

We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

6,900

Open access books available

186,000

International authors and editors

200M

Downloads

Our authors are among the

154

Countries delivered to

TOP 1%

most cited scientists

12.2%

Contributors from top 500 universities



WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com



Decentralisation of Forest Management — Is it a Panacea to Challenges in Forest Governance in Uganda?

Nelson Turyahabwe, Patrick Byakagaba and David Mwesigye Tumusiime

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/61014>

Abstract

Decentralisation of forest management is currently implemented in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America as a governance strategy aimed at enhancing forest resource conservation, poverty alleviation and equity in forest resource utilisation. In Uganda, the overarching aim of decentralisation of the forest sector was to shift responsibility of forest management to lower elected local government councils so as to increase participation and accountability in the forest sector. In this chapter, we investigate whether decentralisation has led to transfer of “real” power to local authorities and the extent to which the original objectives of decentralised forest service delivery have been achieved and challenges encountered in the implementation. We used questionnaires, unstructured observations and interviews to collect data from three districts of Uganda. We found that District Forest Departments of local government are mostly involved in revenue generating activities and protection of local forest reserves with only a very limited focus on activities that endear people towards participation in the management of local forest reserves. Power sharing of District Local Governments with lower local institutions and local communities is extremely limited. Contradictory policies about forest resource governance, inequitable sharing of revenues generated from forest resources between the District and Sub-county governments, rent seeking and political corruption amongst actors who are charged with forest law enforcement are the major challenges in dispensing decentralised forest governance. There is need to increase space for citizen participation in the management of forest resources, holding accountable of the duty bearers and equity.

Keywords: Decentralisation, participation, equity, local governments, forest department, forest governance, Uganda

1. Introduction

The past two decades have been characterised by many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America implementing policies that promote decentralisation of natural resources such as forests [1-3]. Proponents of decentralisation of forest management often argue that if implemented it can lead to forest resource conservation, poverty alleviation, equity and promotion of good forest governance in developing countries [4,5]. Decentralization involves transferring power from the central government to lower-level actors and institutions [6]. In 1997, forestry was one of the sectors that the Government of Uganda (GoU) decentralised [7-9]. The government recognised local governments and community-based organisations as key players in the development of the sector. In order to implement this, the GoU initiated reform processes in the sector and these culminated into the development of the 2001 Uganda Forestry Policy [10], the National Forest Plan [11] and the 2003 National Forestry and Tree Planting Act [12]. The major outcome of the reform was the change in ideology in the management of forests from centralised to decentralised management. Accordingly, local governments under the District Forestry Services (DFS) were mandated to manage Local Forest Reserves (LFRs) and provide technical support to private forest owners while the National Forestry Authority (NFA), which was created by an Act of parliament, was responsible for the management of Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) [13]. The purpose of decentralising forest management was to increase people's participation in decision-making on forest resources and accountability in the forest sector [14,15].

It is still unclear whether decentralisation of forest management has improved forest governance at local government level since these reforms were introduced in Uganda. Most studies on decentralisation have not assessed specific powers transferred to local authorities, yet these are critical for determining the outcomes [16]. The functioning of DFS at various units and extent to which the original objectives of decentralised forest service delivery have been achieved has not been documented. In this chapter, we investigate whether decentralisation reforms that occurred in Uganda from the late 1990s have led to good forest governance practice at a local level. The focus is mainly to explore how District Local Governments in Uganda expedite their mandate and extent to which principles of good forest governance are adhered to by the duty bearers and the local communities.

2. History and evolution of decentralisation of forest management in Uganda

Formal management of forests in Uganda started in 1898 when the colonial government's Scientific and Forestry Department was established. A Department of Forestry was established as a separate body in 1917 and renamed as the Forest Department in 1927 [17]. Since then, forest management has shifted from centralisation to decentralisation to address challenges of the time in the forestry sector. The first attempt to decentralise forest management was between 1939 and 1947 with legislation establishing village forests (VFs), LFRs and central forest

