%) were female (see *Table 1*). There were more male respondents compared to females, meaning that a number of males were active members of the Church. From the table below of the total number of questionnaire respondents, 27 (34%) were females, 51 (66%) were males, and those who responded to

the interview, 8 (80%) were males, and 2 (20%) were females.

Table 1: Analysis of respondents by gender

Gender/ section	Male	Female	Total
Questionnaire	51	27	78
Interview	8	2	10
Total	59	29	88

Source: Field data

Church Membership & Available Land Resources in Mitooma Archdeaconry

From 88, the study sought to ascertain information in regard to the utilisation of land resources. The

findings reveal that 34 (38.6%) respondents were from Mitooma Parish, 30 (34.1%) were from Kyankukwe Parish, and 24 (27.3%) were from Ijumo Parish (see *Table 2*).

Table 2: Land resources in Mitooma archdeaconry

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Parish	Mitooma	34	38.6
	Kyankukwe	30	34.1
	Ijumo	24	27.3
Available land resources	Fertile soils	65	96
	Stones	09	13
	Swamps	25	37
	Forests/Trees	32	47
	Clay	07	10
	Total	138	203%

Source: Primary Data 2023

This research established the available land resources in Mitooma archdeaconry and their current utilisation in West Ankole. It was approached by setting a number of items and administering them to the various categories of selected respondents outlined earlier on.

Findings reveal that there are several land resources in the Mitooma archdeaconry, as shown in *Table 2* above. When asked about the available land resources in Mitooma archdeaconry, 65(96 %) respondents stated that there are fertile soils; 09 respondents indicated stones, which made up 13%; 25 indicated swamps 37%; 32 indicated forests/trees which made 47% while only 7 respondents indicated clay which made 10%. The total number of responses was 138, which is more than the number of respondents. This was a result of the multiple-response questions that required a

respondent to give more than one response. This, therefore, accounts for the 203%.

From an interview carried out with one of the respondents about the resources in Ijumo Parish, this is the response that was given.

“My father passed on in 1993 and left behind my mum and many children who by then were still in primary but with a lot of land which was fertile. My mum was uneducated, but through this land, she managed to engage us children in many activities like rearing animals and crop growing, especially of matooke on this fertile land. We got a lot of income through this, and those of us who wanted to study have graduated”.

From the above, it is evident that the fertile land is used to support agricultural activities, which end up

leading to improved income and standards of living in Mitooma Archdeaconry.

Generally, the land resources that are in Mitooma Archdeaconry and known to people are being utilised by them, though not at the same level. The commonly used one is fertile soil.

Utilisation of Land Resources in Mitooma Archdeaconry

When asked about how land resources are being utilised, respondents indicated bricklaying for construction, stone quarrying, crop growing, animal rearing, forestry, commercial building, and loan acquisition as security and settlement, as shown below.

Table 3: The current utilisation of land resources in Mitooma Archdeaconry

Current utilisation of land resources.	Frequency	Percentage
Brick laying for construction	10	15
Stone quarrying	05	7
Crop growing	63	93
Animal rearing	22	32
Forestry	12	18
Commercial building	13	19
Loan acquisition as security	07	10
Settlement	65	96

Source: Primary data 2023

The highest percentage was obtained from settlement and crop growing, which had respondents indicating that the land resources were being used for crop growing and animal rearing. The researcher attributed this to the fact that the two-give bases to fulfil the basic necessities of life are shelter and food. Through crop growing, Christians in the Mitooma archdeaconry do earn a living, just as one respondent in the Mitooma sub-parish said,

"I do carry out crop growing. I have a banana plantation and coffee, and sometimes, I grow cereals like beans and ground nuts. Through these crops, I get food for my family and surplus for sale, from where I get school fees for my children. My firstborn is now at the University, and it is only the income from these crops that support me".¹⁴

When asked about how the land resources are used in loan acquisition, a key informant said that when he needs money to pay fees for children and at times

buy some land at a relatively low price, which money he does not have, he uses the land as collateral security and gets the money he needs from a nearby village SACCO which he is able to pay in instalments. Another respondent said that the money acquired as loans is used to pay for crop growing, animal rearing, and payment of school fees.

