Enacting Gender to Create Own Space: Tourism Development and Women Empowerment in Zanzibar

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Abstract

Within the post-structuralist perspective the paper examines Zanzibar women's self-ability to view their world and be able to get empowered through tourism by engaging in tourism related enterprises. Women's world is argued to be composed of the dominant patriarchal systems which governs individual's lives by assigning gender roles and responsibilities. Likewise, the tourism development processes have also been claimed to be constructed by unequal gender relations that tends to marginalize women position. Within this context, the paper analyses the multiplicity of the views of position of Zanzibari women in society and the structures governing their position in society as well as in tourism industry. It goes further by analysing women's view of their position as assigned by the society in order to understand their way of creating their space despite of the complex socio-economic patterns that governs their lives. Moreover, given the fact that post-structuralism stresses the importance of exploring the power of human agency, this paper, through the enactment framework lens, sees women as proactive participants with an ability to challenge and negotiate with structures and find their way to cope with them. By being so it reveals the multiple positionality of women according to their inclination to (re)produce or challenge the gendered structures.