

Abstract

The Turkana lead a predominantly traditional lifestyle largely depending on available natural resources for their livelihoods. They are mainly nomadic pastoralists with a few growing crops along the rivers' floodplains. The utilization of the rangelands is characterized by little or no use of yield enhancing inputs. However, the nomadic pastoralists have been able to achieve some sort of balance between their environment and their economy through experiential co-adaptation. Through this experiential co-adaptation the Turkana people have accumulated a wealth of indigenous knowledge and established institutions that have helped them to cope with their fragile environment. However, not much of this knowledge has been used in the design and implementation of development initiatives. The article is based on a study which examined how the Turkana pastoral community living along the Turkwel riverine has over the years used its indigenous knowledge to cope with their environment. The study used participatory and household survey methods. The results show that, among others, the Turkana pastoralists cope with adverse situations through social networks, mobility, herd maximization and the adoption of 'new' adaptive strategies. It is concluded that there is a wealth of indigenous knowledge that can be used in finding practical solutions for local problems.