

The Editorial

This Journal issue contains eight papers on cross-cutting issues such as information for forest management, agriculture, biotechnology, food security, information and communication technology, electronic resources, and knowledge management. The first paper, “Use of Participatory Forest Management as a Strategy for Sustainability of Kazimzumbwi and Pugu Forest Reserves, Tanzania” by E. M. Mkhai, J. Nawe and P.A. Manda, reveals that the majority of the people in rural areas depend on forests for multiple purposes such as medicine, firewood, construction materials, domestic utensils and fodder. The findings of the study upon which the paper is based indicate that the Tanzania government recognises the value of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) as a right strategy for fostering effective forest management and sustainable forest use. As access to and use of information is critical in forest management, they paper recommends that the flow of information be closely monitored to minimise obstructions. In addition, it recommends for the repackaging of the information communicated for it to be more accessible and usable for the rural people as they cannot understand scientific information.

The next paper “Newspaper Coverage of Agricultural Information in Tanzania” by Catherine M. Ogessa and Alfred S. Sife examines the coverage of agricultural information in four Tanzanian newspapers published between 2009 and 2013. The paper highlights the study findings that indicate that of the 63,609 news articles in all the four newspaper editions reviewed, only 836 (1.3%) articles were on agriculture. The agricultural news articles published ranged from 0.79 percent in 2010 to 1.92 percent in 2012. The prominence of agricultural information in all the newspapers was as low as 4.9 percent. Based on these findings, the paper suggests the formulation and institution of policies aimed at increasing the coverage of developmental topics such as agriculture in the newspapers.

In his paper “Auditing Information and Knowledge Accessed and Utilised from Community Resource Centres in Bunda District, Tanzania”, Kelefa Mwantimwa presents the findings that indicate that the established Community Research Centres in the district under review had yet to yield positive results in terms of the accessibility and usability of information and knowledge that meet specific expectations of the rural-based poor. The study found that the information available, accessed and utilised in the wards surveyed was too insufficient to bring about the desired rural development. However, there were some promising indicators associated with the establishment of rural resource centres in Bunda district. Against this backdrop, the paper recommends for a re-think and re-orientation of the development thrust in addition to deploying community resource centres in redressing the situation and supplementing development information and knowledge yet to be covered by other outlets.

In the “Knowledge Management Practices in Institutions of Higher Learning in Tanzania with Reference to Mbeya University of Science and Technology”, Wilson Charles and Julita Nawe examines the knowledge management (KM) practices in Institutions of Higher Learning and the perceptions and opinions of staff on the current KM practices. Their study upon which the paper is based established that Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) staff were not explicitly aware of KM practices; there were no knowledge management initiatives in place at MUST; few or no strategies were employed in managing knowledge and there was no agreed upon mechanism for knowledge sharing. These study findings prompted the researchers to recommend for the establishment of a proper structure aimed to promote and enhance KM

practices in the institution. Moreover, individuals should be encouraged to take on board knowledge management practices in their work, with KM practices being embraced as an integral part of the organisational culture.

Eric Nelson Haumba and Sarah Kaddu, in their paper “Documenting and Disseminating Agricultural Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Food Security in Uganda” focus on how Agricultural Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) is documented and disseminated and the challenges to its management for sustainable food security in Uganda’s district of Soroti. The study upon which the paper is based found that many small-scale farmers in the Soroti district still embrace indigenous knowledge in farming, particularly in managing soil fertility, controlling pests and diseases, controlling weeds, soil preparation, planting materials, harvesting and storage of indigenous root crops and animals despite the advent of modern farming methods.

The paper by Elias Mwabungulu and Hosea Mungwabi entitled “The Impact of Smart-phones Usage on Third-Year Undergraduates in Tanzania: A Case of the University of Dar es Salaam” indicates that the majority of undergraduate students own smart-phones which they used for different purposes, including for academic purposes such as reading lecture materials, and watching academic-related videos. The paper underscores how, to an extent, smart-phones add value to and enhance the undergraduate students’ performance of academic activities.

Philbert S. Nyinondi, Frankwell W. Dulle and Julita Nawe in “Perception of Agricultural Biotechnology among Farmers, Journalists and Scientists in Tanzania” deals with the perception of Genetically-Modified (GM) crops among farmers, journalists and scientists in Tanzania and the factors that influence their attitude towards GM crops. The paper presents the study findings that overall 70.5 percent of the sampled farmers, journalists and scientists had a positive perception of GM crops, 23.8 percent were non-committal neutral and 5.7 percent had a negative perception. Moreover, individual perceptions of GM crops in Tanzania were found to be shaped by a combination of a multiplicity of factors such as age, gender, educational level, marital status, religion, occupation and basic knowledge in science and technology.

The final paper is by Anajoyce S. Katabalwa and Peter G. Underwood, “PERii Electronic Journals: Assessing Access and Use by Postgraduate Students in the School of Education at the University of Dar es Salaam”. The paper is based on a study that assessed the awareness of Programme for Enhancement of Resources Initiative (PERii) electronic journals, their use and challenges encountered by postgraduate students. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents became aware of PERii electronic journals through various sources. Furthermore, the widely used e-resources were largely found to be for the exploration of on-going scientific debates through peer-reviewed papers. The challenges encountered were mainly infrastructural, including inability to access resources from home, together with limited information and computer literacy.