



Research Article

Roles of Traditional Beliefs in Conservation of *Ikyomaaki Andtsegavar* Community Forests in Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated how traditional beliefs in Vandeikya Local Government Area, Benue State, contribute to the preservation of forest resources in Ikyo Maaki and Tse Gavar community forests. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 6 communities, 3 communities in Ikyo Maaki and 3 communities Tse Gavar, the selection was based on their proximity to these community forests. In each of the selected community 25 persons were randomly selected from the key informants. This gives sampling intensity of 150 respondents, however only 133 questionnaires were retrieved. Data were collected with the aid of semi- structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and five points Likert scale were used to analyse the data collected. It was established that, restriction of access to the community forests, ban on felling of live trees in the community forests, ban on hunting in the forest, Ban on Killing of Mona Monkey, Restriction of pregnant women from entering the forest and enactment of traditional rules and regulations as well as sanction and fines were traditional practices used for the conservation of their community forests. The respondents agreed (WMS=3.74) that traditional beliefs were used as tools for forest conservation. Traditional beliefs were every effective in the conservation forest resources (WMS=4.44), those enforcing them were effective (WMS=3.77). Payment of high fines was one of the effective sanctions used (WMS=3.76). Traditional beliefs and practices were very effective of the community forests, it was recommended that such practices should be harnessed by relevant authorities for the management of our declined natural resources.

Keywords: Belief; Conservation Human activities; Forest Resources; Restriction of access; Traditional

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INTRODUCTION

The roles of forest and its resources in promoting human livelihood and the health of the ecosystem as well as attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have acknowledged and is receiving global attention (FAO,2018; Sarre & Davey,2021; Ma *et al.*,

2022; Wang *et al.*, 2023). Forests' resources are essential for maintaining human livelihoods, sustainable agriculture, resilience, renewable energy production, and the control of the water cycle (FAO, 2020). They also help with climate change mitigation and adaptation. It said that almost all of the SDGs had shown how

managing forests sustainably may aid in reaching those SDGs (FAO. 2022). However, many species are in danger of extinction, due to continuous loss of biodiversity resulting from habitat loss and overexploitation, this has become a global problem. In addressing this universal biodiversity fear, the idea of has been developed to ensure sustainable use of biodiversity and hence numerous approaches are employed. One of such strategy according to Kideghesho (2009) is the use of traditional belief and customs which before now, it values and role in conservation of biodiversity were not recognized. Achieving sustainable natural resource management requires a strong adherence to African traditional customs and beliefs (Shastri *et al.*, 2002; Rim-Rukeh *et al.*, 2013; Mavhura & Mushure, 2019; Ikyaagba *et al.*, 2020). Every society have these cultural values because they serve as a check and balance on government power (Eneji *et al.*, 2012). Dagba *et al.* (2013) reported that traditional taboos and beliefs are present in every community of Tiv people and can be successfully used to conserve natural resources. This was affirmed by the work of Amonum *et al.* (2017) in Agogo Pond in Chito Stream in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue state were the community used traditional belief in maintaining the sanity of the pond. Anoliefo *et al.*(2015) also affirmed that indigenous peoples in Nigeria have developed ways of coexisting peacefully with their surroundings through their traditional knowledge and practices. For instance, among Igbo of south eastern Nigeria traditional taboos procedures (rules) and sanctions were used to protect cultural values (Anoliefo *et al.*, 2003). Despite the potency and the role of traditional African belief systems in natural resource management and conservation, little attention is given to this informal institution. Indigenous knowledge systems are now being unjustly negated as they are viewed in some quarters as somehow inherently primitive this gives room to many communities managed natural resources being degraded. Yet, forest resources in *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver* are near intact through the use of traditional beliefs practices. However, literature search indicates that there are no documented records of traditional beliefs practices used for conservation of forest resources in the study area. This study was conducted to examining the roles of traditional beliefs and their effectiveness in the conservation of forest resources in *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver* in Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

