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ALLEVIATING POVERTY THROUGH ECOTOURISM PROGRAMMES IN NGORONGORO CONSERVATION –TANZANIA-CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT.
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The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in northern Tanzania covers an area of 8292km. The area's natural and cultural endowment namely the world's highest density of large mammal species, the Ngorongoro crater (largest unfolded caldera), two world's richest paleontological and archaeological sites (Alaitole and Oldupai) ,which spans a periods of 3.5 million years in human evolution and local people who undertake pastoralism i.e Maasai, Hadzabe and Tatoga has made the place a unique protected area in Africa and warranted a list of world heritage sites in 1979 and an international biosphere reserve in 1981.

In efforts to realize its vision and its new management regimes (a place where pastoralism, conservation and tourism coexist harmoniously) the area initiated and supported programmes which involve local people that harmonies relationship between wildlife-protected areas and local communities.

Of those programmes is ecotourism which is defined in this paper as form of tourism designed to maximize benefits to local communities without jeopardizing natural and cultural environment. Under this projects vision, ten (10) Cultural bomas (Places where local communities can interact with the tourists, selling their handicrafts) where established to ensure income generation to local people and therefore way out to poverty.

Although this project has been in operation for sometimes, local people claim they are not fully benefiting as ambitioned. This paper will therefore, strives to examine the social economic benefits accrued from the mentioned project and suggests what is needed to have genuine social benefits and serving as tools for sustainable community development.

Keywords: Ecotourism, livestock Keepers and Livelihoods and Poverty alleviation.

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