

**THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION  
ON TOURISM RESOURCES. A CASE STUDY OF  
MT.ELGON NATIONAL PARK**

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DEGREE IN TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT OF  
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## DECLARATION

I, Killa Grace, declare that this piece of work is original and has not been submitted by any other scholar in any university or college for the award of a diploma or degree.



.....  
Signature

30<sup>th</sup> / 9 / 2010  
.....

Date



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this piece of work to my family.

## APPROVAL

This is to certify the research of Killa Grace has been under my supervision and now ready for submission to the School of Business and Management for the award of a degree of Tourism and Hotel Management of Kampala International University.



.....  
**DR. NUWE JOHN BOSCO (BSC,PGDE, MSC, PhD Environmental economics)**  
**SUPERVISOR**

.....  
**DATE**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I wish to extend my special thanks to the following persons. My husband Augustine for sponsoring my studies throughout, and to my family and friends for their support, especially Kyeyune Hasfah who has been on my side all the time.

My supervisor Dr. Nuwe John Bosco for his time and knowledge despite his busy schedule and all the staff of Kampala International University for turning my dream into a reality.

And finally to the Almighty God who has fought the battle and I claim the victory.

## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Mt. Elgon National park in eastern Uganda in Mbale district, with the main purpose of investigating the impact of environmental degradation on tourism resources.

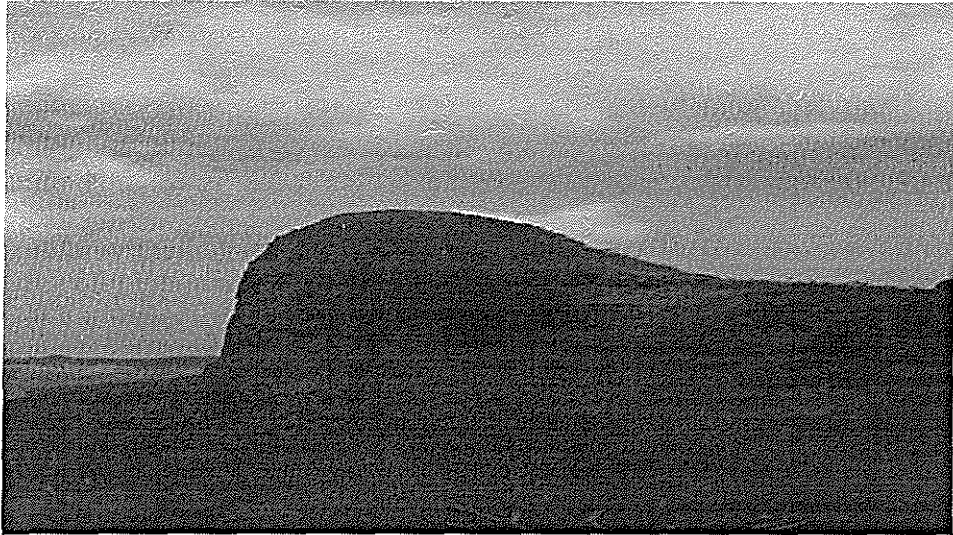
The study aimed at achieving the following objectives

To identify the tourism resources at Mt. Elgon National Park. To identify the environmentally degraded resources in Mt. Elgon National Park. To find out the impacts of environmental degradation in Mt. Elgon National Park Tourism resources. To establish the possible solutions to rehabilitate environmental degradation.

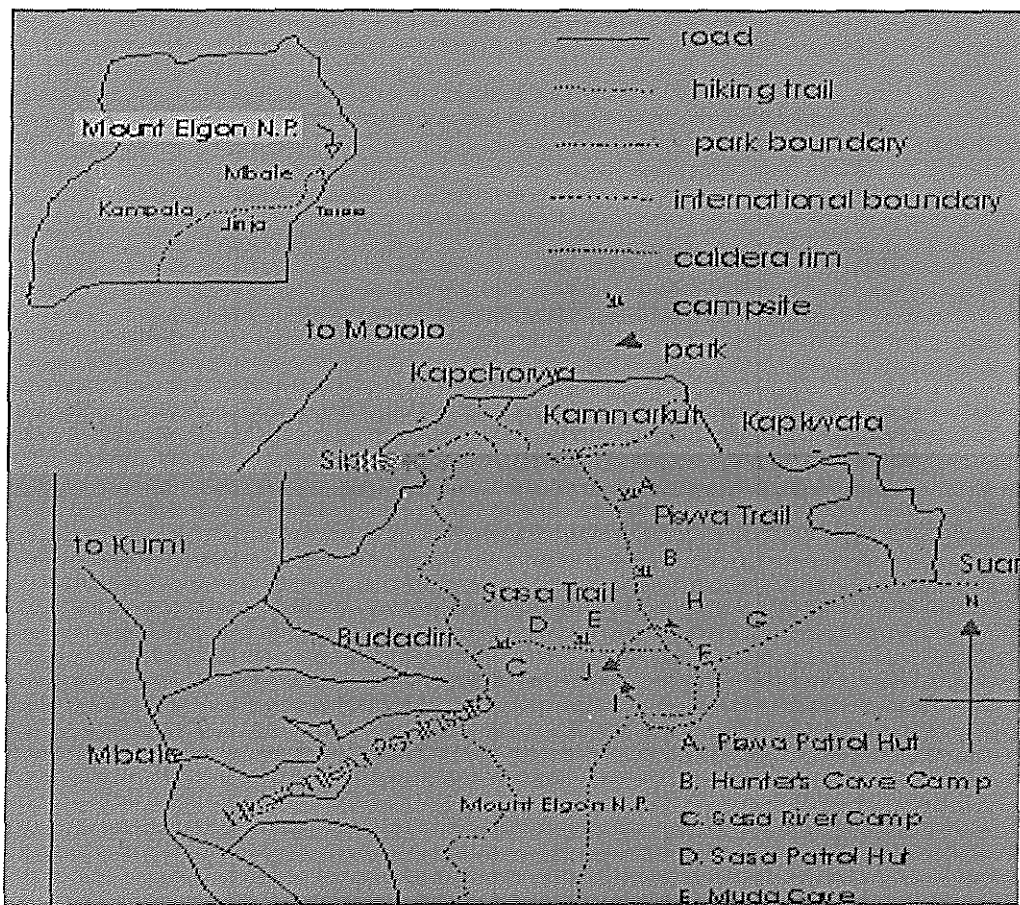
The procedures used during data collection include: primary data collection instruments; questionnaires, interviews, and secondary library research on relevant materials. Data was analyzed by the use of descriptive method. The findings were presented in its tables and charts and discussed using the analysis method used.