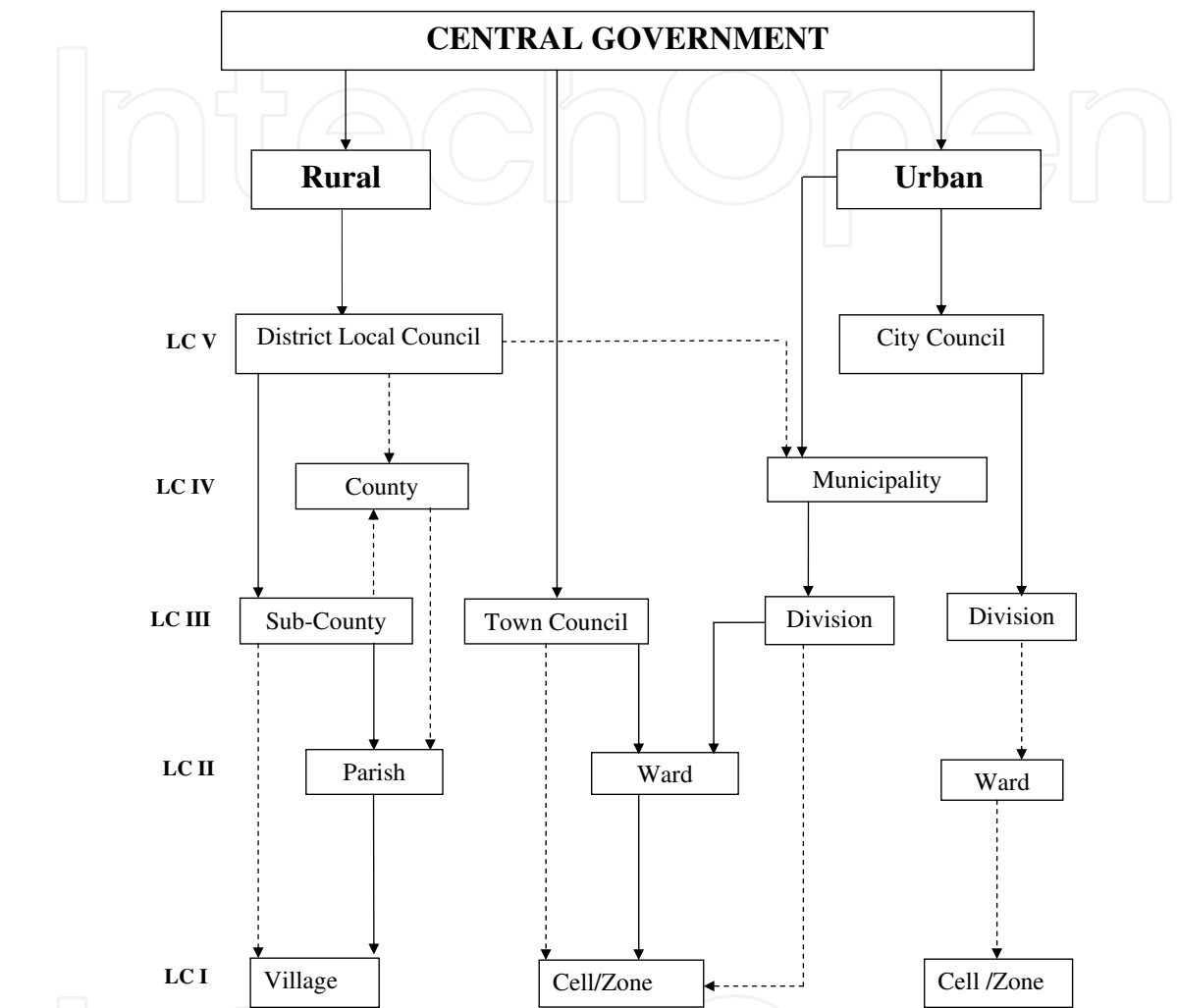
reserves (CFRs). As the names suggest, the VFs were administered by local villages and all the revenues from them were used for local village development. On the other hand, LFRs were administered by either the District or Kingdoms in areas (e.g. Buganda, Toro, Ankole and Bunyoro) where the latter existed while the CFRs were administered by a central agent, the National Forest Department [18]. By then, each Ugandan District had a District Local Government Council of Ugandan chiefs and councillors. The chiefs had powers over trees on both public and private lands and were mandated to issue licenses, collect revenues, regulate wood extraction and arrest offenders over the same while the Council had powers to make byelaws on use of forest resources [19,20].

However, forestry administration was drastically changed following the attainment of political independence in 1962. The post independence governments of presidents Sir Apollo Milton Obote and Idi Amin Idi Amin changed forestry legislation in ways that diminished the roles of local forest administrators. One particularly significant change was the 1967 amendment of the 1964 Forests Act that sought to improve efficiency and ensure rationality in the sector by centralising provision of forest services hitherto provided by Local Administrators (Hamilton, 1984). Decisions on use of forest resources on public and private land were solely entrusted to a centrally organised Forest Department.

The first step in Uganda's decentralization process was the enactment of the 1987 Resistance Council/Committees (RCs) Statute No. 9 that legalised Resistance Councils (RCs) and gave them powers in their areas of jurisdiction at the local level [21]. Thereafter, the government embarked on an effective implementation programme of decentralization with the enacting of the 1993 Resistance Council Statute [22]. From 1995, Uganda embarked on the process of decentralising delivery of services to local government agencies, including the management of forests [23,24]. After promulgation of the Uganda's Constitution of 1995, the decentralisation policy was legalised by the Local Government Act of 1997, which established the District level Local Council (LCV), Municipality (LC IV) and Sub-county / Division / Town Council (LC III) as corporate bodies of local governments and devolved to them far-reaching powers and responsibilities such as income tax collection, service provision, formulation of policies and laws and managing the environment which were formerly undertaken by the central government ministries [23]. Hence decentralisation in Uganda is based on three inter-linked aspects: (i) political and legislative empowerment of the people, (ii) fiscal devolution and (iii) control of the administrative machinery by the local councils [25]. Local governments were expected to deliver services including management of forest resources on behalf of the central government. Under the 2001 Forest Policy and the National Forest Plan of 2002, the central government recognises local governments and other local community organisations as key players in forestry development [8,11].