Vandeikya Local Government Area is located between latitude 7°5' and 7°15' N, longitude 9° and 9°6' E. It has a landmass of 183,939 square kilometres (Agera *et al.*, 2010) with a projected population of 316,600 (Iorkosuet *et al.*, 2019). The local government shares boundaries with Obudu and Bekwara in Cross River State to the east, Ushongo to the north and Konshisha LGA to the west. It has twelve administrative council wards. Vandeikya Local Government Area has a tropical humid climate divided into the wet and dry seasons. The wet season is from April to October while the dry season is between November and March. The annual rainfall is between 1500 - 1750 mm. Temperatures are generally very high (30- 35 °C) especially between March and April (Agera *et al.*, 2010).The vegetation is predominantly Guinea Savanna consisting of fire-resistant trees interspersed with giant grasses. Some the tree species include; *Iruingia gabonensis*, *Daniellia olliveri*, *Prosopis africana* (Red mortar wood) *Parki abiglobosa*(locust bean plant), *Khaya senegalensis* (Dry zone Mahogany), *Dialium guineense* (velvet Tamarind), *Syzygium guineense*, *Lophira lanceolata* (Red ironwood), and *Vitex doniana*(Black plum). The people are predominantly farmers involved in the production of arable crops such as yam, cassava, maize, melon, pepper and cocoyam.

Population of Study and Sampling Procedure

The population of the study comprised of traditional rulers, Hunters, traditional healers, Youth women, chief priests, bush meat traders and farmers located close to the *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver* Community Forests.in *Ikyo Maaki* and 3villages *Tse Gavar* based on their proximity to these forests. The study was divided into two phases. The first phase was a reconnaissance survey which was done to obtain information on the socio-cultural background of the people of the area as well as identified villages closer to the study area. This information obtained from reconnaissance was used to design the study and develop the research instrument for data collection. The second phase involved collection of vital information using the key informants using semi-structured questionnaire (Kideghesho, 2008). This aided the researchers to gain insights into the traditional laws, taboos, concerning forest resources use and management as well as the challenges militating against the effectiveness of these laws. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 6 villages, 3 villages, in each of the selected communities 25 persons from the target groups were purposively selected based on their knowledge of the forest for interview. A total of 150 questionnaire were distributed, however only 133questionnaireswere retrieved.

Descriptive statistics and five points Likert scale were used to data analysis.

