

ABSTRACT

Limited land resource has resulted into poor conditions of locals in Uranga Division, Siaya County, Kenya leading to reclamation, conversion, or development of wetlands. Uranga Division has seen the reclamation, development, and conversion of wetland in Yala swamp through the Dominion Farm Project. While numerous studies have been done in this area on the impact on the ecosystem and soil structure, very little has been done on the socio-economic effects of dominion farm activity in Yala wetland. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess socio-economic effect of Dominion Farm in Yala swamp. The specific objectives included to examine the economic changes brought by the project on the lives of people of Uranga Division, assess social changes brought by the project on interaction of people in Uranga Division, and evaluate the level of benefit sharing to the community. The conceptual framework indicates that economic and social effects on the community were identified in addition to examining the level of benefit sharing principle. While anchoring the study on benefit sharing model, correlational and mixed method research designs were employed. The target population included all the households in Uranga Division, which were represented by a sample of 398 participants. The sample included 385 households (house heads were units of analysis), 10 locals, and 3 representatives from Dominion Company. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire, FGD, and interview schedule. Validity of instruments was determined by experts in School of Planning and Architecture whose input was included. Reliability of instruments was determined by Cronbach alpha coefficient at 0.7 threshold from which a value of .89 was obtained implying that it was very reliable. Quantitative data was analysed using frequency counts and percentages, and Pearson Correlation. Qualitative data was transcribed and analysed in emerging themes and sub-themes. The study established significant positive relationship between use of wetland and economic impact ($r = .713$), use of wetland and social impact ($r = .607$), use of wetland and level of benefit sharing ($r = .611$) among households in Uranga Division. Qualitative findings also confirmed that other than different uses of wetlands, the Dominion Farm Project activities have had significant socio-economic impacts with mixed reactions on benefits sharing principles. The study concluded that there were positive changes brought by economic, social and benefit sharing practices of Dominion Firm to the community and recommended that there should be enhanced benefit sharing.