The legislative framework for decentralisation in Uganda is provided by the Decentralisation Statute of 1993 and the Local Government Act of 1997 [22,23]. It is based on a district as a unit under which there are lower local governments and administrative units. It introduced the five-tier system of elected representatives called Local Councils (LCs), from level LC1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 or village, parish, sub-county, county, and district, respectively (Figure 1). Each LC has a nine member executive committee, one of whom is designated Secretary for production and

environment. The latter oversees forestry activities. According to the 1997 Local Government Act, only the District and Sub-county Councils have powers to legislate. The others are administrative units.



Source: Original

Figure 1. Structure of Local Government in Uganda

The administrative (executive) functions are exercised through a hierarchy of officers supervised at the district level (by a Chief Administrative Officer), county level (by an Assistant Chief Administrative Officer), sub-county (by Senior Assistant Secretaries) and at parish (by Parish chiefs). The executive committee initiates and formulates policies, oversees the implementation of local and central government programmes. The legislative functions are exercised through a hierarchy of elected representatives from LC1 to LC5. These include formulation of policies, ordinances and byelaws for managing the districts' natural resources, including forests [23]. The District Forest Departments manage small areas (about 5000 ha) of Local Forest Reserves (reserves that were decentralised to local governments) distributed in the different

parts of the country. They are also mandated to offer advice on sound management of private forests and trees growing on private land, carrying out publicity and forestry extension services. All this work is categorised as district forestry services and the district forest department is mandated to implement them as indicated in the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 [12]. In particular, Section 48 of the Act provides for the establishment by District Local Governments (DLGs) of the District Forestry Office (DFO) to function as a decentralised service under the guidance of the District Forestry Services (DFS).

3. Role of forestry in Uganda's national development

The forestry sector is considered as part of the solution to balance economic growth with conservation and ensure sustainable development in Uganda [26]. The total economic value (marketable and non-marketable values) of Uganda's forests is estimated at USD 300 million [27]. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the percentage share of GDP made by the forestry sector in 2009 was 3.5% (1.4% monetary and 2.1% non-monetary). The contribution of forestry to the economy is often underestimated because of conceptual [14] and methodological challenges as some of the resources are accessed in a clandestine manner [28]. A significant part of this contribution is found in the ecosystem service roles of forests including climate change mitigation, watershed services, soil conservation, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and ecotourism. Therefore, forests are indispensable in supporting production of other sectors like energy, health, water, and agriculture. Forestry contributes to a large part of the informal sector through sale of firewood, charcoal, furniture, craft materials, fruits, seedlings and honey [29].

The forest sector is an important employer in Uganda, especially in rural areas. The sector employs about one million people and approximately 100,000 of these are employed in the formal sector [8]. With the current Decentralization reforms, there has been a growth in plantation forestry through the private sector and this has contributed to additional 10,000 permanent jobs and another 15,000 part-time jobs, which translates into approximately USD 12.1 million [30]. Other employment opportunities in the forest sector are in contracting forest operations, supplying forest equipment and inputs, processing of forest products, sawmilling and artisan industries.

Woody biomass is the dominant energy resource for households, and small- and medium-scale industries such as lime, brick and tile making and a number of agro-based industries. About 92% of Uganda's energy needs are met from woody biomass [26]. For example, it is estimated that the nominal value of household expenditure on firewood and charcoal (in both monetary and non-monetary terms) increased from 18 million tons in 1996/97 to 32.8 million tons in 2005/06, or 82% increase over a period of 9 years [31]. The value of charcoal consumption more than doubled, while the value of firewood consumption for the same period increased by 68%.

Forests and trees are an important source of construction materials in Uganda by providing timber, poles, ropes, and other construction materials. Over 42% of dwelling units in Uganda

use mud and poles for the walls of dwelling units, and 98% of the dwelling units use timber or poles (with iron sheets or grass-thatch) as a component for roofing [32]. The construction industry has grown at an average rate of nearly 13% annually during the period 2004/05–2008/09 [31], with direct consequence of increasing demand for the forest products.

Forests and trees help to mitigate the effects of climate change. Opportunities for payment for mitigation of the effects of climate change through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and more recently, Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) have emerged on the international scene. The product traded is carbon [29]. Uganda has registered a number of projects in both the voluntary and regulated carbon markets, for instance, the Nile Basin Reforestation Project and Kachung Afforestation Projects under the CDM. Other projects on voluntary schemes include Kikonda Forest Reserve Reforestation Project under the climate, community and biodiversity alliance [33].

Catchment forests protect water catchments and thus sustain water supply to homes, industries and hydro energy power plants. Forests and trees play a key role in servicing agriculture through regulation of underground water flows, stopping soil erosion and improving soil fertility. Forests are a source of raw materials for the manufacturing sector (e.g. honey, fruits, medicines and aromatic products). There is a big potential for biodiversity enterprises to contribute to industrial development and competitiveness that is yet to be fully tapped. For instance, herbal medicines are beginning to make inroads, especially as the Natural Chemotherapeutics Research Laboratory progresses in validating the medicinal properties of many tree and shrub species.

