

# **The Role of Tour Guides in the Conservation of Cultural Landscapes in Kieni**

**East Division, Nyeri North District**

**Hoseah Wanderi**

**A thesis submitted to the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, University of Nairobi, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the**

**Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology**

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## Declaration

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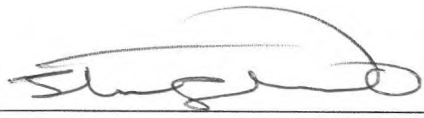


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Date: 21/6/2010

Hoseah Wanderi

This thesis has been submitted with my approval as a university supervisor.



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Date: 23/06/10

S. Nangendo (PhD)

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to all those people who have a passion for the conservation of our cultural landscapes. I also dedicate this work to my beloved wife and my two sons.

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| COMPACT | Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation                     |
| GEF SGP | Global Environmental Facility Small Grant Programme                      |
| ICOMOS  | International Council of Monuments and Sites                             |
| IUCN    | International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources |
| KATO    | Kenya Association of Tour Operators                                      |
| KIFCON  | Kenya Indigenous Forest Conservation Programme                           |
| KNCU    | Kenya National Commission for UNESCO                                     |
| KWS     | Kenya Wildlife Service   |
| NGOs    | Non Governmental Organizations   |
| UN      | United Nations   |
| UNEP    | United Nations Environmental Programme                                   |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization          |
| WHC     | World Heritage Convention  |



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To all these people: *asanteni sana!*

## **Abstract**

This study sought to bring out the role of tour guides in the conservation of cultural landscapes. The research specifically probed their potential role in the conservation of Mount Kenya which is faced with threats to its well-being. The research was carried out in Kieni East Division in Nyeri North District.

The study had two objectives: to investigate roles that tour guides can render in the conservation of Mount Kenya cultural landscape and to examine how the roles can be integrated in the conservation programmes of Mount Kenya cultural landscape. It was guided by the value- belief-norm theory of the environmental movement. Probabilistic sampling design was used to select a study sample of thirty individual tour guides who became the key respondents. Primary data were obtained through interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation while secondary data were obtained from written texts in libraries and internet journals. The data were then processed into tables and analyzed in percentages while information from direct observation and secondary data was recorded in direct speech, quoted or recorded on digital camera.

The information acquired from the study indicated that tour guides are keen on current conservation problems and needs of Mount Kenya and are willing to be part of the solution to the problems. It emerged that tour guides are aware of the effects of degradation both within and without the Mount Kenya protected area in which case they were able to correlate the human economic activities that may be a danger to the well being of the mountain environmental well-being. It was also established that the tour guides have in the past offered environmental care to the mountain despite the fact that their continued participation in the conservation work has been curtailed by authorities. Their participation has been kept superficial in the sense that they sometimes receive invitations to attend educational forums such as workshops and seminars on conservation but do not get space to practice what they learn and from their practical experience on Mount Kenya.

The research, therefore, recommends that the tour guides' knowledge obtained through experience needs to be utilized to enhance government's conservation efforts. Their conservation initiatives ought to be supported and encouraged by conservation agencies. The training of tour guides also need to be enhanced and sustained. Finally, ways of motivating tour guides need to be initiated to perpetuate and sustain their eagerness in giving care to the threatened Mount Kenya cultural landscape.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

Conservation is one of the major debates in the modern world which has been occasioned by the observed rapid deterioration of the physical and social environments. Scholars have endeavoured to tackle the problem of the destruction of physico-cultural environments after the realization that human beings are the chief agents of the destruction owing to their socio-economic activities such as tourism, agriculture, mining and fishing.

According to the IUCN (2006:1), conservation is:

the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

Thus, conservation is positive, embracing preservation, maintenance, sustainable utilization, restoration, and enhancement of the natural environment.

The Dictionary of Social Sciences defines conservation as the husbanding of persons, creatures, specific categories of simple and complex things such as trees, forests and lakes or the preservation of such from unnecessary, excessive, wasteful, and destructive uses or influences (Gould and Kolb 1964: 128). From the two definitions, conservation may be viewed as a benevolent practice towards safeguarding heritage in general.

Conservation has been such an important issue at the international level to the extent that agreements and declarations have been made and ratified by nations for its enhancement. Examples of these are international agreements such as the Venice Charter of 1964 which was adopted by ICOMOS in 1965. The charter takes care of conservation and restoration of monuments and sites (ICOMOS 1964). There is also the Nara Document on Authenticity written in Japan in 1994 which further developed the Venice Charter as a response to the expanding scope of cultural heritage concerns and interests in the contemporary world (ICOMOS 1994:1). The 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972 came up with a document that established protection of the

world cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972). There was also the United Nations General Conference of 1992 which formulated what is now referred to as the Rio de Janeiro Agreement and this was chiefly about care for the physical environment against destruction by human developments such as industrialization and urbanization (United Nations 1992). All these agreements have been accepted by many nations of the world. For instance, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention has been assented to by 186 out of the 195 nations in the world (UNESCO WHC website 2009). These facts demonstrate the seriousness with which the contemporary world views conservation of cultural and natural heritages.

Current issues in the world concerning conservation have tended to specifically focus on the integrated management of the natural and cultural resources. Integrated management has been viewed as one of the means to sustainable development (Lass and Reusswig 2001: 7, GEF SGP 2004:5, Maathai, 2005: 37). In the integration, central agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local communities and other stakeholders to a particular resource have been encouraged to participate as partners in conservation. For instance, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (2004:1) addressed itself to integrated approaches for safeguarding the tangible and intangible cultural heritages in the world. The tangible cultural heritage is the physical or visible aspects of culture such as trees or rocks believed, for instance, to be sacred. On the other hand, the intangible cultural heritages are the invisible aspects of culture that are only discerned by mental cognition. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage is manifested in a people's knowledge, language, beliefs or practices.

In addition, integrated management acknowledges the relevance of community participation in conservation. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972: article 5) expresses the role of the community in the integrated protection of heritage in comprehensive planning programmes. The Rio de Janeiro Agreement of 1992 also featured the acknowledgment of community involvement in the conservation of the environment. The agreement passed twenty seven principles, three of which are prominent in endorsing community participation. The three principles: 10, 21, and 22 focus on participation by the local people in handling the environment. Principle 10 holds that environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens at the relevant levels. It also proposes that at the national level, each individual ought to have appropriate access to information that is held by public authorities in addition to having the chance to participate in decision-making. On the other hand, Principle 21

recognizes the need to tap the creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world so as to achieve sustainable development. Finally, Principle 22 acknowledges the role indigenous people and other local communities have in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices (UN 1992: 4).

Currently, there are laws that have been formulated to protect both the physical and cultural environments in Kenya. These are: the GoK (2006): National Museums and Heritage Act, (Number 6 of 2006), the GoK (1985): Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (Cap 376), the GoK (2005): Forest Act of 2005 and the GoK (1999): National Environment Management and Coordination Act of 1999. The four Acts establish structures to check against human activities that might destroy cultural and natural heritages in the country.

Despite the existence of local and international laws, the involvement of the local communities has not been sufficient in Kenya. According to one programme report of 2004 on Kenya, community consultations in regard to the treatment of the forest and other local issues were not satisfactory to the Forest Department and other stakeholders (GEF SGP 2004: 36). The aforesaid Acts of Kenyan laws attest to the fact that at least there are legal frameworks for conservation in the country. The problem is how effectively the local community has been made to interact with the government enforcement officers to achieve the best conservation results. Within the focus on sustainable and efficient conservation, it was, therefore, a matter of concern for this study to understand the extent that local communities have been actively involved in operating within the established frameworks.

The purpose of the study was to specifically understand the potential role of tour guides in the conservation of cultural landscapes in Central Kenya. The particular cultural landscape of interest was Mount Kenya. The mountain is an important landscape in Kenya especially in matters to do with its economic resources. It is an important source of water for many Kenyans for it is a major catchment area. It also supports a diverse range of flora and fauna some of which are endemic species. Its landscape also bears scenic sites owing to the geological formations and the permanent snow. The natural features of the mountain are a source of attraction to tourists. For instance, groups such as the Mountain Club of Kenya, local lodges, and private safari companies organize many mountain safaris to the Mount Kenya National Park (GEF SGP 2004:36). Tour operators generally promote this region as appropriate

for eco-tourism. In scholarly debates, however, the term 'eco-tourism' has generated a lot of debate among social scientists with no common agreement on its precise definition. Ceballos-Lascurian (1996:20) defined eco-tourism as:

...environmentally responsible, enlightening travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact: and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local population.

A significant relationship exists between eco-tourism and cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes provide resources that attract eco-tourists. According to UNESCO World Heritage Convention (2003:10), a cultural landscape is a site that demonstrates interactions between people and the environment, a place with both cultural and natural values and a site with spiritual and other associative values. Mount Kenya, therefore, qualifies to be referred to as a cultural landscape. This is mainly because of its natural features that have been interpreted by the local people as having spiritual significance. Agikuyu for example, associated it with the holiness of God and called it 'Kerenyaga' meaning mountain of brightness and in addition considered it to be God's resting-place (Kenyatta, 1938: 225). Hall (1994:140) has forwarded a fundamental argument concerning national parks and national reserves. He argues that to retain an area as a national park is as much a cultural decision as it is to use the land for grazing, intensive farming or slash/burn cultivation. His view is that the splitting of heritage into cultural and natural components is artificial as values associated with national parks, wilderness, and scientific reserves are cultural in nature (Hall, 1994:140). It can thus be said that the attraction of tourists to Mount Kenya is a consequence of cultural decisions made to protect the landscape.

Several decisions have over the years been made to protect the mountain's landscape. The mountain's summit and moorlands were established as Forest Reserves in 1932. Then the area was gazetted as a National Park by the colonial government in 1949 and later recognized by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve in 1978 (GEF SGP 2004:36). Finally, it was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997 as both a National Park and Natural Forest (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2006). Despite the legislation efforts, however, the mountain's well-being has negatively been affected by loggers, hunters, charcoal burners, honey gatherers and farmers (Clarke and Woodley, 1993: 24, Gathaara, 1999: 61; Milner et al. 1993: 27). Such illegal activities happening in Mount Kenya threaten future prospects of having an intact cultural landscape.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

The conservation of Mount Kenya has been a major challenge in recent times. This has happened despite the presence of the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Forest Service outposts in the area. Regardless of the efforts of these conservation institutions, negative landscape changes have continued to be experienced within the mountain environment. It is evident that the contemporary management method in landscape has not fared well gauging from the destruction experienced in the mountain. Current destruction includes; illegal logging, illegal cultivation, poaching and forest fires (Gathaara, 1999: 16; Vanleeuwe, *et al.* 2003: 18). Littering and trail proliferation have also affected the mountain to a great extent (Clarke and Woodley, 1993: 25). The trail proliferation problem has resulted in uncontrolled bush tracking in which case muddy swathes as wide as one hundred metres have been reported on the mountain (Clarke and Woodley, 1993: 24; GEF SGP 2004:37).

Besides the destruction of the mountain, the other major problem has been the situation where protected areas in Kenya today are more accessible to tourists than they are to the local residents who traditionally owned and managed the resources in such areas. This paradox has occasioned what Gichiah (2004:5) calls 'protectionism' that denies the local community the rights to resources they consider theirs. Such a situation tends to de-link government agencies from the local population in matters to do with mutual responsibility and overlooks the possible gains that could be sourced from the integration of local stakeholders.

Tour guides now have a larger stake in Mount Kenya gauging from available statistics where the tourist numbers were 26,300 in 2001, 27,900 in 2002 and 25,500 in 2003 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004:182). In the wake of current increase in the number of tourists who visit the Mount Kenya region, the tour guides' participatory role needed to be interrogated.

It was, therefore, necessary to evaluate the tour guides' own experiences and operations in the Mount Kenya cultural landscape in order to understand their roles in conservation which was hitherto unclear. The main focus of the study was to evaluate the tour guides' ideas, opinions and their manner of activities that relate to the conservation of Mount Kenya. This was the focus owing to the fact that tour guides have unlimited access to the Mount Kenya landscape. In the study, sampled tour guides were given a chance to express their experiences in the cultural landscape.

The study was guided by the following questions.

- What roles do tour guides have in the conservation of Mount Kenya cultural landscape?
- How can the roles be used to inform formulation of conservation policies for Mount Kenya cultural landscape?

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Broad objective**

- To investigate the role of tour guides in the conservation of cultural landscapes.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

- To investigate roles that tour guides can render in the conservation of Mount Kenya cultural landscape.
- To examine how these roles can be used to guide policy in conservation plans for Mount Kenya cultural landscape.

### **1.4 Justification**

Several studies have been done concerning the integration of local communities in the conservation of natural and cultural landscapes in Kenya. The issue to do with local community involvement has been discussed by authors such as GEF SGP (2004), Bett, (2005), Vanleeuwe *et al.* (2003), Emerton, (1999), Marete, (1998), Johnson *et al.* (1995), Clarke and Woodley (1993), Obare and Wangwe, (2000), Maathai, (2005). All the above authors have, in part, tackled the benefits of the integration of local communities in conservation particularly around Mount Kenya. The authors generally acknowledge the crucial role that local communities have played in conservation in various initiatives. Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for instance, have in the past mobilized self-help groups to help in the restoration of the landscape features such as forests through afforestation. One of the prominent ones is the Green Belt Movement, an organization that emphasizes reforestation (Maathai, 2005:37). Despite the recognition of the need for community participation, little is mentioned about the involvement of tour guides who are also stakeholders of the landscape.

Non-involvement of tour guides creates a serious gap in conservation activities given that the other local people are only able to be frequently active outside the protected area where physical access is limited to a few. Thus, as



already implied, the essence of conservation of the mountain is controlling the number of people allowed into the landscape. Among the few people who have legal access are either government employees such as the KWS wardens as well as forest rangers and the tour guides who are not government employees. Hence, tour guides have a greater stake as regards their regular authorized access to all the zones in the mountain compared to other civilians. Consequently, it was considered reasonable to assume that they relatively have more experiences of the mountain landscape compared to other members of the public who do not have similar access.

On this basis, tour guides were viewed in the study as falling in a unique group. They are comparatively autonomous as regards their employment since many are self-employed (Clarke and Woodley 1993: 45). The only other people who may have such access and experience are those who use illegal means to enter the protected landscape. Tour guides who actually access the landscape are, however, licensed and, therefore, operate within the law. Consequently, they were accessible as research respondents for the study. Tour guides also have an important role in cultural contact. Their roles in tour guiding entail answering questions posed by tourists. For this reason, they are the most important medium for the transference of cultural understanding for most tourists (McDonnell, 2001: 8). The study sought to get authentic ideas of tour guides in the realm of community participation in conservation. The focus was tour guides' understanding and evaluation of issues to do with knowledge, its organization, and its application to conservation ideals.

