

The role of tourism in the conservation of cultural heritage in Kenya

Irandu, EM

Abstract:

Due to the declining fortunes in agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors, many developing countries have turned to tourism as a panacea to the numerous economic problems facing them. However, emphasis in Kenya has been mainly on beach and wildlife tourism, to the total exclusion of cultural tourism. This paper discusses critically the contribution of international tourism in the conservation of cultural heritage in Kenya. The cultural impacts of international tourism are found to be both positive and negative and much more pronounced at the coast and in Maasailand. Doxey's irritation index (irridex) is used as the main theoretical framework in the paper. Although Doxey suggests that in the last stage of tourism development the local communities are likely to be antagonistic to the tourists, in the case of the Maasai, the relation between them and the tourists has been rather harmonious. This could be so because the local community is actively involved in tourism development and derives benefits from the industry. The issues discussed in the paper are relevant to other parts of the world including Asia Pacific region. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for proper visitor management through planning to minimize negative cultural impacts on local communities