

**ASSESSING AWARENESS AT COMMUNITY LEVEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND  
RELATED RISKS ON THE PEOPLE OF THE LAKE CHIRWA BASIN -**

*The Case of Mtogolo Community in Zomba District*

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Malawi is a small landlocked country with limited resources and facing considerable population growth in the near future. The purpose of study was to understand the effects of climate change and to determine the level of awareness on climate change in the Lake Chilwa basin particularly in relation to the Mtogolo community, Zomba, Malawi. A survey was used to collect data from 52 male and female participants to determine their level of awareness on climate change and its related risks. The Lake Chilwa Basin is known to be particularly vulnerable because of its fragile ecosystem and human activities such as farming and deforestation that have heightened the propensity of climate change and its related risks in the Basin. Unfortunately, levels of awareness of the Lake Chilwa Basin communities about climate change were not well known. Non-probability sampling was used to select participants for the interview. Analysis of the data utilized simple descriptive statistics while the results were presented as tables, figures and graphs. One single meeting was held with the village head and the village elders. Information from the village register complemented the survey results. Findings of this study indicate that over 90% of respondents are aware of climate change and its related risks. It was also found that the mass media played a major role in climate change awareness in the study area. The results also indicate that the communities have practiced some innovative indigenous measures for climate change adaptation for many years. This study concludes that extension workers, the media, researchers and civil society groups have something to learn from Mtogolo and could assist in diffusing these innovations for widespread adoption in other communities. An understanding of the link between level of awareness and adaptation of mitigation measures can be useful to the decision makers for planning, management and evaluation of climate change management policies.