The choice of Mount Kenya as a study site was backed by a number of reasons. Firstly, it is an important sacred site to the Agikuyu, Aembu, Ameru and Samburu people. For example, among Agikuyu, Mount Kenya is the holy earthly dwelling place of God (Kenyatta, 1938: 225). Secondly, it is a gazetted National Park, a Biosphere Reserve as well as a World Heritage Site recognized by both UNESCO and IUCN. The recognition implies that it is of local, national and international importance. Thirdly, it is considered a vital water catchment for Kenya. Over 50% of Kenya's hydro-electric power is currently generated from rivers originating from the mountain. Irrigation projects such as Mwea and Tebere rice schemes depend on streams and rivers such as Thiba and Ngurubani whose source is Mount Kenya. The mountain is also a major source of drinking water for about seven million people and supports a variety of biodiversity (GEF SGP, 2004:35). The biodiversity in the mountain includes species that are endemic, rare and threatened be they animals or plants. Among the rare animals found within the mountain environs include the giant forest hog, black rhinoceros, tree hyrax and black-fronted duiker. Endemic species include the alpine swift

and alpine lizard. Examples of indigenous forest trees species include the camphor and cedar species while high altitude plant species include the giant lobelias and groundsels (Bett, 2005: 4).

Fourthly, despite the fact that there are government institutions charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the well-being of Mount Kenya landscape, there has been a persistent challenge of environmental destruction which is a grave threat to the continued preservation of the mountain's ecosystem. The Kenya Wildlife Service has traditionally relied on park wardens for surveillance while the Forest Department has used the forest rangers for patrolling the landscape.

The study envisioned the unique position held by tour guides, being ordinary citizens, as liable to provide unique ideas that can be tapped so as to reduce the problem of the destruction of Mount Kenya ecosystem. Protecting Mount Kenya landscape has become a big challenge for the people charged with the task of managing the extensive area in which case the staff cannot afford to adequately cope with every occurrence in the landscape even with the use of aerial surveys and other modern surveillance technology.

The study sought to identify possible solutions to deficiencies in conservation of cultural landscapes. The findings are expected to be invaluable to government conservators in Mount Kenya and other cultural landscapes in the country.

### **1.5 Scope and limitations**

For the purposes of the study, only tour guides based in Kieni East Division's tourist centres were studied. This also included individuals who have double roles such as guide/driver or guide/porter. The study concentrated on measurements within the scope of anthropology. However, relevant data collected by other researchers were used to understand and grasp basic information pertaining to the Mount Kenya landscape.

One of the limitations, however, was a shortage of academic literature that specifically addresses tour guides in conservation. Past conservation activities of tour guides in Kenya was hitherto unknown. The researcher sought to solve this drawback by reading general literature on conservation of the Mount Kenya landscape in particular and other landscapes in general.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1.0. Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to get an overview of arguments forwarded by scholars on conservation but with an emphasis on community participation. This assisted the researcher in the familiarization of the current progress in conservation research of cultural landscapes that often act as basic tourist resources. The chapter generally summarizes key issues in modern trends of conservation of both cultural and natural heritages specifically in Kenya but with key examples from the rest of the world.

The concept of cultural landscapes gained prominence during the UNESCO WHCs' Twenty-Seventh Session of 2003. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention acknowledged new challenges that had emerged as a result of broadened definitions of heritage. The convention realized that there are distinctive spiritual, material and technological responses of people to their environment. Such responses to the environment are characterized by a people's interpretation of what is cultural and what is natural (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2003:10). Therefore, the World Heritage Convention today recognizes cultural landscapes as being important in demonstrating interactions of people and their environment and on this premise emphasizes their need to be conserved.

According to Coleman (2003:1), cultural landscapes are sites and places that preserve cultural values and ecological diversity, while offering economic gain such as agriculture and tourism as well as displaying considerable scenic and amenity value to local areas and daily life. There are three categories of cultural landscapes (Rossler, 2000:27) recognized by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The categories are: landscapes designed and created intentionally by humans, organically evolved landscapes and associative cultural landscapes. According to Rossler (2000), a landscape designed and created intentionally by humans is one that is constructed for aesthetic reasons which are often, but not always, associated with religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles. A representative for this category can be Uhuru Park in Nairobi City. On the other hand, an organically evolved landscape results from an initial social, economic, administrative, or religious imperative and has developed to its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. A good example for this category is the

Koobi Fora fossil landscape. Finally, associative cultural landscapes have the distinction of having powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence (Rossler, 2000:28). Mount Kenya falls in the third category since the cultural significance associated with it is based solely on its natural elements.

### **2.1.1 A brief history of conservation of Mount Kenya cultural landscape**

Written records on Mount Kenya began with European explorers who wrote about the mountain when they saw it during their expeditions to the interior of present day Kenya in later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The information generated interest from European sport hunters who came to experience the areas' teeming wildlife. Many of the big mammals within the Kenyan plains and mountains were, as a result, threatened with decimation due to the resultant uncontrolled trophy hunting (Migot-Adholla et al. 1982:18).

The colonial government, therefore, took action by protecting the heritage which was under threat by the hunters. Thus, Kenya became the first East African country to enact laws for the conservation of wild fauna. Ouma, (1970: 41) says that;

...following deliberations of the first ever international conference on wild life management in 1900, the protectorate instituted The East Africa Game Regulations 1900, which was effectively complemented by the Game Ordinance of 1903.

Much later, the summit and moorlands of the Mount Kenya landscape were gazetted as a National Park in 1949 which became a hallmark in nature conservancy in East Africa (Ouma, 1970:41). However, the conservation measures and regulation of hunting brought an anomaly in which case some traditional African subsistence economies were destabilized. The long-established economic livelihood of hunter-gatherer communities was outlawed giving rise to a situation where wild animal slaughter by the gun was seen as sport while hunting for food with bows and arrows was viewed as poaching (Migot-Adholla, Mkangi and Mbindyo 1982). This brought about a form of alienation of the local population from their natural heritage.

In spite of the negative effects brought about by the changes, several world conservation bodies later joined in the quest to protect Mount Kenya landscape. The mountain was enlisted by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve in 1978.

It was also inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a World Heritage Site after an IUCN evaluation report which noted that:

The Mt. Kenya nomination consists of two administrative units: the Mt. Kenya National Park (715km<sup>2</sup>) managed by the Kenya Wildlife service (KWS) and the Mt. Kenya Forest Reserve (1,420km<sup>2</sup>) managed by the Kenya Forest Department. Both are equally important zones that are designed to protect the main natural values and the watershed of the mountain above the 2,000 - 2,500m elevations (IUCN 1997: 69).

In the recent past, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources gazetted the whole of Mount Kenya as a National Reserve in 2000 under the Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act, Cap 376 which replaced the Forest Act Cap 385. In the new gazettelement, Mount Kenya land, measuring approximately 2,124 square kilometres in both Eastern and Central province, was put under the protected area network (Kenya Gazette 2000, Supplement No 48).

### **2.1.2 Conservation debates in the international world**

Conservation issues in the modern world have tended to adopt a holistic approach when dealing with the environment. At a symposium held in Natchitoches, Louisiana, USA in 2004, ICOMOS noted that the traditional separation of nature and culture is a hindrance to protection, and is no longer sustainable. It also noted that heritage landscape protection is required at the local, national and global levels in order to transmit the valuable heritage resources to future generations (ICOMOS 2004: 1).

Several international bodies are currently working in collaboration to achieve more adequate conservation results in the modern world. The UNESCO, IUCN, ICOMOS and UNEP are some of the major organizations that have been involved in matters to do with conservation. In the initial stages of the formation of the UNESCO Convention on World Heritage, the General Conference of 1972 noted that:

the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay but also changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972: 1).

Article five of the convention, therefore, encouraged state parties in the agreement to enforce effective and active measures to conserve and preserve the cultural and natural heritages situated in their territories. One way of doing this was to adopt a general policy which aims at giving the natural and cultural heritages a function in the life of the

community. The second way was to integrate the protection of those heritages into comprehensive planning programmes (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972:3).

To meet such measures, a new system of World Heritage Partnerships (WHP) was heralded to focus on effective management. One of the key objectives was to integrate world conservation actions into regional and urban planning and sustainable development strategies that include ecotourism and cultural tourism. It was also hoped that the public and private sectors would cooperate and be consolidated to design new actions that would address particular threats posed by resource exploitation at or near cultural landscapes.

In line with WHP, a World Heritage Membership programme was formed to strengthen world heritage information networks and to foster a general ethic of conservation through capacity building, education, public awareness and media strategies. This was hoped to get the youth in action towards conservation in what was hailed as 'World Heritage in Young Hands'. The expectation would in this case be that more space and enabling environment would be accorded the young people in decision making levels. The empowerment was hoped to develop broad based partnerships with the tourism industry in support of World Heritage Sites and observance of guidelines for responsible and sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism realistically depends on the advancement of conservation. In recognition of this, a UNEP conference held in Brussels adopted a strategy where the tourism sector, national and local authorities as well as consumers are involved (Carbone, 2005:4). In the strategy, the actors in the tourism industry are supposed to promote voluntary integration of environmental good practices and accountability. The government is supposed to build capacity to integrate environment aspects into tourism policies and plans and to create an enabling environment for private sector initiatives. Also in the UNEP's strategy are the consumers (tourists) who are expected to build the demand for sustainable travel products and raise awareness on responsible holiday making (Carbone, 2005:5).

The UNEP strategy demonstrates that tourism and conservation can be harmonized to act symbiotically. If a given heritage is well conserved its sustainability can be guaranteed by continued income from tourism (Tribe, 1999: 374). The strategy featured a UNEP/UNESCO joint objective of linking tourism to conservation of biodiversity. One of the key elements in this objective was to showcase projects that promote sustainable tourism in world

heritage sites. There were six World Heritage Sites that were showcased namely: Komodo and Ujung Kulon in Indonesia, Sian Ka'an in Mexico, Rio Platano in Honduras, and Tikal in Guatemala (Carbone, 2005:9).

The global initiatives set ideals for establishing networks for partnerships between stakeholders involved in environment-threatening activities. There also emerges the evidence of common agreements on the need to conserve nature and culture in the present world against destruction. The joint dream, however, develops into a challenge when it comes to the actual implementation of the local, national and global programmes.

### **2.1.3 Tourism**

#### **2.1.3.1 Eco-tourism and conservation**

Tourism as a global experience has been characterized by broad shifts in societal values in travel and leisure (Hall 1994:137). Western societies have designed conservation ethics for the needs of the tourist industry in the West. Due to the growing awareness of the needs of environmental protection, conservation and the development of environmentally-friendly products has become a major selling point of tourism destinations and specific tourist packages. The concept of eco-tourism has been adopted as an appropriate kind of tourism that cares for the environment. The term ecotourism emerged in the late 1980s as a direct result of the world's acknowledgment and reaction to sustainable practices and global ecological practices (Diamantis, 1999:93). As a concept it is hampered by an apparent lack of conventional agreement among scholars on its precise definition. As already mentioned in chapter one, Ceballos-Lascurian (1996: 20) defined it as being environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed natural areas for enjoyment and appreciation of nature and culture. He also viewed it to be that kind of tourism that promotes conservation and that which has low visitor impact and provides for economic involvement of local populations.

A different view is posed by Wheeler (1994: 4), who argued that since tourism's essential interest is profit-making, any supposed symbiosis between tourism and conservation is a fabrication. Wheeler disputes the idea that eco-tourism is eco-friendly by citing a case in United Kingdom where he says that the proliferation of small tour operators have grown thereby threatening the areas that they promote for tourism. He also uses an example of the situation in the Everest on the Himalayas where it has become a giant litter dump. He concludes that the concept of ecotourism though altruistic and noble has been hijacked for commercial and material purposes (Wheeler, 1994:7).

Diamantis (1999:94) says that the limitations of the concept arise from the spectrum within which ecotourism operates where a variety of terms have been introduced to describe the same phenomenon. Such terms are nature travel, nature-orientated tourism, nature tourism, nature-based tourism, sustainable tourism, alternative tourism and special interest tourism. Offering a slightly different view is Wild (1994:16) who states that in its applied form, ecotourism involves travel to small or remote towns and villages in undeveloped areas and scenic natural settings.

Panos Media Briefing (1995:1) says that the 'eco' prefix in eco-tourism stands for responsible travel. Espionzoa (2006:2) relies on the major factors associated with eco-tourism to describe it. The author says that some of the factors linked to eco-tourism are: parks and protected areas, environmental awareness, ethical responsibility, and conservation. Espionzoa, therefore, concludes that these provide a base of ideas to work from when looking into whether or not something is or is not eco-tourism.

Other scholars have brought up more terms in a bid to champion a more acceptable form of tourism. Gilbert, et al. (1994:31) say that:

The terms appended to tourism such as 'appropriate', 'alternative', 'controlled', 'eco', 'green', 'nature', 'soft', 'responsible' and 'sustainable' reflect an often simplistic approach to creating what authors believe to be a more benign form of tourism or even one with positive benefits.

However, a study conducted by Black, et al. (2001) indicates that reforms on tourism industry practices are most likely to focus more on immediate market goals that enhance the appeal of a tourist attraction. The study looked at ecotourism in the less developed countries, where it is often promoted in association with protected areas.

According to the study;

...training contents for tour guides revealed that most of the training programmes emphasized skills in interpretation, group management, specialist knowledge (botany, ecology, history etc.), communications, first aid, and customer relations (Black, et al. 2001:151).

This perspective is also held by Wheeler (1994) who says that actors in the tourism industry will focus more on profit-making. Emphasis on long-term strategies for both cultural and natural environments may not feature prominently in the current wake of competition for tourists. Speck (1993:71) says that severe changes in fragile ecological systems such as construction of new roads and lodges can occur through tourism. In view of these arguments, eco-tourism if unchecked can be the cause of destruction of nature in a gradual scale regardless of the fact that it is portrayed as a better alternative to mass tourism.



Nevertheless, the quest for the best practices for conservation of the threatened tourism resources remains. Godde, (1998:16) says that linking local and scientific knowledge is essential for promoting tourism that is sustainable to both the environment and to cultural values and beliefs. Tourism can contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and earning of foreign exchange (UNDP 1999: 5).

### **2.1.3.2 Eco-tourism in Kenya**

Kenya is among a few African countries that have taken advantage of eco-tourism. However, the rapid growth of tourism in general reveals both strengths and deficiencies in the existing management structure of nature-based tourism in parks (Eagles, 2006). The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, (1999:113) says:

The concept is becoming very popular particularly with environmentalists since it links conservation with sustainable development. In fact, it is the largest direct transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor. For instance, tourist establishments have sprung up outside the National Parks and Reserves and have attracted a new diversified tourist attraction namely the community based tourism.

