

The role of mobile phones in facilitating communication among the Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining the role of mobile phones in facilitating information communication for socio-economic development among the Maasai pastoralists in Monduli District, Tanzania. Specific objectives were to examine the pattern of access to and use of mobile phones by the pastoralists, investigate the ways in which mobile phones facilitate communication among pastoralist communities, examine the constraints in the usage of mobile phones and determine ways in which the usage of mobile phones by the Maasai pastoralists would be improved. The study was basically cross-sectional and data was mainly collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. Major findings of this study revealed that many of the mobile phone options are known and used, but phone call is the most used option. It was also revealed that mobile phones are used for communicating with friends, family and veterinarians in carrying out financial transactions, finding out livestock prices in the market and information on new grazing areas. The constraints encountered in the use of mobile phones include network outage, high cost of recharging batteries, unavailability of vouchers, lack of electricity in the village and the language barrier. Finally, recommendations for improving mobile phone usage are given.