The major findings of the study are that environmental degradation had negative and positive impact on the tourist resources in Mt. Elgon National Park. The findings of the study also revealed that Mt. Elgon national park is a typical government organization which has been managed upon by the government to effectively provide services for the people and employees.

It was recommended that there should be attempts to sensitize people on the dangers of environmental degradation and the positive impacts of maintaining the natural vegetation and its inhabitants.



*Over view of Mt. Elgon National Park found in Eastern Uganda*



*Map and Location of Mt. Elgon National Park*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Approval.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Map and location of Mt. Elgon National Park.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
Acronyms.....	ix
List of tables.....	xi
List of figures.....	xi

<b>CHAPTER ONE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	5
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	5
1.5 Research questions.....	5
1.6 Scope of the study.....	6
1.7 Significance of the study.....	6



<b>CHAPTER TWO:</b>	7
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1 Specific ways to solve problems	14
<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b>	16
3.0 Introduction	16
3.1 Research design	16
3.2 Population and area of study	16
3.3 Sample selection	17
3.4 Data collection methods and instruments	17
3.4.1 Observation	17
3.4.2 Questionnaires	18
3.4.3 Recording	18
3.4.4 Interviewing	18
3.4.5 Photography	18
3.4.6 Transects	18
3.5 Limitations	18
<b>CHAPTER FOUR:</b>	19
4.1 Introduction	19
4.2 Tourism resources found at Mt. Elgon national park	19
4.3 Environmentally degraded resources in Mt. Elgon national park	21
4.4 Impact of environmental degradation in Mt. Elgon national park	22
4.5 Solutions to rehabilitate environmental degradation	25

<b>CHAPTER FIVE:</b> .....	28
5.1 Introduction.....	28
5.2 Summary.....	28
5.3 Recommendations.....	29
5.4 Conclusion.....	30
Appendix I References.....	31
Appendix II Questionnaire for employees.....	33
Appendix III Questionnaire for tourists.....	35

## ACRONYMS

<b>CEP</b>	-	Caribbean Environment Programme
<b>NEMA</b>	-	National Environment Management Authority Programme
<b>NEMS</b>	-	National Environment Management Statute
<b>UNRISD</b>	-	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
<b>UTB</b>	-	The Uganda Tourism Board
<b>UWA</b>	-	The Uganda Wildlife Authority

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: graph showing solution to rehabilitate environmental degradation.....27

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: bar graph showing tourism resources found at Mt. Elgon National Park.....21

Figure 2: graph showing environmentally degraded resources in Mt. Elgon national park.....22

Figure 3: graph showing comparison between the positive and negative impacts of environmental degradation in Mt. Elgon National Park.....26

Figure 4: graph showing solutions to rehabilitate environmental degradation.....27

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the background, the statement of the problem, purpose, general objectives, research questions, the scope, and the significance of the study.

## 1.1 Background to the study

According to Longman dictionary, environment means sum total of all surroundings of a living organism, including natural forces and other living things, which provide conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage.

Environment includes all the physical factors of the surroundings including land, water, atmosphere, climate, sound, odour, taste, animals, plants, social factors such as aesthetics and the natural and built environment, for example buildings and roads. (NEMSP, 1995). All of the conditions, circumstances, etc. that surround and influence life on earth, including atmospheric conditions, food chains, and the water cycle. According to Oxford dictionary degradation, is the diminution or reduction of strength, efficacy, or value; degeneration; deterioration. It also means a gradual wearing down or wasting, as of rocks and banks, by the action of water, frost etc. It is also the state or condition of a species or group which exhibits degraded forms; degeneration.

Therefore environmental degradation is erosion of the quality of natural environment caused, directly or indirectly, by human activities.

Erosion means eating away of a coastline or land by the action of water, ice, and/or wind, or wearing away of a surface by corrosion or traffic

Tourism, as we know it today, has been defined in many different ways. A layman may simply define tourism as travel. Generally, it has been defined as “a short-term movement of people to places where they don’t live and work. Such movements should, however, have no economic gains attached and should not lead to permanent settlement”. In 1837, the League of Nations recommended adopting the technical definition of tourism as the “travel for a period of at least twenty four hours to countries outside those in which people involved live and work”. In 1982, Marthiathon and Wall defined tourism as “a temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work, the activities undertaken during the stay in these destinations and the facilities created to cater for their needs” (Cohen, 1998).

Hunziker and Krapf, 1941 defined tourism as "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity." In 1976 Tourism Society of England defined it as "Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes." In 1981 International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism defined Tourism in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment.

The Advanced Learners' Dictionary 6<sup>th</sup> Edition defines tourism as “the business activity connected with providing accommodation, services and entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure”.