In a different cultural environment, many tourists need a guide since such visitors frequently break social rules and intrude upon others' privacy (McDonnell 2001:1). This places a tour guide in a significant position as a link between the tourist, the authorities and the general community in matters to do with the rules, regulations and cultural norms of the host country. In Kenya, the situation is not different. Tourists hire guides to show them around. The dilemma to have more visitors and to conserve fragile ecosystems leaves government conservators at cross roads. In the Maasai Mara, for example, illegal but virtually unregulated off-road driving by tour operators has scarred the landscape (Vanasselt, 2000:2). This implies that tour operators might be victims of a compromise to a certain degree for rules that are supposed to be observed in protected areas.

The Kenyan government and other stakeholders in the tourism industry have sought to recapture the country's reputation as one of the preferred tourist destination in the world. According to Sindiga (1999:108), Kenya is now one of the most developed tourism destinations in Sub-Saharan Africa. He points out that eco-tourism is a catalyst for encouraging ecologically sustainable development which, in this case, is a form of economic growth occurring within the context of sound environmental management.

The aspect of environmentally-friendly operations in tourism industry has been assessed by Luck, (2006) while Musau and Prideaux (2003) have looked specifically at the hotel sector which they found to have significant impacts on the environment. Luck cites a case study of a tourist establishment set in the tropical coastal forest in

Mombasa Kenya run by Touristic Union International (TUI). In the Robison Baobab Club, managed by TUI, rubbish is avoided altogether rather than producing it and then disposing it off. It heavily relies on local supplies for food which guarantees support for the local community. The architecture is African which relies on straw roofs, which is bought from the local craftsmen (Luck, 2006: 363). Eco-tourism in this case becomes attractive to the local people since they are made to participate. The involvement of the local community, in this instance, conforms to Sindiga's sentiments regarding local community participation in eco-tourism activities. One fundamental argument he has forwarded concerning this is the assertion that:

Eco-tourists are expected to have a harmonious relationship not just with nature but also the local communities which host them. As such they are expected to respect the host communities, their cultures and customs. This is not to assume that cultural attributes of such communities are readily known to the eco-tourists. Rather, it is to emphasize that the tourists are sensitized to the local cultural circumstances. (Sindiga 1999:112)

From his argument, it is understood that a harmonious relationship requires cooperation between the different stakeholders in the eco-tourism business. This encompasses players from the grass root level to the highest level of authority within the country.

Many tourism activities in Kenya, however, are concentrated on growth in tourist numbers, by concerned authorities such as the Kenya Tourism Board. Akama (1997:96) notes that the government emphasis in terms of tourism development have been to encourage more tourists to visit the country without similar emphasis on care for social and environmental realities such as degradation. Driven by profit margin prospects, the tourism investors concentrated capital investments in high potential areas such as popular wildlife parks (Akama, 2002: 7). This was occasioned by lack of clearly laid down regulations and procedures relating to the social and environmental considerations. Thus, control against degradation becomes a problem. Kareithi, (2003) has done a study that included a search for understanding routes used by tour guides when conducting visitors. He realized that tour guides and tour drivers would opt to stop over at specific curio shops where they were assured of being paid a commission (Kareithi, 2003: 12). With the case in focus, questions about the level of compromise of tour guides arise. Interest can be aroused concerning the rules governing integrity of tour guides should they, for example, be induced to leave the designated track by their tourist clients. Kareithi's finding, nevertheless, adds value to the

Akama (1997) and Sindiga (1999) arguments that point to the need for cooperation of various stakeholders to keep watch against physical degradation of sites of visit.

According to Okungu (2002:4):

Eco-tourism in Kenya has grown and is referred to as responsible tourism in which the integrity of both nature and culture are protected so that the benefits of tourism and conservation can be sustained indefinitely. To be a positive force for conservation, ecotourism therefore, calls for involvement of all and not small exclusive groups.

It is a matter of interest to learn how inclusive eco-tourism business has been as regards matters to do with conservation.

#### **2.1.4 Community participation in conservation of protected areas in Kenya**

Several studies have been done concerning the trend of community participation in conservation. The emphasis on community participation is viewed as a departure from 'protectionism' that is seen as denying the local community their entitlement rights to what they consider theirs (Gichiah, 2004:5). The negative impact of 'protectionism' prompted the adoption of an alternative conservation approach. The preferred alternative approach is the participation by locals in conservation. The local participation approach has support particularly in developing countries. It is preferred because it has an interest in local level solutions to resource problems and in changing local institutional arrangements (Gichiah, 2004:6). The general view as regards community participation in wild life management is that a two-way communication between local community, managers of protected areas and the local government is necessary for mutual understanding. On this view, Lembuya and Snelson (1990: 103) argue that the local people are usually the most familiar with the local ecology and under many conditions should be the guardians of the local resources.

Kenya has adopted new policies where institutional arrangements and human resource base are the foundation for identification, diversification, maintenance and operation of Kenya's tourist product (Okungu, 2002: 5). The earliest major programme in Africa to embody the approach of community participation in conservation was the establishment of the Maasai Mara and Amboseli District Council Game Reserves (Olindo and Talbot 1990: 67). In the establishments, it was found necessary that the local community be involved for the success of the wildlife conservation.

Studies specifically focused on community participation in conservation around Mount Kenya have been done by Bett, (2005), GEF SGP (2004), Vanleeuwe, et al. (2003), Emerton, (1999) and Marshall, (2004). The studies have favourably tackled issues to do with dynamics of forest protection and resource use by local community. Marshall (2004: 2) believes that support by local communities for sustainable ecotourism is a need for long term positive effects on both the natural and cultural environments. She argues that if locals do not enjoy benefits from a given resource, they will not see the value of conservation, which is especially important in developing nations where wealth is difficult to obtain or where the wealthy are few.

The study by Bett, (2005), for example, mainly collected data on respondents such as; the local agricultural community, forest wardens, and district wardens. The GEF SGP (2004:39) has discussed projects that involved local communities in workshops targeting Community Based Organizations, youth as well as farmers where the people themselves came up with proposals on how they wanted biodiversity conservation enhanced.

Emerton (1999:13) has discussed the effects of the *shamba* system. The system was introduced in the region to incorporate the local farming communities in afforestation programmes. The community benefited from planting crops in the cleared lands while taking care of newly planted forest trees. Emerton (1999) seeks to qualify the justification for community participation and sustainable utilization of forest resources rather than strict protection and exclusion. Her view is that the communities are thereby given a sense of ownership of the resource. A contrasting opinion is however forwarded by Obare and Wangwe (2000:4) as regards the *shamba* system. They say that the system was discontinued in 1986 because it was subject to abuse.

Recent surveys indicate an improved community participation especially in tree planting where massive logging had previously taken toll in Mount Kenya. A report on changes in the conservation of Mount Kenya forests in 1999-2002 employed a time series analysis to highlight the status of conservation of the landscape. The report revealed that the trend of reforestation increased nineteen fold between 2000 and 2002 compared to 1995 and 2000 (Vanleeuwe, et al. 2003: 21).

Literature particularly tackling community participation in conservation is limited concerning areas deep in the Mount Kenya landscape. Carlsson, (1998) has briefly described the problem of littering on the mountain summit. He says that management of waste on Mount Kenya has been done through the use of such means as informative

pamphlets and signs, government and private-interest sponsored group clean-ups. The other means used is passing of information by word-of-mouth about impacts by tour operators to tourists (Carlsson, 1998:28). The Association of Mount Kenya Tour Operators is expected to do the sensitization but there are freelance tour operators (guides), though, who operate outside the association (Clarke, and Woodley, 1993: 46).

Nevertheless, Clarke and Woodley (1993) view tour guides as being part of the problem. The two authors say that some porters are responsible for leaving rubbish, deteriorating environment and theft. The implication is that participatory conservation is not tenable within the landscape. This may possibly be a contributing factor in failure to sufficiently tackle the problem of degradation in protected areas.

Viability of conservation efforts requires a holistic approach. The focus on participation of local people is therefore poised to continue appealing to many scholars. Sindiga (1999:112) holds that the greatest range of knowledge of ecology lies with the local people who are thus able to manage the resource system in a more sustainable manner. Local populations must be involved in creative ways both in conservation and in direct tourism activities. Mope (2004: 32) is of the view that any sustainable development must include the human dimension. Therefore, ecotourism is the balanced role of three main players namely, tourists, tourist enterprise and destination areas.

### **2.1.5 Tour guides and conservation of cultural landscapes**

A study of the management plan for Mount Kenya for the year 1993-1998 highlights the level at which government conservation authorities regards tour guides in relation to the conservation of the mountain. The community wildlife conservation programme set out in the plan was limited in scope (Clarke and Woodley 1993). Their argument was that no part of the National Park is contiguous with any community since the Park is completely surrounded by a buffer zone of the forest reserve. This assertion however, actually ignores the fact that natural and cultural resources in the mountain are not restricted by the artificial boundaries that delineates the National Park and the Forest Reserve. For instance, the wild animals at times of extreme weather conditions leave the designated park and the forest reserves into the settled areas causing havoc. The assertion also ignores the fact that there are tour guides who frequent the National Park on a daily basis and who are neither forest rangers nor game rangers and therefore ought to be considered as a community that directly neighbours the park. The statement also undermines the

interconnectedness of habitats where the buffer zone may also be rendered artificial when we talk about plant and animal communities.

The management plan however addresses the issue of Problem Animal Control (PAC). The plan tackles the PAC issue by suggesting the improvement of PAC skills where it suggests that the park could assist in training the people in the same. The suggested training includes; anatomy, animal behavior, target practice and snap shooting (Clarke and Woodley 1993: 62). The suggested training interventions are not exhaustive and tend to focus on the animal as the only subjects. Holistic approach is lacking in matters to do with issues such as how the community itself impacts on the behaviour of the animals, how the human-wildlife conflict should be addressed and what aspects of conservation the major conservation authorities can learn from the community. Symbiotic relationship between the local community, wildlife and the conservation authorities was therefore not well articulated in the management document. It appears that the mind set is that the local community should just be there to be advised on how to behave or handle wildlife issues. It did not occur in the management plan's derivation that the conservation authorities can indeed also learn from the community. Community involvement in conservation matters thus seem not be founded on dialogue but on instructions from the government authorities.

Progress however, seems to have been made by organizing workshops for the tour guides to discuss the affairs of Mount Kenya. During a workshop held for Mount Kenya porters and guides and sponsored by the KWS, the main focus was improvement of the former's standards of services to tourists, improvement of relationships between the tour guides, local community and KWS as well as having dialogues between the various parties involved in tourism. (Kenya Wildlife Service, 1993: 9). Key recommendation of the workshop were; establishment of a Mount Kenya tourism management advisory board, direct improvement of community and industry relations and improvement of porter/guides welfare.

The study thus embarked on getting the facts on the ground about the nature and extent to which the tour guides have shaped the conservation of Mount Kenya.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

The study used one theoretical framework to address the socio-cultural issues regarding the conservation of cultural landscapes. It assumed that tour guides in their capacity as stakeholders of the Mount Kenya resource can be subjects of conservation initiatives to observe rules and regulations for protection of cultural landscapes.

The theory employed in the exercise is discussed below.

### **2.2.1 Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory**

The main proponents of the Value Belief Norm (VBN) theory are Dietz, et al. (1999). They presented the theory from the perspective of environmental movement and argued that individuals, who accept a movement's basic values, believe that valued objects are threatened. Such individuals also believe that their actions can help restore those values. The pursuit of the restoration of the values creates a predisposition to provide support for the restorative activity by way of action, adherence to policy and personal behaviours that conform to the agreed principles. The support results in an obligation (personal norm) that is based on the individuals' capabilities and constraints (Dietz, et al. 1999:81). The theory thus assumes that for individuals to take care of the environment, they must first have value for the environment and value for change. The openness to change influences a new ecological standard which is informed by awareness of consequences of one's action which then influence pro-environmental norms.

The Value-Belief-Norm theory, therefore, explains the interventions made by individuals to check harmful human activities through efforts such as support for government policies aimed at decreasing destructive activities and support for agencies dedicated to environmental protection.

### **2.2.2 Relevance of the theory**

Mount Kenya cultural landscape has been negatively affected to a substantial extent due to growing human economic activities. The Value-Belief-Norm theory of environmentalism was, therefore, selected as most suitable to tackle the research problem since it typically holds a perspective that acknowledges harmful impacts by human agency on the biosphere. It also considers human actions such as support for policy and personal-sphere behaviours to redress harmful effects on the environment. It is, therefore, appropriate in the sense that it not only seeks the nature of government intervention but also the public roles in conservation.

### **2.3 Assumptions**

Following the research problem posed and the subsequent review of theory and literature, the following assumptions were proposed for the study.

1. In their capacity as licensed regular operators in the Mount Kenya cultural landscape, tour guides sufficiently comprehend past and current conservation problems to serve as care takers of the landscape.
2. Tour guides' understanding of the landscape is a valuable skill and strategically places them for consideration as dependable community resource persons to enrich formulation and implementation of conservation plans for Mount Kenya.

## 2.4 Operational definitions

**Dependent variable:** Conservation

**Independent Variable:** Tour guides

**Conservation:** For the purpose of this study, conservation is taken as the protection of environment (both social-cultural and natural) from unnecessary, destructive or wasteful trends.

**Cultural landscape:** The term is used herein to mean any place that is symbolically given cultural meaning by a given community or communities.

**Tourist:** This term is used to mean any person who is involved in travel for leisure regardless of any other purpose and should at least be 100 kilometres away from home for at least 24 hours.

**Tour operator:** The term is used to mean an individual or a company whose business is to promote, market, and to offer tour services to tourists.

**Tour guides:** This will be taken as an individual whose main source of income is by conducting tourists to sites of attraction.

**Eco-tourism:** The term is used to mean that brand of tourism that is basically for admiration and enjoyment of nature but non-threatening to the well-being of the site of attraction.

**Eco-tourist:** The term is used to mean a tourist whose purpose of travel is basically for the admiration and enjoyment of the beauty of nature without posing any threat to its well-being.

**Local community:** The term is used to refer to all the people whose economic activities are located in or adjacent to a cultural landscape.

**Protected area:** This refers to a section of landscape that has been set apart by the Law for the purpose of conserving all the elements within it.



## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Site

Mount Kenya is shared by two provinces, namely, central and eastern. The mountain's area is about 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> and its highest elevation above sea level is about 5199 metres at point Batian. Its peak snow covered throughout the year. It straddles the equator at about 193 Km north-east of Nairobi and this geographical positioning at the equator together with the permanent snow cap places it among one of the unique mountains of the world.

