

Human Activities Influencing Deforestation on Meru Catchment Forest Reserve, Tanzania

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KEYWORDS Forest. Catchment Forest. Cultivation. Deforestation

ABSTRACT Identifying human activities which influence degradation of catchment forests offers input/solutions for its management to the benefit of communities who depend on resources from the forest. Data were collected in 4 villages using questionnaire, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions. Results revealed that the main human activities disturbing Meru forest are cultivation along the boundaries (29%), firewood collection for commercial and family use (21%), illegal lumbering (18%), fodder collection (12%), bushfires (11%) and traditional honey harvesting (9%). These contribute to forest ecosystem fragmentation and forest cover change. Raising awareness and capacity building on participatory forest management to communities adjacent to the forest could have social and economic incentives for conserving forest resources. Policy and legislation framework to address impact of human activities towards forest degradation are necessary.