4. Methods

This study employed exploratory research design in collecting the data from three Ugandan districts of Mukono, Mpigi and Tororo. The districts were selected based on the presence of decentralised forests and the level of decentralisation. The districts pioneered the implementation of decentralised services in Uganda [34]. These districts were thus expected to provide information on the successes and failures of decentralised forest management in Uganda.

4.1. Sampling procedure

The district and sub-county local governments were selected in the current study because they are the key levels in relation to policy-making, financing and planning for management of forests and other natural resources under the Local Government Act of 1997 [23]. Within the sub-county and district governments, only members of Production and Natural Resources Committees were selected for interviews because they hold decentralised powers and mandate for managing natural resources, including forests [23,24].

In each district local government, at least eight members of the Production and Natural Resources Committee were interviewed. They included four elected local councillors, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the District Environment Officer, the Director of Production

and the District Forest Officer. The CAO is the accounting officer who supervises and oversees the implementation of district programmes, while the latter three are the technical personnel that implement natural resources management programmes, including forestry. Elected local councillors are mandated to plan and formulate policies at the local government level. At the sub-county government level, at least five elected local councillors and senior assistant secretaries (formerly known as sub-county chiefs) were interviewed. The Senior Assistant Secretary performs similar roles as those of CAO at the sub-county level, while elected local councillors perform duties for the sub-county similar to those of the district councillors.

4.2. Data collection approach

4.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to local government officials mainly from the Production and Natural Resources departments at the district and sub-county in 2010. These included the District Forest Officers, Environmental Officers, Directors of Production, the CAOs, Senior Assistant Secretaries and elected local councillors at the district and sub-county levels. Data were collected on their roles and responsibilities in decentralised forest management, their perceptions and awareness about decentralisation of forest management. Information was also sought on forestry activities undertaken, incentives and disincentives for undertaking decentralised forest management, decision-making powers in the management of forest resources, forest rules and byelaws formulated, and constraints and challenges local governments face in decentralised forest governance.

4.2.2. Key informant interviews

In-depth key informant interviews were held with key people in the NFA, NGOs, Ministry of Water and Environment, staff of the defunct Forest Department, and private sector and with staff from local organisations involved in forestry-related activities at the district and sub-county levels. Interviews focused on how local organisations work with the Forest Department at the district, the kind of powers, resources and technical advice provided by the Department, and experiences from participation in forest governance.

4.2.3. Unstructured observations

During interviews, observations were also made on various forestry activities undertaken by communities and District Forestry Services of local governments. This also acted as a tool for triangulating the information obtained from the questionnaire survey.

4.2.4. Desk review

Records, policy and legal documents at the District Forest Department were reviewed to triangulate information on budgets, institutional conditions and framework for the implementation of decentralised forest governance.

4.3. Data analysis

Data entered into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 21 were cleaned and exploratory data analysis conducted to inspect all the entries for possible anomalies including erroneously entered values. Activities implemented, indicators of power relations, and challenges in the implementation of decentralised forest governance were examined through a simple computation of descriptive statistics.

5. Results

5.1. Activities implemented by forest departments under decentralisation dispensation

Forest resource monitoring was the major activity undertaken under District Forestry Services (95.8%), followed by tree nursery establishment and management (87.5%). Local organisations were not much involved in bee keeping, energy conservation and tourism development that were meant to alleviate poverty (Table 1).

Roles and Responsibilities	% Response
Forest resource monitoring (patrols)	96
Tree nursery establishment and management	87
Environmental education and awareness	84
Promotion of tree planting (agroforestry) with households, schools and private institutions	79
Maintenance of forest boundaries	79
Collection of revenue from forests	58
Promotion of collaborative forest management	50
Training of local authorities in forestry planning (development of work plans)	42
Promotion of ecotourism and biodiversity conservation	42
Promotion of energy conservation technologies	38
Promotion of bee keeping	12

Source: Original

Table 1. Activities implemented by District Forestry Services (DFS) of local governments

5.2. Power relations in the management of forest resources at the district level

Limited powers were devolved to sub-counties and village councils to monitor illegal forest resource use, while issuing of permits and prosecuting forest offenders were the responsibility of the District Forest Services of local governments (Table 2).

Activity(s)	% Response
Monitoring the forest resource	63
Making of forest byelaws	50
Apprehending forest offenders	34
Impounding equipment and tools from offenders	33
Recommending Issuance of permits to forest users	8
Prosecuting forest offenders	8
Source: Original	

Table 2. Forestry activities for which sub-counties/lower local governments have decision-making powers

5.3. Challenges in implementing decentralised forest governance

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents reported that there were conflicts between local authorities at the district and sub-county level and the Forest Department staff. They reported that local politicians collaborated with illegal forest users to illegally exploit forests and conflicted on the issue of sharing of revenues from the sale of forest produce. Other challenges included unclear tenure of forest resources, overlapping authority and inadequate budget responsibility for decentralised forestry activities (Table 3).