The specific area of study was in Kieni East Division in the north-eastern part of Nyeri North District in Central Province (See figure 1).

#### 3.1.1 Kieni East Division

The Kieni East Division covers an area of approximately 850 km<sup>2</sup>. It has five administrative locations namely Bakawa, Kiamathage, Naromoru, Kabaru and Thigu (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002: 4-5). The total population of the Division in the 1999 census was 83,639 where 44,090 were males while 39,549 were females (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001: 17).

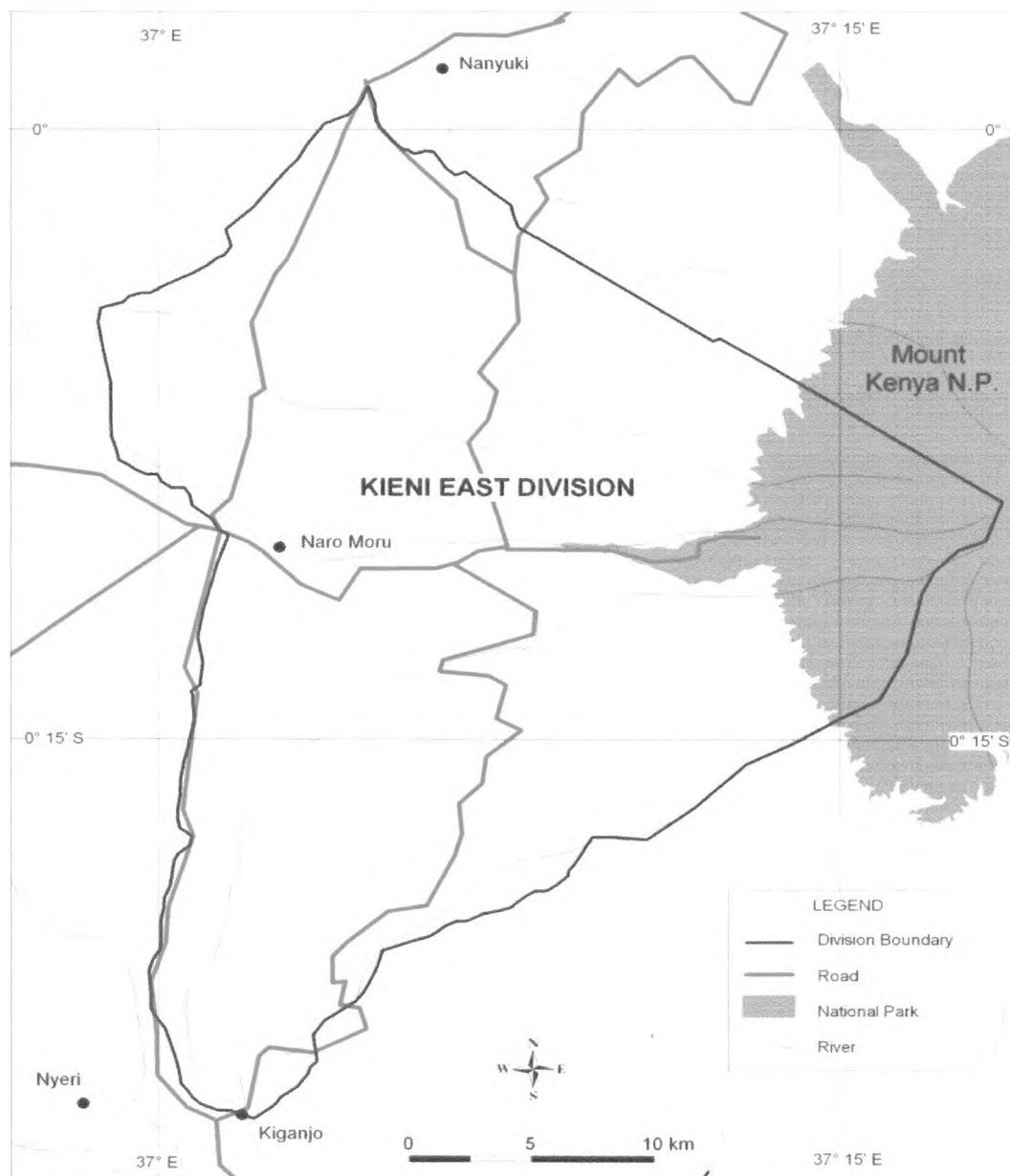
#### 3.2 Research design

The research design used was cross-sectional and probabilistic sampling design was employed to select the study sample. Tour guides were the unit of analysis based on the assumption that they have a vital role in influencing an efficient conservation practice integrated to their guiding activities. The parameters of the population were made from the sample selected. The study area chosen was considered based on two factors. Firstly, Naromoru is one of the important transit points of tourists headed to Mount Kenya National Reserve. Secondly, there are several tourist centres in Naromoru division in addition to a tarmac road linking two important tourist towns namely: Nyeri and Nanyuki.

#### 3.2.1 Population

The study population was tour guides in the Kieni East Division and since their number was not known, a sampling frame of 143 individuals was used to get a study sample of 30 individuals. The list was directly sourced from the tour guide clubs.

Figure 1: Map of Kiieni East Division



Source: Milewa D., 2010: National Museums of Kenya

### **3.4 Sampling procedure**

A sampling frame was used to get the initial number of tour guides from three clubs namely Summit Ventures, Mount Kenya Porters and Guides Safari Club and Burguret Youth for Conservation. The sampling frame had a total of 143 individuals tour guides all sourced from membership registers of the three clubs. The sample was taken from these groups because they are the registered-organized groups in the Kieni East Division. The final sample therefore excluded tour guides who are not attached to any group and who refer to themselves as freelance tour guides. All the three groups are located within Kieni East Division.

From the combined list the simple random sampling method was used to get a final study sample of 30 respondents. The names of the 143 individuals were copied in a common list with each name having a corresponding number. Paper chippings were listed from number 1 to the 143<sup>rd</sup> number, folded into balls and put in an envelope. The envelope was then shaken to turn and thoroughly mix the numbers and to remove any chance of purposive selection. A final sample was derived by picking thirty of the balled pieces at random from the envelope. The randomly picked balls were then used to check against the corresponding names in the sampling frame. The sampling frame had one lady only but she did not get selected in the sampling process. Therefore, all the 30 respondents were males. The simple random sampling was selected to eliminate the classification error and for the reasons that the researcher had scanty advance knowledge of the population.

### **3.5 Methods of data collection**

Qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used and both primary and secondary sources employed to gather information about the research problem. The secondary data was sourced from books, journals, reports and pamphlets with relevant information to better understand the issues under study. Primary data, on the other hand, was obtained from interviews with tour guides and discussions with other relevant stakeholders of the Mt. Kenya landscape. The information was about the nature of the tour guides' activities, perceptions and aspirations regarding the conservation of Mount Kenya.

### **3.5.1 Interviews**

Face-to-face interviews were conducted on individual tour guides selected in the sample. The respondents were asked the same set of questions in the same sequence. The interviews featured both structured and non-structured questions. Structured questions were asked for the purpose of getting specific answers about the background of the respondents. Non structured questions were for the purpose of seeking information about the respondents' aspirations, opinions and perceptions pertaining to issues to do with conservation. The answers were noted down during the personal interviews by the interviewer. The face to face technique was used to ensure that complete and accurate data was recorded and whenever a respondent failed to comprehend a question it could be re-phrased for clarity. This was for the purpose of generating quantitative data which could be easily analyzed (Odegi-Awuondo, 1994:7). The main instrument in the study was a questionnaire (see appendix 1).

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions**

These were guided group discussions aimed at exploring further conservation perceptions. There were three groups in which case the first group was for women only and which had 10 participants. The women selected were those from the local community who have paid for firewood-collection-licenses at the Forest Service offices at Gathiuru. The second and third groups consisted of tour guides who were not in the sample selected, local farmers and quarry men. The selected local farmers and quarry men are those whose activities are on the fringes of the forest reserve and thus have an effect on the landscape. The two last groups had ten and twelve members respectively. The groups' discussions were held at the participants' venues of choice for the purpose of ease in attendance and participation of all members. A set of questions were asked to the each of the three groups where all the group members were allowed to articulate their views (see appendix 2). Important notes were taken by the researcher as the discussions went on.

### **3.5.3 Direct observation**

The behaviours of tour guides in their normal operations were observed and recorded on paper. This was achieved by participating in three excursions that arose during the fieldwork. The research was also keen to note important

experiences observed during the excursions which was recorded on a digital camera. One of the excursions was a five-day trek to and from Point Lenana, the third highest peak of Mount Kenya. The tour helped the researcher in interacting with several tour guides and porters during rests in the mountain camps. This helped the researcher in understanding the nature of experiences tourists and tour guides go through. It also availed firsthand experience on the likely effects tourism has on the landscape. Consequently, valuable understanding of the Mount Kenya landscape gave first hand grasp of conservation problems manifested in the protected area. An observation guide was used to direct the researcher on the major details to be observed (see appendix 3).

### **3.6. Data processing and analysis**

Data processing entailed editing of the primary data to facilitate consistency, uniformity, completeness and accuracy of the raw data. The edited data was then classified for tabulation using a code book. The code book helps in the transformation of the observations into numbers that can be manipulated statistically and searched for patterns (Bernard 1994:360). Each variable was assigned a name for which data recorded was briefly described and its sequence noted to achieve a standard measure (Dooley 2003:119).

Quantitative data was then organized to appear in tables and these were analyzed through the use of frequency tables. The aim was to look for patterns in the data gathered which helped in understanding the typical nature of the research subjects. Qualitative data, on the other hand, were analyzed case by case and unique answers directly quoted. Direct quotations have been specifically made for responses obtained from the focus group discussions.

Data from direct observation have been presented in direct reporting as witnessed from the behaviours of the research subjects during the excursions.

### **3.7 Problems and solutions**

Several problems were experienced and one of the major ones was lack of funding from sources that had earlier been solicited for financing. This delayed commencement of field. In addition, the fieldwork started during one of the high season of tourists to Mount Kenya when the tour guides were, to a large extent, busy with excursions. It was thus a challenge to have respondents honouring agreed appointments as some were engaged in long trips to

Mount Kenya. Other tour guides would be assigned to guide excursions at short notice. The researcher had to conduct interviews for selected tour guides on the spot when situation allowed. The other problem was lack of commitment by the research participants especially when they learnt that there was no payment for the interviews. To solve the problem the researcher used the assistance of other participants who had understood the nature of the research to talk to the difficult respondents.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

The names of respondents were coded so that their real identity was only known by the researcher. This was done to conceal the identity of respondents to guard against unwarranted exposure where they would not wish to be publicized. Participants in the study were informed of the nature and the purpose of the study. It was also disclosed to the would-be participants that interviews would be conducted only with those who were willing to give information on a voluntary basis and, thus, no money inducement was used to get the study sample.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 TOUR GUIDES' ROLE IN CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, demographic patterns, level of awareness of conservation issues, regulations and challenges of tour guides are presented. The patterns produced from the analyzed data present information that may provide a good foundation upon which the conservation capacity of tour guides can be assessed. The data were analyzed under several sub-topics, namely, socio-economic characteristics of respondents, sustainability of guiding, networks for conservation, nature of tourism and tour guides perceptions of changes in Mount Kenya.

#### 4.2 Social and demographic characteristics of tour guides

##### 4.2.1. Age

When the data on age were tabulated they indicated that out of the 30 interviewed tour guides, the majority are aged between the ages of 26 and 40 years. Within this interval, the largest cluster occurred in the 26- 30 years age bracket at 26.7 per cent. The data also indicate that a minority of the respondents occur in the age bracket 20 -25 years and 51-55 years (Table 1).

**Table 1: The ages of the tour guides**

| AGE          | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 20-25        | 1         | 3.33       |
| 26-30        | 8         | 26.66      |
| 31-35        | 6         | 20.00      |
| 36-40        | 7         | 23.33      |
| 41-45        | 4         | 13.33      |
| 46-50        | 3         | 10.00      |
| 51-55        | 1         | 3.33       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> |

#### 4.2.2 Level of Education

Concerning education status, respondents who studied up to primary level comprise 30 percent of the sampled population. Those who proceeded to secondary level are the majority at 43 percent while those who have studied up to college level comprise 26.66 percent (Table 2).

**Table 2: Level of education**

| <b>Level of education</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Primary                   | 9                | 30.00             |
| Lower secondary           | 4                | 13.33             |
| Upper Secondary           | 9                | 30.00             |
| Tertiary                  | 8                | 26.66             |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>30</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

Of the 26.66 percent who have attained tertiary level education, 87.5 percent have studied courses related to tourism while one individual studied a course unrelated to tourism. It was, however, noted that two of the eight individuals who have tertiary level education did not necessarily attain the upper secondary education level. The courses offered to five of the tertiary level graduates were organized by National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) which is now defunct. The remaining two with courses related to tourism have studied distinct courses namely, Tours and Travel and Tourism Management Certificate Course. The remaining one studied a course unrelated to tourism, namely, power option electrical course.

#### 4.2.3 Experience in tour guiding

Over 60 % of the respondents in the sample had worked as guides for more than five years. However the data indicate that a majority are comparatively recent entrants into the guiding service with over 30 percent having worked for less than six years. The data also indicate that 56 percent of the tour guides had worked for over ten years as tour guides while among this category 6 percent had worked for over 25 years (Table 3).



**Table 3: Experience in tour guiding (years)**

| <b>Years worked as a tour guide</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1-5                                 | 10               | 33.33             |
| 6-10                                | 3                | 10                |
| 11-15                               | 8                | 26.66             |
| 16-20                               | 3                | 10                |
| 21-25                               | 4                | 13.33             |
| 26-30                               | 1                | 3.33              |
| 31-35                               | 0                | 0                 |
| 36-40                               | 1                | 3.33              |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>30</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

**4.2.4 Monthly incomes**

To understand the current prospects of tour guiding, the researcher sought to establish the levels of income of the informants. The data indicate that 75 percent of the respondents earn an average income of less than eleven thousand shillings per month. Ten percent earn more than twenty thousand shillings a month. The data may, however, not be precise given that six respondents did not feel free to reveal their earnings (Table 4).

**Table 4: Average monthly incomes from tour guiding**

| <b>Income in Kenya shillings</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0-5000                           | 5                | 20.8              |
| 5100-10000                       | 13               | 54.2              |
| 11000-20000                      | 3                | 12.5              |
| Over 20,000                      | 3                | 12.5              |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>24</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

#### 4.2.5 Other economic activities of tour guides

Tour guides were also evaluated on whether their sole source of income was tour guiding. The analyzed data indicate that only 13.33 percent of the respondents solely get their source of livelihood through tour guiding. A majority were farmers who comprise over 60 percent of the sample. This figure includes those who combine farming with other businesses (Table 5). Many tour guides said that they engage in the other businesses such as pool table parlours, tea kiosks, and barber shops so as to supplement their incomes and as a fall-back when the low season can no longer keep them busy. Others stated that the reason for engaging in the other activities is because it is a means of investing for the future when they will have grown too old to walk the long distances up the mountain.

