

# Women Participation in Tourism Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Minjingu Village, Manyara Region

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## **Abstract**

*Women participation in tourism industry contributes to the initiation of self development projects. This study aimed at identifying tourism opportunities found in Minjingu Village by examining factors which affect women participation in tourism business opportunities and strategise ways for improvement. To this effect, the study employed grounded theory, resource-based theory and financial capital theory were reviewed. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, interview, and observation. Secondary data was collected from various published studies like books and journals. The sample of 327 was picked for the study population of which 317 were women entrepreneurs and 10 were women leaders, village executive officer, hotel operators and tour operators. Data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16.0). The findings revealed that, the presence of tourism activities and services such as accommodation, game drive, cultural attraction sites; they provided various tourism entrepreneurial opportunities to women. They included selling items ranging from beads, woven baskets, curio and other cultural articles to tourists. Further, findings showed that, lack of financial capital and business skills, unstable market due to COVID-19 pandemic; and business competition significantly affected women participation in tourism business. The study concluded that women required to be empowered financially and in capacity building in various aspects to enable them participate fully in tourism entrepreneurial activities for income generation. It recommended tourism stakeholders should establish centres for business skills training and provide financial support to improve women active participation in tourism business.*

**Keywords:** Women, Participation, Tourism opportunities, Entrepreneurship

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Tourism entrepreneurship is the main and very important aspect of economic development in the past and the modern time and leads to job creation in tourism business and improve economic growth worldwide (Nongsiej & Shimray, 2017). Participation in tourism entrepreneurship is seen as the most assured way of dealing with poverty and creating economic growth (Neeraja & Padmavathy, 2012). According to Santha (2013), tourism industry has provided job opportunities and income for many women all over the world. The demand of

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tourism for poor, low skilled and domestic activities, the flexible working hours and the low capital has encouraged many women to find employment in the tourism industry or start an entrepreneurship adventure for their own (Maliva, 2016). Moreover, tourism have been recognized to provide more entrepreneurial opportunities compared to other industries and unlocks opportunities for employment creation and entrepreneurial practices particularly in developing and under developed countries (World Bank, 2017). Entrepreneurship in tourism is one of the most significant aspects that contribute to the beginning of the self-development worldwide (Costa et al., 2013). Entrepreneurship encourages African women to participate in business of tourism and become main actors in the tourism entrepreneurial arena (Nongsiej & Shimray, 2017). As a result policies are being implemented across the African countries promoting women's tourism entrepreneurship (Vossenber, 2016).

Women participation in tourism entrepreneurship in Tanzania was considered as an important aspect of the economy development and many initiatives, policies, programmes and organizations have been established in order to sustain women entrepreneurs and women owned tourism ventures (Nongsiej & Shimray, 2017). Tourism industry has been accepted by UNWTO as the basic way to provide strategic aid for maintaining entrepreneurial venture development particularly in rural areas (Zapalska & Brozik, 2014). Women especially in the rural areas are producing more than 80% of tourists souvenirs, which include pottery, beadwork, weaving and cloth art and are active members in cultural tourism activities (MNRT, 1999).

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism industry provides equal entrepreneurial opportunities to all people to participate directly or indirectly in tourism business regardless of their gender differences (Meunier *et al.*, 2017). The issue of gender inequality in tourism entrepreneurial activity has been the main research debate and policy concern on business enterprise ownership among women (Avolio, 2018). Tourism entrepreneurship in many areas has been men dominated phenomenon as women generally hold positions that do not allow them to participate in decision making (Maliva, 2016). Similarly, women participation in tourism business undertaking face a difficulty of time shortage, combining the demands of their business with the domestic task (Nongsiej & Shimray, 2017). The social responsibilities of traditional family are considered as a major cultural limitations for women entrepreneurs as they barrier them to work outside the house; as a result their husbands/men control the family finances (Kingdom *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, Tourism entrepreneurship established and operated by women are particularly smaller, moderately common in the informal sector and less likely to operate in high added value sectors with growth potential that provide extra income for their family (USAID, 2017). While, little consideration has been made to a female perspective of business ownership there are still areas that need to be

given consideration in order to improve the business environment for women tourism entrepreneurs (Maliva, 2016). Nevertheless, there is the need for different stakeholders such as governments, industry, trade unions, local communities and their different member groups, NGOs, community based tourism initiatives to cooperate in order to improve women's economic status through tourism entrepreneurship (Ramchurjee & Residents, 2017).