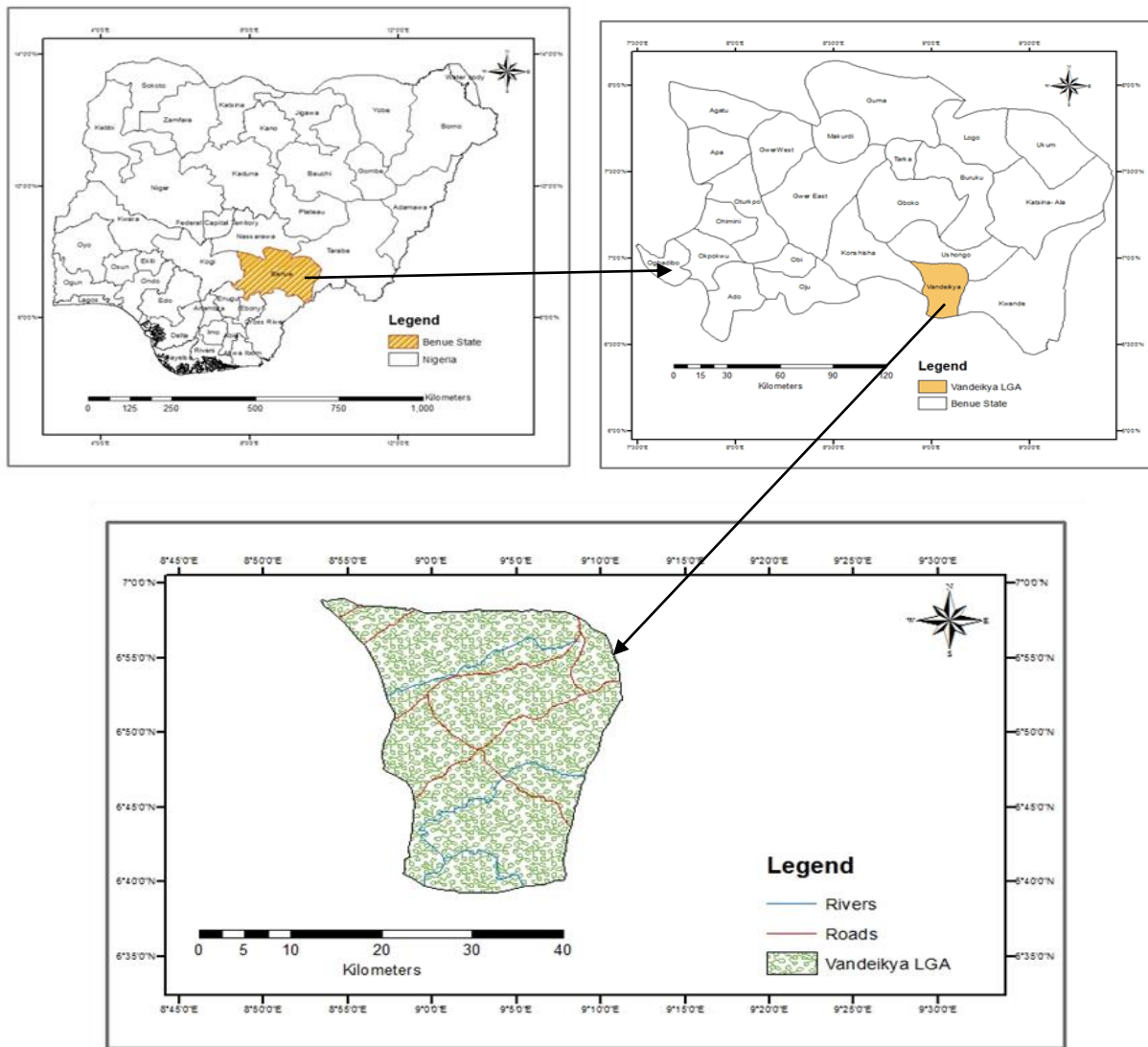


Fig 1 Map of Benue State Showing Study Area

RESULT

Identified Regulations, Taboo and Totem and their roles in Conservation of Forest Resources in the Study area *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver*

The result on the role of taboos and traditional beliefs in the study areas shown in Table 1 include; Ban on hunting in the forest especially in *Ikyo Maaki*, Ban on Killing of Mona Monkey, Ban on Tree Cutting in the Forest, Restriction of pregnant women from entering the forest, Restriction on Defecating in the forest, Restriction of strangers from entering the forest without permission, Restriction on entering the forest in the night, Restriction on Grazing in the Forest. They believed

that some of the Animals in the forest have ancestral importance. Hunting inside will result in their killing. Also, the people believed that Mona Monkey used to help their parents against evil attacks and other evil things in their community. Kill the species will expose them to such attacks. When caught hunting the forest, the person pays a fine as will be decide by the leaders.

Traditional Methods of Forest Conservation in *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver Vandeikya LGA*

The result of traditional methods of forest conservation in the study area as shown in Figure 1. It reveals that 25.0% of the respondents agreed that forest

conservation in the study area is through restriction to community forests, 22.0% agreed that use of sanctions and fine were method used in the protection of community forests in the areas. Also, 20.0% of the respondents were of the opinion that traditional conservation in the study area was through enactment of traditional rules and regulations. Similarly, 19.0% indicated that adherence to traditional rules, regulations, taboos and totems was the method used and 14.0% of the respondents agreed that restrictions felling of trees in the community forests was the method used.