**Table 5: Other economic activities of tour guides**

| <b>Economic activities</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Farming and animal husbandry | 16               | 53.33             |
| Farming and business         | 3                | 10                |
| Business                     | 4                | 13.33             |
| others                       | 3                | 10                |
| Tour guiding only            | 4                | 13.33             |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>30</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

#### 4.3 Conservation networks

##### 4.3.1 Seminars attended

Information was sought that concerns the possible established networks between conservation authorities, tour operators and the local community. The line of questioning also examined the intensity of the networks. To measure these, tour guides were asked to say whether they had ever attended any seminars concerning tourism. They were also asked about the number of such workshops they had attended. The researcher also sought to establish the respondents' comprehension of topics by asking about the content of the meetings. This was done so as to understand the respondents' interpretation of new ideas gained and to gauge the impact of the knowledge. Follow

up questions were asked to establish the levels of networks. This was achieved by enquiring on the identity of organizers of the meetings and the mode of contact for the attendance. Table 6 below shows the statistics of seminars attended.

From the figures it emerged that 76 percent of the respondents had attended at least one seminar during the course of the work. They were also asked about the contents of the seminar(s). Out of the individuals who had attended at least one seminar, 82 percent said that there discussions related to conservation. A sampled list of answers indicates that there were indeed issues handled in the seminars that had to do with conservation. Some of the topics that could be recalled by the respondents include:

1. Insistence on marketing to target fewer but high spending tourists rather than low spending tourists who may visit in large numbers inflicting a strain on the fragile Mount Kenya environment.
2. Maintaining clean-up exercises to ensure cleanliness of the mountain.
3. Community monitoring of threats to conservation.
4. Consolidation of clubs' efforts to establish tree nurseries.
5. Agro-forestry.

**Table 6: Seminars attended by individual tour guides**

| <b>Number of seminars attended</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| None                               | 7                | 23.3              |
| 1-3                                | 15               | 50.0              |
| 4-6                                | 3                | 10                |
| 7 and above                        | 5                | 16.7              |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>30</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

#### **4.3.2 Workshops attended**

Respondents were also asked whether they had ever attended any conservation workshops. From the results, it emerges that 56 percent of the respondents have attended at least one workshop while 43 percent have not attended any (Table 7). The topics handled in the workshops were on issues such as rescue, taxonomy, anti-corruption and

interaction between parks and the local community. One respondent said that he found the anti-corruption topic closely related to conservation because there have been cases where tour guides under-declare the number of visitors in a tour party thereby denying the KWS the much needed revenue which could be used for conservation.

**Table 7: Workshops attended**

| <b>Number of workshops attended</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| None                                | 13               | 43.33             |
| 1-3                                 | 13               | 43.33             |
| 4-6                                 | 3                | 9.99              |
| Over 6                              | 1                | 3.33              |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>30</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

As regards the identities of the organizers of the seminars and workshops, a list was made from the responses and these include: local conservation youth groups, Catering and Tourism Development Levy Trustee (CTDLT), Nature Kenya Club, Kenya Wildlife Service, Action Aid, Summit Ventures, Forest Service, Foreign tour leaders, Tourist Trust Fund (TTF), and the Ministry of Tourism.

The respondents who had attended at least one workshop or seminar were further asked how they had implemented what they had learnt. One respondent said that he now passes the knowledge gathered to his clients during excursions. Another respondent stated that he had since participated in tree planting and clean-up exercises on Mount Kenya. Several respondents pointed out that the meetings had helped them to establish contacts with conservators such as the Mount Kenya conservation groups and Friends of Mount Kenya. It also emerged that plans are now underway to help tour guides in establishing sustainable uses of forests through activities such as bee-keeping that will help in generating income for the guides.

#### 4.4 Tour guides knowledge on changes on Mt. Kenya

##### 4.4.1 Change of tourist numbers on Mount Kenya

Seventy percent of respondents stated that tourist numbers were on the rise in the Mount Kenya region. The respondents attributed the growth in tourist numbers to economic stability, improved marketing, and that travel advisories issued by some western countries were no longer being taken seriously by would-be foreign tourists. Some respondents added that higher entry fees currently been charged in Mount Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania could also explain the rise in tourist numbers to Mount Kenya. However, 30 percent of the respondents held the view that tourist numbers were on the decline in Mount Kenya region (Table 8).

Some of those who held the view that tourism numbers were on the decline in the study area explained that Mount Kenya was poorly marketed. They also felt that there was a rise in competition by other mountain guides around Mount Kenya. This could account for the argument about lower tourist numbers as competition from other tour guide groups can reduce the likelihood of getting clients.

**Table 8: Tour guides views on tourist numbers to Mount Kenya**

| <b>Tour guides perceptions about the growth in tourism in Mount Kenya</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Tourist numbers on the increase   | 21               | 70                |
| Tourist numbers on the decline  | 9                | 30                |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>30</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

Most tourists come from the beginning of July to the end of August. This was observed from the responses of the majority of the respondents. Low season was observed to be during the beginning of the month of April to the end of May.

##### 4.4.2 Frequency of trips to Mount Kenya

The respondents were further asked about the number of trips they made during the high and low seasons. The data are tabulated in Table 9 below which indicate that most of the respondents manage between three to four trips during the high season. This accounts for half the respondents in the sample. During the low season, 66 per cent of the respondents make less than two trips to the mountain.

**Table 9: Average trips made by individual tour guides per month during the high and low season**

| Number of trips during high season | Frequency | %          | Number of trips during low Season | Frequency | %          |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1-2                                | 2         | 6.66       | Nil-1                             | 20        | 66.66      |
| 3-4                                | 15        | 50         | 2-3                               | 8         | 26.66      |
| 5-6                                | 6         | 20         | 4-5                               | 2         | 6.66       |
| 7-8                                | 3         | 10         | Over 5                            | 0         | 0          |
| 9-10                               | 3         | 10         |                                   |           |            |
| Over 10                            | 1         | 3.33       |                                   |           |            |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> |

#### 4.4.3 Preferred mountain routes

The researcher established that the most preferred route to the Mount Kenya summit is the Sirimon-Chogoria route. The chief target for many of the tourists is to get to the top of Point Lenana at 4,789 metres above sea level. The researcher enquired why the Sirimon-Chogoria circuit is more popular to tourists. Many respondents elaborated that the Sirimon route, at 20 km from the KWS park gate to Point Lenana, has easier terrain and its longer route gives people unaccustomed to high altitude enough time to acclimatize hence making attempts to Point Lenana more successful. Descent on the Chogoria route is preferred for its gentle slope though it is the longest route at 28 km from Point Lenana to the KWS park gate. In addition, the respondents said they prefer the route since it has more physical features of interests to the tourists. Such features include steep gorges and hanging valleys on its flanks as well as waterfalls. Many respondents stated that the Naromoru route is too marshy and has many natural terraces that make the climb more strenuous despite its being the shortest route to the summit. There are other routes which are poorly marketed due to their none-attractiveness to tourist. An example of such routes is the Kamweti route which is heavily forested with dense bamboo forming a canopy that blots out the sky for the better part of the climb until one gets to the moorland.

About the increase in tourist numbers to Mount Kenya, respondents were asked about possible effects on the conservation of the mountain. Various answers were given by respondents who had initially said that tourism was

on the increase. Their views on possible negative effects included garbage accumulation, health complications and the disruption of the breeding capacity of animals due to contact with poisonous chemicals in garbage, congestion in the park, soil erosion, plant destruction through trampling as well as creation of new foot paths. On the positive effects, one respondent explained that increased numbers could indeed enhance management due to higher revenue for the KWS.

Respondents who had initially said that tourism was on the decline were of the opinion that when the tourist numbers go down, the subsequent fall of revenue would trigger poor management of the park due to less resources to tackle conservation challenges on the mountain.

## **4.5 Organization and control**

### **4.5.1. Self-induced conduct for tour guides**

Inquiry was made about the rules made by tour guide groups themselves to help in keeping them proactive in taking care of the mountain. The specific intent of the question was to generate information about rules that particularly have to do with conservation aspects. The answers to the question were gathered from a list of many rules that tour guide groups observe. Respondents from all the tour guide groups confirmed that their groups have self-made rules.

Answers given for this type of rules were categorized into two. One of the rules is that which prohibits club members from being involved in activities that directly degrade the protected area. Such activities include charcoal burning, logging, and dumping of garbage. The other category is that which prohibits practices that may indirectly contribute to the degradation of the protected area. These were gleaned from a list of answers the respondents gave. They include rules against corruption as well as misleading or lying to clients. As regards excursions rule, it is prohibited for any tour guide to jump the queue in an ordered itinerary. Corruption was visualized as possibilities of guides bribing wardens manning the park gates to allow some tourists in the conservation area without paying. Respondents said that in this case, a tour guide fraudulently keeps the money paid for the gate entry fee. This would directly interfere with the maintenance fund required to keep authorities financially able to do monitoring. Lying respondents may include misinformation about the conduct of clients when in the park. The clients may be unaware of



**Figure 2: A discarded empty sweets packet**



**Figure 3: A discarded water bottle**

#### **4.5.2 Tour guides' information on conservation issues**

One of the ways designed to measure this variable was to enquire from each respondent on the source of information that helps in interpreting new experiences to tourists. Eighty six percent of the respondents said that they had accessed information on Mount Kenya from books. It was further inquired on what kinds of materials have ever been accessed. Most of the respondents had read guides books on Mount Kenya and a significant number had read current journals on conservation and on Mount Kenya. Others sourced information from audio visual documentaries and the internet. The researcher himself observed that in one tour guide premises, there is a hall with a television set and video player. It was also observed that in two tour clubs offices, there are numerous magazines, journals and pamphlets with diverse environmental topics. On enquiry he was informed that most of the reading materials are donations by non-governmental organizations and hand-outs given during conferences, seminars and workshops. However, some respondents raised concerns that they face challenges in their work due to wrong information in some of the materials accessed. This was a challenge because some clients come to Mount Kenya having read outdated or erratic information on Mount Kenya and may feel cheated when say such a client hoped to see a glacier described in a book but which disappeared years ago. One respondent said that tourist tend to believe in what they have gathered from books more than what they get from tour guides.

A potential source of information was observed from a form of symbolic art in the Naromoru Township. Murals bearing environmental conservation themes have been done on some of the township's buildings along the Nyeri-Nanyuki highway. However, none of the tour guides mentioned the art. It was, however, established from a



community leader that art works were sponsored by the UNDP in 2004-2006 with a focus of passing a message of environmental conservation through tree planting to the residents of the grassy Kieni plains.

On challenges faced by tour guides from their clients, eighty per cent said they had faced bad behaviour from tourists while 20 percent had not. The respondents were then asked to name some of what they considered as tourist bad behaviours. The bad behaviours were understood in two forms. One was the disregard of park rules and the second was simple delinquency. In the first category, the bad behaviour was directly related to threatening conservation measures set for Mount Kenya. The wrong conduct includes littering, taking of plant materials as souvenirs, feeding wildlife such as the hyraxes, lighting fires in camps, refusal to use pit latrines in the camps and instead ridding waste in the open. The question about what effect this has on the environment was asked. One respondent said that park animals' health may be adversely affected if they come into contact with waste which has toxins. The researcher also directly observed this behaviour from a tour party where a tourist discarded waste in the middle of the trail rather than going off the trail and covering it up.

The second category of delinquency was the tendency of some tourist being drug abusers, drug dealers and being averse to modesty.

The respondents were also asked how they tackle such behaviours. The informants explained that they lead by example, especially where garbage has been carelessly discarded, they collect it in full view of the culprit and then caution such a person against such behaviour. They also use tourists who are more respectful so as to influence the conduct of those who are in the wrong. However, extreme cases of delinquency are reported at the KWS bases but some of the informants alleged that a more serious challenge was from criminals. This conservation-related challenge faced by tour guides involves chances of meeting with armed poachers and illegal loggers. There are high risks involved especially when the criminals in fear of being reported to authorities might attempt a cover up by injuring both the tourists and the guides. The tour guides, thus, discourage their clients from showing up with their cameras and actually give a wide berth to the criminals.

## **4.6 Conservation situation in Mount Kenya**

### **4.6.1 Environmental disasters**

Respondents were asked whether there ever was any environmental disaster. Over ninety percent answered in the affirmative. They then were asked to give examples of what they consider as environmental disasters. The most named disaster was bush fires. Other examples given were hailstorms with a particular one that ended up killing some Nyeri high secondary students in one of the valleys on the mountain in the late 1980's. Another example given was air crashes on the mountain. For the latter example, the respondents were asked to explain why they considered air crashes on the mountain as environmental disasters. Some reasoned that parts of the crashed planes are still on the crash sites which make them part of mountain litter while others said that the impact of the crash on the peaks brought long lasting effects of instability of the rocks occasioning periodic rock falls and the resultant erosion.

Possible cause of the disasters was also discussed and many respondents blamed it on human negligence, human activities and works of nature.

### **4.6.2 Causes of degradation**

The major causes of degradation of Mount Kenya were also sought from the respondents. Many respondents directly linked human activities on the mountain to the degradation of the park. For example, human influx in highly fragile areas was identified as a cause. Incessant human treading on the trail was said to promote gradual soil erosion and trampling of fragile plants. The researcher himself observed that the trail leading towards Liki Valley and on to Shipton's camp has been deeply eroded and further deepened when the rain falls (Plate 3). Other respondents pointed out that ignorance of conservation was also a contributory factor to the degradation of the park.



**Figure 4: Gully erosion on Old Moses-Likii North trail**

The other negative effect blamed on human actions was changes in animal behaviour. The change of animal behaviour, according to some respondents, was characterized by animals learning to visit kitchen areas so as to feed on garbage.

The researcher, however, observed that tour guides do not harass animals in the park. Besides the park rules that give animals right of way, there is a common believe among tour guides that harassing park animals brings bad luck. The researcher observed at the Shipton's camp and Mintos camp that the rock hyraxes, high altitude rats and some bird species are tame. The rats and birds, particularly, can draw to as near as between the feet of a person. On inquisition about the strange behaviour, it was told to the researcher that no tour guide would even dare kill an irritating mountain rat for the common believe among tour guides is that serious repercussions such as an untimely death can occur to a person who molests such animals. A case was given where a caretaker in one of the mountain camps killed and ate a rock hyrax but drowned the following day in a small mountain stream that people cross by simply walking across. To avoid potential misfortunes from messing with park animals, infestation of rats at the Shipton's camp was once checked by tour guides by catching them alive and transferring them to a new site a cross a nearby swift flowing stream where they could not cross over back to the camp. Byers (1996: 36), says that socio-cultural factors such as customs, beliefs and taboos can play significant roles in influencing conservation behaviour.