The term resources encompasses land, fish, wildlife, biodata, air, fauna, water, ground water, drinking water supplies, and other such resources belonging to, managed by, held in trust by, relating to, or otherwise controlled by the government.

Tourism is as old as mankind. Today, it is a flourishing venture world over. The fast rate at which it is flourishing was first given an authentic punch in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century with transport modifications (Mc Donald, 1990).

Not surprisingly, the blessed hand of tourism touched Uganda. Earlier, the tourism potential and natural beauty of Uganda was warmly talked about. When Winston Churchill arrived in Uganda by train from Kenya in 1908, he is reported to have written, “Uganda is a fairy tale .You climb up a railway instead of a beanstalk, and at the top there is a wonderful new world. It is the pearl of Africa.”

Uganda has a diversity of tourism potential. Among these are resources. These are equally diverse; some natural, others man-made. Among natural resources lie a variety; flora, fauna, scenic beauty, mountains, lakes, rivers and many more. Be it developed or virgin, they all contribute to tourism development though various factors have led to the degradation of these resources.

Given the above variety, assessing the impact of environmental degradation on tourism resources becomes, then, a challenge.

With this in mind, a correlative research was undertaken; relating the two variables; environmental degradation versus Tourism resources. At the end of the research, the impact of the environmental degradation towards tourism resources will be established. The research will take three months, from May to August, 2010.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Tourists visit the tourism resources with a prior expectation of quality services. In short, they expect value for money. Many factors come into interplay to bring about the abundant quality of resources, how it is offered to meet the level of tourists' expectations and how the tourists perceive these resources. The way tourists perceive a particular destination may go a long way to enhance the importance of a place or discourage tourists from visiting the destination in question. A positive response can lead to favorable development of the area, leading in turn to improving the quality of lives of the people who live and work in and around the area. The contrary can equally happen. Such factors included facilities, services, state of the identified tourism resource (attractions), professionalism and others. Given the above factors in place, the research isolated factor per factor to establish their individual impact on the resources, therefore environmental degradation should be avoided in order to reserve tourism resources should be reserved .



It was against this background that the researcher went out in the field to investigate further on the issues surrounding this problem.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The research was purposed to establish the impact of environmental degradation on tourism resources

The research further established the number of tourism resources at Elgon National Park, other than Elgon National Park itself as a source of historical and geographical importance.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The study was carried out with the following objectives;

1. To identify the tourism resources at Mt.Elgon National Park
2. To identify the environmentally degraded resources in Mt. Elgon National Park.
3. To find out the impacts of environmental degradation in Mt.Elgon National Park  
Tourism resources.
4. To establish the possible solutions to rehabilitate environmental degradation.

### **1.5 Research questions**

1. What are the tourism resources found at Mt.Elgon National Park?
2. Which are the environmentally degraded resources in Mt. Elgon National Park?
3. What are the impacts of environmental degradation at Mt.Elgon National park?
4. What solutions are being taken to rehabilitate the environmentally degraded areas?

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study was carried out at the Mt.Elgon National Park, the local communities surrounding the area and the local authorities that do govern the attraction itself and the area in which it is found.

This research covered 3 months.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

As it happens, tourism organizations in Uganda such as The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), The Government of Uganda, Travel Agencies and Tour Operators, NEMA, local authorities as well as the local people are all hooked in the unfortunate puzzle of wonder as to how much Environmental degradation affects tourism resources. The research believed that establishing the facts surrounding this dilemma would help to bring about a more careful study for effective planning, supervision and monitoring of the tourism resources at Mt.Elgon National Park.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Literature review looked at the written works on the topic by other people, authors, and researchers. It is important because it provides a background on which the researcher will base his research, considering its genuineness, need for adjustment and alterations of some of the views expressed therein.

The environment is one of the primary concerns of ecotourism, which often involves travel to relatively undisturbed areas. As the tourism product is often dependent upon nature, negative impacts upon that resource should be minimized. As Cater (1994) notes, even the most conscientious tourist will have some degree of impact on the environment and so ecotourism should therefore attempt to minimize that impact. Many studies of tourism attempt to identify an environmental carrying capacity but a major difficulty of this technique is that it "implies the existence of fixed and determinable limits to development and that if one stays below those threshold levels no changes or deterioration will occur"

According to Breman and Cisse (1977), Overgrazing decreases the productivity of grasslands and changes floristic composition, with losses in plant diversity and desirable species. Successional changes in the vegetation usually result in perennial species being replaced by annual or ephemeral herbs, and palatable shrubs and trees by more xeric

vegetation dominated by spiny or succulent species. Areas devoid of vegetation appear that are vulnerable to water and wind erosion.

There are numerous examples in the literature of adverse successional changes in vegetation as a consequence of overgrazing. In West Africa, Breman and Cisse (1977) have noted the disappearance of the perennial *Andropogon gayanus* in overgrazed Sahelian pastures, and its replacement by short-lived legumes and unpalatable annuals. In South-East Asia, found that pastures of *Imperata cylindrica* were invaded by unpalatable broad-leaved species of *Eupatorium* when grazing pressure was increased. Overgrazing in three areas of the Western Ghats in India resulted in the elimination of dominant grasses such as *Themeda triandra*, *Themeda quadrivalis*, *Pseudanthistiria heteroclita*, *Heteropogon contortus* and *Anthraxon meeboldi*. They were replaced by less palatable species of *Aristida*, *Dicanthium* and *Eragrostis*, and the useless weed *Blumea eriantha*. As well as stocking intensity, differences in grazing system can also influence botanical composition.