Level of Human activities *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gavar* community forests

The result on level human activities in those community forests indicates that, Rituals and Ceremonies (WMS=3.44), collection of Traditional medicine resources (3.44) were very high. Firewood collection (WMS=2.38) was said to low, other activities; Hunting and gathering (WMS=2.08), Grazing (WMS=1.60), Timber harvesting (WMS=1.85), Charcoal production (WMS=1.24), Farming (WMS=1.99), Ecotourism (WMS=1.59) were very low in those forests (Table 2).

Person (s) that authorized the use of *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gavar* Community Forests

The result as presented in Table 3 revealed that (95.5%) of the respondents were of the opinion that community leaders in the area were the one to give permit for the use of any resources in the forest while (4.5%) said it was the traditional leaders that give permit for the use of any resources in the forest.

Perceived Roles of Traditional Beliefs in Natural Resources Conservation in the Study Area

The result on the perceived roles of traditional beliefs on natural resources conservation Table 4 shows that, respondents agreed that traditional beliefs help in ensuring that forest resources that are endemic are conserve (WMS=3.83), They are used as tools for forest conservation resources (WMS=3.74), Indigenes/residents do regard culture and its provision (WMS=3.65) they were undecided on the role in the preservation of micro and macro organisms (MWS 3.02) and disagreed that it will help in the prevention of bush burning (WMS=2.81).

Reasons for Adherence to Traditional Beliefs in Conservation of Natural Resources in the Study Area

Result Table 5 indicates that, 4 reasons were listed for adherence to traditional beliefs and regulations governing conservation of natural resources in the study area, these payment of (WMS=3.76), benefits derived from the natural resources (WMS=3.55), Use of community members as enforcement agent (WMS=3.36) and ascription of supernatural powers to the natural resources (WMS= 3.75).

Factors Militating against the Effective Use of Traditional Practices in the Conservation of *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gavar* Community Forests

The result of factors militating against the effective use of traditional practices in the conservation of *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gavar* Community Forests in Table 6 revealed that the highest proportion agreed that, socio-economic pressures WMS=4.10), lack of intergenerational knowledge transfer (WMS=3.93), modernization and cultural shifts (WMS=3.62) were the factors militating against the effective use of traditional practices in the conservation of *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gavar* Community Forests.

Table 3: Identified Regulations, Taboo and Totem and their roles in Conservation of Forest Resources in the Study area *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver*

Regulations, Taboo and Totem	Belief(s)	Perceived Impact on Forest Resources	Sanction(s)
Ban on hunting in the forest especially in <i>Ikyo Maaki</i>	They believed that some of the Animals in the forest has ancestral importance. Hunting inside will result in their killing	This help in preservation of the ecological niche. It also prevents degradation of micro and macro-organism habitat.	When caught the person pay a fine as will be decide by the leaders
Killing of Mona Monkey	They believe that Mona Monkey used to help their parent against evil attacked and other evil things in their community. Kill the species will expose them to such attacks.	This help in preservation of the species as is rare in other zones increase in population of Mona Monkeys and other monkey species	When caught the person pay a fine as will be decide by the leaders
Ban on Tree Cutting in the Forest	Cutting of Trees in the forest is a taboo. It is believed that their ancestors spirit resides in the trees in the forest.	This reduced the level of deforestation in the area and conservation of tree species in the area.	When caught the person pay a fine as will be decide by the leaders
Restriction of pregnant women from entering the forest	It is believed that spirits that reside in the forest may attack or cursed the unborn child	Reduce pressure on the resources in the forest	The women may have abortion or they will be delay in delivery.
Restriction on Defecating in the forest	it is believed that, excreting in the forest will contaminate the place for the spirits that reside in the forest	It reduces pollution and contamination of the water bodies around the forest.	The person will be punished by evil spirit. But if the person is a stranger he will be forgiven.
Restriction of strangers from entering the forest without permission	The people believe that if strangers enter the forest alone without permission, they many in activities that will offend spirits that reside in the forest	Reduce pressure on the resources in the forest	The person cannot find his or her way out until fine are paid.
Restriction on entering the forest in the night	It believed that entering the forest in the night will disturb spirits that reside in the forest.		The person will be punish by spirit he will not find his or her way out until fine are paid.
Restriction on Grazing in the Forest	Grazing activities are not allowed in the forest as they believe that, it is a sacred place	This has help in preservation of macro and microorganisms that would have been destroyed as a result of grazing.	When caught the person pay a fine as will be decide by the leaders