From the answers given for the causes of degradation, a solution was subsequently sought from the respondents on how it can be checked. Some solutions were proposed and these were divided into three classes. The classes are outlined below:

1. Corrective measures
2. Enhancement of existing measures
3. Proactive measures

#### **4.6.3 Corrective measures**

Some respondents proposed a concerted effort in reforestation of the degraded forest cover. Where there are deep gullies occasioned by over-trampling it was suggested that expeditions be undertaken to fill the gullies with rocks that are in abundance on the mountain. One respondent said that one way of checking the deepening of the gullies is to totally close some trails in particular seasons of the year to allow for natural regeneration of vegetation. It was also suggested that corruption ought to be curbed at the gates where some tourists may enter the park unaccompanied by guides and porters. It was argued that such tourists are usually exhausted due to their heavy baggage coupled with their being unaccustomed to the effect of the altitude on the body and who thus get tempted to discard even their personal effects on the mountain trails once they get fatigued.

Some respondents pointed out that the government ought to support the annual voluntary clean-up exercises on the mountain but in a transparent manner. Such support, it was suggested should be in the form of some food and allowance for the participants. This would motivate more tour guides to participate in the exercises. It was confided that the past experience of the tour guides has been that some environmental groups solicit for funding to do clean-up work on the mountain and then approach the tour guides to participate on a voluntary basis only to discover later that some colleagues in such exercises were paid allowances while others met their own expenses. This demoralizes the segregated individuals who may become disinterested in such future exercises in apprehension of being abused.

#### 4.6.4 Enhancement of existing measures

Education was viewed as one of the major aspects in conservation. Some respondents argued that communities living around Mount Kenya and the tourists themselves need sustained education programmes concerning taking care of the environment in order to stop further degradation of the mountain landscape. This conforms to Clarke and Woodley (1993) who made a proposal to the KWS meant to train the local community on specific topics covering issues such as animal anatomy, animal behaviour and apprentice /master training in live situations. The proposal was aimed at improving problem animal control (PAC) skills amongst local community members.

Regarding the issue of the PAC, the Kenya Wildlife Service was blamed for poor handling of the problem animals such as individual elephants, leopards and bush pigs. One discussant said that it is the poor handling that prompts the community's to result to unorthodox self-protective initiatives in a bid to secure themselves against wildlife. These results in worsening of not only the human-wildlife conflict where the agricultural community resort to protecting their crops and livestock by whichever means available but also bad feelings against the conservation authorities. One discussant gave an example where he said:

“it is only the wealthy farmers who can manage to protect their crops and animals by hiring farm workers to keep vigil all night when animals such as elephant invade the farms. They can also afford to light fires at different spots all around the perimeter of the farms to keep off such animals. The duty of monitoring elephant movement in the forest reserve and restricting them in the protected zone ought to be solely the responsibility of KWS.”

It can then be understood from this statement that the work of educating the community about conservation may not get the desired results when one of the stakeholder is perceived as being overwhelmed by his or her responsibility.

The advocacy role of tour guides was therefore noted in terms of them being a linkage between the local community and the conservation authorities in participatory conservation. However, during a workshop organized for porters and guides, the participants noted that the human-wildlife conflict was a bigger challenge. This is because it was difficult to convince the local farming community about the conservation benefits of the park when their crops were destroyed by wild animals yearly with no benefits from the revenue obtained from tourism (Kenya Wildlife Service-Community Wildlife Programme 1993: 11). The problem seemed to have been solved as it was observed during the field work that a 75 km electric fence project had been launched and financed by KWS in collaboration with the Arid Resource Management Programme (ARMP) and the Kenya Forest Service. It is meant to help in keeping off, from the farms, problem animals such as bush pigs, giant forest hogs, antelopes, porcupines, leopards and elephants.

Their occasional presence in the farms creates human-wildlife conflicts by way of denying horticultural farmers good harvests (Clarke and Woodley 1993:62). The seriousness of this problem can be understood from statistics that indicate that wildlife destroys about 25 percent of the crop while between three and four people are killed annually by elephants and buffaloes (Marete 1998: 15).

There is the problem of poachers and other trespassers who pose a threat to wildlife in the protected area. As regards this, some respondents argued that in addition to the tour guide identification badges that they carry whenever they enter the parks, they ought to be given identification uniforms. They argued that the uniforms would assist in distinguishing, from a distance, genuine guides from trespassers who may get into the parks with different intentions. There was also a view that the rule that requires every tour party to come down with garbage as per the size of the group was gradually being neglected and, therefore, authorities need to take charge.

As regards poaching, one discussant said that the problem is well known by authorities and that it is not even a case of ignorance since reports of such malpractices have been relayed many times to the authorities but the problem has been corruption where some officers have already been compromised and therefore turn a blind eye. Another discussant said that even the bush meat markets are known.

“There is one bush market in a place known as Kangaita near the Mount Kenya Safari Club where the meat is sold in the evenings”, said one discussant. It was also claimed this is not news to the rangers for it has been in existence for a long time.

#### **4.6.5 Proactive measures**

A question was posed to probe the attitude of the local community about their view about importance of conservation of Mount Kenya. One discussion group had a unanimous view of the view that the mountain's conservation would be their security against the noticeable changes in traditional livelihood. Some discussants argued that there is a serious shortage of water especially during the dry months unlike in the past where water from surface rivers was assured. One discussant argued that rivers from the mountain have now tended to be seasonal due to changes in the rainfall and illegal water abstraction by the farmers whose farms are adjacent to the forest reserve. Such farmers even divert the entire streams into the farms by damming and pumping the water using power driven pumps during the dry seasons while those downstream need a portion of the water. The view then was that the

Water Resource Management Authority (WARMA) need to be more active to address the situation before the water accessibility becomes an issues of serious dispute.

Another individual added that Mount Kenya was not just about the water importance but also the fairness in accessibility of the mountain by the locals for forest products which have always been the case in the pre-colonial period. It was argued that local communities could get access to herbal medicine, wild honey and pasture for their livestock in specific areas. The discussant argued that the situation had been reduced to the issue of money in which case if you can't afford to pay the fee charged by the Kenya Forest Service then the forest resources are inaccessible yet people from far such as tourists can access the resource because they can afford to pay. The argument was that for the locals to continue viewing the Mountain as beneficial to them, traditional form access ought to be reinstated where every stakeholder will feel duty bound to conserve the mountain. The discussants argued that criminal activities experienced within the mountain were partially due to the monetary determined access to the mountain resource. *If it cannot be accessed any other way, people resort to breaking the law.*

To tackle the problem of the degradation within the mountain trails views were respondents were sought. Some respondents said that it was necessary to be closing down some mountain trails seasonally. The impact of such a measure was argued as being appropriate since it would allow ample time for the natural recovery of vegetation that would have been trampled upon the trails. A recommendation that agrees with the respondents' sentiments was that by KATO (1994:4) which suggests that visitor numbers should be regulated in these fragile areas and if necessary they should even be closed for suitable periods to allow regeneration of the vegetation.

Other proactive measures presented by respondents were that there was a need for the establishment and promotion of alternative sources of energy and the introduction of other environmentally-sound mechanisms of controlling agricultural pests. These, it was argued, would discourage illegal cutting of forest trees for firewood while a change of chemical control of agricultural pests for more environmentally-friendly methods would relieve the strain on the buffer zones of the protected area. Further to this argument on promotion of alternative sources of energy, a participant in one discussion group said, "There should be promotion of biogas that can be used for cooking. This will ease the demand on firewood. The firewood principally comes from the forest reserve."

## **4.7 Environmental changes**

To evaluate the tour guides grasp of the environmental changes on Mount Kenya, respondents were asked whether there are any animal species that they used to see easily but are now rare. Over seventy five percent said that there are, indeed, animals that used to be common in Mount Kenya National Park but are nowadays either rare or never seen at all. The respondents were then asked to name such animal species and several respondents said that animals such as rhinoceroses (particularly their tracks used to be common) and elands could be seen in herds but are now never found. Other animal species named as never seen include: mountain bongo, black leopards (Melanistic panthers), lammergier birds, canary birds, and alpine lizards. Hard-to-find species include duikers, dik dik, mackinder's owl, zebras, golden cats and lions.

Opinion was solicited for possible causes of this change. The answers received were categorized into three types and these include:

- i) Direct human interference
- ii) Changes in ecosystem
- iii) Outbreak of epidemics

### **4.7.1 Direct human interference**

The respondents said that changes occasioned by direct human interference include poaching, wild animal relocation, bush fires, pollution and human-induced changes in animal behaviour. Pollution and human-induced changes in animal behaviour were understood as separate. Pollution in this case was viewed as taking effect in the increased use of agrochemicals on the farms surrounding Mount Kenya. One respondent, for instance, argued that some bird species may eat treated crops or feed on rodents that have died of poisoning and this may trigger a chain reaction which may in turn kill the birds or the residual effect of chemicals may affect the natural breeding capabilities of birds eventually leading to the depopulation of some species. The chain reaction in the food chain was also seen as possible between species where birds of prey feed on other birds.

Human-induced changes in animal behaviour were also argued to be another of form of direct interference. Some respondents said this can possibly manifest in long periods of dumping food remains in mountain camps. They said that over the years, some animal species and especially scavengers have learnt to easily access food dumped in



camps. Hyenas, for instance, it was revealed, never used to climb to high altitudes but started by visiting low altitude camps and later higher altitude camps like Shipton camp at 4,200 metres above sea level where other animals like rock hyraxes had a relatively safe habitat. The hyenas possibly started preying on hyraxes while on scavenging missions or perhaps introduced new diseases to the hyraxes. It was also seen as possible that hyraxes themselves may have fed on food refuse which might have interfered with their health. Other respondents viewed the influx of visitors to Mount Kenya and wanton camping as possible causes that displace animals that feel insecure.

Another different angle about the direct human interference was held by one discussant who said that the kind of permits given to loggers in the past by the then Forest Department was highly abused which led to the current situation of alteration of the pristine state of Mount Kenya. Some animal species it was argued can only survive in specific zones and in specific type of vegetation. Some of the loggers abused the licences to clear large tract of forests beyond what the permit allowed by clearing even the young trees leaving some forest patches clear of vegetation. This it was argued drastically changed the ecosystem of Mount Kenya.

It was however argued that *ex situ* conservation by way of establishing trees nurseries have been done but the Kenya Forest Service have been slow to seedlings projects have been initiated by the forest

#### **4.7.2 Changes in ecosystem**

As concerns changes in the ecosystem, the blame was laid on the works of nature. Some respondents who had started working as guides in the early 1980s said that the drought of 1984 brought drastic changes that even wiped off some glaciers. Some feared that there may be no more snow to be proud of in future. The concern was further entrenched by an analogy one tour guide gave to describe what the snow means for the tour guides. He said,

“when there is a heavy snow fall, the feeling a tour guide gets is like the feeling a farmer would get when his crop is ripening. The presence of snow assures us of continued prospects of tourists’ influx to Mount Kenya region which is one of the attractions”.

The presence of snow to tour guides is thus an indicator of the well being of Mount Kenya and it surrounding. This is because tour guides also understand the importance of the precipitation in the peaks in sustenance of rivers downstream.

Some respondents believed that animals' migration from the Mount Kenya Park could be due to climate change and this, they said, could be the cause of the rarity of some species. This was linked to the shrinking of animals' natural habitats, deaths due to starvation, traumas and deaths due to forest fires, and the resultant destabilization of food chains. Other respondents talked of global warming as a possible cause. In this case, it was understood that ecological niches of some animal species may have been altered leading to a decline in their numbers.

#### **4.7.3 Outbreak of epidemics**

Some respondents argued that outbreak of epidemics in the wild, apart from any other cause, could be a possible contributing factor to a decline in the population of some species. For example, new infections could adversely affect park animals that have not had previous contacts with such epidemics. For outbreaks of epidemics to arise in a previously secure environment, Rossiter (1990:127) says that some factors would need to change in order to destabilize the ecological balance such as natural nutrition, normal stress patterns, metabolic imbalance, nutrition-deficiency, plant poisoning and genetic disorders.

#### **4.8 Tour guides' future plans**

It was sought from the respondents about their future plans regarding their operations on Mount Kenya. Some respondents said they were planning to raise the professional standards of tour guides by attending relevant courses. Such informants added that they had already approached the Austrian Alpine Association to avail trainers for such courses. Others stated that they hoped to establish their own tour companies as a group, intensifying marketing through the internet, continued involvement in mountain clean-ups, purchase of land to establish tree nurseries as groups, joining membership of conservation groups such Nature Kenya, engaging in income-generating activities such as bee-keeping, changing public image about tour guides and forming an umbrella organization for operators in Mount Kenya. Most of the respondents were optimistic about the future conservation of Mount Kenya. Some even disclosed that they had observed a gradual return of glaciers and thus believed that the snow cap would, therefore, not disappear. One respondent indicated that the indigenous forest of Mt Kenya can indeed regenerate rapidly if human effort is made to replant it especially through the non-resident farming (formerly known as the *Shamba* system) by allowing the participation of the local communities in re-forestation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers the principle issues emerging from the study and discusses them to highlight points pertinent to the research objectives. Tour guides are a small section of the stakeholder community which is peripheral in terms of established conservation related decision making. Their knowledge, responsibility, utility, values and perspectives regarding the conservation of the Mount Kenya cultural landscape has been elaborated in detail. From the above issues, the chapter assesses the part they can play in conservation leadership in the local community, initiatives networking, and advocacy in sustainable conservation.

#### **5.2 Discussion**

The findings of this study show that the interviewed tour guides were aware and concerned about the conservation problems affecting Mount Kenya. A majority are in their youthful years and are fairly educated. It also appears that tour guides have made their own efforts to check the conservation problems within their groups. For example, one group had written letters to KWS seeking permission to conduct clean-up exercises in 2004. However, there are indications that there is a sustained suspicion between the authorities and the tour guides. The request was ignored with no letters confirming receipt or acknowledgement. Some respondents expressed disillusionment because of the KWS attitude towards them and argued that they found no reason why they should be ignored whereas other clean-up parties sponsored by big companies have come from as far as Nairobi. Such are the only times their groups have been asked to send some of their members for participation in such clean-ups.

