

An Analysis of the Challenges Facing Cultural Tourism Development in Kenya

Dorothy Rotich

School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Moi University,
P.O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret, Kenya

Tel: +254722702118 E-mail: djepkoech@yahoo.com

Abstract

Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those peoples, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. Cultural tourism is a genre of special interest tourism based on the search for and participation in new and deep cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, or psychological. It is important to consider, therefore, that cultural tourism may take on many forms and meet a number of tourist motivations. Cultural tourism brings together the accepted practices of research, site development, design, planning, construction, interpretation, and visitor services and connects them to the practice of tourism in marketing, research, product development, and promotion. Cultural tourism has to use accepted practice and principles, but integrate tourism planning and development practices into the process.

Key Words: Cultural Tourism, development, challenges, Kenya

1. Introduction

Travelling has always been about discovery, and it is through visiting other countries that we learn about the world. Tourism is not just a financial exchange; it is about the exchange of experience, learning about new places, faces and people. Cultural tourism has been around since ancient times it has been a motivation for travel, although only among a tiny minority of the general public. The "Grand Tour" was once considered an essential part of a "gentleman's" education. Today, it is a worldwide mass trend that people travel to experience other cultures. But it is only since the early 1980s that cultural tourism became recognized as distinct from recreational tourism. The best way to understand another culture is to experience it firsthand, and this is the true value of the tourist trade. All over the world, tourists seek cultural experiences, from the cathedrals of Europe to the Egyptian Pyramids, from the cosmopolitan streets of New York and London to remote villages in the Himalaya.

Kenya is a nation endowed with a great cultural and natural heritage. With over 100 cultural nationalities, a natural landscape of diverse environments, rich natural resources and a dedicated and enterprising citizenry, Kenya has 42 cultures, countless languages and dialects and one of the most richly diverse social tapestries on earth. Cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing and most popular niche markets today. While some may argue that many tourists visit Kenya to experience only our famous wildlife, or our beaches, the truth is that for these visitors it is the experience of our culture that makes their stay so special. A trip to Kenya is about more than just wildlife or scenery—the real face of our country is found among the combined faces of Kenya's many cultures. It is the people who bring the destination to life, each of our landscapes has a different cultural significance to a different community, and the wildlife has long been an essential part of our traditional cultures.

Our heritage expands back longer than most, and the depth of our history can be seen in the three UNESCO World Heritage sites in Kenya. At Koobi Fora, the earliest evidence of human habitation on earth has been found; Mt Kenya is a biosphere reserve that combines a traditional symbol of creation and the need to conserve our environment for the future. Meet the Swahili sailors of the coast, visit the thorn-enclosed villages of the Maasai in the South, walk beside Samburu warriors in the Northern wilderness, or fish with the Luo the master fisherman of Lake Victoria in the West. Anywhere you travel in Kenya, you will find new and fascinating cultures, and cultural events. The true heart of Mombasa is found in the exotic old town, among the narrow winding streets and Arab architecture. It is well known for its ancient buildings, extravagant art designs and curio shops that sell antique and popular Kenyan souvenirs, the annual Maulidi celebrations in Lamu to the bullfights of Kakamega, the Maasai culture to the

Mombasa cultural carnival, there are enough festivals, events and ceremonies all year round and ensure that there is always something new and exciting to experience anywhere, anytime. Cultural tourism shows us the great value of our traditions and our community spirit, and by encouraging and celebrating culture, we ensure it is preserved and protected for the future. www.kenya.asn.au/index.php?options. Increasingly, more and more communities are turning to tourist projects as means of sustaining and enriching their lives.

1.1. Cultural tourism principles

It is now recognized that cultural tourism must adhere to a number of basic principles. A number of attempts have been made to define these basic principles for sustainable and appropriate tourism development. The International Committee on Cultural Tourism (ICOMOS) has developed a Charter on Cultural Tourism outlines these approaches to tourism development.

1. Sustainability; protection of natural environments; the creation of harmony between the needs of the visitor, the place and the community; broad community support with a proper balance between economic, social, cultural, and human objectives; and a recognition of the importance of the relationship of government, the host communities, and the tourism industry.
2. The residents of the community must maintain control of tourism development by setting objectives, identifying the resources to be maintained and enhanced, and developing strategies for development and interpretation. As importantly, residents must be responsible for the implementation of strategies as well as the operation of the tourism infrastructure.
3. Tourism development must also provide quality jobs for residents. The provision of fulfilling jobs has to be seen as an integral part of any tourism development at the local level. Part of the process of ensuring quality employment is to ensure that the tourism infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, shops) is developed at the local level. All residents must have equitable access to the fruits of tourism development.
4. The development process must also ensure that heritage resources are maintained and enhanced using internationally acceptable criteria and standards. The objective of community cultural tourism is to ensure that the experience provided to the tourists is an authentic one which accurately reflects the area's culture and does not attempt to present a false image of the community's culture. Cultural tourism development must also be sustainable and "must be rooted in the reality of an environment, with all its natural, economic, and cultural characteristics."
5. The inventory and analysis process should assess the full range of cultural tourism resources whether they be tangible or intangible. The inventory process must not concentrate only on buildings but must also stress the way of life and cultural traditions which are important ingredients in making a site or community unique.

