EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON LIVELIHOODS: A CASE STUDY OF ITHANGA DENEARY, MURANGA COUNTY-KENYA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Climate Change and variability are major threats to sustainable development of our time, causing the greatest impacts on the socio-economic system of the world. Africa is considered to be particularly vulnerable to climate change-induced effects largely due to lack of financial, institutional and technological capacity. Kenya, like the rest of the world, is experiencing climate change and variability and the associated adverse trends. It impacts on ecosystems, water resources, food, health, coastal zones, industrial activity and human settlements. Severe weather and extreme climate events and other climatic fluctuations have been shown to have a high influence on the social and economic activities of the country and the performance of the country's economy. This study investigated the effect of Climate Change on livelihoods in a case study of Ithanga Deanery, Muranga County-Kenya. There is little information on the effects of climate change on livelihoods. Substantial efforts have been directed towards understanding climate change impacts on agriculture and ecosystems, less efforts however, have been directed towards meso level impacts. Therefore, the present study intended to fill the current gaps and analyze the effect of Climate Change on rural livelihoods in Ithanga Deanery in Muranga County. The study also sought to assess the various adaptive and coping strategies used by the affected community. The overall objective of the study set to analyze the effect of Climate Change on rural livelihoods in Ithanga Deanery. Specifically, the study set 1) to analyze the factors contributing to Climate Change on rural households, 2) identify effects of climatic change on rural livelihood in Ithanga Deanery. 3) Examine the coping mechanisms adopted by locals in Ithanga Deanery. A case study design research was adopted and a sample of 89 households was selected through stratified random sampling. The study used both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data was gathered using questionnaires and checklists. The checklists were used to collect data from Focus Group Discussions and key informants. The secondary data was collected from past theses, journals and other related studies. The data collected was coded numerically and presented in charts, tables, percentages, frequencies and means generated from Microsoft Excel (2007) and SPSS (19). Relevant correlations were made where appropriate to explore the relationship between variables. The study findings reveal that climate change has affected food security and livelihoods negatively. The study also found that the population increase was affecting the socio-economic status of households in Ithanga Deanary. The research concluded that impacts of climate change in Ithanga Deanery are a reality that requires urgent attention. The study further recommends for appropriate family planning measures to be put in place to address population increase.

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