

**Adaptive Capacity to Climate Variability of Forest Dependent Communities  
Assessment of the Role of Village Resource Management Committees in Ndongi  
Joint Forest Management Trust, Choma, Zambia.**

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**Abstract**

Despite decades of research regarding the impact of the Participatory Forest Management approach on socio-economic changes to communities as well as reduction of environmental degradation, the role of local institutions such as Village Resource Management Committees on the adaptive capacity to climate change variability of forest dependent communities has largely gone unexplored. There has been a dearth of research on understanding the role local institutions such as Village Resource Management Committees play on the adaptation capabilities to climate change variability of forest dependent communities in Zambia. The main objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Village Resource Management Committees (VRMCs) in enhancing the adaptive capacities to climate change variability of communities surrounding Ndongi forest reserve in Choma District of southern province in Zambia. A combination of primary qualitative and quantitative data, in addition to secondary data, was used in the study. The results show that the community has a relative adaptive capacity to climate change variability due the availability of options for income generation. The results have also revealed that the majority of the respondents are aware of the shift in the starting and finishing times of the rainy season for the past ten years. The study results have also shown that for the majority of the respondents, climate change variability has resulted in the overall increase in food production. The study has also revealed that the majority of households are food secure for only seven months per year.

**Key words:** Participatory Forest Management, Village Resource Management, Adaptive Capacities, Climate Change.