Source: Survey 2023

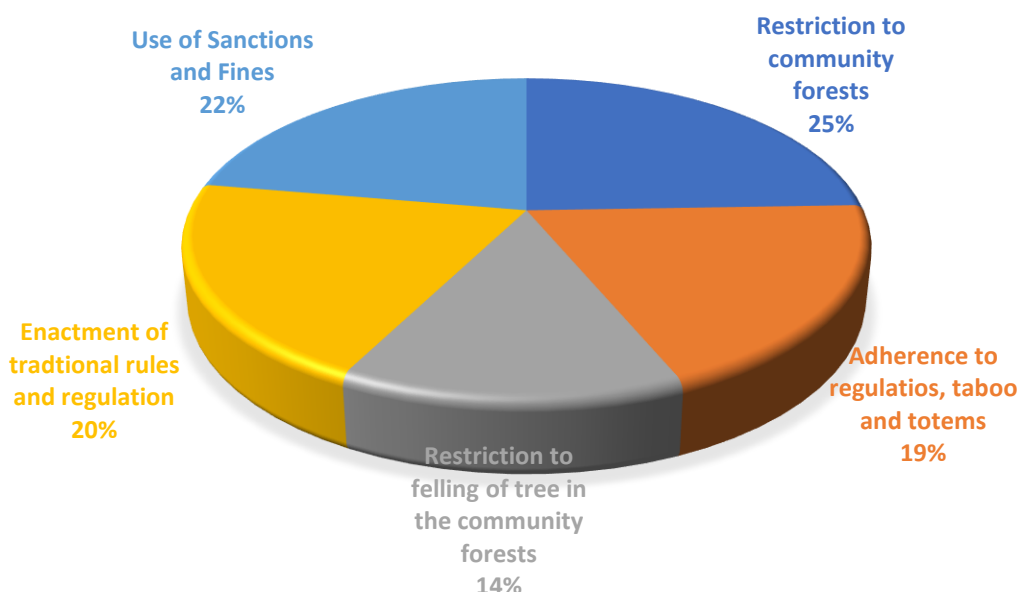


Fig. 1: Traditional Methods of Natural Resources Conservation

Source: Survey 2023

Table 2: Rating human activities in sacred or community forest

	VH	H	M	L	VL	N	WS	WMS	DECISION
Rituals and Ceremonies	5(25)	70 (280)	42(126)	11(22)	5(5)	133	458	3.44	Very high
Hunting and gathering	0	9(45)	25 (75)	58(116)	41(41)	133	277	2.08	Low
Grazing	0	0	6(18)	68(136)	59(59)	133	213	1.60	Very low
Timber harvesting	0	0	32(96)	49(98)	52(52)	133	246	1.85	Very low
Charcoal production	0	5(20)	38(114)	74(148)	11(11)	133	293	2.20	Low
Firewood collection	0	9 (36)	57 (171)	42 (84)	25(25)	133	316	2.38	Moderate
Farming	0	6(24)	24(72)	66(132)	37(37)	133	265	1.99	Very low
Ecotourism	0	0	0	75(150)	62(62)	133	212	1.59	Low
Traditional medicine	11 (55)	49 (196)	50 (150)	24 (48)	9(9)	133	458	3.44	High
Beekeeping	0	35 (140)	57(171)	35(70)	6(6)	133	387	2.91	Low

Note: VH= Very High, H=High, M= Moderate, L= Low, VL=Very Low

Source: Survey 2023

Table 3: Person (s) that authorized the use of *Ikyo Maaki* and *Tse Gaver* Community forests