Women entrepreneurs play an extremely important role in the economic and social development of most countries in the world (Ibanescu *et al.*, 2018). Nevertheless, gender in tourism entrepreneurship function is not equal among men and women (Neeraja & Padmavathy, 2012). Gender inequality in entrepreneurial opportunities are noted in many areas whereby women are still faced by a number of challenges that limit their participation and ability to benefit from the tourism entrepreneurship (Maliva, 2016). However, women who choose to pursue entrepreneurial ventures have had limited representation in the tourism industry which limits their contribution to economic development (Costa *et al.*, 2013). The underrepresentation of women has been caused by various factors, such as cultural background, level of confidence and choice of business (Mishra & Zachary, 2015).

Many studies on gender participation mainly cover issues of employment, the role of women in tourism related sectors and income equalities (Nxopo & Iwu, 2016). In most cases, women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities are neglected area (Kumar, 2011). In this context, possibly little is known about woman participation in tourism entrepreneurship and the contribution of women in tourism entrepreneurship development in Minjingu Village. Therefore, this paper was designed to investigate women participation in tourism entrepreneurship and their contribution to the general development of Minjingu Village in Manyara Region. To this end, this paper identified tourism entrepreneurial opportunities found in Minjingu Village, examined factors affecting the participation of women in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities in Minjingu Village; and came up with strategies to improve women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities.

### **3.0 MATERIAL AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 The Study Area**

Minjingu Village is found in Manyara Region in Babati District along Dodoma highway about 100 kilometers away from Arusha City (Mariki *et al.*, 2011). The village is located to the east of Lake Manyara along the rift valley escapement at Manyara Region in the northern Tanzania at latitude 03° 42' 30.9" S and longitude 035° 54' 56.3" E Minjingu Village occupies approximately a land area of 24,000 hectares with a population of about 11,000 people (Mohammed, 2017). Minjingu Village consists of different ethnic groups such as the pastoral Maasai and the agro pastoral Mbugwe, Iraqw and Barbaik (Moyo *et al.*, 2016).

Minjingu is one of the villages which form Burunge WMA which occupies the land and migration corridors between Tarangire National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, and the neighboring Manyara Ranch now known as the Tanzania Lands Conservation Trust (TLCT) under AWF management (Neeraja & Padmavathy, 2012). The WMA involves Lake Burunge as an important area for water birds such as greater and lesser flamingo and a range of ducks and shorebirds, and also hosts a large buffalo population that moves in and out of the Tarangire National Park (Mariki *et al*, 2011).

Minjingu Village is in a semi-arid with average annual precipitation of 750 mm/annum. The rainfall pattern is bimodal, with short rains between May and June and long rains between November and January. The months of June through October are normally dry months. Agriculture and livestock keeping are the main land uses in the study area and is practiced by 94% of the population. Other activities include fishing, tourism related businesses (souvenirs, mat weavings) and other small businesses. Crops grown in the area are mainly sorghum, maize. The crop production level is low mainly due to climatic limitations (semi-arid) conditions (Kaswamila, 2012). The reason of selecting Minjingu Village is its location along the Dodoma high way, being the part of Burunge WMA, migration corridors between Tarangire National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, the neighboring Manyara Ranch and cultural diversity that provide business opportunities for tourism entrepreneurs.

