Implications of Climate Change on Cultural Tourism in the Maasai Land, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing importance of cultural tourism as an alternative livelihood activity and community's adaptation strategy in localities affected by the prolonged drought, its interrelationship with such prevailing climate change has not been emphasized. Within the culture ecology theoretical framework, this study focused on the Maasai community near the Tarangire National Park in northern Tanzania juxtaposes cultural tourism activities, their production and delivery to the prolonged drought in order to examine its dynamics and sustainability. The study applies hermeneutic phenomenology approaches to study experiences of the Maasai women engaged in cultural tourism business in the midst of the prolonged drought. The findings reveal that cultural tourism is greatly influenced both positively and negatively by the prolonged drought. Although negative perspectives (ranging from the intrapersonal, intersegment and external angles) are more pronounced than the positive ones, the Maasai women would prefer to continue with cultural tourism as an adaptation strategy to curb the effect of drought than their traditional animal grazing or small scale farming. Also, the paper provides recommendations and raises critical theoretical questions on sustainability of cultural tourism in the midst of the ongoing climate change, and its incorporation in the prevailing park management models, policies and business adaptation strategies.