The available clay in wetland areas is extracted by the local women, and they use it in making pots of different shapes for different purposes like cooking beans, meat, and mingling millet, which they sell in the local markets that enable them to buy some necessities of life. Another category of Christians who extract clay are the energetic men who make bricks from it that they usually sell to those undergoing construction, as clay bricks are highly treasured for a firm foundation.

The stones available in Mitooma archdeaconry have given rise to stone quarrying, where these stones are mined and crushed into small particles and later sold

¹⁴Interview with Annet Kemigisha on 24th Nov 2023

for building construction. This was seen being done on a small scale. Forestry in this table gives an 18% level of utilisation while 47% of respondents appreciated that forests are a resource in Mitooma archdeaconry. One of the respondents said that most forests/trees only have a very small number of Christians, and they are seen in an acre or two or half. These few who have such trees/forests do not allow other community members to use them for any reason, be it firewood collection.

The construction of commercial buildings is not seriously being given attention! The above table that shows percentages of land utilisation in Mitooma archdeaconry gives only 19% out of 290% that has been put under commercial building. Most of the

respondents live in town councils, and one would expect massive commercial construction of rentals for income generation. It was also found out that some of the Mitooma district officials from outside failed to get houses to rent and keep commuting. If such buildings were there, they would be very good sources of reliable income for Christians, leading to sustainable development.

Constraints to Effective Land Use in Mitooma Archdeaconry

This research established the constraints to effective land use in Mitooma archdeaconry. The responses were captured on a 5-point Likert scale as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 4: The constraints to land use in Mitooma Archdeaconry

	SA	A	NS	D	SD
Poor land regulations	23 (33.8)	23 (33.8)	15 (22.1)	07 (10.3)	
High population pressure on land	45 (66.2)	15 (22.1)		8 (11.7)	
Increasing conflicts over land use	24 (35.3)	15 (22.1)	15 (22.1)	7 (10.3)	
Laziness among landowners	15 (22.1)	8 (11.7)		30 (44.1)	15 (22.1)
Lack of properly documented land ownership system	45 (66.2%)	8 (11.7)	7 (10.3)	8 (11.7)	
Illiteracy	15 (22.1)	23 (33.8)	7 (10.3)	8 (11.7)	15 (22.1)

Key: SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; NS = Not sure; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree

Source: Primary data 2023

The study found that 67.6 % agreed the fact that poor land regulations are a constraint to effective land use. This would limit the use of some areas of land like swamps and gazette areas where some Christians using these areas have been evicted forcefully in the name of environmental protection while others have been left. This has led to the massive destruction of gardens, leading to losses, according to respondents. To them, the issue of environmental conservation seemed not to matter, for their minds were only focused on short-term gains!

With high population pressure on land, 88.3% indicated that this factor has limited effective land utilisation. This was evident with the observation of congested homesteads and many family members of

twelve, ten and fifteen members who had a small plot of land. Here, it would be practically impossible for such a number to carry out agriculture and produce adequate food even at a subsistence level. Some families revealed that they were renting land to grow food crops for consumption. This is an indicator of no savings and, hence, no sustainability in the food supply.

Still, under population pressure, it was found out that modern agricultural practices were affected negatively, for there were practices like overstocking and overgrazing, which made cattle to be poorly fed as pastures were consumed in a short time. The products from such cattle fetched low prices that could not meet the basic demands of all family members.

Regarding increasing conflicts over land use, 57.4% of the respondents agreed that increasing conflicts on land have limited effective use of land. For example, I observed a chunk of land and when I asked one of the respondents, an 87-year-old man said that he developed a conflict with a neighbour over 4 acres of land, and when conflicts intensified, he took the matter to court in 1992 and the court stopped every business on that land. Since then, 28 years have elapsed, and nothing is going on, making it nonproductive.