Basing on Winrock International (1992) emphasized that, the multiple uses of grasslands by grazing and browsing animals is a sound ecological system that can be highly productive per unit area of land, because different animal species are at most only partially competitive for food when supply is abundant. This argument is relevant to the utilisation of grazing resources by both wildlife and domestic livestock. In sub-Saharan Africa, where the wildlife endowment is particularly unique and diverse, Winrock International concluded that wildlife and domestic livestock were compatible in most rangelands across all agro-ecological zones. For example, in Zimbabwe (formerly

Rhodesia), eland were found adapted to complement cattle in the low and middle veld, where their preference for browse was important for the utilization and control of woody plants. Similar observations were made in East Africa -Uganda

However, the expansion of cultivation and high livestock densities are resulting in the displacement, fragmentation and reduction in wildlife populations through changes in, or the destruction of, habitats and competition for diminished grazing and water resources. On the other hand, wildlife is blamed for transmission of diseases to cattle, destroying crops, breaking fences, damaging irrigation ditches and for predation.

Similar conflicts have taken place outside Africa; for example Aleem (1978) found that overgrazing and wood cutting caused deterioration in vegetation, increased soil erosion and habitat destruction in the Chitral Gol Game Sanctuary in Pakistan. The wild goat (the Markhor), a key species in this location, was particularly under threat from domestic goats and sheep which grazed plants preferred by the Markhor.

It is worth mentioning briefly that the use of herbicides in arable farming and the use of pesticides for the indirect control of animal diseases (e.g. spraying to reduce the numbers of tsetse flies to counter trypanosomiasis) could also have negative effects on the populations and diversity of fauna.

According to Fuls (1992), the hooves of livestock not only have direct effects on plant growth, but influence indirectly soil structure by pulverisation and compaction of the surface. Treading, which causes a packing of soil particles and a loss of the larger pores

in the soil mass, results in an increase in bulk density. This, in turn, reduces aeration, moisture infiltration and retention, and drainage. Resistance to root penetration increases and biological and chemical activity in the soil decreases. Gaseous composition of soils is also affected. Treading increases run-off and erosion, which are both positively correlated with bulk density. Erosion leads to losses of dissolved nutrients in surface run-off or overland water flow, and transport of nutrients adsorbed or chemically-bonded on soil solids. Thus, erosion contributes to a decline in soil fertility. Soil particles reaching drainage channels cause sedimentation of water courses downstream reducing the capacity of dams and reservoirs. Increases in annual stocking rates and grazing pressure accentuate these effects, whilst stall-feeding animals in confinement would eliminate them.

There are several environmental problems in and around the National parks. Most of these are due to Uganda history of civil war, the great poverty of the area, and the high rate of population growth (3.1 percent) which puts pressure on an already weakened environment. Deforestation still occurs as local communities find it necessary to find fuel for cooking and for warmth. Increasing numbers of visitors also increase demand for fuel.

A variety of animal and plant species could be harmed as ecotourists overrun their natural habitats. The lands within the Bwindi and Mgahinga parks are remnants of the Afro-montane forest, a vanishing ecosystem. The only remaining population of the highly endangered Mountain Gorilla lives in Uganda (Ecotourism Society, 1993).

Environmental degradation impacts may be divided into resource depletion and resource degradation, although they are interrelated and not always distinguishable. The former refers to the overuse of resources such as energy, freshwater, raw materials, marine resources, food and land etc, whereas the latter is related to waste production, pollution, deforestation, erosion, disruption of wildlife and habitat destruction, both of which occur during development as well as tourism activity (Neto, 2003).

Tourism may alter cultural and social patterns through the influx of transient population and crime, the commoditisation of culture and neo-colonisation of tourist areas due to the import of capital and labour. This may result in alienation of communities, acculturation, pressure on local resources, inflation, and loss of public land and degradation of cultural sites, causing a change in the pace of life, loss of tradition and sense of identity. (Hollinshead, 1996).

According to Government of Uganda. (1990), ecotourism is the fastest growing sector of the world's fastest growing industry, tourism. For many of the world's poorest countries, tourism is seen as a means of obtaining foreign exchange and of developing infrastructure. A country promoting low-impact, ecological tourism may be able to better avoid the adverse environmental effects of traditional tourism and from the sale of natural resources. Furthermore, since the sustainability of the ecotourism industry is dependent upon the preservation of environmental quality and biodiversity, it is felt that it can bolster conservation efforts. Ecotourism is appealing to tourists, environmentalists, businesses, and governments alike.

According to Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP)/United Nations Environment Programme, (1994), concludes with a saying that, "from an environmental point of view, the most appropriate approach is that which leads to the conclusion that the tourist industry must also regulate itself to avoid the negative environmental changes which can result from attempts to take advantage of tourism resources. Strictly speaking, these are not specific regulations for the tourist industry but general ones for all economic activity." Between these vague lines is the message that the Caribbean Environment Programme will not, at this point, by the place for the regulation of the tourism industry to take place. Regulations which are voluntary at some level are therefore more feasible options for the immediate term. Under Ugandan law, national parks and reserves have the highest conservation standards, and yet there are very limited resources to monitor that these are upheld. Within the GEF-funded project are mechanisms to provide funding for more efficient patrolling, and to provide economic opportunities to the poor farmers of surrounding communities who are most likely to disregard strict deforestation and harvesting laws. Education to help people understand the importance of conservation is an important component of the project. Media interest in the issue will be necessary for an effective campaign, and there seems to be growing coverage.