Person(s)	F	%
Community leader	127	95.5
Traditional leader	6	4.5
Chief priest	0	0.0
Youth leader	0	0.0

Table 4: Perceived Roles of Traditional Beliefs in Conservation of Natural Resources

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	WS	MWS	Decision
Traditional beliefs are used as tools for forest conservation	32(160)	58(232)	23(69)	17(34)	3(3)	133	498	3.74	Agreed
Indigenes/residents do regard culture and its provision	35(175)	39(156)	30(90)	12(48)	17(17)	133	486	3.65	Agreed
Community forest ensure that forest resources that are endemic are conserve micro and macro-organisms are preserved through traditional conservation	42(210)	49(196)	24(72)	14(28)	4(4)	133	510	3.83	Strongly agreed
Prevention of bush burning	23(115)	21(84)	39(117)	35(70)	15(15)	133	401	3.02	Undecided
	12(60)	22(88)	45(135)	37(74)	17(17)	133	374	2.81	Disagreed

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, N=Number of respondents, WS=Weighted Score, MWS=Mean Weighted Score

Source: Survey 2023

Table 5: Reasons for Adherence to Traditional Beliefs in Conservation of Natural Resources in the Study Area

Reason for Adherence	SA	A	U	D	SD	N	WS	MWS	Remark
Ascription of Supernatural Powers/Anger of gods	37(185)	43(172)	23(63)	19(38)	11(11)	133	469	3.53	Agree
Benefits derived from the forest	31(155)	59(236)	18(54)	21(42)	4(4)	133	491	3.69	Agree
Use of community members as enforcement agents	39(195)	36(144)	32(96)	20(40)	6(6)	133	481	3.62	Agree
Payment of High fines	40(200)	45(180)	27(81)	18(36)	3(3)	133	500	3.76	Strongly Agree

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, N=Number of respondents, WS=Weighted Score, MWS=Mean Weighted Score

Source: Survey 2023

Table 6. Factors Militating against the Effective Use of Traditional Practices in the Conservation of Ikya Maaki and Tse Gavar Community Forests

	SA	A	UN	DA	SDA	N	WS	WMS	DECISION
Lack of intergenerational knowledge transfer	47(235)	54(216)	12(36)	17(34)	3(3)	133	524	3.93	Agreed
Modernization and cultural shifts	41(205)	52(208)	5(15)	19(38)	16(16)	133	482	3.62	Agreed
Land tenure and rights issues	6(30)	10(40)	14(42)	70(140)	33(33)	133	285	2.1	Disagree
Lack of incentives and benefits	16(80)	25(100)	26(78)	45(90)	21(21)	133	369	2.77	Agree
Climate change and environmental degradation	0(0)	4(16)	45(135)	38(76)	46(46)	133	273	2.05	Disagree
Limited access to resources and technologies	0(0)	2(8)	36(108)	47(94)	48(48)	133	258	1.94	Strongly disagree
Lack of recognition and support	19(95)	27(108)	30(90)	29(58)	28(28)	133	379	2.85	Agree
Socio-economic pressures	57(285)	50(200)	4(16)	22(44)	0	133	545	4.10	Strongly agree
External interventions and development projects	3 (15)	15(60)	19(57)	59(118)	37(37)	133	287	2.16	disagree
Limited collaboration and networking	0()	7(28)	21(63)	63(126)	42(42)	133	259	1.95	Strongly disagree

