

**TOWARDS A GENDER ANALYSIS MODEL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT OF ECOTOURISM RESOURCES IN KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed at proposing model would help promote ecotourism through gender analysis lenses aimed at ensuring equity for both men and women in the utilization of natural resources by local communities. The results showed that more men than women are involved in the utilization of environmental resources to enhance their ecotourism activities for economic gain. In contrast women use environmental resources to fulfill domestic chores and cultural obligations without much economic returns. The paper recommended that for there to be gender equity for both men and women in the management of environmental resources, a localized and functional approach of meeting local needs should be adopted through gender analysis lenses by the relevant institutional actors involved in ecotourism. In conclusion there is gender inequality in the utilization of environmental resources and this can be corrected through development of an appropriate gender analysis framework.

KEY WORDS: Ecotourism, Gender, Environment, Management, Resources

1. Introduction

Ecotourism as a market is the fastest growing segment of the tourism, currently growing at rates of 10%–12% per year, i.e., three times faster than the tourism industry as a whole (TIES, 2008). More importantly, ecotourism has been embraced by many developing countries- that are home to many of the world's rare and threatened species - with a hope of improving their economies in a way that is environmentally sustainable (Brooks, et al 2006). At the same time worldwide, there has been a steady increase of interest in the number of local communities becoming more involved in the tourism industry, and more particularly with ecotourism seeking to gain from it's robust economic benefits (Hinch, 2004). Integrated conservation models specifically present ecotourism as an effective instrument of enhancing rural livelihoods while protecting the environment (Becken & Schellhorn, 2007). Thus ecotourism is being embraced as a potential economic alternative by many rural communities who are motivated by the economic opportunities for jobs creation, new business ventures, local skill development and a possibility of securing greater control over natural resource utilization.

In Africa, women are the main food producers because of their major role in subsistence farming (Gladwin, et al, 2001). While some men may have a close connection with the environment through activities such as agricultural work, cattle grazing and hunting, in most developing countries more men than women now engage in paid employment and do not rely heavily on the natural environment as women do. In addition, where women's roles place them in close connection with the physical environment, they develop specialist knowledge because of this work, as well as an interest in protecting the environment. Therefore to achieve effective and sustainable ecotourism, gender issues should be considered. In countries where socially prescribed roles mean that women and girls generally have greater interaction with nature than men, women's cooperation is needed if the natural resource base, the resource upon which ecotourism is dependant is to be sustained.

According to Scheyvens (2000), in many parts of the developing world, rural women and girls are responsible for collection of water, fodder and fuel wood. They are also involved in income generating activities based on the sale of forest products, and crafts made from reeds and grasses. In marine environments, women are involved the in gathering of fish. As the natural constituency for environmental endeavors women suffer the most when soil erodes, water sources go dry, or trees disappear. This justifies why many environmental intervention projects are inclined towards women as the entry points (Joekes, et al 1996). Maasai women, for example, have special knowledge of walking routes, craft production and useful plants, all of which can be related to the development of tourism products and services. Thus it would seem

logical that those managing environmental projects should actively seek out women's involvement. If people (especially women) are deprived of access to resources because of the development of ecotourism, and yet they do not receive any benefits from ecotourism, it is unlikely that they will support conservation of the natural resources upon which ecotourism is based (Sindiga, 1995). This statement has particular relevance in Kisumu County where women's roles place them in close connection with the natural environment, yet they being the majority are not in the decision-making process.

The complex and dynamic nature of environmental problems require a flexible and transparent decision making processes that embraces a diversity of knowledge and values. In the Kenyan context, there has been growing emphasis in the recent past on poverty alleviation and environmental conservation by the government of Kenya in its management strategy of ecotourism. The paradigm shift has been towards seeking participation of local communities in the development and management of ecotourism (Tourism Trust Fund; 2009). For this reason mainstreaming of gender issues in management of environmental resources is of pragmatic benefit to sustainable ecotourism. The quality of environmental actions is dependent on participation; which in turn is dependent on gender dictates of environmental management strategies. These strategies of essence need to be practical so as to enable the cushioning of men and women from the diminishing or transcending environmental hazards associated with gender roles.