### 3.2 Data Collection Method

#### 3.2.1 Research Design and Sampling

Research design refers to a plan, roadmap and blue print way of study conceived so as to obtain answers of research questions (Kothari, 2004). This study adopted exploratory research design while combining literature review, interview and survey to obtain respondents opinions on women participation in tourism entrepreneurship opinion (Creswell, 2003). The study employed a mixed method with qualitative and quantitative data approach. Therefore, the study drew a sample of 237 women entrepreneurs from the population of 2,300 by applying the following formula to determine needed sample size with confidence level of 95%.

$$n = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{e^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

$$N=2300, X^2=3.841, P=0.5, e^2=0.05$$

Therefore, 317 respondents out of 2300 were selected randomly from handcraft/beads and basket weaving, traditional food, curio shops and cultural bomas women entrepreneurs. Purposive sampling technique was used for informants to answer the research question.

Data collection instruments refer to the devices/instruments used to collect data or the tools used by researchers to actually collect data in the research process (Kothari, 2004). Data was collected through questionnaires for quantitative data, interviews and observation for qualitative data as well as documentary review on women participation on tourism entrepreneurial opportunities. Before interview was carried out Key informants were identified by the help of the village leadership for the purpose of obtaining their views and comments.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves ordering of data into constituent parts to obtain answers to the research questions. Qualitative data obtained using interviews and closed ended questionnaires were analyzed using content analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis such as simple comparisons, averages and percentages. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was applied to analyze the coded information of the questionnaire in this study. Eventually, data collected from this study was presented by using Tables.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 3.4 Tourism Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Tourism entrepreneurial opportunities were identified in the study area. The research revealed that, 47.6% of the respondents were beads and basket weavers. They constituted the main entrepreneurial activities in the study area. About 24.9% of the respondents were involved in cultural boma; 13.3% of the respondents were involved in dairy and poultry products; they were carried out by Maasai who are as well pastoralists and culturally beads/baskets weavers; and 8.5% of the respondents dealt with traditional food supply. While, Curio shop activities were carried out by 2.5% of women respondents from different cultures such as Iraq and Meru women.

**Table 4.5: Tourism opportunities**

Opportunities	Frequencies	Percentages
Beads and basket weaving	156	47.6
Cultural boma	82	24.9
Curio shop	8	2.5
Traditional food provision	28	8.5
Dairy and poultry products supply	43	13.3
Fruits and vegetables supply	10	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

#### 3.4.1 Level of Women's Participation

The level of women's participation was analyzed. Table 4.6 shows that, 66% of the respondents passively participated in tourism entrepreneurship due to the culture and social obligations such as taking care of children's welfare. Whereas;

30% of the respondents said that, they participated through material incentives by supplying materials such as beads and baskets, fruits and vegetables, dairy and poultry products to the institutions that deal with tourists. Furthermore, 3.3% and 0.7% of the respondents participated in tourism business through information giving and interactive participation respectively. Generally, women passively participated in tourism entrepreneurial activities; their passivity was largely caused by the cultural factor which reduced women family care social responsibilities.

**Table 4.6 Level of women participation in tourism activities**

Forms of participation	Frequencies	Percentages
Passive participation	216	66
Material incentive participation	98	30
Interactive participation	2	0.7
Information giving participation	11	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

### 3.5 Factors Affecting Women Participation in Tourism Activities

Factors affecting women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities were identified in the study area. The research findings revealed that, 37.3% of the respondents had the problem of capital to finance their entrepreneurial activities, 32.7% of the respondents had no entrepreneurial knowledge/skill for their business management, 28.5% of the respondents reported gender and social responsibilities as inhibiting factor participate in entrepreneurial activities; while 1.1% of the respondents were affected by the lack of market for their products and 0.4% of the respondents were affected by business competition. Therefore, those were the major factors affecting women in tourism entrepreneurship as presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Factors affecting women participation in tourism entrepreneurship**