Kind of conflict(s)	% Response
Politicians collaborating with forest offenders	87
Inequitable sharing of revenues from forest produce	67
Lack of clear tenure on forest produce from private forests and trees growing on private land	53
Overlapping authority and unclear chain of command between local councils and the District Forest Department staff	33
Lack of commitment of fiscal resources for forestry activities	25
Source: Original	

Table 3. Challenges in implementation of decentralised forest governance in Uganda

6. Discussion

6.1. Activities implemented by forest departments under decentralisation dispensation

Our findings revealed that policies that primarily target increasing revenue and protection of the country's forest estate from illegal users dominate the roles of the District Forest Depart-

ments. The integration of social and economic needs of local users through collaborative forest management, agroforestry, tree planting and ecotourism development is implemented by local government albeit with very remote prioritisation. The findings show some efforts by the District Forest Departments to invest in activities with the potential to improve the livelihoods of the local people, while protecting the forest resources. The Forestry Departments promote agroforestry in order to increase tree products to local people. Farmers are encouraged to establish woodlots for production of poles, fuelwood, fruits, fodder and for soil conservation. Agroforestry can reduce pressure on natural forests, and contributes to poverty alleviation as local community sell forest and agricultural products [35].

The current study reveals that there is very limited focus on activities that endear people towards participation in the management of local forests reserves which are directly under the stewardship of the District Forest Departments. Promoting collaborative forest management which was envisaged in the Forestry Policy of 2001 [8], and National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 [12], as a pathway through which local communities would participate in the management of local forest is not highly prioritised.

Our findings corroborate [36] who found that most local authorities to whom powers are devolved are systematically structured to be upwardly accountable to the central authorities, rather than downwardly accountable to local populations. In our study, district forest departments were more inclined towards implementing activities that resonate with the overarching aspirations of the central authority as provided in the Forestry Policy, 2001, and Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003. The study has shown that the discourse of participation and power-sharing with local institutions and local communities that influenced most forest governance reforms in Africa [37] is not yet pervasive in Uganda.

6.2. Power relations in the management of forest resources under decentralisation

Sub-county and village councils are rarely involved in issuing permits and other activities which are directly linked to exploitation of forest resources. There is a tendency to only decentralise administrative responsibilities to lower governance units. Our findings are in tandem with [16] who found that local people and their representatives rarely engage in activities that define who wields power even when formally forest resource management has been decentralised. It further shows that even when forest management is decentralised to district local governments, lower administrative units are still relegated to activities that do not involve money but to mainly those that require local support such as making of forest byelaws, monitoring forest resource, impounding equipment and tools from offenders. Discussions with LCs revealed that they are not involved in making decisions on how the forest resources are used. This suggests that democratic decentralisation of forest management has not been embraced in Uganda. It is therefore remote to expect equity to be achieved under the current dispensation of forest governance. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that Uganda's Forestry Policy of 2001 and National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003, do not specify guidelines for selecting powers that can be transferred and the local levels that ought to receive them.

Our findings therefore show that in spite of decentralisation reforms taking root in Uganda for the past two decades, the mentality of professional foresters towards local communities at the district level has not significantly changed. They are still perceived as villains who cannot be given power to participate in activities involving giving concessions but are best suited to design and enforce regulations to protect local forest reserves. This may probably be because of fear to be held accountable by the local communities. It has been reported elsewhere [38-40] that in situations where local communities are considered as simply informants as in the current scenario, it may be difficult to attain effective forest governance. It is important that local communities, especially those that are adjacent to the resource, have rights to make decisions on how the forests are used. This builds confidence and also creates incentives for them to invest in sustainable forest management.

6.3. Challenges in the implementation of decentralised forest governance

Local politicians tend to exert pressure on the Forest Department staff to grant permits and licences to indigenes patronage. This situation often worsens during elections because politicians protect forest offenders from being prosecuted as a strategy to mobilise votes from their constituencies. Local politicians are themselves engaged in illegal forest exploitation.

Furthermore, there is increased pressure from some local governments onto the Forest staff to increase revenue, hence more pressure to exploit forest resources. This situation makes the District Forestry staff more vulnerable to undue pressure or even victimisation should they go against the wishes of the local politicians and some state agents. The findings demonstrate that political corruption has become hegemonic in the management of decentralised forest resources. This has been reported to be a major obstacle to successful implementation of decentralised forest governance in most developing countries [41]. The remuneration of the forest staff is generally inadequate compared to the value of the resource being managed and their qualification. As a result, rent seeking by staff in the forest department in districts is common and selective enforcement of the law and guidelines. Other authors [e.g. 15,42-44] have also reported rent seeking and political corruption as obstacles to forest decentralisation. According to [45], widespread bribery and corruption among forest rule enforcers makes their activities susceptible to abuse and not taken seriously by forest users. In other cases, corruption and the lack of respect for rule of law undermines the work of forestry officials involved in the implementation of decentralised forest governance [41,46].