According to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1994 environmental decline also impacts upon tourism resources like wildlife. More commonly, however, environmental decline adversely affects the health, well-being and livelihood opportunities of the animals affected by pollution or natural resource



depletion. Soil erosion, deforestation, the loss or depletion of animal and plant species limit the productive opportunities of vast numbers of the tourism resources.

Gorillas respond to environmental degradation in a variety of ways including; they may adapt their customary production and consumption patterns to the new circumstances, migrate, or organize to undertake collective action to protect their livelihoods. Such individual responses, in the medium to long term, change social structures. When natural resource-dependent wildlife intensify production, restrict or change consumption patterns, engage in new activities or migrate, they are changing their traditional societies, and participating in broader social transformations that will influence institutional change. ([www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/apes/gorilla](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/apes/gorilla))

## **2.1 Specific ways to solve problems**

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and one of its fastest growing economic sectors. This causes different impacts, either positive or negative, on people's lives or on the environment. Therefore sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices must be taken as a solution. In addition, sustainability principles deal with environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of the tourism development to provide a balance between them to guarantee a long-term sustainability (Castillo, 1994)

Therefore sustainable tourism should include: i). the use of environmental resources in tourism development and maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. ii) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of

host communities, conserve their living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. iii) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation. iv). Initiating the cooperation of the neighbor countries in the promotional programs of tourism.

Global Environment Facility, (1995) clearly puts it that the governments should continually revise environmental laws to find practical and effective solutions to the environmental problems. For example there should be rules for the following; i) The polluter pays principle: where the tourism operators, such as Hotels must be responsible for causing environmental problems. ii) Special working groups: to be appointed to solve problems in major tourism destinations, in coordination with related departments or organizations, such as Municipalities or other organizations to share resources and energy in resolving physical and social problems of the environment. iii) Promotional measures: to make an on-going campaign to make the public aware of environmental conservation in tourism. It should have information on environmental conservation via the mass media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines). iv) Personal development: conducting training programmes and lectures of environmental conservation on various pupils, students, guides, government servants, company employees, and employees of the tourism business sector.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter the methods followed while collecting and processing data are outlined. The methods of collecting data and the research instruments used are also given a detailed description in this chapter.

#### **3.1 Research design**

In the research design, a quantitative type of research was carried out. It was a socio-economic in nature; where the two variables were correlated; environmental degradation and Tourism Resources so as to investigate further the issues surrounding the problem of The Impact of Environmental Degradation on Tourism Resources.

#### **3.2 Population and area of study**

The research was carried out in Mt.Elgon National Park, located in Mbale District. Elgon National Park is of great historical, geographical and economic importance given its strategic location.

The population of the park was about five hundred thousand people and it's composed of a number of tribes namely; the Basoga, Baganda, Bagishu and others. The reason for this population composition is the fact that Mbale, being one of the cleanest towns in Uganda and it's nearness to the boarder, attracts people from different parts of the country. The majority of the people in Mbale are the native Bagishu.

### **3.3 Sample selection**

It is amongst the above people, thus, that the research was carried out. Of these, 50 respondents were targeted and interviewed.

20 of these comprised of workers at the National Park, 15 local residents, 5 clients and 10 tourists. Random selection was used.

### **3.4 Data collection methods and instruments**

The data collection method is the means that was employed while collecting data and the tools used in the due course. In the course of data collection, the following instruments were used: observation, interviewing, questionnaires, recording, and photography.

#### **3.4.1 Observation**

There was use of physical naked eyes to see whatever was done related to the topic under study. The research embarked on both perceive and participatory observation. This was a very important tool for primary data collection and was quite cheap.

#### **3.4.2 The questionnaire**

A set of questions was designed on the research topic. Questionnaires were distributed to various respondents who are in turn expected to answer them correctly. This method was employed with the help of a research assistant who helped in the distribution of questionnaires.

### **3.4.3 Recording**

Observation and interviewing was done while taking note of all data found necessary. All such information was later edited and compiled into useful information for the research project. Where necessary and with the permission of the respondents, tape recorders were used.

### **3.4.4 Interviewing**

This was in dialogue form. The dialogues took place together with the respondents. Formal interviews were used, especially in quiet and private places. This enabled to gain a deeper insight into issues for purposes of data collection.

### **3.4.5 Photography**

Photography of events and scenes leading to degradation of tourism resources as may be evidenced and witnessed in the course of the research was more relied on.

### **3.4.6 Transects**

Line transects were used to illustrate a particular gradient or linear pattern along which communities of plants and, or animals due to environmental degradation. They provided a good way of being able to clearly visualize the changes taking place along the line. Depending on how detailed the line transect may be, they can usually be accomplished fairly quickly. However, line transects may not produce as much information on the relative densities of individual species.

### 3.5 Limitations

The following are some of the limitations that were faced in the course of the effort to gather information and solicit for data. i). There was a problem of inadequate literature. There was no enough much compiled literature about environmental degradation generally and the tourism resources in particular due to the fact that respondents thought that they were being spied. ii). There was inadequate cooperation. This resulted from the individuals that thought that research was looking for weaknesses to count against them. iii). management policy was slightly strict, so there was a problem of being given easy access to the tourists, employees, the bosses and all other people from whom the data was hoped to be got. iv). Financial limitation. The costs involved were higher than the researcher's financial potential. v). There was no enough time to accomplish the research brilliantly because of the limited time frame of only two months. vi). There was language barrier during the research process since most of the community people were illiterate and only new their local language. That is the entire population was composed of the Bagisu, Sabiny and Ndorobo languages

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

With the aim of finding out the Impact of Environmental Degradation on Tourism Resources, with Mt. Elgon National Park as the case study, the research was carried out, using the questionnaire, interview and observation methods and came out with the following findings.