Factors	Frequencies	Percentages
Entrepreneurial knowledge/skills	107	32.7
Gender and social responsibilities	93	28.5
Lack of capital	122	37.3
Lack of market	1	0.4
Business competition	4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

#### 3.5.1 Financial needs

Financial capital limitation was one of the common problems facing women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities in Minjingu village. The

study findings revealed that, 37.3% of the respondents had capital problem for their entrepreneurial activities. It signifies the extent Micro businesses facing problems in raising capital and managing tourism business due to limited access to approved credit from established agency such as a bank and government agencies. In this category, only 5% were reported to have access to credit, while 32.3% had no access to credit unit due to the lack of collateral. This subjected them to tight budgets compelling them to look for capital through informal and often humiliating means such as begging relatives and friends. It underlines the fact that, lack of financing becomes is one of the major hindrances that limit women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities.

### **3.5.2 Skills and Knowledge Needs**

Entrepreneurial knowledge or skill was another factor affecting women entrepreneurs in the study area. It was so bearing in mind Minjingu Village is dominantly a pastoral community mainly Maasai people where most of the women neither had formal education nor informal training in business before due to the already explained cultural circumstances. These factors account for the results presented in Table 4.4; for low level of entrepreneurial knowledge/skill explain for the experienced low tourism entrepreneurial activities among women. Although, some of them seemed to be contented with the level and knowledge they had achieved so far; the majority of them still insisted to continue with learning entrepreneurial knowledge /skills in order to improve their business skills.

### **3.5.3 Gender and Social Responsibilities**

The study established that gender and social responsibilities affected women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities because they have full responsibilities of their households which reduce their participation time in entrepreneurial opportunities. Around 28.5% of the respondents said that, in pastoral communities' woman are recognized and admired for keeping their households clean, for looking for and cooking food as well as entertaining guests (Table 4.8). Moreover, women living in rural areas are mostly engaged in traditional economic activities such as farm work and livestock keeping. They are considered as women's work. They are mostly done for domestic and not commercial purposes. This can be argued as the effect of retrogressive traditions with norms and values which favour of men over women.

### **3.5.4 Market Environment and Business Competition**

Market availability and business competition are critical in tourism entrepreneurial development despite the low responses 0.4% and 1.1% suggesting lack of market and business competition respectively. However, through observation supported by key informants confirmed that stiff business competition discouraged most women entrepreneurs at Minjingu which was instigated by competitors from Ngorongoro and Lake Manyara as they inflated

market prices to their advantage. Also, high market prices were incited by the strike of COVID-19 pandemic (Table 4.8). Moreover, the stiff market competition made some women entrepreneurs withdraw from the tourism business and go for other alternative businesses such as subsistence cultivation.

### 3.6 Strategies to Improve Women Participation in Tourism Entrepreneurship

The study established strategies for improvement of women participation in tourism from the respondents while answering the questionnaire. Impliedly, the following were the suggestions given by the respondents; 38.1% of the respondents suggested capital support, while 36.2% respondents recommended training and education and 5.6% respondents suggested to be empowered through training and change of tourism policies towards encouraging women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities (Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9 Strategies to improve women participation in tourism**

Measures	Frequencies	Percentages
Education and training	118	36.2
Training and tourism policies	84	25.6
Capital support	125	38.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

#### 3.6.1 Financial Capacity

Financial capacity is one of the basic requirements for effective women participation in tourism entrepreneurship. The research established that, 38.1% of the respondents suggested that access financing would source capital for the poor women to initiate women centred tourism business. It calls for women entrepreneurs to access financial capital at low interest rates through financial institutions in order to invest their entrepreneurial business. Respondents further proposed that, different stakeholders in women empowerment including the government, tourism institutions and Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Village Community Bank (VICOBA); and others programmes such poverty alleviation to collectively enhance the development of women in tourism entrepreneurship in Minjingu village.