There is also lack of transparency in the process of issuing permits and licences by the District Forest staff. Exploitation of forest produce is often based on political patronage. Records available in most of the district forest offices indicate that licensed timber dealers are not local residents. This situation creates local resentment and makes forest users poachers instead of protectors of resources [47]. Successful decentralised forest management planning should therefore consider the needs of the local forest users.

Benefits from timber and other forest produce are skewed in favour of the district government and commercial timber users. District government takes 60% of the total revenue generated from forest resources, while 40% goes to the lower local governments. Sub-county local governments are dissatisfied with the 40% of the revenue because they believe that the forests

are within their jurisdiction. Unequal sharing of benefits is a disincentive for local governments to participate and regulate forest resource use [48,49]. There is no deliberate affirmative action for local communities that are interested in being awarded concessions from forests within their localities. Many of these are won by “outsiders” who have the economic muscle to pay for rent seeking and there is no clear framework for benefit sharing in both the law and the practice. Giving local authorities a fair share and rights to revenue encourages their participation in the protection of the forest resources and instils a sense of confidence and trust among local forest users and forest agencies [45,50].

In Uganda, control of reserved trees that grow on farmers’ land, for example, *Milicia excelsa* (Welw.) C.C. Berg, and commercial harvesting of forest produce from private forests and other trees growing on farmers’ land require a licence from the District Forest Office. This often is a disincentive to conservation of forests. Legislation and administrative laws must be clear, precise and consistent to avoid misconstruing the provisions. Insecurity of tenure hinders local community participation in tree planting and promoting sustainable forest management [50,51]. According to [52] and [53], individuals are more likely to conserve a resource when they believe they will reap long-term benefits from it.

Local government councils do not prioritise the management of forests during the budget processes probably because of lack of immediate tangible benefits that can bring political capital. Many political scientists argue that local governments tend to focus more on the developmental policies when allocating financial resources necessary to support local economies and to promote the growth of the communities [54,55]. Their major concern is economic growth of the local governments, not forestry protection, which is a common-pool resource that cannot exclude other communities from obtaining benefits from its use [52]. From this perspective, there is competition between local governments in allocating fiscal resources to activities that help to enhance their fiscal capabilities and those for protection of the forest estates; and the competition is likely to lead to reducing regulatory burden that appeal to forest law enforcers in their jurisdictions. Especially, underfunded District Forest Departments have few fiscal resources to support strict forestry regulations. This leaves many forest departments in districts in a dire situation and the staff cannot implement activities that would ensure effective forest governance despite having authority through a legal instrument.

7. Conclusions and policy recommendations

7.1. Conclusions

The central government decentralised functions and responsibilities to local governments to monitor forest resources without devolving adequate fiscal resources. Contradictory policies about forest resource governance, inequitable sharing of revenues generated from forest resources between the district governments and sub-county governments, rent seeking and political corruption amongst actors who are charged with forest law enforcement are the major challenges in dispensing decentralised forest governance in Uganda.

7.2. Recommendations

1. There is need to establish platforms for citizen participation in the management of forest resources in their jurisdiction and this ought to be done with a perception of a right and not privilege.
2. There is a need to give incentives, secure political will of the lower local governments, ensure equitable sharing of forest resources between the district and sub-county governments and reform forest regulations for successful decentralised forest governance.
3. The role of District Forest staff and local authorities at district and sub-county level in policing and regulating forest resources should be clearly spelt out and reconciled for effective decentralised forest management and systems for demanding accountability from citizens should be put in place and operationalised.
4. Frameworks which can lead to equity in sharing of revenue accruing from forest resources between district and sub-county governments to motivate local governments to monitor forest resources need to be formulated.
5. Local governments need to be supported financially through grants to implement activities that can enhance the vitality and health of forests since most of the benefits that accrue from them are a common good for the whole country and not only for their areas of jurisdiction.
6. There is a need to strengthen the existing collaboration between the District Forest Departments of local governments and other stakeholders engaged in forestry to foster decentralised forest governance and also prioritize forestry in budgetary processes.

Acknowledgements

We thank staff in forest departments of the districts covered by this study and our research assistants.

Author details

Nelson Turyahabwe^{1*}, Patrick Byakagaba² and David Mwesigye Tumusiime²

*Address all correspondence to: turyahabwe@caes.mak.ac.ug

1 Department of Extension and Innovation Studies, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University, Kampala

2 Department of Environmental Management, School of Forestry, Environmental and Geographical Sciences, Makerere University, Kampala