Source: Survey 2023

DISCUSSION

The number of regulations and beliefs identified in this study were similar to the findings of Ikyagba *et al.* (2020) among Igede of Benue State, Nigeria, and Jimoh *et al.* (2012) among Ejagham people of Cross river State, Nigeria. The record of these traditional beliefs used for conservation of natural resources in the study area implies that, the people of the study area still believe and adhere to traditional practices that encourage the conservation of natural resources in the study area. This agrees with the assertion that traditional beliefs and norms have positive impact on land, natural resource conservation (Ormsby and Edelman, 2010). For example, the restriction to access to the community forest in the area, restriction to access to the strangers to the community and adherence to taboo/totems, no felling of live trees in the community forests could be attributed to the fear of consequences of sanctions attached to non-compliance. Similar experience was recorded by Ikyagba *et al.* (2020) among Igede of Oju Local government of Benue State. This could be because the sacred community forests are the most cherished heritage to the locals. This confirms the findings of Manikandan *et al.*, (2011), that sacred groves define the cultural identity and heritage of local people. Again, prohibition from felling trees could relate to the fact that these trees are scarce economic and valued species and undergoing threats while some are endangered. This confirms earlier findings of Otsyina *et al.* (2008) that traditional management practices shield scarce tree and plant species though socioeconomic pressures in the 21st Century put undue demands on forest resources. This finding is similar to work done by Atanga (2015) in Ghana who in his study highlighted similar traditional practices of natural resources conservation and management. These practices of traditional conservation of natural resources have likely implications on the overall sustainability of natural resources if analysed in the light of modern scientific principles of natural resources conservation. These traditional practices allow for sustainability and regeneration; increase heterogeneity of forest resources; improve resilience as a buffer for other disturbances; avoid over-exploitation of natural resources and also to allow regeneration and breeding of species.

However, traditional natural resources management has been acknowledged as being dependent on the rules and regulations set out in the community as shown in the result of the study, therefore, they ensure that offenders are detained and sanctioned. The strength of these practices have been tested and proven in forest management through the application of taboos over the

past years. This agrees with the findings of Dorm-Adzobu *et al.*, (1991) and Millar (2004) that traditional management practices have survived several threats over several decades of years. Effectiveness of these practices has resulted in the prolonged survival of the sacred grove over the years and still serves as a reservoir for biodiversity. This is confirmed by the findings of Manikandan *et al.* (2011) on sacred groves in India.

The people positively perceived traditional beliefs and practices to promote conservation of plant and animal species in the area. For instance, ban on hunting in the community forests help in conservation and preservation of mona monkey in the area, Arhin (2008) reported several communities in Ghana where Mona monkeys were protected and this promoted their population in such areas. Ikyagba *et al.* (2020) stated the prevention of hunting in traditionally protected area in Igede land help to prevent erosion of endemic plant and animal species in the area such as *Python spp*, *Xerus erythropus*, *Milicia excelsa*.

It has been emphasized that the survival of vulnerable natural resources outside protected areas will ultimately depend on the involvement of local communities living adjacent to these populations (Oates *et al.*, 2004). In such places, the conservation of these critical resources urgently needs the support of the local communities and traditional knowledge for its conservation (Nyhus *et al.*, 2003), and as long as these traditional beliefs still exist, integrating them into conservation strategies is therefore paramount to the survival of these species they tend to protect. In all villages surveyed, some natural resources such as python and owl were considered as a totem animal or as a sacred animal and were forbidden to be killed or eaten. These taboos prohibiting the exploitation of the species has also been considered a successful local conservation strategy (Colding and Folke, 2001; Banjo *et al.*, 2006; Saj *et al.*, 2006; Etiendem *et al.*, 2011). It is equally important to note that these taboos are still in place in the study area.

The adherence to traditional beliefs in the study area is attributed to beliefs in the presence of supernatural/psychic powers within the community forests and the fear of the consequences of penalties attached to non-compliance. The residents of the studied region believe that breaking the law will anger the gods, who will punish anyone who does so with tragedy. Henshey (2011) and Eneji *et al.* (2012) revealed that the majority of locals in most African communities firmly hold the notion that natural objects like rocks, trees, and streams are manifestations of the power of the supreme god. Amonum *et al.* (2017) had similar findings in Chito Benue State, Nigeria and Jimoh *et al.* (2012) among Ejagham in Cross River State Nigeria. Additionally,

because community members respected their traditional leaders and were afraid of the gods' wrath (which may result from unauthorized access into the sacred grove), traditional management procedures in general were successful in maintaining the sacred grove/forest. As a result, they follow the customary laws and guidelines governing the sacred grove's use and maintenance procedures.