2. Problem Statement

Whereas ecotourism is gaining prominence as alternative source for economic livelihood of local communities, in addition to a multiplicity of actors involved in ecotourism, there is still lack of a framework for gender inclusion. Gender plays a pivotal role in shaping the environment and determining how environmental resources are used. This lack of a framework for gender analysis can lead to negative impacts resulting to environmental degradation even when there is abundance of resources to be used for ecotourism. A gender analysis model is of essence since it will help the actors involved in ecotourism carry out their activities with gender lenses to achieve gender equity.

3. Study Objective

To develop a gender analysis model for ensuring gender inclusivity in management of environmental resources by ecotourism stakeholders in Kisumu County

4. Study Methodology

The study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was used to review the concept of ecotourism to and relate it to the gender discussion. The sources of data used for analysis and discussions are drawn from scholarly articles and official documents from the Kisumu County Tourism office. To complement the findings from secondary data, primary data was obtained from field observations, preliminary interviews with the local community actors involved in the ecotourism industry within Kisumu County. The preliminary interview was done using gender rapid appraisal technique to gather basic gender aggregated data.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Conceptual Perspective of Ecotourism

Ecotourism as a sub-field of tourism is gaining much prominence as an alternative to the traditional tourism from both academic and industry perspectives. This prominence is because of the principle of sustainability and benefit to the local communities upon which ecotourism is anchored on. In addition it is also being popularly promoted as a means of reconciling natural resource conservation with economic development,

particularly in developing countries (Campbell, 2002). One of the most popularly quoted definitions of ecotourism is that of Ceballos-Lascurain (1996), where ecotourism is described as traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas. This definition is limited and more of ecotourist oriented. It focuses on the tourist motive of visiting natural places that are unadulterated to derive maximum satisfaction, but lacks the element of the local community pleasure- driven gain as that of the ecotourist.

Several authors have interrogated the concept of effective community involvement in ecotourism with regard to getting maximum benefits from ecotourism (Loon and Polakow, 2001). This line of argument follows those ecotourism activities that are considered successful should have a high degree of community control, meaning that the communities command a large proportion of the benefits instead of outsiders. There is concurrence with this by Wearing and McDonald (2002:191), who argue that ecotourism studies should not only focus at ‘the direct or actual effects of tourism on the natural and cultural environment’ but taking “a broader and more abstract approach in understanding community-based approaches to ecotourism” so as to facilitate a deeper understanding of the context in which ecotourism takes place. A content analysis of some literature from publications in journals for the last ten years, from 2003 to 2013, illuminate the fact that most of the scholarly works are yet to appreciate the gender concept in ecotourism. Gender as a concept is lacking, despite the current trend of thinking that sustainable development is that which appreciates gender for successful community based ventures. Equally for a community’s venture to be successful, the stance taken in this paper is that such ventures must incorporate the gender component for the community to benefit.

5.2 Contextualizing Gender in Environmental Resource Management

The gender meaning is very contextual, varying from society to society and it’s meaning changes overtime. However, all societies of the world are gendered though the people’s lives may vary depending on the place, age, social class, ethnic origin and religion. From a sociological point of view, gender is used by sociologists to describe all the socially given attributes, roles, activities, and responsibilities connected to being a male or a female in a given society. Thus gender identity determines how one is perceived, and how one is expected to think and act as a woman and man, because of the way society is organized. According to Kevane (2004), gender refers to the constellation of rules and identities that prescribe and proscribe behavior for persons, in their social roles as men and women. The rules and identities may be deliberate or unintended, explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious. World Bank (2011) refers to gender as socially constructed and learned male or female roles, behavior and expectations. Raj et al (2011) refer to gender as the social meanings that cultural mores and norms impart to biological differences between sexes. In this context gender extends beyond the realms of ideology and culture. Within a historical-cultural context, gender determined the division of labor within most societies, whereby women traditionally bore most of the responsibilities for reproductive activities (non-income generating activities such as bearing and rearing children) while also contributing to the productive activities (in-come generating activities). This meaning depicts the cultural and social aspect of sexuality.

In some studies, gender roles and sex roles are interchangeably used. De Biagiand Dantas (2001), use the terms interchangeably and define gender roles or sex roles as an individual’s endorsement of personal characteristics, occupations and behaviors considered to be appropriate for women and men in a particular culture. The concept of gender roles thus enables one see the links between the individual, the social order and the culture. Within the frame of this thought gender roles would be defined as constituting a patterned cluster of behavior and attitudes that are culturally prescribed, meaning it refers to the set of attitudes and

behaviors socially expected from the members of a particular gender identity. It can further be explained that individuals act and interact according to the proscribed understanding of what is appropriate and expected of them. Individuals will also behave and interact always to conform to the constellation of qualities understood to characterize males and females in their culture. According to Davis and Greenstein (2009), the development of sex role identity is influenced by both biological and historical-cultural factors in complex interactions and with changing degrees of ascendancy at different critical periods. There are also other arguments that have been advanced that explain women's and men's gender role formation as being embedded in socio-cultural context. This implies that all cultures interpret and translate the biological differences between men and women into beliefs about what behaviors or activities are appropriate for each gender as well as their rights, resources and power.

Another perspective of gender roles is one that brings in the aspect of tasks assigned within domestic and work spheres. The tasks are usually represented as more suitable for one sex than the other (i.e. for males rather than females or vice versa), excluding all those that can be included in the complex reality of sexuality. The multiple work roles that women and men do can be categorized as production, essential household and community service, and community management and political activities. Productive activities include all tasks that contribute to the income and economic welfare and advancement of the household and community. Women's productive roles include cash and subsistence farming, home-based industries and formal sector employment. Reproductive activities are mainly activities carried out to reproduce and care for the household. These reproductive roles include pregnancy, childbirth, breast-feeding and child bearing. Essential household and community services are those which must be carried out daily to meet the family and community basic needs such as fuel and water collection, education, healthcare and food preparation. Community management and political activities refer to the management and conversion of resources for collective community consumption as well participation in religious and cultural ceremonies, formal and informal political activities and involvement in development organization, such as non-government organizations or women's groups.

According to the interactionist approach, roles (including gender roles) are not fixed, but are constantly negotiated between individuals, implying that gender roles are not static, but keep on changing according to the situation. Wood and Eagly (2002), argue that within the workspace, for instance, male and female roles are becoming interchangeable, while the same does not occur at the domestic sphere, as females still must assume extra tasks such as a second or third job, mostly without participation of males. Based on this argument, one then can conclude that gender roles are specific to space and time. Other criticisms have also emerged against those who propagate the gender role differences concept. According to Weber, et al, (2005), there is eminent danger in perceiving men and women as each having different needs, for this can lead to expectations based on norms that will continue to produce and re-produce gender roles. It can also lead to exclusion of those individuals who feel that they do not fall into either of these two categories. They further argue that it may be more appropriate to adopt a gender-neutral perspective and look at differences between individuals instead of between men and women (Maddux and Brewer, 2005). However, adopting a gender neutral perspective has its own demerits. Anthony (2001), is of the view that because men and women use space differently and have different responsibilities and experiences, there is therefore need to differentiate their roles.

6. Results and Discussions

6.1 Ecotourism Resources in Kisumu

This study was carried out in Usoma beach. Within the wider local context, the study site is located on the South-East of Lake Victoria shores and is part of Kisumu County. In the vicinity are other lake beaches and fish landing sites, histo-cultural sites, rich agricultural farms and an enormous stretch of the Lake Victoria wetland. The local community ethnicity is mainly composed of the Luos, who still depict some cultural beliefs and practices that are considered significant components of ecotourism. However, in the urban and peri-urban areas, there exist other ethnic groups such as the Abaluhya, Abagusii and Indians. Most of the local community residents in the rural hinterland and villages have in the past heavily been dependent partly on the dwindling lake fishing and subsistence agriculture. A considerable variety of agricultural crops are grown in the villages, such as maize, beans, millet, cassavas, sweet potatoes and a variety of vegetables and fruit trees. Fishing is still an important activity, both at an individual level and at village level, since fish forms part of the staple food. There is a clear gender division of labor, for example, women prepare fields and engage in vegetable cultivation, while men mostly are outside the household domain thus more often than not are engaged in activities that fend for the family. Ecotourism activities either take place at the family level or the village level on land that is owned by the community, such as the beaches. These communal activities are regulated through organized groups such as the Beach Management Units, which oversee the day to day running of activities at the beaches. Most of the men who get engaged in ecotourism activities spend many hours at the lake and the beaches, by being involved in ecotourism activities such as boating, fishing and nature-tour guides. Some of the women are involved in fish mongering, petty business retailing and cooking traditional food cuisine.

The Kisumu County Government has designated beaches as potential ecotourism attraction sites. Because there has been a decline of fish in the lake progressively over the years resulting to a depressed local economy, the county government has been prompted to champion diversification to other community beneficial activities such as ecotourism. Through ecotourism, the government hopes to strike a balance between local development and natural resource protection. Local resources available for developing attractive ecotourism for the area include wetland resources, such as aquatic wildlife, swamps and migratory birds, as well as cultural and historical establishments. Based on these natural resource endowments; the ecotourism activities in the area range from: bird watching, education and research, fishing, walks to see sacred places, trees, waterfalls and wildlife, game viewing, photography and filming, scenic viewing, village walks, traditional music and dancing.

6.2 Gender Resource Utilization Analysis

The study through purposive sampling, selected Usoma beach as a unique and major convergence point for ecotourism in Kisumu County. To gather gender disaggregated data, using a Rapid Gender Assessment, it was possible to profile the environmental resources used by both men and women in Usoma beach. A sample population of 20 on a ratio of 10:10 for both male and female was used.

Table 1 Environmental resource utilization by gender

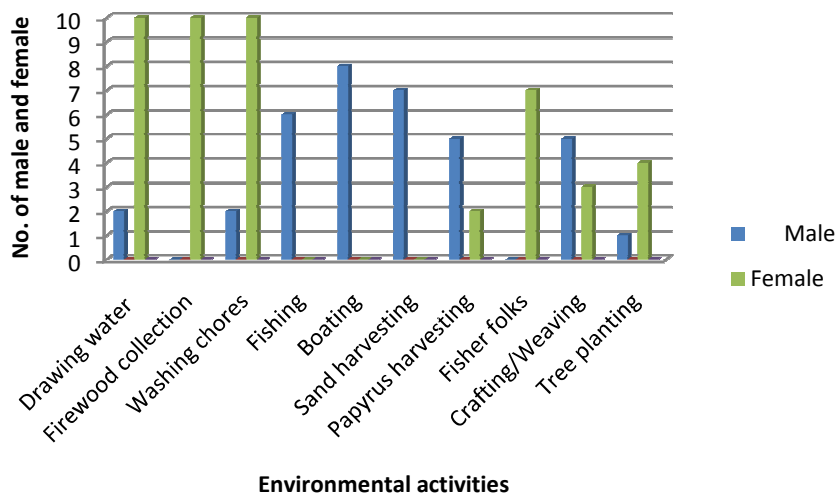
Source: Fieldwork (2015)

Activity	Male		Female	
	No.	Category	No.	Category
Drawing water	2	Economic	10	Cultural
Firewood collection	0	Economic	10	Cultural
Washing chores	2	Economic	10	Cultural
Fishing	6	Economic	0	Economic
Boating	8	Economic	0	Economic
Sand harvesting	7	Economic	0	Economic
Papyrus harvesting	5	Economic	2	Economic
Fisher folks	0	Economic	7	Economic
Crafting/Weaving	5	Economic	3	Economic
Tree planting	1	Economic	4	Cultural

Table 1.1 Environmental resource utilization by gender

Source: Fieldwork (2015)

Figure 1.1 Activities performance by Gender



From table 1 and figure 1, it is succinctly clear that men were involved mainly in activities that were of economic gain, while women were more engaged in essential household activities because of cultural dictates. All the 10 men were involved in activities are economic of nature, while none of them were involved in any activity for cultural reasons. None of the 10 women interviewed were involved in the most economical gainful activities of fishing, boating and sand harvesting. The highest numbers of men were involved in fishing (6), boating (8) and sand harvesting (7). All the 10 women interviewed were engaged in activities that had no economic benefits such as drawing water (10), firewood collection (10) and washing clothes (10). The only economic activity that majority of the women were involved in was fish selling. This implies that men are mainly engaged in production activities for economic gain while women are mainly engaged in essential household activities as domestic chores.

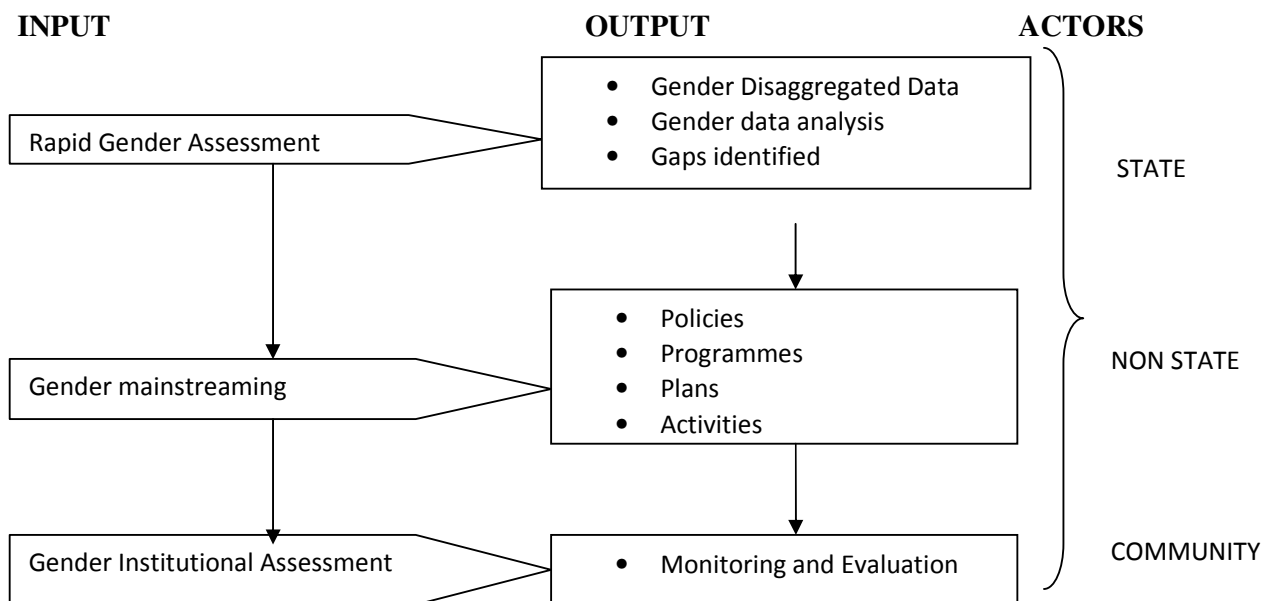
From these results the paper posits that despite ecotourism definitions having emphasis on community inclusion which distinguishes it from other forms of tourism, sustainability cannot be achieved if gender issues are not incorporated. For ecotourism to be embraced by both men and men, factors that dictate the nature and extent of community participation have to be determined, instead of undertaking a holistic view of any community initiatives. Thus the varying paradigms in management of environmental resources call for a model that uses a gender analysis lenses to assure gender inclusivity in ecotourism projects and programmes. The purpose of a gender analysis model is to develop an approach that is context specific, applicable to Kisumu County and the local community needs, which can be operationalized to undertake intervention activities.

To ensure that there is equity in the manner in which men and women utilize environmental resources; gender analysis has to be carried out in any ecotourism project that is being undertaken. Gender analysis examines how the social roles of men and women are determined and how those roles affect the outcomes being studied. Although the term *gender analysis* is often used to refer to studies that look at women, it is not possible to study women’s behavior without considering the broader contexts facing both women and men. Gender analysis examines how the roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and women interact and how that affects outcomes. In ecotourism, gender analysis provides insights into how socially constructed roles and responsibilities shape the myriad decisions around ecotourism development and environmental resources management.

7. Recommendations

The study recommends that for proper gender analysis, an appropriate model that concerns all in the environmental management of ecotourism resources has to be developed. Figure: 2 below presents a proposed model that would ensure gender inclusivity, which would entail: rapid gender assessment, gender mainstreaming and gender institutional assessment.

Figure 2: Proposed Gender Analysis Model



Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) involves the gathering of some critical data quickly to enable an understanding of conditions in ecotourism from the perspective of gender-sensitive lens. The process does not involve detailed assessment; however it is able to generate sufficient baseline data for development of gender mainstreaming strategy for integration of gender sensitive issues and priorities. RGA entails developing objectives with gender lenses to identify and gather baseline data, identifying analytical gaps, undertaking a gender situational analysis, formulating thematic areas of focus by looking at local conditions and capabilities such as socio-economic characteristics, environmental resources, and environmental management actors. The baseline data gathered can be used to develop gender mainstreaming strategy with an aim of preparing Gender Equity Action Plans by the County Government of Kisumu. The advantage of RGA as a methodology is, it is based on the collection and analysis of existing documents in areas of inquiry and the interviewing of relevant actors in the thematic areas of ecotourism projects. Also since RGA methodology is not premised on generating original data if similar data already exists, within the confines of limited resources and timeframe, RGA methodology will help in focusing on using existing studies, government documents and policies, documents and research from Community Based Organizations. As a departure from traditional quantitative research methodologies, RGA appreciates the various roles played by different players using a rapid bottom –up.

7.2 Gender Mainstreaming

The ultimate outcome of Gender Analysis is gender mainstreaming policies and programmes. Gender mainstreaming means making gender concerns the responsibility of all in an organization, and ensuring that they are integrated into all structures and all work (Candida et al 2005). This is seen as an alternative to making gender concerns the sole responsibility of a smaller specialist team or unit. To integrate gender mainstreaming in ecotourism means to promote structures which support the equality of women and men, by accepting their differences for the purpose of equal opportunities. It involves methodical planning steps to integrate equal opportunities for women and men in ecotourism. The process involves focusing on the integration of gender equality in all stages of the planning process; from formulating the objectives to planning the measures and to implementing and evaluating them. For successful implementation it is necessary to build gender planning competence as a part of the management expertise of ecotourism projects and activities. Gender mainstreaming in ecotourism

7.3 Gender Institutional Assessment

Gender institutional assessment is can be a critical component of the RGA. It involves doing a gender analysis of the utilization of the environment in terms of the existing gender policies and practices in the utilities, the level of gender awareness in the institutions, the sensitivity of management systems to the specific and unique needs of both men and women, a gender analysis of personnel policies and employment and hiring practices, and the implication of the analysis on service provision, norms, standards, user fees. However, gender institutional assessments are as complex as the institutions themselves since it requires very specific skills and expertise. As such, it is not possible to conduct a rapid institutional assessment in a limited time. However, certain critical aspects of gender from the institution can be identified and focused on such as gender composition of personnel and gender gaps in the different professions, positions and skills in environmental resource utilization. The institutions for analysis can be Community Based Organizations which are either for women, men, youths or sector specific.

8. Conclusion

The aim of the study as stated in the abstract was to provide a model that would help promote ecotourism through gender analysis lenses aimed at ensuring equity for both men and women in the utilization of natural resources by local communities. It can be observed from the study that decisions on ecotourism development made by implementing agencies should reflect the interests of diverse groups of community members, whose should genuinely share in the benefits of the ecotourism initiatives through a gender analysis framework. The framework should facilitate good natural resource management which is eminent in the development of ecotourism resources. An appropriate framework will finally assist in the transfer of skills and knowledge in environmental management of natural resources to a broad range of community members, including women involved in ecotourism. The ultimate aim is to secure *de jure* and *de facto* equality between men and women. Eventually this will also ensure gender perspective is integrated in all areas of policy and decision-making activities of ecotourism. In conclusion the efficacy of community based planning for stakeholder involvement in ecotourism, is dependent on the extent of consideration of gender.

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