References

- [1] Agrawal A. The Regulatory community: Decentralisation and environment in the Van Pachayats (forest councils) of Kumaon. *Mountain Research and Development*. 2001;21: 208 - 211. DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/0276-4741\(2001\)021\[0208:TRC\]2.0.CO;2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/0276-4741(2001)021[0208:TRC]2.0.CO;2)
- [2] Larson A. Democratic In: Carol J. Pierce Colfer and Doris Capistrano (eds.). *The politics of decentralization: forests, power and people*. Earthscan: London; 2005:32-62p
- [3] Ribot J. Democratic decentralisation of natural resources: institutional choice and discretionary power transfers in Sub Saharan Africa. *Public Administration Development*. 2003;23: 53-65. DOI: 10.1002/pad.259
- [4] Lund J, Treue T. Are we getting there? Evidence of decentralized forest management from the Tanzanian Miombo woodlands. *World Development*. 2008;36: 2780-2800. DOI:10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.01.014
- [5] Larson A. Decentralisation and forest management in Latin America: towards a working model. *Public Administration Development*. 2003;23: 211-226. DOI: 10.1002/pad.271
- [6] Agrawal A, Gibson CC. Enchantment and disenchantment: The role of community in natural resource conservation. *World Development*. 1999;27: 629-649. DOI:10.1016/S0305-750X(98)00161-2
- [7] Bazaara N, paper presented at the Environment, accountability and decentralisation contexts, Kampala, Uganda, 25th October. 2001.
- [8] Turyahabwe N, Geldenhuys CJ, Watts S, Obua, J. Local organisations and decentralised forest management in Uganda: Roles, challenges and policy implications. *International Forestry Review*. 2007; 9: 581-596. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1505/ifor.9.2.581>
- [9] Turyahabwe N. Local capacity to manage forestry resources under a decentralised system of governance. The case of Uganda [thesis]. South Africa: University of Stellenbosch; 2006. DOI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/1321>
- [10] MWLE (Minstry of Water Lands and Environment). *The Uganda forest policy*. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment. 2001.
- [11] MWLE (Minstry of Water Lands and Environment).. *The national forest plan*. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment. 2002.
- [12] MWLE (Minstry of Water Lands and Environment). *The national forestry and tree planting act*. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment. 2003.

- [13] Turyahabwe N, Banana A. An overview of history and development of forest policy and legislation in Uganda. *International Forestry Review*. 2008;10: 641-656. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1505/ifor.10.4.641>
- [14] MWE. REDD readiness preparation proposal for Uganda, R-PP. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Water and Environment. 2011.
- [15] Banana AY, Namaalwa JJ, Byakagaba P, Waiswa D, Buyinza M, Gombya-Ssembajwe W. The impacts of decentralisation reforms on sustainable forest management in Central Uganda. In: P Katila, G Galloway, W de Jong, P Pacheco, G Mery, editors. *Forests under Pressure: Local Responses to Global Issues*. Vienna: IUFRO; 2015. 32: 357–367.
- [16] Ribot J, Lund J, Treue T. Democratic decentralization in sub-Saharan Africa: its contribution to forest management, livelihoods, and enfranchisement. *Environmental Conservation*. 2010;37: 35-44. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0376892910000329>
- [17] Forest Department. A history of the Uganda Forest Department 1898–1929, *Bulletin No.3*. Entebbe, Uganda: Government Printer. 1951.
- [18] Forest Department. A history of Uganda Forest Department 1930–1950. *Bulletin No. 4*. Entebbe, Uganda: Government Printer; 1955.
- [19] Uganda Protectorate. The native authority ordinance. The official gazette of the Uganda Protectorate. *Gazette No. XII(12)*. Entebbe, Uganda: Government Printer. 1919.
- [20] Uganda Protectorate. African Local Governments Ordinance and District Council Proclamations and Regulations. Government Printer, Entebbe, Uganda, 1949.
- [21] Asiimwe, J. The resistance councils and committees (RCs) in Uganda: an appraisal of a policy of democratic decentralization: problems and prospects [thesis]. Kampala, Uganda: Makerere University, 1989.
- [22] GoU (Government of Uganda), "The local government (Resistance Councils) statute," *Uganda Gazette ; LXXX VI(55)*. Entebbe, Uganda: Government Printer. 1993.
- [23] GoU (Government of Uganda). The local government act. Entebbe, Uganda: Government Printer. 1997.
- [24] GoU (Government of Uganda), The forest reserves (declaration) order 1998. Statutory instrument supplement No. 63. *The Uganda Gazette No. 56*. Kampala, Uganda. 1998.
- [25] Bashaasha B, Najjingo MM, Nkonya E. Decentralization and rural service delivery in Uganda, *Discussion Paper* Kampala, Uganda: Development Strategy and Governance Division, IFPRI. 2011.
- [26] GoU (Government of Uganda). National development plan (2010/11 – 2014/15). Kampala-Uganda. 2010.

