

The Role of Kiswahili in the Integration of The East African Region

Habwe, John

Abstract:

This paper is about Kiswahili and its role in the integration of the East African diverse communities. It is argued in this paper that there is an evolving social-cultural matrix unique to East Africa. This culture is finding its expression in Kiswahili, which is a popular lingua franca in the region. This lingua franca enjoys goodwill not just as a communication tool but also as a symbol of regional identity and integration of the East African peoples and cultures. Kiswahili's role as one of the inner agents of East Africa faces great challenges by the mere fact of globalization enforcing on the spread of major world languages like English, French, German, Spanish and others. Globalization is likely to spark off even more of the allegiance of the East African inhabitants to their native languages. All these factors, notwithstanding Kiswahili's ability to reinforce the East African integration is extremely significant.