#### 4.2 TOURISM RESOURCES FOUND AT MT.ELGON NATIONAL PARK

According to the questionnaires distributed, 10% of the respondents supported and said that several interesting endemic plant species such as Giant lobelia and groundsels, Commercial timber species i.e. Podocarpus imbrucata ,Podocarpus nerrifoüa, Eugenia Sp.,Eugenia Sp., Helalanhilus giganteus, Vernonia arborea,Acer neveum, high open moorland covered by the worldly giant lobelia and groundsel plants, Lithocarpus spicata, High montane heath mostly cover the national park.



*Photograph showing some of the endemic plant species*

50% of the respondents said that the thick scrub supports a remarkable 296 bird species makes this superb safari territory like; moustached green tinker bird, black collared apalis, African Goshawk, Chubb's Cisticola, White-chinned Prinia, Golden Winged and Tacazze sunbirds, Ross's and Hartlaubs Turacos, Black and White Casqued and Crowned Hornbills, the endangered Lammergeier, flamingo are resident on the Sipi Falls and the Jackson's Francolin, bronze pigeon, hartlaub's turaco, tacazze sunbird which are found nowhere else in Uganda.

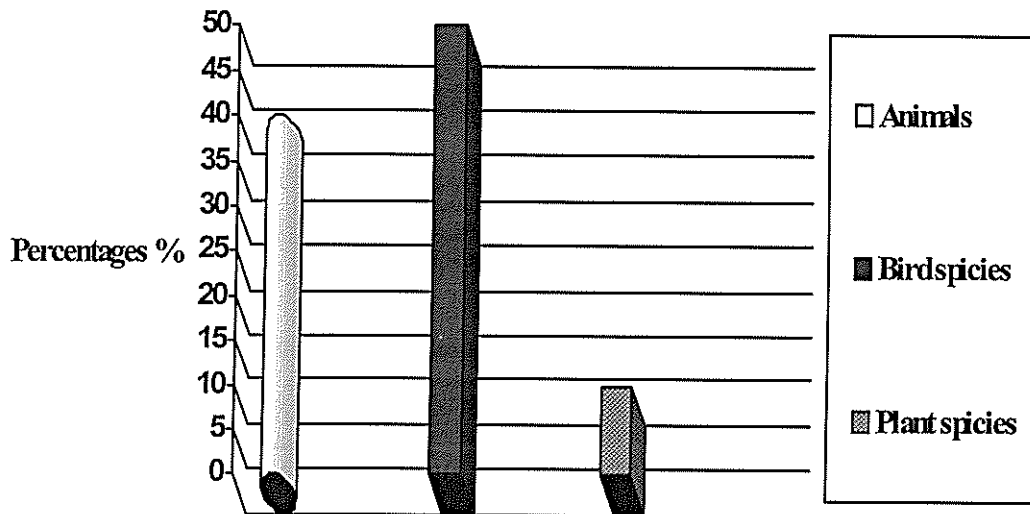
Also 40% of the rest of the respondents said that a number of animals are also found at Mt. Elgon National Park, these included; leopards, Blue and White Colobus monkey, hyena and buffalos all regularly sighted around the tourist which also boasts a marvelous waterfront setting in the shadow of the Elgon Mountains. Black and White Colobus Monkey, Blue Monkey, gorillas, chimpanzees, buffalo, duiker, tree climbing lions, hyena, leopard.

However according to me, I disagree with the respondents view. Therefore plant species are more than any of the species. This is illustrated in the graph below.



Figure 1

showing tourism resources found at Mt.elgon national park

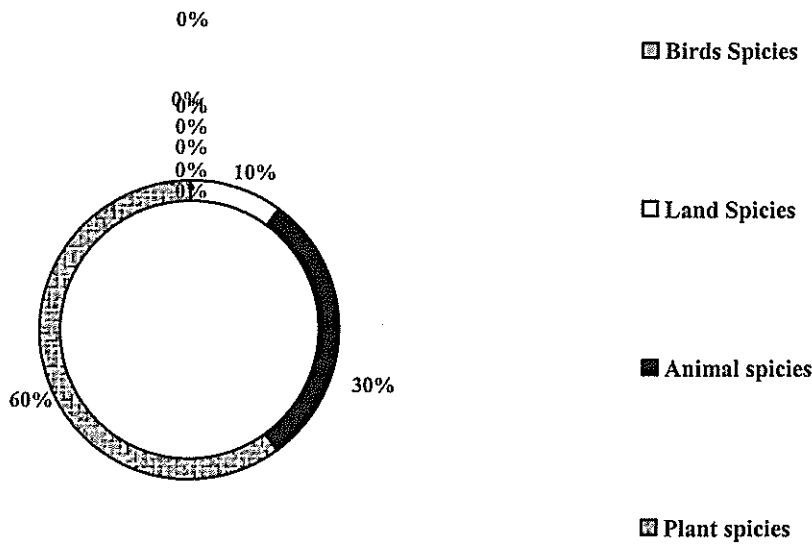


#### 4.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY DEGRADATED RESOURCES IN MT.ELGON NATIONAL PARK

Out of the 50 questionnaires distributed, 60% of the respondents said plant species especially *podocarpus imbriscata* is useful for furniture and handicraft, besides that plants are also affected during fire camps. 30% of the respondents said that animals especially deers are affected since they are a source of food by the local people.

Besides all that 10% Of the respondents said that Land as a resource is affected by the human population through subsistence farming which is done for long in one area, also tourists affect plant and land resource through the treks that lead them to the forests this is illustrated in the figure 2 below.

