

Abstract

Key words: drought, conservation farming, socio economic effects, adoption rates, mitigation, potholing, ripping, crop diversification and weeding.

Drought has been known to have an adverse impact on households. Southern Africa with Zambia included has experienced cyclical rainfall which has affected yields over the years. Communities have opted for diversified farming practices in order to mitigate the effects of drought. Conservation farming is viewed as one of the ways to mitigate the effects of drought.

The Mpima women of Kabwe, in Central province of Zambia were also affected by the 2003-2005 droughts. Since the community depends solely on farming for livelihood and food security the effects of drought compromised their livelihoods. The women face a double tragedy as they are charged with looking after orphans whose parents have died as a result of AIDS related illnesses. Africare, an International organization introduced conservation farming methods to the women as a way of alleviating their problems. The study focuses on the socio economic effects of conservation farming in drought mitigation. Adoption rates of conservation farming as well as the support provided by Africare are also explored. The findings show that conservation farming has increased income and food security for some women and not others. This may be attributed to the different adoption rates and the women's differentiated ability to work in the fields.