

Pastoralism, Women and the Church in Kilosa, Tanzania

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Given the strong patriarchal systems still evident among the pastoral Maasai society one might think that the life of the Maasai women is bleak and difficult; but this is no longer the case. First-hand observation, in-depth interviews and group discussions obtained through an ethnographic-inspired approach revealed that increasingly in Kilosa, Tanzania there is new hope for the women once regarded as servants, second-class citizens and properties of men under the male-dominated empire. Where state structures, services and civil society are thin on the ground, the church is increasingly becoming involved in this transformation process. Women are increasingly learning to negotiate and manipulate rules and norms, to straddle different institutions, both formal and informal and to resist the oppressive culture. The church is facilitating and promoting self-awareness to women of their own value and potentials, even as widows, single women or divorcees. Local communities and women in particular are increasingly supported, educated and empowered to manage their own lives and shoulder their reproductive and productive roles as well as decision-making roles once regarded a male-only dominion. Some have even ventured into politics and are demanding their rights to land within the patriarchy-dominated system. The work draws on extensive fieldwork conducted in Kilosa, Tanzania between October 2010 and March 2015 on pastoral conflicts and livelihood of pastoral women.

Indigenous Ecotourism as a Poverty Eradication Strategy: A Case Study of the Maasai Community in Amboseli, Kenya.

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Tourism is presently being promoted a viable tool for poverty alleviation in many developing countries including Kenya. Much of the tourism literature has focused on the socio-economic impacts of this development strategy but there, comparatively limited research that examines the role of tourism in poverty alleviation from the perspectives of the local people. The purpose of this study was therefore to examine the contribution of indigenous ecotourism to poverty eradication in Amboseli, Kenya. The findings show that the Maasai now participate in tourism both as entrepreneurs and ‘objects of the tourist gaze’. An increasing number of them now participate in cultural boma tourism which is an indigenously homegrown tourism initiative through which they earn direct and indirect tourism income. While the income from cultural bomas tourism played a very important role in diversifying and supplementing local sources of livelihood, the study also established that the Maasai in Amboseli have fully exploited the area’s tourism potential to make any meaningful contribution to poverty alleviation and to sustain rural development. The study concludes that the Amboseli region has enormous potential for community based nature and cultural tourism which if well developed can help alleviate poverty, improve the living conditions of the local people and contribute to sustainable development.

Key words: Maasai, community, indigenous ecotourism, sustainable development, poverty alleviation

Aging in Africa: The Life of Elderly Women in Rural Kenya

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The aging population is a global phenomenon in reference to the demographic transition from high to low levels of fertility and mortality. However, “aging” has not been recognized as an urgent issue to act on among most of the developing countries on the contrary to economic and social development. It is also mentioned that there would be a rapid growth rate of elderly people all over the world in the near future, including sub-Saharan African countries. In the case of Kenya, the current elderly ratio, over 60 years old, is only 3%; however, it will reach 12% by 2050. Thus far, it is rare to have long-term care arrangement for a more effective and appropriate system to address the care needs of a rapidly expanding elderly population in Africa. “Global health and aging” by WHO (2011) raises awareness not only about the critical link between global health and aging, but also the importance of rigorous and coordinated research to close the gap in our knowledge and the need for action contingent on evidence-based policies. Moreover, since women tend to live longer, as UNFPA Report (2012) mentions that the feminization of poverty will be the key issue in aging societies. In order to assure quality in health, economic status, and safety of women, it is necessary to understand the current situation of the people’s life. At this time, there are few studies on women’s life and the “care” for them.

The main purpose of this study about elderly women in rural area is to comprehend the current situation of the “care” for elderly. How are they taken care of? Who is the care giver physically and financially? It has been a tradition in Kenya that the elderly should be taken care of by their children as they’re revered in society. However, because of social changes, such as urbanization, the situation has changed. This presentation is based on the research about the elderly women in Kwale County, Kenya, conducted on August, 2016. I interviewed 31 elderly women and families in the Golini, Kinango, and Mwaluphamba locations, utilizing the HDSS data of the HDSS (Health Demographic Surveillances System) of Nagasaki University and KEMRI (Kenya Medical Research Institute). Even though this research is still in its initial stage, there are three main findings from the research thus far: (1) most of the caregivers to elderly women are female, such as daughters, daughters-in-law, and other relatives including grandchildren; (2) elderly women prefer to be taken care of by their own daughters; however, most of them are not around because of jobs in cities like Mombasa or long distances due to relocation after marriage; (3) some of them live alone in their compound without enough support from their own children and relatives. These findings illustrate a different view from the assumed situation, and it leads to require for considering adequate support for elders in Kenyan society.

Reference:

UNFPA 2012 Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and a Challenge

(<http://www.unfpa.org/publications/ageing-twenty-first-century>)

WHO 2011 Global Health and Aging (http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/global_health.pdf)