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Assessing the Challenges of Indigenous Knowledge Usage in Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Rakai District: A Case Study of Small Scale Farmers in Lwanda Sub-county.

The research assessed the challenges of using indigenous knowledge in sustainable natural resource management through indigenous farming practices in Rakai district. The specific objectives were: to determine the indigenous knowledge-based practices, and secondly to find out the challenges of using indigenous farming practices in natural resource management, while suggesting ways of improving the use of indigenous farming practices in natural resource management. The study population included 97 respondents comprising of members from registered farmer groups in Lwanda sub-county and a few selected key informants. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents who participated in the study. The methods of data collection employed included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The quantitative data from closed-ended questions in the questionnaires were analysed manually by putting together the frequencies, while the qualitative data obtained from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews were analysed manually by coding. It was discovered that indigenous knowledge-based farming practices such as shifting cultivation, mixed cropping, land rotation, crop rotation and intercropping were commonly used in the district, although there were many challenges to these systems in natural resource management. The challenges included; negative attitudes towards the indigenous knowledge systems, lack of proven scientific procedural explanations, population growth and fragmentation of land, competition from modern scientific methods, increasing poverty levels and poorly enforced natural resource management policies. The use of indigenous knowledge practices in natural resource management can only succeed with deliberate support and cooperation of all the stakeholders including the government, academic institutions, indigenous institutions and farmers who have direct interface with these natural resources.

Key Words: Indigenous Knowledge Usage, Sustainable Natural Resource, Management, Rakai District.