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Threats on Biodiversity Conservation and the Link Between Community Conservation Practices and Culture as Part of Traditions and Customs: The Case of Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

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Internal and External Threats to the Community Conservation Initiative that were Identified during the CCRA in Tanzania.

- The natural forests, land and rivers/lakes are prone to internal threats where agricultural investors and large-scale farmers cultivating on adjacent land, diverge water flow away from communities leaving them with inadequate water for their agricultural production and domestic use.
- The water pumps placed near rivers, spilling oils into fresh water which is also used for domestic purposes hence posing environmental and human health threats to people.

…Threats cont…..

- Commercial people doing illegal logging pose internal threat to the forests and trees grown for years.

  Soil degradation, loss of medicinal tree species, degradation of the

  ecosystem, decreased rains vs climate change

- Agrochemicals pollution from conventional agriculture and climate change are exacerbating the threats.
- Lack of communities' awareness on biodiversity conservation and consequences also exaggerate the problems.

  E.g Pastoralists with large cattle herds, goats and sheep consuming young trees planted around water sources as they move from one place to another searching for pasture.

- Lack of women's land ownership limits their work in environmental conservation and protection of the resources. (due to tradition & customs).

Link between community conservation practices and culture as part of traditions and customs

Communities in Lawate, Wiri and Ngasinyi villages in Kilimanjaro Region, have taken steps to conserve biodiversity in their areas.

- Establishment of indigenous tree nurseries to plant trees around water sources, around farms and adjacent to forests for protection of soil
- The communities in their environmental groups and traditional leaders have taken it upon them to ensure that laws are being adhered to by reprehending and reporting to the local government offices on any environmental destruction act performed by anyone
- Cooperation with the local government to control water utilization by large scale farmers adjacent to rivers eg. Dehu river in Kahe

Link between community conservation practices and culture as part of traditions and customs.

Dehu River in Kahe community.

Tradition and customs that protected forests.

- In Kilimanjaro Region, Moshi Rural District, Kahe community, Ngasinyi village, there is Male forest, Female forest and Community forest.
- Male forest is used for initiation ceremony for boys, when circumcised they have to stay in the forest till they heal, while getting trained by elders on their traditions and customs as grown men, manhood, discipline, etc.
- If a boy died in the forest during this period, he is buried in the forest, only his clothes would be taken to parents and inform them on the death of their son.
- Women are not allowed to enter Male forest for any reason, if caught, it is an abomination and then taken to community court led by customary leaders.
- Tree cutting in the forests is forbidden.
- Nowadays, Bee keeping is done as part of conservation effort and for livelihood.

Tradition and customs that protected forests.

In Female forest, men are not allowed to enter for any reason. This contributed to environmental conservation and preservation of culture.

Key recommendations

- INGOs, NGOs in collaboration with local government officials to conduct community awareness raising on environmental conservation and effects of climate change.
- Intergenerational learning sessions are encouraged for transferring traditional knowledge and skills from elders to youth for effective biodiversity management.
- Advocacy on women's land ownership and participation in decision making need promotion.
- Enforcement of laws and policies for protection of natural resources.

Key recommendations

- Gender roles in conservation and resilience have to be known to promote conservation.
- Development partners have to be engaged to support community conservation efforts and achievement of Aichi targets.
- Engagement of media for public awareness on environmental destruction that goes on and for conservation need to be sustained for advocacy purposes.

Asante Sana!