

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF WETLAND DEGRADATION ON
CULTURAL VALUES.
A CASE OF NABAJJUZI WETLAND IN MASAKA DISTRICT.**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, am the sole author of this dissertation. The work presented in this dissertation has never been submitted to Busitema University for the award of a degree of Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Economics or any other Higher Institution of Learning for any academic award. Thus, the work is original, a result of my own research, and where other people's research was used, the authors have been dully acknowledged.

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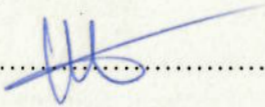
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APPROVAL

This serves to exhibit that this work has been truly through the efforts of Nakalema Teopista towards partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Economics of Busitema University under my guidance and supervision.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the Almighty God for his divine guidance, and to my beloved family members, Ms. Nakasi winey, Mr. Mutebi Ismail, Ms. Nangozi Stellah, Mr. Kyabaggu Aloysius and my grandmother Ms. Nanziri Teopista. May the Almighty God bless the work of your hands.

I would like also to dedicate this report to my late mother Nalunga Proscovia and sister Nambi Nashiba, may their souls rest in eternal peace.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NEMA	:	National Environment Management Authority.
MA	:	Millennium (Ecosystem) Assessment
NFA	:	National Forestry Authority
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
BMPs	:	Best Management Practices
MAYODO	:	Masaka Youth Development Organization
PEAP	:	Poverty Eradication Action Plan.
CVM	:	Contingent Valuation Method.
HPM	:	Hedonic Price Method.
TCM	:	Travel Cost Method.
WTP	:	Willingness To Pay.
WTA	:	Willingness To Accept.
AC	:	Avoided cost
RC	:	Replacement cost
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Science.

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted at Nabajjuzi wetland in Masaka. The wetland is globally important and contains many threatened species including the Sitatunga, swamp antelope, the Shoebill and the Papyrus Yellow Warbler. It is also the sole source of water for over half a million people living in nearby Masaka town. This study investigated the impact of the wetland degradation on the cultural values of the wetland. It is an important eco-tourist attraction which is of economic and socio-cultural significance for the local people and the country at large.

The methodology involved interviews with a cross-section of the local people, questionnaires were used to collect primary data. This was supplemented with secondary data obtained from literature and other secondary sources like the university library, internet, journals and magazines as well as research papers.

The results indicate the wetland is critically threatened by the uncontrolled human activities such as waste disposal, over extraction of materials, draining the wetland for agriculture and hunting of the threatened species. This has led to the loss of the wetland biodiversity thus leading to the loss of the cultural values. The following were recommended for the improvement of the current status of the wetland and its sustainable management: enhancement of local participation in biodiversity conservation initiatives, initiation of public education and awareness campaigns, integration of traditional and modern knowledge system of biodiversity conservation, provision of alternative sources of income for the local population, strict implementation of the laws and policies to punish those who violate them and fighting corruption.

The study concludes that an integrated approach provides the best management options to the continued use of wetland. However it was noted that integrated wetland management is often framed as a decision problem with conflicting multiple objectives, where the challenge is to identify the best compromise management solution. Thus care should be taken when making the policies and laws for managing wetland.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter contains background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, and conceptual frame work, justification of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, operational definition of the key terms and organisation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

According to the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance, wetlands cover about 6% of the earth's surface and are defined as "areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water whether natural or artificial, permanent or seasonal with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salty, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres." (Ramsar, 1971) Wetlands occur at all latitudes, from the polar areas to the tropics, and occur in most countries. Wetlands perform a number of ecosystem services, some of which are well recognized, others less so, and are internationally recognized as one of the most important ecosystems for the conservation of biodiversity (Carp, 1980). Wetlands also have important primary functions in the regulation of hydrology, water purification and flood control, and coastal wetlands can help to alleviate the impacts of storm surges. Further, wetlands have aesthetic values and significant eco-tourism potential (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Peatlands are estimated to store more than twice the amount of carbon as all global forest biomass combined. Drained and disturbed peatlands emit a massive amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (Anonymous, 2008).

According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, wetlands are the habitat that has been most affected by development and are being lost more rapidly than any other habitat in the world. However, 80% of the global peatland area is still pristine and not severely modified by human activities. Globally, natural peatlands are destroyed at a rate of 4000 square Kilometres per year, with 50% attributed to agriculture, 30% to forestry and 10% to peat extraction.

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