1.2. The top five cultural tourism activities are:

Visiting museums or art galleries, visiting history/heritage buildings, attending performing arts or concerts, visiting art/craft workshops/studios and attending festivals/fairs or arts/cultural events Boniface, B (1998)

1.3. Benefits of cultural tourism

Tourism generates positive effects when communities' residents share their culture as well as to those visiting the communities. The benefits to the host may include reciprocity, community pride, tolerance and a stronger sense of ethnic identity. Some additional positive effects of tourism is the cultural exchange, include the revitalization of local traditions, increased quality of life and improved image for the community. The interrelation fosters a cross-cultural communication that can promote understanding between the host and guests (Mathieson and Wall, 1984). Residents are educated about the outside world without leaving their homes, while visitors significantly learn about a distinctive culture. According to Dower (1974), "Tourism and conservation can be brought to work together to mutual benefit, tourism and conservation are interdependent and both can stand to gain from close and effective collaboration"

Evans (1976) postulated that cross-cultural communications between tourists and their hosts may promote adaptive changes in local culture while preserving or revitalizing local ethnic and cultural identity. There are a lot of examples that suggest this argument. The case of Pataxo shows that cultural commoditization does not necessarily destroy the significance of cultural products, while tourism oriented, and acquires new meanings for their crafters (Grunewald, 2002). De Kadt (1979) argues that the demand of tourists for cultural souvenirs can result in local arts and crafts being revitalised. Other benefits normally associated with cultural tourism development are, increased employment thus additional income for individuals as well as local businesses, diversification of the income, improved tax base, and more visibility for the community in other economic activities Besculides. A, et al (2002)

1.4. The costs to the community can be:

Depletion and destruction of cultural resources if they are not properly managed, investment of public funds which often requires borrowing and servicing costs, congestion and over use of community facilities, can arouse hostility of residents, brings about change in cultural values and can reinforce social discrepancies. Sindiga, I and Kanunah, M (1999).

2. Challenges facing cultural tourism development in Kenya

With the current growing interest in cultural heritage, growth in cultural tourism has increased a positive worldview of the importance of cultural resources as a tool for creating economic development while preserving cultural resources. The challenge to preserve the character of a community and its cultural resources, offer an authentic experience, respect the social and cultural way of life of the communities while ensuring sustainability and authenticity of the tourist product is a huge challenge for any organization. In many destinations, the demands of cultural tourism have outstripped the supply. To overcome this lack of real cultural experiences, many destinations stage attractions in order tourist to have the chance to experience the cultural elements of the local communities (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). The staging of artificial experiences is a way for the traveler to remain out of contact with overseas peoples in the very act of going to places of their interest. There is the example that in many host destinations, tourism has been accused of being culturally arrogant for manipulating the traditions and customs of people to make tourist experiences more interesting and satisfying. Furthermore, cultural staging is being displayed by tourist developers and promoters.

There are many obstacles to cultural tourism based on the community development approach these challenges include:

2.1. Culture stability

This is always a difficult issue particularly when trying to preserve a culture while integrating it into a totally different world-view at the same time. There are enormous consequences, for instance, of attempting to preserve a society which is built on hunting and gathering principles or a cattle economy, and at the same time asking it to fit into an economy which is based on market principles or a money exchange system. Certainly, unequal relationships that are often a result of unequal education levels are a constraint to community development and cultural tourism. Attempts to overcome many of these equality differences are a focus of the community development approach in itself. However, it must be recognized that this inequality pervades all levels of society. While, most often, we tend to think of it as an antagonism between the local community and the national governments or trans-national corporations, it often exists inside the community as well. Often, disunity exists between the elders and youth of the community especially when each has been educated in different ways and on different principles. Ongaro, (1995)

2.2. Post-colonial hangover

One Constraint in the community development approach in Kenya is the post-colonial hangover so prevalent throughout the continent, and particularly in the traditional societies which are the likely targets of cultural tourism development. These societies are not accustomed to taking the initiative independent of historic or present government involvement. Independence will need to be fostered and encouraged.

2.3. Market access of cultural products, marketing and promotion

Effective marketing and promotion of cultural tourism products is a challenge, and there is absence of widespread marketing skills. Developing countries do not have market access of their quality goods and services in developed countries and in other outlets locally, regionally and in the international marketplace thus Fair trade cannot be realized significantly. This reduces the participation in Cultural tourism activities and trade, unless poor countries have market access of their quality goods and services in rich countries and in other outlets locally, regionally and in the international marketplace. