



The Role of Ecotourism to Income of Small-Scale Business Women in Arumeru District, Tanzania

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0324.0724>

ABSTRACT

Small-scale business women in Arumeru District are largely characterized by the degree of unemployment and dispossession, and low skills but are rich in natural resources, so ecotourism is one of the potential sustainable land uses that can help the improvement of small-scale business women's income. Even though, ecotourism businesses have many advantages to the community's livelihood, their contribution to the income of the small-scale businesswomen is not empirically substantiated. This study assesses the role of ecotourism on small-scale business women's income in the Arumeru District in Tanzania. Specifically, the study examines ecotourism activities that promote small-scale business women's income in the study area. A repeated cross-sectional research design is applied. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques are used to select small-scale businesswomen and Key Informants respectively. Data are collected using the questionnaire survey and Key Informants' interviews. The quantitative data analyzed through descriptive statistics and the use of simple revenue equations, while qualitative data are analyzed through content analysis. The study findings show that small-scale business women engage themselves in handcraft and artisan cultural performance, food vending, and shopkeeping as major eco-tourism activities to generate their income. Also, small-scale businesswomen have substantial incomes that enable them to meet their livelihoods. The study concludes that eco-tourism subsidizes to income among small-scale businesswomen in Arumeru District. The study recommends that there is a need to engage key stakeholders related to tourism to ensure small-scale businesswomen benefit from ecotourism opportunities.

Keywords - Ecotourism, small-scale business women, small-scale business women's income, livelihood.

1.0 Introduction

Small-scale business women's income generation refers to the situation whereby small-scale business women can earn money for themselves to meet their everyday needs through agriculture, business, and formal employment (Brockington, 2001; Scheyvens, 2021). Small-scale business women's income is an important component for the improvement of small-scale business women's livelihood. About 70% of small-scale businesswomen worldwide are poor, they are poor because they have low education and suffer from discriminatory traditions and customary laws (Kato and Kratzer, 2013). Involving women in the tourism sector as small-scale entrepreneurs is an important strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of gender equality and the growth of their economy (UNWTO 2019). This has contributed to poverty reduction amongst small-scale businesswomen. Ecotourism has been defined as responsible travel to natural areas where the conservation of the environment takes place and improves the welfare of the local people (Koki, 2017). Ecotourism is the part of tourism that brings huge benefits through the national to host communities in the form of individuals and groups in environmental and natural resources conservation (Walter et al., 2018; K.C.et al., 2018). Economic sectors including ecotourism employ large percentages of small-scale businesswomen at comparatively high wages and help to improve their relative economic well-being (Mgonja et al., 2015). Involving in ecotourism activities in rural areas has improved not only men's but also small-scale business women's livelihoods, thus enhancing their well-being (Kunjuraman and Hussin, 2016).

In Malaysia, small-scale business women's participation in development projects such as ecotourism activities in rural areas improved their livelihood and enhanced their lifestyle politically, economically, psychologically, and socially (Kunjuraman and Hussin, 2016). Likewise, in Nepal through ecotourism, small-scale business women perform various forms of business namely selling food and soft drinks, renting out toilet services, and renting out cottages for visitors which in turn help them to contribute about 45% of the total family income (Tambani et al., 2022). Moreover in Romania through ecotourism, small-scale business women's livelihoods were improved as they were given both formal and informal opportunities in the sector (Terry, 2011).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, ecotourism is looked at as one of the catalysts in promoting community development and well-being. Ecotourism hinged on the premise of promoting responsible travel to natural areas, making a positive contribution to environmental conservation, and enhancing the well-being of the local livelihood of the community (Mrema et al., 2015; Anup, 2016; Kimengsi, 2019). Also in Sub-Saharan ecotourism was found to be one of the fastest growing sectors, and a driving force for Socioeconomic development, as well as the fact small-scale business women can be empowered since

they can manage most of the hospitality business Hammami.M (2023). Moreover, a study conducted by Irandu and Shah (2016) in Kenya points out that the goals of ecotourism development should be fostered alongside community development and ecotourism also has the potential to increase gender equity and promote small-scale business women's empowerment with income-generating activities and education.

In Tanzania, small-scale businesswomen involve themselves in tourism and utilize the tourism opportunities however; small-scale businesswomen in some areas are not satisfied with the tourism opportunities due to gender inequalities which still exist as a major barrier for small-scale businesswomen's income generation (Maliva, 2016). In addition, despite an increase in revenues, there was discontent among residents regarding the percentage share and other benefits they receive from ecotourism on average, ecotourism contributed 9.6% of total annual household income but only 22.7% of the households earn income from ecotourism (Shoo and Songorwa, 2014)

The Government of Tanzania (GoT) has taken various measures to empower small-scale business women economically, including implementation of policies such as Tanzania Development Vision (TDV) 2025, National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP I and II), National Strategy for Gender Development (NSGD) (2005), Small-scale business women Development Fund (WDF); Tanzania Small-scale business women Empowerment Policy of 2000; and Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) (URT, 2012; Kato and Katzer, 2013). Despite the efforts taken by the Government of Tanzania to promote eco-tourism, the level of small-scale business women's income is low, for example, about 60% of the small-scale business women live with less than 1 USD per day and are not actively participating in decision-making about issues that matter most in their lives both at household and community level (Maliva, 2016). This study therefore assessed the contribution of ecotourism on small-scale business women's income in Arumeru District Tanzania. Specifically, the study aimed to examine ecotourism activities that promote small-scale business women's income in the study area. This study was guided by Tourism-Economic Growth Theory which was propounded by Mackens (1998). The theory states that tourism is an effective strategy for the improvement of people's payments and thus strengthening the national economy in less developed countries. Komppula (2013) argued that tourism is an essential factor in the life of less developed societies including Tanzania because of its direct effect on the economic sectors. Therefore, in this case, ecotourism is considered an essential strategy for income generation by small-scale businesswomen who engage in eco-tourism activities in Arumeru District.

2.0 Methodology

This study applied a repeated cross-sectional research design whereby data were collected from the same respondents in the study area and the first study was conducted in 2020 on a similar topic. The study area was conducted in in Arumeru District involving two wards which are; Usa River and Kiutu. The two wards were selected to have higher eco-tourism activities compared to other Wards in the district (Ngonya, 2015). Given the study population of 380 small-scale businesswomen engaged in eco-tourism in two wards, the sample size of 191 small-scale businesswomen engaged in eco-tourism was estimated using a model as per Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Proportionate samples of 112 and 79 small-scale businesswomen from the Usa River and Kiutu Wards respectively were obtained. Random sampling technique was employed to select small-scale business women engaging in ecotourism activities in the study area and a purposive sampling technique was used to obtain one District tourist officer and two Ward Executive Officers (WEOs). Primary data were collected using questionnaires surveys and key informant interviews while secondary data were collected through documentary review.

The information based on ecotourism activities that promoted small-scale business women's income was analyzed through multiple responses using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. Furthermore, income collected by small-scale businesswomen from ecotourism was analyzed using the simple revenue function to obtain income collected per day and thereafter computed per year, and then mean income was obtained through descriptive statistics. Mean was used to express the average income collected by small-scale businesswomen from ecotourism. The following formula was used to compute total revenue;

$$TR = QP \text{ .(1)}$$

Where;

TR = Total Revenues collected in an investment

Q = Quantity of goods sold

P = Price indicated for a particular good

All qualitative data from all objectives were analyzed through content analysis.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Ecotourism Activities that Promote Small-scale Business Women's Income

The study examined ecotourism activities in which small-scale businesswomen are engaged to generate their income in the study area. Ecotourism activities that generate small-scale business women's income are shown in Table 1.

3.1.1 Handcrafts and Artisan

The study findings show that 96.3% of all the respondents said that, handcrafts and artisans play a great role in the generation of small-scale business women's income (Table 1). This implies that ecotourism creates job opportunities for small-scale businesses women including formal and informal employment whereby some small-scale businesswomen get a salary as a source of income through formal employment by being employed in tourist hotels and cultural heritage sites while other small-scale businesswomen are self-employed as they engaged in different activities such as art and craft product selling hence get income for improvement of their livelihood. This is similar to Sharma and Sarmah (2019) and Scheyvens (2010) who argued that the tourism sector provides various entry points for small-scale business women's employment and opportunities for creating self-employment in small and medium-sized income-generating activities.

One key informant said that;

"...some small-scale business women have special knowledge of handcraft production attractive objects such as table mat, beads, baskets, weaving, tapestries, ceramics, textiles and the like, these items attract tourists and they earn more money by selling them" (Ward Executive Officer (WEO), Kiutu Ward, Arumeru District 12/06/2023).

The finding means that small-scale business women in the study area engaged in handcrafts and artisan to generate income and it implies that through ecotourism opportunities present in the study area where small-scale business women can engage in handcrafts and arts activities and generate income. These findings agree with Kimengsi et al.(2019) who argued that the production and sale of arts and crafts items and the promotion of cultural heritage sites as key ecotourism choices in the promotion of household income. Also, Waren and Larsen (1996) stated that small-scale businesswomen have a closer connection with the physical environment of their community in which they use locally available resources such as trees, soil, glasses, and water to make different art products and earn income.

3.1.2 Cultural performance

Findings indicated that 69.6% of all respondents pointed out that cultural performance is among the opportunities that generate income for small-scale businesswomen (Table 1). This means that women in the study area use their cultures such as traditional clothes, food, dance, and their language as a source of income. The finding agrees with Ekwale (2014) who argued that one of the benefits of ecotourism is to provide cultural exchange between hosts and guests, in that case, the study findings imply that ecotourism provides an avenue for small-scale businesswomen to produce and sell traditional goods that attract tourist visitors in their area, such as clothes, shoes, local ornament and cooking of local food. It further implies that small-scale businesswomen may perform cultural dances to entertain tourists and in turn, generate income.

The findings from another key informant pointed out that,

"...small-scale business women established a business organization called Mulala cultural program under the Agape Small-scale business women Community to fight against poverty. They offer safaris for nature walking, and dancing especially in high seasons." (Tourist Officer, Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) Arusha. 15/06/2023).

The finding means that, through ecotourism opportunities small-scale business women organized themselves into a group and initiated cultural program that contained different activities to generate income that aimed to raise small-scale business women's income. Such organizations could help them find support from different stakeholders to support their initiatives to generate income using their cultural products like traditional dance, traditional foods, and hiking to the natural environment. The study resembles a study by Lama (1998) which found that in Langtang small-scale businesswomen from Nepal performed cultural dances for tourists and used the funds raised to restore their local monastery.

Table 1: Ecotourism related activities that promote small-scale business women's income

Variable	N	frequencies	%
Hand crafts and artisan	191	184	96.3
Cultural performance	191	133	69.6
Shop keeping	191	131	68.6
Walking and tour guiding	191	68	35.6
Hiking	191	70	36.6
Food vending	191	127	66.5

**Multiple responses existed hence column tallies may exceed 191 and 100% respectively*

Source: Field data (2023)

3.1.3 Shopkeeping

Findings indicate that 68.6% of small-scale businesswomen were engaged in shop keeping which generated income for them (Table 1). This means that 68.6% out of 191 small-scale businesswomen in a study area were able to utilize ecotourism opportunities by selling different shop products and generating income. This implies that ecotourism enabled small-scale business women to start up shops in their area where they sell different goods to people who are engaging in eco-tourism activities and tourists' visitors and hence earn income for their development.

These findings agree with Koki (2017) who argued that ecotourism facilities like National Parks, hotels, and campsites, led to the establishment and existence of small trading such as curio shops that sell local tourism products like carvings and souvenirs, increasing the market chain for the local products supplied to them especially agricultural products such as maize, beans, milk products and vegetables. Also, this implies that small-scale business women can use the shop to sell different cultural products such as bracelets, traditional ornaments, traditional bells, and other different products that attract tourists.

3.1.4 Walking and Tour Guiding

Findings indicated that 35.6% of small-scale businesswomen were involved in walking and guiding activities (Table 1). This shows that few small-scale businesswomen were interested in walking routes activities as a source of income. Since walking and tour guiding an opportunities that can be used by small-scale businesswomen women generate income while showcasing their local expertise and passion for travel and exploration, in the study area, this is contrary because most small-scale businesswomen in the study area were not using these opportunity due to some culture barrier which cusses women to stay near their home place busy with domestic work which limited them not spent more time outside their home environment thereby hinder small-scale business women from walking long distances for the sake of generating income. The finding agrees with Shoo and Songorwa (2014) who argued that Social norms have been reported to be one of the major barriers to small-scale business women's income generation through ecotourism opportunities. Also, the study implies that women can do better in the generation of income in the study area because of ecotourism opportunities but the small-scale business women are limited but culture and norms

3.4.5 Hiking

The findings show that 36.6% of all the respondents mentioned hiking activities as the source of generating income (Table 1). This implies that because small-scale businesswomen had other domestic responsibilities that prevented them from walking long distances may spend many days far from their families a situation which is against the norms and traditions in the study area.

The interview with key informants indicated that;

"...small-scale business women in Arumeru District are affected by a patriarchal system whereby men control their decision, so it was difficult for small-scale business women to use hiking as an activity to generate income, which could demand them to leave domestic responsibilities" (WEO, Usariver Ward. 18/06/2023).