More serious discouragement is felt by tour guides when they go as volunteers only to realize latter that the other participants are paid some allowances after the exercise while they are ignored. In effect, some tour guides have accepted that they do not matter. This is the consequence of passive participation in conservation. Passive participation is being told what is going to happen or what has already happened and this tends to be a unilateral announcement where people's responses are not taken into account. The preferred model which is more inclusive is the interactive participation where people participate in joint analysis which leads to action plans and the

strengthening of existing local groups in making local decisions as well as having a stake in maintaining structures or practices (Ntimoa-Baiddu *et al.* 2000: 21). Tour guides have already demonstrated their initiatives through their self mobilization for environmental care despite the fact that they face hindrances in realizing their potential. It can then be argued that important local and international conservation concepts such as World Heritage in Young Hands (Vujjici-Lugassy, 2005:10) and Neighbours as Partners (Kenya Wildlife Service-Community Wildlife Programme, 1993:9) have been poorly applied by conservation authorities in Mount Kenya.

The findings also indicate that conservation being a challenging task can be made less tedious and made more efficient when all stakeholders are brought on board. The perception of the tour guides that they are an alienated lot may accentuate the problem of degradation of Mount Kenya in which case they might become averse to acting responsibly in protest to the relationship of distrust between them and the conservation authorities. It was realized that though spontaneous and ad hoc activities may be designed to correct and check environmental degradation their sustainability in the long-term is bound to fail without the participation of such groups. This may result in the regeneration of the degradation problem after some time. It was established that the tour guides' self made rules and regulations have considered the conservation aspect. They do not, for example, condone logging among their members failure to which one can be expelled from the club. It is plausible to say that such a rule would be more enforceable if the tour guides had a representation in forest management committees.

The management of protected areas has often been based on a model that excludes the local resident population and their concerns are perceived as being incompatible with conservation (Mulongoy and Chape 2004:18). This model needs to be replaced with an inclusive one for sustainability of the protected areas. There are strengths that local population can put to action to compliment those of the government conservation authorities. The current and better model is the participatory conservation model. A participatory approach is all about empowering people to mobilize their capabilities in social action rather than being passive subjects to the action. The Fifth World Parks Congress issued a declaration that squarely put indigenous peoples and local communities at the centre of conservation planning and emphasized the need to see protected areas in a wider context (Mulongoy and Chape 2004:18). During discussions with the local community, it emerged that in their opinion the involvement of local youths can enhance the protection of forests. The youths argued that most forest officials have no historical attachment to the forest

resources of Mount Kenya. Therefore, sound forest management and conservation must be based on a clear understanding of indigenous forest resource conservation systems. Legilisho-Kiyiapi (1996:91) says that the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is only available with indigenous communities living in or adjacent to forest areas and such rural communities are key stakeholders in as far as forest resources are concerned.

This research found that tour guides are willing to take care of the Mount Kenya environment but they have not been given an enabling environment by authorities. This is despite their knowledge and experiences in the mountain landscape. A case in point is the apparent apathy against tour guides who have in the past expressed interest to conservation authorities to carry out mountain clean-ups only to be ignored. The alienation does not augur well when the tour guides are ready to help but they are taken as part of the conservation problem. It becomes meaningless to invite tour guides to get knowledge from seminars and workshops but when it comes to the implementation phase they are denied the enabling platform to actualize the knowledge gathered into meaningful action. During the study it was learnt that many tour guides were uncomfortable with the government authorities because of their being looked down upon especially when clean-ups are organized elsewhere and they are invited to take part but when they initiate the idea they are turned down.

It was also established that many tour guide groups have strict regulations some of which were borrowed from park rules that help to instill discipline amongst members. Such organizational structure can be harnessed by conservation authorities to supplement their conservation work thereby instilling into tour guides a sense of ownership of the cultural landscape.

The research also established that tour guides visualize a close correlation between the conservation of Mount Kenya protected area and some of the economic activities that happen outside the conservation area. Such economic activities include agriculture and animal husbandry which are among the economic activities that tour guides supplement their income with. For instance, the findings have demonstrated the tour guides' ability to link the apparent loss of animal species in the Mount Kenya protected area with potentially harmful farming practices on the nearby farms. Some harmful agricultural practices include the use of environmentally hazardous agricultural chemicals to control pests especially in the observed horticultural growth in the Mount Kenya region. Some tour guides attributed a reduction of some animal species as probably having resulted from feeding on chemically treated

crops which would result in poisoning to death or hampering breeding. They also were aware of the indirect effects such chemicals may have in the entire food chain in the sense that some predators might feed on the carcasses of the poisoned animal and, thereby, get poisoned also otherwise known as the knock-on effect. Veterinary scientists have raised concern on the use of harmful agricultural pest control chemicals such as *Furadan* which has a sustained knock-on effect on animals (Mbugua 2008: 3). The insecticide is applied on crops such as beans. Some livestock farmers actually treat meat with the poison to kill predators. The chemical, according to Mbugua, poses danger particularly to large predators like lions, hyenas, cheetahs, leopards, jackals including scavengers such as the vultures who may die of secondary poisoning by eating the carcasses (Mbugua 2008:3). Hence, the tour guides' information and awareness about the intricate details about the conditions for ecosystem balance *vis-a-vis* the nature of their work points to the relative convenience for their involvement in a central conservation role.

From the foregoing, tour guides' economic activities outside the park add to the strength of the stake that they have in the conservation of the Mount Kenya resource. It is clear that tour guides are affected by changing environmental conditions happening outside the Mount Kenya protected area just as they are affected by negative changes happening within it. This implies that the conservation of Mount Kenya must be considered from both perspectives: within and without. Tour guides demonstrated that they are among the best placed target groups through which the dissemination of information concerning conservation would be best addressed. To ensure that the park's fauna is protected for posterity, environmentally-friendly agricultural activities have to be adopted. Thus, it is highly tenable that to change harmful farming practices in areas around the park, tour guides can more successfully play the advocacy role since they already have a grasp of the seriousness of the problem in the protected area through their experiences.

Tour guides who are farmers would also share the same experiences with other farmers. Examples of the effects that plague on them are, for instance, reduced water supply from rivers due to the depletion of glaciers on the peaks. The water is used for irrigation and for watering domestic animals on the farms. The tour guides' frequent trips to the mountain afford them first-hand understanding of the root cause of the problem. They are, therefore, in a better position to explain and lead other members of the community towards sustainable use of the environment through practices such as agro-forestry.

The area around the mountain is heavily under horticulture farming prompting more tapping of river water for irrigation purposes. From the study, it emerged that tour guides are aware about the problem of receding glaciers in the mountain and the subsequent reduction in the volumes of water flowing in the rivers. This clearly demonstrates that they are adequately aware of the problem of over-use of irrigation agriculture which reduces water flow downstream impending on the ecosystem stability. Tour guides are, therefore, strategically placed as the best group to be used in educating the farmers about alternative and efficient water procurement methods such as rain water harvesting and use of boreholes. Tour guides also share in the loss of crops just like the other farmers when wild animals like elephants invade their farms during drought. Hence, when it comes to looking for alternative solutions they can actually be used to dissuade the local community from using firewood to light bonfires that people use to scare away the animals. Several tour guides suggested the use of alternative sources of energy such as biogas and to safe guard forest trees. Therefore, the tour guides can be used as a target population by aid agencies who may want to introduce new technologies that can save the non-renewable resources.

It was also realized from the study that some tour guides who keep livestock loan their animals to herders to graze together with their animals. Some herdsman obtain licenses from the forest service to graze their cattle on the forest edges. They are currently charged forty Kenya shillings for every head of cattle and twenty shillings for every sheep per month. Goats are not allowed in the forest because their browsing tendencies suppress bush regeneration. It is worth mentioning that user rights for grazing in forests are provided for in the Forest Act 2005 in Part III, Section 46 paragraph 2 (d). The practice is used as a management tool as grazing enables the suppression of weeds in forest plantations; facilitating faster growth of the young trees and it also reduces the biomass that could otherwise pose fire hazards (Gathaara 1999:20).

Analysed data indicate that significant steps have been made towards initiating tour guides to the meanings, trends and practices in conservation. A significant number of tour guides had benefited from at least one seminar and at least one workshop in their tour guiding career. Therefore, networks of conservation have already extended to the tour guides. This apparently conforms to Carbone's (2005) argument that the local population is an important stakeholder in the conservation of cultural landscapes. Some of the themes tackled in the seminars and workshops relate to the sustainability of tourism through conservation. One of the themes that could be recalled by respondents

was a focus on high spending but fewer tourists who exert less pressure on the ecosystem. The impact of the focus is seen from the perspective of less negative environmental effects as a result of fewer trips up the mountain. The problem, however, arises from the premise that tour guides have limited control on the nature of tourism.

It is notable that during one of the many workshops, one of the major concerns was that tourists are and may contribute to poor conservation practices in and around the park. They are often poorly informed about conservation practices in and around the Mount Kenya National Park (Kenya Wildlife Service-Community Wildlife Programme 1993: 1). It, however, escapes the attention of the authorities that some conservation problems may be brought about by their own conduct. It is evident that the current system of conservation based on intensive policing and protection have proved to be ineffective and largely unworkable (Emerton 1997: 136). This results in the feelings of exclusion by the local community. There are 16 forest stations in the entire Mount Kenya each with a number of outlying forest guard posts ranged around the boundary of the forest (Emerton 1997:137). Yet the problem of illegal logging persists. It was observed that local people still sneak into the forest and cut down small logs with saws before carrying the logs for splitting in the villages. The conduction of tour guides in workshops and seminars against the current exclusiveness by conservation authorities may send confusing signals. On the one hand, tour guides are trained to undertake measures in conservation but on the other hand they have no say in the same issues. A participatory approach need to be adopted where the local population can be allowed to make crosscutting decision that will help in the reintegration of the traditional customary authority in heritage conservation.

From the data gathered, language was understood to be an important factor in the effectiveness of conservation issues. It was observed that language barrier was a major drawback in tour guide communication with the tourists. English was observed to be the most common language tour guides used to communicate with foreign tourists regardless of the latter's fluency in the language. It was observed in only one excursion when one tour guide spoke in French when he was handling a French tour group. The rest of the tour guides handling non-English speakers could only attempt to use sign language while some would make fun by speaking their mother tongue to the tourists who would also respond in their own language. Tourism as a service industry succeeds or fails by "word of mouth". (Wanjiru, 1993: 22). The role that can be played by the porter/guides towards sustainable tourism on Mount Kenya



National Park is therefore crucial. Through their contact and dialogue with tourists, tour guides can pass important conservation messages to the tourists and facilitate awareness and care for the environment. For instance, it was observed that some tour guides take the pain of explaining even the seemingly trivial issues about the ecosystem. One instance was observed when a tour guide called for a halt to his clients so as to explain about anthills that were found on the way. He proceeded to give an explanation of the ants and the importance of the termites as a source of food to some animals such as the ant bear. This was an attempt to draw attention to what an ordinary lay man would have taken for granted. The important message was passed about the fine details of the tropical ecosystem in matters to do with the food chain.

It was also apparent that tour guides are well aware of the local indigenous knowledge. Several tour guides were, for example, observed to be versed with the traditional herbal medicine. One tour guide for instance was seen explaining to his clients about curative properties of particular shrubs seen on the trail. He was also observed to practically demonstrate to the tourists about how a particular shrub was used to produce a brown dye for colouring hides that were traditionally used as clothing by the local community. The researcher enquired later about his source of this information. He said that he had learnt such knowledge from elders when he was a herds boy and later by sharing information with other people. The oral transmission of such cultural information is now being jeopardized through the influence of modernization that tends to disrupt opportunities for such knowledge (Zavarin 1991: 252). It is therefore clear that tour guides are an important source of information of indigenous knowledge particularly with issues to do with biodiversity which if probed more may in turn enhance the stimulus for conservation of natural habitats of plant resources in protected areas. The Kenya National Biodiversity and Action Plan argues that the country possesses a wide diversity of indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices that be harnessed for sustainable utilization and conservation of biodiversity (Biotrak Consultancy Limited 2000:13). It is also plausible to say that the knowledge tour guides have concerning plant resources can be tapped to add to the already existing information on biodiversity. In consideration of *in situ* conservation within protected areas, the action plan acknowledges that:

... there are gaps in biodiversity research which require urgent attention Efforts are also required to involve local communities in wildlife management, and improve marketing strategies for wildlife related resources... In order to address these issues, the following strategies should be implemented: support bottom-up, participatory and consultative processes involving all stakeholders (Biotrak Consultancy Limited 2000: 20)

Besides this, tour guides have a role in any research that focuses on environmental conservation. This is because their close contacts with animals and plants in the protected areas give them superior experiences over other local community members. The experiences can be tapped by researchers who want to understand the ecosystem better. Indeed, as concerns the interaction of plant and animal biology of Kenya's indigenous forest trees. Trapnell (1997:11) says that this has yet to be completely studied and no one knows, for instance, the part played in the floral fertilization by the seed and fruit eating birds, bats and monkeys endemic to the forests. Hence, there emerges the need for a more enhanced collaboration of tour guides in research. The incorporation of tour guides, however, ought to take care of intellectual property rights and indigenous knowledge (IK). Local communities, as has been demonstrated, have knowledge about different species of plants and animals, their behaviours and information about the way in which aspects of the universe interrelate. The challenge of safe guarding intellectual property rights crops up from the growing interest by the developed world in research on curative chemicals in tropical plants. For instance, Gray (1991: 67) states that:

Japanese companies are collecting herbs in Asia. American companies are after plants in Latin America. European companies are opening up research centres in Brazil and India. There is money to be made, but none for the people who first discovered the value of these traditional medicines.

In the context of Mount Kenya, the emerging problem rises from the established fact that tour guides have been handling clients who are strictly researchers some of whom have been botanists. Some tour guides are recorded to have said that some researchers carry samples of specimens collected on the mountain but such researchers have prior clearance supported by authorized licenses to take such samples. Tour guides, however, have no powers to ascertain whether such licenses indeed grant researchers to take away specimens from the park. In the highly competitive scientific world where some tropical plant species have been patented by the western world, there is a need for the government to put a check on the possible threat on the loss of the Kenyan natural heritage. Organizations such as the World Rainforest Movement are seeking alternative strategies using the experiences of

local people to create a world where their rights become recognized as inextricably bound with conservation issues (Gray 1991: 72). To avoid the imminent threat of the loss of intellectual properties,

...many developing countries are dismissing the concept that biological resources are common heritage and are hence no longer willing to allow unconditional free access to the genetic resources under their national jurisdictions. While they concede that the international community has a common concern in conserving these resources, those countries maintain that they have the right to exploit and benefit from them (Cooper, 1991: 109).

There is, therefore, a need to do a thorough patenting of the known tropical plants with medicinal properties, with information collaborated from the tour guides as well as other knowledgeable individuals in the community.