**Figure 2 showing environmentally degraded resources in Mt. Elgon national park**



However to a small extent I don't agree to the respondents' reactions and therefore in my own view, all tourism resources are affected the same way. For example burning starts all the resources will be affected.

#### **4.4 IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN MT. ELGON NATIONAL PARK**

Poaching has been especially problematic in recent decades, as thousands of persons displaced by civil wars and ethnic conflicts within the region have found refuge in the nearby foothills of the Mt. Elgon National Park and the tracts of remaining dense forest within protected areas. These landless refugees often have little choice but to rely on illegally taken animals in order to survive. Hence displacement of animal species.

In recent decades, however, increased population pressures and frequent burning have begun to test the land's ability to recover from each successive fire. Additionally, fires that escape into the neighboring protected area have threatened to permanently damage the delicately balanced ecosystems within the Park. The long-term effects of this relatively new, intensified fire regime on the land, vegetation, fauna, and human populations of Mt. Elgon National Park have yet to be determined hence environmental degradation in the long run.



*The dark brown-black patches on hillsides in the photograph on the left are areas that have recently been burned.*

The number of tourists visiting Mt. Elgon National Park is low but increasing. Tourist impact on the Mt. Elgon environment is thus currently low. However, there is some evidence of erosion on tourist trails (often exacerbated by use by local resource collectors and grazing animals) and firewood is collected around camping areas. As tourist numbers increase, these and other impacts such as rubbish or effluent pollution will require more management.

Illegal harvests of fuel wood, medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products pose a threat to Elgon national park in two ways: selective depletion and destruction of specific plant species, and the opening of formerly undisturbed areas within the Park to

human influence. As an increasing number of people rely on natural resources derived either legally or illegally from protected areas, the ability of the land, vegetation, and animal species to recover and subsist is People used to hunt for bush meat in form of calábase monkeys, bush bucks and blue and red tailed monkeys which they do not get any more diminished.

Natural calamities like land slides that have recently happened are a great source of the entire environment. They lead to the entire collapse of fauna and all the animal spicies within the area. They may form deep trenches which tap water and in the long run become breeding space for mosquitoes.



*Photograph showing some of the area affected by land slides before being covered by stagnant water*



*Photograph showing some of the area affected by land slides and covered by stagnant water*

However on the other had burning of the plant species in the parks helps to regenerate new grasslands that may attract other new animal species to occupy the place since the grassland is their source of food

**Table 1**

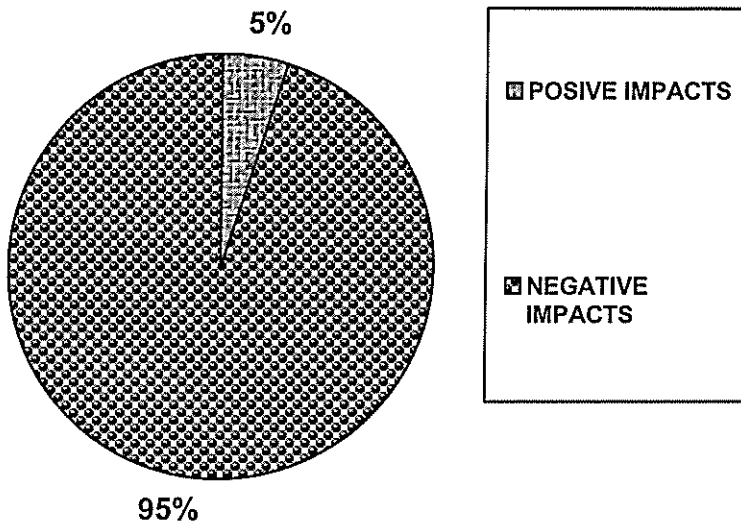
**Showing percentage of Impact of environmental degradation in Mt. Elgon national park**

<b>REACTIONS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE %</b>
displacement of animal species	25
damage the delicately balanced ecosystems	45
erosion on tourist trails	10
selective depletion and destruction of specific plant species	15
Regeneration of new plant and animal species	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 above illustrates percentage of Impact of environmental degradation in Mt. Elgon national park that is 25% of the respondents said displacement of animal species, 45% of the respondents said damage the delicately balanced ecosystems, 10% said erosion on tourist trails, 15% of the respondents also said selective depletion and destruction of specific plant species and the rest (5%) said Regeneration of new plant.

**Figure 3**

**Comparison between the positive and negative impacts of environmental degradation in Mt. Elgon national park.**



According to Figure 3, above negative impacts out weight positive impacts. However, according to my observation, I agree to the above respondents reactions.

#### **4.5 SOLUTIONS TO REHABILITATE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

According to the questionnaires distributed, 40% of the respondents reacted that burning in Mt. Elgon National Park-setting fires in certain areas on a regular schedule to regulate fuel-loading and make it less like the Park will burn on a large scale.

25% of the respondents said that the government has implemented laws to stop the poaching practice at the park.

