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Effects of drought on cultural tourism: selected cases of Maasai tourism groups surrounding Tarangire National Park in Tanzania

Noel Biseko Lwoga[a] and Edwin Asubisye[b]

[a]Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; [b]Department of Wildlife Management, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

This study explores the effect of drought on cultural tourism by applying the case study approach using the Maasai women's groups surrounding Tarangire National Park (TNP) in Tanzania. Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to collect data from 30 purposefully selected Maasai women and 30 tourists. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings show that drought affects tourism both positively and negatively. Positively, drought forges unity among individuals, and creates the community's external links that are crucial for tourism development. Negatively, drought interferes with the development and delivery of tourist products, thus destroying their quality and service delivery. Despite the challenges tourism faces during times of drought, including the scarcity of raw materials for making cultural products, 50% of the respondents would rather continue with tourism as a strategy to curb the effect of drought than their traditional livelihoods. Theoretically, the study shows the importance of the cultural ecology and livelihood lenses in investigating the effects of drought on tourism in a cultural setting. Practical recommendations for tourism authorities and stakeholders, as well as areas for future research, are provided.

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Cultural tourism; climate change; drought; culture; Tarangire; Maasai

Introduction

It is widely recognized by governments and researchers throughout the world that climate change is a significant social and environmental issue facing the global population and its resources (Beg et al., 2002). Houghton et al. (2001) reported that the average global surface temperature will increase by between 1.4°C and 5.8°C between 1900 and 2100. This situation has already resulted in increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods, heat waves and drought, which affect living conditions and livelihood activities (Amelung, Nicholls, & Viner, 2007). Drought, in particular, is a recurrent climatic phenomenon across the world, and is a major disaster causing huge damage to humanity, the environment and the economy (Masih, Maskey, Mussa, & Trambauer, 2014). EM-DAT (2014) reported that during the period 1900–2013, there were 642 droughts across the

CONTACT Noel Biseko Lwoga noelight@udsm.ac.tz
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