Indigenous Knowledge Systems; A Re-emerging Approach to Climate change Adaptation

R. Oteke
Pan African University Institute of Water and Energy Sciences (including climate change)-PAUWES, Algeria
risperoteke@yahoo.com

Low fish catch is already a challenge for the fishing communities in South Coast Kenya. This challenge is expected to exacerbate with uncertainty in weather patterns, associated with future changes in the climate, thus, putting more burden on local fisher households. However, Indigenous Knowledge Systems have been tracked for their efforts both in the past and currently in enabling fisher households’ to respond to changes in the environment. This paper aims at assessing indigenous knowledge systems when incorporated into policy formulation to enable fisher households’ adaptation under future changes in the climate. For that, semi-structured interviews (with 49 representatives of the various indigenous communities identified) were conducted in Diani Chale. Findings revealed the potential of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in bridging the climate gap communities face in their livelihood activities. However, most Indigenous Knowledge Systems have limited ability in using scenarios or other techniques to contend with climate uncertainty and the risks associated with potential futures, therefore, plan only against short time horizon. As future changes will be associated with long term changes, short term planning will be insufficient in dealing with these changes, there require capacity building. Thus, there is room for Indigenous Knowledge Systems to sustain their role of enabling fishers’ households' adaptation to climate change if the capacity can be built in terms of forecasting and long term planning.