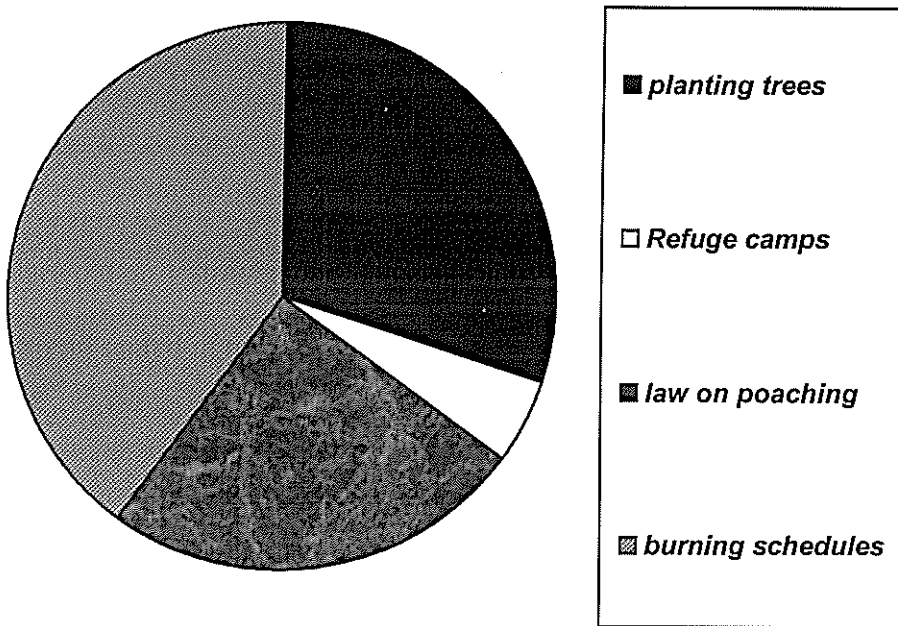
5% of the respondents said that the government has set up refugee camps away from the park to stop immigrants from grazing their animals within the gazetted areas of the park.

Besides that, park 30% said that there are schedules of planting more tree species in order to replace old or destroyed one. This is usually done at least very after 3 years.

This is represented in the pie chart below.

**Figure 4**

**showing solutions to rehabilitate environmental degradation**



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter endeavors to draw the summary, conclusions and make relevant recommendations regarding the research carried out.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

This study was conducted with a view of finding out the impact of environmental degradation on tourism resources. Mt. Elgon National Park was used as a case study.

The research purpose, research objectives, research questions were formulated, the research problem, scope of the study and significance of the study were identified. Relevant literature as secondary sources of data was reviewed. The research methodology was designed and the research proposal prepared, which guided the whole research process. The main instruments of collection of primary data were questionnaires, interviews, photography and observations. Secondary data was also collected from textbooks, periodicals, newspapers, minutes, and the Internet.

Data was collected and subjected to analysis by use of qualitative and quantitative methods. The results of which are revealed in chapter four.



### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to consider a broader array of assets and rights in order to identify people depending on environmental resources for their livelihoods. Income from environmental resources is important in situations where people are unable to obtain sufficient income, from agriculture or wage employment.

Understanding the dependency of house holds on the park is critical for developing management strategies.

Managers of the park must embrace a proactive approach and work with local Communities to address their socio economic concerns.

The government should relocate people in the ecological sensitive area.

Should also develop management of NENP management plan that highlight that highlight the ecological sensitive areas.

Awareness programs through community sensitization should also be done.

Alternatives to should be set up for the local communities for example energy saving stores, solar, hydro electricity generation.

Good agricultural practices should be encouraged and taught.

Government should encourage tree growing in the park

However further research should be conducted in order to bridge the gap between the negative and positive impacts of environmental degradation.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

All in all, the entire programme was a great success. This is simply because the two variables were easily managed to compare the two variables; environmental degradation and tourism resources were easily compared and managed and besides that a clear solution to the problem were stated

## APPENDIX I

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## APPENDIX II

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES

Dear Respondent,

I, Killa Grace of Kampala International University under taking kindly requests you to fill this questionnaire to enable me compile the research findings about “The impact of environmental degradation on tourism resources”.

The information you give will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this study since it is part of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor’s Degree in Tourism and Hotel Management of Kampala International University.

**Please tick the most appropriate answer or fill in the spaces provided.**

Thank you.

1. Name(s) (optional).....
2. Position and Department.....
3. Age

20-30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30-40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How long have you served at Mt.Elgon National Park?

1-2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. List some of the tourism resources found at Mt. Elgon National Park
  - i) ..... ii) .....
  - iii) ..... iv) .....

6. Which areas in the National Park are environmentally degraded by the tourist activities?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. What other factors have led to environmental degradation at Mt. Elgon National Park?

.....  
.....

8. What challenges do you face at Mt. Elgon National Park in the environmentally degraded areas?

.....  
.....

9. What are some of the programmes that are being under taken to hinder environmental degradation at the park in the environmentally degraded areas?

.....  
.....

*Thank you very much for your time.*

**APPENDIX III**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS**

Dear Respondent,

I, Killa Grace of Kampala International University kindly request you to fill this questionnaire to enable me compile the research findings about “The impact of environmental degradation on tourism resources”.

The information you give will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this study since it is part of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor’s Degree in Tourism and Hotel Management of Kampala International University.

**Please tick the most appropriate answer or fill in the spaces provided.**

Thank you.

- 1. Name(s) (optional).....
- 2. Country of origin (optional).....
- 3. Purpose of visit.....
- 4. Why did you choose Mt.Elgon National Park  
(Please give at least 3 reasons)
  - i). .....
  - ii). .....
  - iii). .....
  - iv). .....

5. Have you been to Mt.Elgon National Park before?  
Yes  No

6. If yes, how did you know about the park? (Please tick)

- News papers/Magazine
- Internet
- Friends and Relative
- Tour Operation/ Travel Agents
- Uganda Tourism Board

7. What are the tourism resources do you find interesting at Mt Elgon National Park? (List them)

i). .....

ii). .....

iii). .....

8. In your view do you think environmental degradation has an impact on the tourism resources?

Yes

No

b). If yes, explain how. If no, explain why

.....

.....

.....

9. According to your own assumption, what are the causes of environmental degradation at Mt. Elgon National Park?

.....

.....

10. How best can management reduce environmental degradation?

.....

.....

*Thank you very much for your time.*