

## **Towards a Pro-community-based Water Resource Management System in North-west Cameroon. Practical Evidence and Lessons of Best Practices**

**Bikwibili Tantoh, Henry**

PhD Student, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, bikwibilith@mail.com

This paper examines community-based water resource management (CBWRM) in three municipalities of North-west Cameroon as well as a review of literature focusing on some successful Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. Using both empirical and secondary data collected through participatory research methods and a rapid appraisal of existing literature, it is argued that some aspects of best practice arising from the case studies can contribute significantly to promoting the development of effective community-based water management system in North-west Cameroon. This could partly be achieved through a resolute devolution and decentralization of power, active participation and empowerment of rural communities which will facilitate and invigorate a platform for capturing the views of diverse user groups and this in turn can bring about a people-centred and community-driven development process. It is important to note that in any natural resource management system, power becomes a crucial factor as it determines who has and does not have access to these common-pool resources. In this regard, it is argued in the paper that a more robust way to achieve efficient management of scarce water resources in Cameroon is by adopting a more bottom-up and integrated management approach through engaging and involving Community-Based Institutions (CBIs) and building of institutional capacity at the community level in decision-making and the management of resources that are in close proximity to communities of interest. This has been examined within contemporary theoretical and practical discourses and approaches on CBNRM in developing countries.