- [27] Bush G, Nampindo S, Aguti C, Plumptre A. The value of Uganda's forests: Livelihoods and ecosystems approach. Kampala, Uganda: Wildlife Conservation Society. 2004.
- [28] Tumusiime DM, Vedeld P, Gombya-Ssembajje W. Breaking the law? Illegal livelihoods from a protected area in Uganda. *Forest Policy and Economics*. 2011;13: 273-283. DOI: 10.1016/j.forpol.2011.02.001:
- [29] MWE. The national forest plan, 2011/12-2021/22. Kampala, Uganda: Ministry of Water and Environment. 2013.
- [30] Kaggwa R, Hogan R, Hall B. Enhancing forestry contribution to growth, employment and prosperity. *Environment and natural resource series* Kampala, Uganda: UNDP/NEMA/UNEP Poverty environment initiative. 2009.
- [31] UBOS (Uganda Bureau of Statistics). Statistical abstract. Kampala, Uganda: Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2010.
- [32] UBOS. The 2005/6 Uganda national household survey, *Report on the socio economic module*. Kampala, Uganda: Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2007.
- [33] Peskett L, Schreckenberg K, Brown J. Institutional approaches for carbon financing in the forest sector: learning lessons for REDD+ from forest carbon projects in Uganda. *Environmental science & policy*. 2011;14: 216-229. DOI:10.1016/j.envsci.2010.10.004
- [34] Ministry of Local Government, Status report on the implementation of the decentralisation programme for the period 1st July–31st December 1996. Kampala, Uganda: Decentralisation Secretariat. 1997.
- [35] Nair PKR. An introduction to Agroforestry. The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers; 1993. 489p. ISBN: 0-7923-2135-9
- [36] Ribot J. Decentralisation, participation and accountability in Sahelian forestry: legal instruments of political-administrative control. *Africa*. 1999;69: 23-65. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1161076>
- [37] Colfer C, Capistrano D. The politics of decentralisation: Forests, power and people. London: Earthscan; 2005. 322p. ISBN: 1-84407-205-3
- [38] Ghimire KB, Pimbert PM. Social change and conservation. *Environmental politics and impacts of national parks and protected areas*. London: Earthscan; 1997. 342p. ISBN: 1853834106, 9781853834103
- [39] Ahmed J, Mahmood F. Changing perspectives on forest policy. Issue 1 of Policy that works for forests and people series, ISSN 1028-8228. In: (ed.) In: J Mayers, editors. *Policy that Works for Forests and People*. Islamabad and London: IUCN Pakistan and IIED; 1998. 140p. ISBN: 1904035396, 9781904035398

- [40] Fisher J. Devolution and decentralisation of forest management in Asia and the Pacific. *Unasylva*. 1999;50: 199. DOI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10535/8405>
- [41] Kaimowitz D. Forest law enforcement and rural livelihoods. *International Forestry Review*. 2003;5: 199–210. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1505/IFOR.5.3.199.19146>
- [42] Larson A, Ribot J. The poverty of forestry policy: double standards on an uneven playing field. *Sustainability science*. 2007;2: 189-204. DOI 10.1007/s11625-007-0030-0
- [43] Wardell D, Lund C. Governing access to forests in northern Ghana: micro-politics and the rents of non-enforcement. *World Development*. 2006;34: 1887-1906. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.11.021
- [44] Tacconi L. Decentralization, forests and livelihoods: theory and narrative. *Global Environmental Change*. 2007;17: 338-348. DOI:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2007.01.002
- [45] Conroy C, Mishra A, Rai A. Learning from self-initiated community forest management in Orissa, India. *Forest Policy Economics*. 2002;4. DOI:10.1016/S1389-9341(01)00068-5
- [46] World Bank. Helping countries to combat corruption. The role of the World Bank, Washington D.C., USA: The World Bank. 1997.
- [47] Soetarto E, Sitorus MTF, Napiri Y. Decentralisation of administration, policy making and forest management in Ketapang District, West Kalimantan. Jakarta, Indonesia: CIFOR. 2001.
- [48] Kaimowitz C, Vellejos P, Pacheco P, Lopez R. Municipal governments and forest management in Bolivia. *Journal of Environmental Management*. 1998;71: 45–59. DOI: 10.1177/107049659800700104
- [49] Larson AM. Natural resources and decentralisation in Nicaragua: Are local governments up to the job? *World Development*. 2002;30: 17-31. DOI:10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00098-5
- [50] Dykastra DP, Kowero SG, Ofosu-Asiedu A, Kio P, editors. Promoting stewardship of forests in the human forest zone of Anglophone West Africa and Central Africa. Final report of a collaborative research project undertaken by United Nations Environment Programme and The Centre for International Forestry Research. UNEP, Nairobi (Kenya); Center for International Forestry Research, Bogor (Indonesia); 1996 103p. ISBN: 979-8764-09-9
- [51] Larson A. Forest tenure reform in the age of climate change: lessons for REDD+. *Global Environmental Change*. 2011;21: 540-549. DOI:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.11.008
- [52] Ostrom E. Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action. Cambridge University Press; 1990. 298p. ISBN: 9780521405997

- [53] Baland JM, Platteau J. Halting degradation of natural resources: Is there a role for rural communities?, Food & Agriculture Organisation; 1996. 423. ISBN: 9251037280, 9789251037287
- [54] Peterson PE. The price of federalism. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution; 1995. PetersonThe Price of Federalism;1995. ISBN:0-8157-7024-3/0-81577023-5.
- [55] Schneider M. The competitive city: The political economy of Suburbia. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press; 1989. 249 p. ISBN: 0822936100/ 0822954524