On laziness among land owners, 33.8 % revealed that it was a constraint to land use, while 66.2% of the respondents stated that Christians are not lazy. This meant that Christians were not constrained by laziness in the effective use of land but by other factors mentioned here. Lack of a properly documented land ownership system had 66.2% strongly agreeing. This would lead to conflicts like land grabbing, rendering some Christians landless.

On illiteracy, 55.9% of the respondents revealed it as a constraint to land use in Mitooma Archdeaconry. This shows that illiteracy has hampered the effective use of land resources since the majority of Christians lack information regarding modern ways of identifying the available resources and how they can effectively be used for economic sustainability.

As per the findings above, it is seen that high population pressure on land and lack of properly documented land ownership systems are the leading constraints that have limited the effective use of land in Mitooma Archdeaconry.

Ways Through which the Land Resources Can Best Be Utilised

This research question was set to seek respondents' opinions on the ways through which the land resources can best be utilised among Christians in Mitooma Archdeaconry up to grassroots levels. The table below presents the findings.

Table 5: Suggested ways through which the land resources can best be utilised among Christians in Mitooma archdeaconry

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Sensitisation	47	69
Marketing resource products	15	22
Cooperation	17	25
Competitions	11	16
Family planning	35	51
Demonstration projects	30	44
Acquisition of land titles	07	10

Source: primary data 2023

The majority of the respondents suggested that sensitisation could do a big deal in improving the use of land resources. Actually, 47 out of 88 proposed this. Through sensitisation, the respondents hoped to be equipped with knowledge on the appropriate use of the land resources so that they could improve the way they were doing it. They even hoped to explore other resources in case they for their full utilisation. Sensitisation, according to the researcher, would lead to more meaningful utilisation of resources by avoiding

cultivation and stocking and starting to carry out such practices as modern methods of agriculture for improved production, mixed cropping, controlled grazing and putting all the land resources to full use. Sensitisation would also help the Christian communities to appreciate the need for land titles, which would reduce rampant cases of land grabbing among Christians.

Another strategy proposed was the marketing of farm produce. A respondent noted that during the harvesting seasons, too much is produced, and

almost in all the Christian communities around, harvest is too much, and the local markets are not available. She went on to say that the produce sometimes perishes from houses, for they cannot be kept for long, and those who come to buy offer very little prices to the producers, which are not compared to the efforts they put in. So, Christians hope that with a marketing strategy, the producers can jointly bargain for high prices for their products.

Out of 88 respondents, 35 indicated that there was a need for family planning to be embraced by the Christian communities in Mitooma archdeaconry in order to reduce the population pressure that created a great demand for land, leading to such factors as cultivation. There was also a need for demonstration projects by Christians to help them learn more about the tactics of utilising land intensively. Respondents expressed the need for demonstration projects to be set up at respective parishes and at the archdeaconry level so that Christians have a learning point in case they have to try out certain income-generating projects.

They backed their need for demonstration by arguing that sometimes they need to try out something like zero grazing because of limited land but do not know how to go about it as one respondent said.

'I have been with great need of starting up cattle rearing on this land that I have but I know it is very little making me feel zero-grazing is the best for me but I do not have the required skills. I have been told to go to Mbarara for someone to help me, but I find it all expensive! If there was any nearby place where I could get the required skills, I would have started already.'

Christians also suggested cooperation among their communities. They were looking at a few Christians who owned land in abundance and had some of it lying idle without a willingness to lease it to others. 09% said that resources were fully being utilised, while 91% thought otherwise.

According to the findings above, there are many available land resources in Mitooma Archdeaconry, but their current utilisation is not to the expected standards. This was a result of a high population on land, increasing conflicts on land, lack of properly documented land ownership system and lack of land titles, which limited effective utilisation that would lead to economic development. From this, massive sensitisation would solve all the problems affecting effective land resource utilisation and pave the way forward for economic sustainability.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The analysis of findings indicates that there are several land resources in West Ankole Diocese, which are fertile soils, forests/trees, swamps, clay, and stones and of these, the most utilised are the fertile soils. The availability of these resources is an indicator that the West Ankole diocese has the resources necessary to ensure a steady flow of income among the Christian communities for the attainment of economic sustainability.

