Indigenous Knowledge of the Samia,
Samia District, Kenya

By
Joyce Nabwire Majanja

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is knowledge that is been held in peoples mind and it faces a danger of extinction as its holders die without having conserved it in formats that can be retrieved. This study sought to determine ways to conserve and access indigenous knowledge of the Samia people of Funyula Division, Samia District, Kenya. The specific objectives were to: identify the existing indigenous knowledge of the Samia people; ascertain the IK that is still in use among the Absamia; determine means and ways of access to Samia IK; Determine factors that impact on Samia IK; and determine ways of conservation of Samia IK. The study used symbolic interactionism for its theoretical framework. Data was gathered using face to face interviews and focus group discussions with persons aged eighteen years and above, sampled using purposive and snowball methods. Narrative analysis method was employed to analyse the data. Findings reveal there is IK currently held by the Samia, but not in retrievable formats. The IK used by an individual is influenced by their surrounding environment; Costly to document and conserve Samia IK; Few people within the community still use and value IK; there is need to document and conserve this knowledge. Super-ordinates included: family life; land ownership and use; knowledge acquisition, religion and health. With “modernization” the current Samia generation seems to water down their ways of life in favour current trends. The researcher recommends that the government put in place policies and allocate funds to enhance conservation of IK from grassroot up to district level. Educationists to come up with strategies to incorporate IK into formal school curriculum to increase awareness and support. It is hoped the findings of this study will benefit the Samia community understand their background, appreciate, and embrace some of their traditional practices. The collected Samia IK may also serve as references for scholars, researchers and the general public.