With the documentation, the knowledge can facilitate for sustainable use of the forest resource for present and future generations. Kabuye, (2002: 15) says that the knowledge behind the usefulness of the biological resources in people's livelihoods facilitates their conservation and management. It can, thus, be argued that tour guides who have been demonstrated to have knowledge of traditional herbal medicine can play an important role in the creation of awareness on the health value, among others, of the biodiversity in Mount Kenya. The awareness generated among the local community can be used to enhance local conservation initiatives for the conservation of biodiversity. In regard to the enhancement of local conservation initiatives, there is need to emphasize that conservation of natural resources places the local people at the centre of solutions to the threat facing the environment (Gray 1991:72).

Tour guides are part of the local community of Mount Kenya and thus hold an important stake in the well being of the environment they live in. The conservation of the biological resources has currently taken an economic dimension. It is now recognized that conservation can bring about economic development but this ought to take care of the current and future needs of the local community. Kabuye (2002:15) says that indigenous knowledge systems are participatory in nature and any action to exploit their use in development would need to involve local communities as they hold the key to the knowledge and problem-solving options within their environment. On this premise, therefore, the conservation process must safeguard a people's livelihood.

Some of the tour guides' future plans are income-generating activities that have an aspect of the conservation of the environment. Some talked of considering establishing tree nurseries and bee keeping. The establishment of forest outside the protected area, for instance, has been termed as *ex situ* conservation which is an extended form of conservation of plant diversity that with time draws the loggers away from the forests (Zakri, A. 2000: 38). Bee

keeping within the park, on the other hand, affords a sustainable use of forest resources by ensuring that the ecosystem is minimally disturbed. This was a traditional form of sustainable conservation of the forest. If the tour guides' dream would get realized they would play a leading role in the re-introduction of traditional conservation methods. Njogu (2002:135) says that policies on conservation were inventoristic (sic) in approach and have led to a breakdown of indigenous institutions and systems of conservation. There has been a recent shift from this though, as seen from the current Forest Act of 2005 in Part iv, on community participation, paragraph 45 (3) (e). The section establishes provisions for communities' proposals for use of forest resources, methods for conservation of biodiversity, as well as methods of monitoring and protecting wildlife, plant populations and enforcing such protection (Government of Kenya 2005).

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Conclusions

Tour guides' role in conservation was the main subject of this study. The study set out to investigate tour guide's knowledge, perceptions and experience-based solutions to the conservation of Mount Kenya cultural landscape. They exhibited a passion for participation in the maintenance of both the physical and the cognitive aspects of the Mount Kenya heritage.

Conclusions derived from the study are discussed below. Tour guides' understanding of the landscape is a valuable skill and strategically places them for consideration as dependable community resource persons to enrich formulation and implementation of conservation plans for Mount Kenya. There was a significant set of intricate information possessed by tour guides on issues to do with the conservation of Mount Kenya that places them in a position to be incorporated as caretakers of the landscape. This emanates from their regular contact with the landscape, the government conservation authorities and tourists. Despite the fact that some respondents did not proceed to high levels of education, some of their ideas demonstrate that the level of schooling alone is not a hindrance to their critical analysis of the conservation concerns facing Mount Kenya. Tour guides instinctively exhibited ecological consciousness in their attitudes, beliefs and practices on their co-existence with nature. Many were found to have an incisive view of threats to conservation. For instance, they could link some agricultural practices to some negative changes on the environment. This might be attributed to the level of long interaction with people from diverse back grounds, both academically and culturally.

It was also established from tour guides' experiences that negative effects felt outside the Mount Kenya protected area were directly linked to actions taking place within Mount Kenya. It was learnt that logging is one of the most destructive actions that have happened to Mount Kenya effecting gradual reduction in river water volumes and which is currently being felt by communities living downstream. The study also established that tour guides' knowledge of the landscape can be beneficial to the conservation activities in the Mount Kenya landscape. Formulation and implementation of conservation plans can greatly benefit from incorporation of that knowledge through participatory approach. However, participatory conservation as concerns Mount Kenya cultural landscape

has been superficial. Where local residents have been involved, it has been a relationship of receiving policies and orders from authorities with little of their views and opinions considered. A number of concerns were gathered including:

Decision makers have ignored the tour guides as being part of the key stakeholders that need to be considered in the organization, planning and execution of Mount Kenya conservation drives. The timing of the conservation activities by authorities such as clean-ups, meetings, seminars and workshops sometimes ignore the work schedules of tour guide groups who may be notified at a short notice resulting in misunderstandings about their commitment to such activities.

There has also been economic exploitation both by the tour operator and conservation authorities that has affected their enthusiasm to be proactive in conservation matters. From the study, it was realized that training programmes available to tour guides such as seminars and workshops have concentrated on better services to tourists, promotion and marketing of Mount Kenya with less emphasis on the long-term conservation agenda. Where issues to do with conservation have been handled in the training programmes, they only remain on paper. Available legislation addressing the role of local communities as partners in conservation has not been effectively invoked to legitimize community's direct inputs in resource management.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The demonstrated importance of the tour guides in terms of knowledge and experience of Mount Kenya landscape, threats, mitigation measures needed and their drive for proactive conservation through acts such as Mountain clean ups need to be considered by government conservation authorities. There is a need to harness, streamline and incorporate the experiences of tour guides to enhance government's protection efforts of Mount Kenya cultural landscape. This may be achieved by acknowledging their stakeholder role in conservation and consequently integrating them in conservation programmes of Mount Kenya by involving them in decision making. It has been demonstrated in this research that tour guides have the role of being carriers and educators of the local indigenous knowledge (IK) thereby acting in not only in conservation of the tangible heritage but also the intangible heritage.

From the study done, it can be understood that protectionism is no longer a tenable option for conservation of cultural landscapes. The tour guides can be a means of making the local, national and international community

aware of heritage and engage in its actual conservation. The stimulus to engage tour guides in a proactive role in conservation can only be achieved by practically allowing the right to decision making and incorporation on the basis of their occupation and their being part of the local community.

The cultural knowledge that the tour guides possess needs to be documented for purposes of the conservation of the intangible heritage. The objective should not be simply to document vanishing indigenous knowledge but to create a fairly comprehensive database that can be used by local field institutes to give skills that will facilitate effective utilization of ethno-science for future conservation activities. The tour guides past and present interest in managing and caring for the mountain need to be viewed as an incentive and the opportunity should not be lost in incorporation of this group during conservation policy formulation and indeed at the implementation stage. In line with this, tour guides need to be seconded and represented in district conservation forums through their local groups or clubs. They also need to be incorporated, on the basis of their unique occupation, in community-based conservation projects both in planning and execution.

Tour guides' independent initiatives in conservation ought to be supported by the government conservation authorities and monitored rather than suppressed. The role of tour guides should essentially be viewed as complementary to the duties of the park wardens.

There is a need for emphasis on capacity building to enhance the roles of the tour guides in conservation. Enhanced educational programmes focused on the conservation of heritage ought to be formulated to benefit tour guides. Such programmes also need to take into account scholarships and sponsorships facilities for tour guides with demonstrated capability to learn. Tour guides so trained can then be used as trainers of their peers on the knowledge acquired. This would sustain the learning opportunities and thereby improve tour guides' contribution to conservation. In addition, language training of tour guides in the major foreign languages such as French, German and Spanish is needed to ease their communication with nationals who may not have knowledge of English. Language is an important tool for passing important conservation messages. It is also imperative that the park rules be translated in the said languages for the same purpose. It was observed that many tour guides on the ground can only speak in English to foreign tourists. Where there was no tour leader who could speak the English language it

was hard to communicate any message to the clients. In the short term, it is crucial for conservation authorities such as KWS to consider making a rule that would require tour groups that have no English speakers to hire a person who can speak both their own language and English to aid in translation.

Finally, more research is needed to specifically understand the process of presentation of indigenous knowledge (IK) against a background of rapidly changing approaches to management of cultural landscapes.



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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire for tour guides

### a) Background information

Respondents code name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Area of respondent's birth: Village \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_
2. Respondent's age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
4. Religious affiliation \_\_\_\_\_
5. Education Level  
Illiterate \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary \_\_\_\_\_  
Lower Secondary \_\_\_\_\_  
Upper Secondary \_\_\_\_\_  
Tertiary (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. When did you start tour guiding? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you have any other source of livelihood? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_
8. If yes what do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

### b) Tourism dynamics

During which month of the year do you receive most tourists?

1. During which month do you receive the least number of tourists?

2. How many trips on average do you make to the mountain in the high season?

3. How many trips on average do you make to the mountain during the low season?

4. What is your approximate level of monthly income from tour guiding (in Kenya shillings)?

a) 0-5000 \_\_\_\_\_ d) 21000-30000 \_\_\_\_\_ g) Over 50000 \_\_\_\_\_

b) 5100-10000 \_\_\_\_\_ e) 31000-40000 \_\_\_\_\_

c) 11000-20000 \_\_\_\_\_ f) 41000-50000 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Gauging from the duration of your work as a tour guide in this region, are the tourist numbers on the increase or the decline in the Mount Kenya region?

Increase \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion what is the cause for this?

How does the change affect conservation of Mount Kenya?

Do you ever get return tourist? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what reasons do they give for coming another time?

What particular place do most tourists to Mount Kenya prefer to tour?

**C) Level and impacts of networking with conservation groups**

- 20 a) Have you ever attended any seminar concerning tourism? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b) If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Did it (they) have a component of conservation of tourist resources? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- d) If yes what, according to you, was the most important theme relating to conservation of the tourist resources?
- e) Who organized the seminar(s)? \_\_\_\_\_
- f) How were you contacted to attend?

- 21 a) Have you ever participated in a conservation workshop? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b) If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Who organized it (them)?
- d) How were you contacted?
- e) If yes, what were the topics of discussion?
- f) How did you find the topics related to your tour guiding activities?
- g) Have you implemented the issues discussed then? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- h) If yes how have you implemented them?
- i) If no, why do you not considered the issues?
- j) Was there any benefit from the workshop(s) regarding your actual interaction with nature? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- k) If yes what do you consider as benefits?
- l) If no, why do you think there were no benefits?

22. What other meetings have you attended that have to do with conservation? Explain.

- 23 a) Have you ever been approached by government officers to co-operate in giving any information on any unusual occurrences you may witness while in your excursions? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b) If yes, how have you interacted with government officers such as Forest Rangers and Kenya Wildlife Wardens before?
- c) How do you communicate?
- d) Do you have a reporting office near your base?

- 24 a) If no to questions 23 (a), have you on your own initiative ever made efforts to interact with them in sharing experiences about the mountain? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- b) If no, why do you find it unnecessary?

- 25 a) Do have any cooperation with any non government organization(s) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b) If yes, name them.
- c) What are your common objectives with the organization(s)

**D) Self regulations of tour guides**

- 26 a) Do you have a local tour guide association? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b) If yes, does it have any authority in vetting membership?

c) If no, how does one start engaging in tour guiding in the Mount Kenya region?

27 a) Does one need to have any professional training on tour guiding? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) If yes above please specify the requirements.

28 a) Do you have any self-made guiding rules on your operations as tour guides of Mount Kenya?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) If yes from what sources did you get your ideas?

c) How do the rules help you in your guiding activities?

d) Can a member be punished for violation of the rules? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

e) If no, how do you regulate conduct of colleagues and clients when on the mountain?

f) If yes what are the major violations that can prompt the punishment?

29. How do you ensure that you and your clients don't get lost in the vast Mount Kenya landscape?

30 a) Do you carry telecommunication gadgets? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) If yes which ones.

31 a) Do you use any geographical instruments during your excursions?

i) Altimeter \_\_\_\_\_ ii) Portable Global Positioning System (GPS) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) Compass \_\_\_\_\_

iv) Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

b) If yes for any mentioned, have you ever used them in noting down landmarks of interest for future reference?

c) How else have you used the gadgets?

### **E) Main interest spots in the Mount Kenya landscape**

32. What kind of tourists do you deal with?

i) Bird lovers

ii) Mountain climbers

iii) Historians

iv) Others (specify)

33. What kind of attraction do most tourists prefer while on the tour?

34. Have you been hired to guide clients who are strictly researchers? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

35. If yes, what was the nature of their work?

36. How would their work affect the mountain landscape?

### **F) Competence in knowledge of conservation issues in the Mount Kenya landscape**

37 a) Do you ever read any materials with information on Mount Kenya? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) If yes what kind of reading materials have you read?

38. What other sources of information do you have?

39 a) What major challenges do you experience with tourist during your excursions?

- b) Have you ever had an experience with tourist behaviour that you consider as being threatening to the Mount Kenya? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- c) If yes, describe the behaviour.
- d) How did you handle the situation?
- e) What was the reaction of the tourist(s) to your intervention?
- 40 What do you consider as the most important function of tour guides regarding conservation?
- 41 a) In your opinion what are the major causes of degradation of the natural setting of the Mount Kenya Landscape?
- b) What needs to be done to control degradation?
- 42 a) Have you ever had environmental disaster(s) in Mount Kenya national reserve since you started tour guiding? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b) If yes what do you consider the worst environmental disaster?
- c) What do you think was the cause of the disaster?
- i) Works of nature \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) Human activity \_\_\_\_\_
- iii) Human negligence \_\_\_\_\_
- iv) Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
43. What do you consider the major identifying trait of Mount Kenya
44. Why do you consider it the major trait?
45. Are there any animal species you used to see easily but are now rare? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
46. If yes give examples.
47. In your opinion what would you attribute the changes to?
48. How do you tackle the challenge of showing your clients a particular attraction only to discover the trail has an obstruction say, a fallen tree or a dangerous wild animal?
49. Do you of your own wish prefer to show to tourists certain places? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
50. If yes, why do you prefer the places to others?
51. What future plans do you have regarding sustaining your trade?
52. What is your vision about the future conservation of Mount Kenya?

## **Appendix 2: Guide for Focus Group Discussion**

1. Tell us your opinion about the importance of conservation of Mount Kenya.
2. Who ought to be responsible for conservation of Mount Kenya?
3. How can the conservation of Mount Kenya be enhanced?
4. In your opinion, how have the management authorities for Mount Kenya fared?
5. How would you compare the traditional conservation methods with the modern methods as far as protection of Mount Kenya is concerned?
6. What are your views about incorporation of non government workers in conservation?
7. How can illegal activities within Mount Kenya National Reserve be effectively eradicated?
8. In your opinion, what part can tour guides in this region play in conservation activities of Mount Kenya.?

### **Appendix 3: Observation Guide**

1. Note the kind of instructions tour guides give the tourists concerning expected behaviour before the excursion begins.
2. Observe the nature of relationship between tour guides with Forest Wardens and Kenya Wildlife Rangers.
3. Observe the tour guide(s) reactions to such experiences as litter left on the trail or littering by the excursion party.
4. Note the kind of equipment the tour guide carries along when on the tour.
5. Take note of the general condition of things near the trail (the ground, vegetation and animals).