Lipsey (2006:32), claims that all types of rural land use—agricultural, pastoralism, forestry, wildlife conservation, and tourism—are engaged, supports this finding. Christians who put all of these into practice with a goal and vision can be able to earn meaningful income from them. In addition, Lipsey states that anything on the soil that is enjoyed alongside the land, as well as the land itself, are all considered to be a part of the land by tenure. He cites artificially established examples such as houses, buildings, and structures, and naturally occurring ones such as rivers, streams, lakes, lagoons, and creeks. He also adds trees like palm trees. Along with everything that land symbolizes, it also encompasses any state, interest, or right in it.

All these resources are plenty in Mitooma Archdeaconry. However, from the analysis above, it is evident that quite a large number of resources are still idle, as already seen. Even from the respondents' views, they indicated a loophole in the utilisation of the commonly used resources, as

farmers should be trained to move away from subsistence methods of farming to commercial systems of farming.

This is attributed to a number of constraints, as shown in the findings. For instance, there's generally a high population on land in the diocese. According to FAO (2013:12), there is a visible strain on land resources at the moment; degraded terrain accounts for 16% of arable land. The technology and management requisite for supplanting outdated land management approaches are not always readily available, and these systems are either collapsing or antiquated. The unparalleled pace of population growth and the consequences it causes are the primary drivers of the current predicament, which is the growing demands imposed on land. Besides impeding sustainable land management are associated with climate change.¹⁵

As part of rectifying the situation, the majority of the respondents suggested that sensitisation could do a big deal in improving the use of land resources. Actually, 47 out of 88 proposed this. Through sensitisation, the respondents hoped to be equipped with knowledge on the appropriate use of the land resources so that they could improve the way they were doing it. They even hoped to explore other resources in case they for their full utilisation.

In summary, the above findings mean that Christians in the area have not lacked resources to develop themselves but have lacked the knowledge of resource to develop them themselves but have not lacked resources to develop themselves but have lacked the knowledge of resource identification and utilisation and have had their minds focused on very short-term and ending gains, the reason they buy food, yet they are gifted with fertile soils. Most Christians have engaged a lot in agricultural

practices for subsistence, forestry for fuel and wood sources and also in making bricks for sale and construction of their houses.

CONCLUSION

O'Riordan observes that "sustainability appears to be accepted as the mediating term designed to bridge the gulf between 'developers' and environmentalists. Its beguiling simplicity and apparently self-evident meaning have obscured its inherent ambiguity" (p. 30). The ambiguity makes it exceptionally difficult to analyze its implications to the agricultural economics profession. Yet, the concept appears to be gaining disciples and is influencing politics and policies both in the United States and abroad. Furthermore, as an alternative belief system, it challenges many economic concepts, tools, and assumption.

The sustainable development concept warns us as agricultural economists that if we cling too tightly to conventional neoclassical concepts, we are in danger of trivializing important global problems. We should order and examine the conceptual bases of sustainable development concepts and explore conflicts with traditional economic approaches. We should give more attention to the inter relationships among (and evolutions of) economic and ecological systems. Furthermore, if an investment is made in a more coherent theory of sustainable development, the theory can provide a guide to research, policy, and action that may indeed lead to an improved world. Some progress is being made with respect to these issues, but there is justification for broader participation and broader reflection on the challenges posed by the sustainable development concept to our profession.

DISCLAIMER

As acknowledged, the review of extant documents, publications, and research papers provided the foundation for this investigation. As a result, we are

¹⁵ FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation). 2013. Sustainable Land Management: Land Resources.

URL <http://www.bing.com/search?q=FAO+reports+onSLM+incentivesor> [accessed on 20 May 2013] p. 12.

unable to credibly speculate as to how much of our claims—are founded on the evaluated literature—can be simply applied in different situations. Therefore, we recommend that additional investigations be carried out utilising individuals that looks at how Christians can achieve economic sustainability through the management and use of land resources in other contexts. This might correlate practices with current laws and policies to enhance the services provided to the deprived population.

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