THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATORY WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ON LOCAL COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS: A CASE OF NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK, KITENGELA SUB – COUNTY, KENYA

By

Arthur Osore

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The study examined how participatory wildlife conservation affects the livelihoods of communities in the Kitengela sub-county. New and severe human activity patterns such as settlements, quarrying, fencing and urban sprawl from Kitengela and Athi river townships have put a greater constraint on sustainable conservation of the greater Nairobi National Park ecosystem. The study was guided by four objectives. First, the study sought to assess the status of implementation of participatory wildlife management in Kitengela sub-county. Second, the study aimed at determining the livelihood effects of participatory wildlife management in Kitengela sub-county. Third, it sought to identify the opportunities in implementing participatory wildlife management in Kitengela sub-county. Fourth, the study sought to establish the challenges faced in participatory wildlife management in Kitengela sub-county. This research used a cross sectional survey whose target population consisted of all the 5005 households in Kitengela Sub-county. For this study, a representative sample of 200 households (50 from each of the four identified hotspot areas of Empakasi, Ilkeek-lemedung'i, Ololoitikoshi and Oloskaiki) was randomly selected. The study used primary data, which was gathered from respondents using semi structured interviews with the household heads, key informants interview and Focus Group Discussions, which was analyzed using both content analysis and descriptive statistics. The study established that the Kenya Wildlife Service through the management of Nairobi national park had effected corporate social responsibility framework through which they were funding construction of schools in Empakasi village. Others include creation of employment opportunities for the locals through clean up exercise around the park. In addition, through their participation in wildlife conservation, they had been able to have the Maasai cultural bomas constructed to preserve their culture. Findings indicated that indigene residents in Kitengela sub-county were not satisfied with the benefits derived from their participation in wildlife conservation and management in Nairobi national park From the findings, communities living around Nairobi national park will seek to experience a sense of reciprocation through their involvement in conservation activities to ensure that they receive reasonable returns for their participation in wildlife conservation. Results from this study shows that there is no proper framework for engaging the local communities in conservation activities. This study further recommends increase in public education awareness on conservation and wildlife management matters and also emphasizes the need for consultations with and the consent of landowners when designating areas that need protection as wildlife dispersal areas or migratory corridors within their properties.

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