The institutional framework of EDRM in Simanjiro District (Tanzania) and its implications for tourism stability

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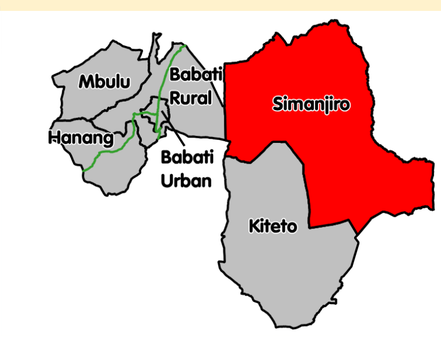
Issue

The primary issue in the Simanjiro District is extreme drought, which devastates biodiversity and Maasai culture, directly threatening the stability of local tourism. Despite the existing institutional framework, a reactive rather than proactive approach to risk management prevails, which, combined with poor coordination and a lack of resources, weakens the region's resilience. This failure to protect wildlife migration routes and local communities leads to a decline in the destination's attractiveness and its inability to cope with climate change.

Aim

The aim of this study is to analyze the structure and performance of Environmental Disaster Risk Management (EDRM) institutions in the Simanjiro District of Tanzania and to assess their impact on safeguarding the vital tourism sector.

Study area

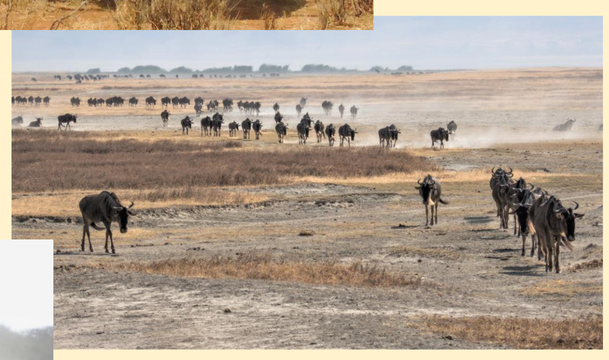


Methodology

The study employs a qualitative approach centered on the Simanjiro District. Primary data were gathered through key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with local communities and 19 representatives from NGOs and the private sector. Secondary data included a review of the National DRM Strategy (2022–2027) and district reports. Data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to identify institutional patterns and factors influencing disaster risk management performance.

Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11:4, 589-597.

Results



Environmental threats to tourism in Simanjiro

Destabilization of Wildlife Tourism: Droughts and environmental degradation disrupt migratory cycles (wildebeest, zebra) and increase wildlife mortality, reducing safari attractiveness.

Cultural Erosion: Extreme livestock losses (92,000+ head) drive Maasai youth to urban areas, leading to the loss of living traditions and cultural authenticity for visitors.

Logistical and Economic Collapse: Flash floods destroy unpaved roads and isolate lodges. Constant infrastructure repairs significantly increase fixed operational costs.

Health and Safety Risks: Rising disease outbreaks (cholera, malaria) and escalating Human-Wildlife Conflict over water resources increase the destination's risk profile.

Institutional Failure: The EDRM system is reactive, underfunded, and fragmented. A lack of coordination with NGOs and local communities prevents effective disaster prevention.

Discussion

The results show that the disaster management system in Simanjiro performs only average, primarily due to poor cooperation between institutions. Instead of a coordinated approach, tasks are often duplicated, or certain risks are overlooked entirely. Furthermore, the system operates reactively – addressing problems only after they arise rather than investing in prevention, which contradicts modern international standards. A major shortcoming is the exclusion of NGOs and traditional Maasai communities; despite their valuable field experience, the state fails to involve them in decision-making. To protect tourism in the region, it is essential to shift toward an open governance model that integrates these communities and organizations into the official system.

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