This means that in a study area, male-dominated decision-making over small-scale businesswomen therefore small-scale businesswomen are not free to decide on the type of activities to do to generate income especially that demand them to spend more time outside their home environment. This implies that it is difficult for small-scale businesswomen to generate income through hiking activities due to the patriarchal system in many societies. This finding agrees with Hunt and Harbor (2019) who acknowledged that when small-scale business women are not involved in decision making can take them away from their traditional roles and obligations for periods, and also because of the suspicion that a woman travelling alone will probably commit adultery. Also, Bakari (2015) argued that ecotourism enterprises have for some time been largely male-dominated and so in small-scale businesses women's involvement has rarely been considered a priority.

3.1.6 Food vending

The study found that about 66.5% of all the respondents revealed that ecotourism led to the creation of food vending (Table 1). This means that out of 191 respondents, 66.5% engaged in activities of food vending as a means to generate income. This implies that small-scale businesswomen in the study area do engage in food vending activities as it has high demand compared to other products since everyone needs survival food hence being sure of raising their income day to day through food vending. This finding is similar to that of Scheyvens (2010) who argued that through ecotourism, small-scale businesswomen become financially stable and can manage their families. Therefore food vending was seen as a major activity that women depend on to raise the income of small-scale business women in a study area

An interview with one Key informant shows that;

"...Ecotourism has created local job opportunities for small-scale businesswomen as there are several small-scale businesswomen who are engaged in various tourism-related activities such as selling traditional food to tourists, various positions in tourist hotels, lodges, restaurants, and curio shops hotel operations as well as casual workers like compound cleaners" (WEO, Kiutu Ward. 12/06/2020).

This finding means that small-scale businesswomen in the study area use ecotourism opportunities through being employed in lodges, restaurants, curio shops, lodges, or self-employment by selling traditional foods and other products that attract tourism to generate income. This finding concurs with that

of Luvanga and Shitundu (2003) who pointed out that, participation in eco-tourism among members of households motivated small-scale businesswomen in Tanzania to benefit from employment, incomes, creation of external links and the desire to use the incomes received from tourist related activities.

3.2 Income Collected per Annum by Small-scale Businesses from Ecotourism Activities

Study findings indicated that income was collected per year by small-scale businesswomen; minimum income was TZS 253,475/= while maximum annual income was 19,479,333 with an average income of TZS 10,679,167 (Table 2). However, literature shows that the poverty income line in Tanzania is based on the national basic needs poverty line of 36,482 TZS per adult per month (World Bank, 2018). This study finding indicates that the average income for small-scale businesswomen engaging in eco-tourism in the study area is relatively higher compared to the national basic needs poverty line as per the year 2018 statistics. This suggests that small-scale businesswomen engaging in eco-tourism in Arumeru District are pro-poor. The finding is similar to that of Shoo and Songorwa (2014) who realized that there was an increase in revenues through ecotourism opportunities.

Table 2: Income collected by small-scale business women from ecotourism activities per annum (TZS)

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Income of respondent in Tzs per annum	191	253,475	19,479,333	10,679,167

Source: Field data (2023)

Also, this study's findings agree with Kunjuraman and Hussin (2016) who argued that small-scale business women's participation in development projects such as ecotourism activities in rural areas of Malaysia improved their livelihood economically. On the other hand, Kimengis et al. (2019) argued that through ecotourism the environment remains safe and more opportunities are generated for the local community to benefit.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes activities like handicrafts and artisan, cultural performance, food vending, and, shop keeping were the leading activities that generated income for small-scale businesswomen through ecotourism in the study area. Also, ecotourism provides small-scale businesswomen who engage in eco-tourism with opportunities to raise their income. It is concluded that eco-tourism has contributed to the increase in income among small-scale businesswomen in the Arumeru district. The increased income is the avenue towards improved livelihood among small-scale businesswomen in the study area.

It is recommended that regulatory authorities articulate clear policies, regulations, and guidelines that delineate strategies on how to implement ecotourism activities in most parts of Tanzania. Such strategies should describe how to increase the accessibility of ecotourism benefits to local communities, increase small-scale business women participation, and benefit and elucidate better mechanisms of sharing revenues generated from ecotourism.

Also, this study recommends that it is important to integrate all the key stakeholders who can contribute to ensure that small-scale businesswomen in the area benefit from the available eco-tourist business ventures. The stakeholders may also include tour operators or travel agencies, environmental and conservation authorities, government, NGOs, and the local communities. This could also increase conservation benefits access by small-scale businesswomen who are keen to protect their areas.

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