

# Analysis of the Impacts of Gold Panning on The Riparian Forest of The San Karani River (Tributary of the Upper Niger) in Guinea

Soumaïla Condé

Université Julius Nyeréré de Kankan, Guinea

## ABSTRACT

A significant degradation of plant biodiversity has been observed in riparian areas Since 1970, the West African sub-region in general and Guinea in particular has experienced a drop in rainfall in its north-eastern part, Upper Guinea. This drop in rainfall combined with anthropogenic impacts on natural resources contributes significantly to the gradual degradation of plant biodiversity which once seemed to be preserved thanks to the low population density and limited industrialization. The research is being conducted in the Upper Niger watershed, Guinea. More particularly in the Upper Guinea region. In this region of Guinea, wetlands are undergoing multiple changes, particularly over the past three decades as a result of an intensification of human activities. These often-uncontrolled activities are the cause of the scarcity or disappearance of plant species in the basin in general and in the wetlands in particular. Among these activities we have agriculture and gold panning. Gold panning is practiced almost everywhere in the basin by men and women. This activity, despite its semi-mechanized nature in the locality, has negative consequences on the functioning of watercourses and often their bed is filled by the deposit of gravel. Recent studies (Mbodj, 2011) of control areas (less impacted areas) and those impacted have shown a more remarkable degradation of ecosystems in mining areas. Mining is a major issue. The term stake can be defined as what one can gain or lose by doing an activity. This notion has several definitions and is used in various fields of scientific research (Dioubaté, 2002). Each human activity, whether individual or collective, is linked to specific issues that determine human motivations. The issues related to mining can be summarized in positive and negative play: Semi-mechanized gold panning is today one of the main economic activities of the populations of the Prefecture of Mandiana. Throughout the basin, there is a considerable attraction of populations from elsewhere for the exploitation of gold, which results in a high density of populations in these gold-bearing areas. Currently this activity is a source of the degradation of biodiversity. However, maintaining the balance of wetlands is one of the conditions for preserving natural resources, and water in particular. These wetlands play a fundamental role in regulating the water regime because they absorb water during rainy periods and release it during dry periods.

**Keywords:** Prefecture of Mandiana, Impacts of gold panning, Riparian forest