#### 3.6.2 Education and Training

Education and training for entrepreneurs is another basic requirement for women participation improvement in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities. In this case, findings disclosed that, 36.2% of the respondents suggested capacity building was one of factors which enhanced women participation in tourism entrepreneurship. The capacity building pre-supposed provision of awareness building and training women on entrepreneurial skills in order to solve some of the challenges facing them. These views were underlined by mostly key



informants ranging from lodge owners, Village executive officer and women leaders also suggested the need of training and education regarding women participation in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities.

### **3.6.3 Policy Analysis**

Training and tourism policies were the strategy suggested by women entrepreneurs in Minjingu Village whereby 25.6% of the respondents suggested training and change of tourism policies in order to encourage women participation in tourism entrepreneurship by promoting the marketing of women products. In short, change of policies coupled with coordination different levels of government sectors may lead to women fully participate in tourism programmes.

### **3.7 Discussion of the Results**

Minjingu village being near Tarangire National Park where tourism accommodation other facilities are located; offer good entrepreneurial opportunities for local communities especially for disadvantaged groups particularly women dealing with petty businesses involving selling beads and basket weaving, cultural boma, curio shop, traditional food provision and so on. These findings tally with Vossenbergh (2016) observations that, tourism is increasingly underpinned by entrepreneurial behavior of a diversity of stakeholders in rural localities where by tourism is seen as a key agent for regional rejuvenation on the demise of traditional economic activities. It has also introduced innovative ideas to business women in the rural areas; for example, those in the study area used sign posts, exchanged trade ideas with friends, some attended local exhibition such as Saba saba and Nane nane farmers day exhibition to promote their entrepreneurial products. The main customers for their commodities included both tourists and local residents.

Despite the efforts made by the few women participating in tourism entrepreneurial; they were limited by the lack of sufficient capital, entrepreneurial knowledge/skills, gender and social responsibilities; and business competition in the open market for their products. These limitations were fueled by lack of access to the financial institutions, culture and domestic responsibilities. These findings resemble Maliva's (2016) study on the women's participation in Tourism in Zanzibar an Enactment Perspective where more or less similar limitations were reported for business women participating in tourism entrepreneurial activities. Finally, the negative effects of COVID-19 are known worldwide, therefore, the study area was no exception it suffered the same. However, this study agreed with respondents' views which were obtained through a participatory approach and presented above on how to improve women participation in tourism business. They formed basis of the recommendations of this study.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study had testified that, it is possible to integrate women petty businesses such as selling beads, locally woven baskets, curio products and cultural bomas among others to both local and international tourists in order to generate income which will ultimately liberate women from poverty and underpinning retrogressive traditions that hold women back in the course of social development. The main challenges facing such young enterprising women include lack of capital, shortage of entrepreneurial knowledge/skill, lack of market for women products, business competition, gender and social responsibilities. The study recommended that, the government, tour operators, hotel operators and other tourism stake holders should put in place a good and entrepreneurial training policy that encourages women to participate in tourism entrepreneurial opportunities and the policy that would govern, monitor and evaluate participation of women in tourism entrepreneurship. More business centre for women tourism entrepreneurs such as cultural bomas, curio shops should be opened for sell, publicity and promotion women in tourism entrepreneurship. Also, the government, NGOs and other tourism stakeholders should find ways and means of according financial support to women entrepreneurs because most of them lack access to loans due to lack of collaterals for credit from established financial institutions such as banks and other financial agencies. The study further suggested that, tour operators should put in their safari itinerary women tourism entrepreneurial products offered in the vicinity of Tarangire National Parks in order to provide market for women products. Moreover, tour operators should ask their driver guides to stop at the women business centers without asking commission. Lastly, hotel/lodges operators should give first priority to the women entrepreneurs when purchasing supplies for the hotel/lodge use. Also, women should be encouraged to sell items such as eggs and chickens, fruits, vegetables and women made handcrafts in order to augment women's income for the betterment of their families and the general welfare of the society in general.

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