This result is consistent with research by Ntiamoa-Baidu (1995) and Abayie-Boateng (1998), which claimed that traditional forest management in Ghana is based on regional laws and ordinances. These community norms and laws, enacted by traditional leaders, typically take the shape of taboos, bylaws, and penalties. Offenders are required to offer atonement to the gods for their disobedience and for dishonouring their tribe and community. A research in Kalbeon and Wulugu villages, where traditional management systems prevail through the usage of taboos and punishments against offenders, is backed by Millar *et al.* (2004).

In order to appease the gods and gain their protection against potential disasters brought on by disobedience by unauthorized admission, sacrifices are offered to them (Millar, 2004). Even though such practices were not reported in this study it is available in some communities in Nigeria (Jimoh *et al.*, 2012). Such laws and restrictions are frequently based on superstitions and religious or cultural beliefs. They are enforced through prohibitions that have no legal justification but rely on them is strong enough for customary beliefs to be effective in enforcing strict adherence (Ntiamoa-Baidu 1995). Perhaps a verifiable explanation for the significance of these ideas can be found in Millar's (2003) contention that the spirituality of the local population serves as the foundation for all human actions and is reflected in their worldview.

From the challenges identified influx of foreign religion and tag of traditional beliefs as idolatry were the most pressing problems facing traditional methods of conservation of natural resources in the study area. Influx of religion plays a role as many who belong to western religion now see some of these taboos and totems as being satanic. Finding of the study agrees with report by Saj *et al.* (2006) reported that the Saviour Church of Ghana, encouraged their members to hunt monkey which is a taboo among the people, this have affected the population of monkey. In Nigeria, Anoliefo *et al.* (2003) reported that, many local people in Nigeria have embraced Christianity and hence shun traditional religion and its taboos. According to Akindele (2010), many locals in Nigeria have adopted Christianity and are thereby distancing themselves from traditional religion and its taboos. Jimoh *et al.* (2012) also recorded similar

challenges among Ejagham people, Amonum *et al.* (2017) also experienced it in Chito Benue State Nigeria. The study also indicated that Lack of intergenerational knowledge transfer of traditional practices amongst the youth was a challenge. Hence, Sarfo-Mensah and Oduro (2007) stated that rapid change in the belief systems among rural folks (notably the youth) is indeed a major hindrance to effective traditional practices.

CONCLUSION

In this study area, beliefs, rules, regulations, totems and taboos that promote the preservation of natural resources were found. These beliefs are important for the preservation of natural resources in the study area. The study highlighted some beliefs that help in the conservation of these forests such as; Ban on hunting in the forest especially in *Ikyo Maaki*, Killing of Mona Monkey, Ban on Tree Cutting in the Forest, Restriction of pregnant women from entering the forest, Restriction on Defecating in the forest, Restriction on entering the forest in the night, Restriction on Grazing in the Forest

The study also emphasised effectiveness of these beliefs in the conservation of natural resources.

The belief in the supernatural powers of the natural resources, the benefits people gain from the resources, and the use of community members as enforcement agents all contribute to the study area's commitment to traditional conservation practices. It can also be concluded from the study that, even though traditional beliefs play significant roles in conservation of natural resources in the study, these methods of conservation is faced with challenges such as disrespect to traditional beliefs, influx of foreign religion and tag of traditional beliefs as idolatry.

The study's final finding is that traditional beliefs have a big impact on how natural resources are conserved in the Benue state and Nigeria at large. As a result, in order to sustain traditional conservation of natural resources, it's necessary to raise awareness about its significance, give resources to traditional institutions, change people's attitudes, and incorporate traditional conservation into formal conservation of natural resources and employing local residents as law enforcement officers.

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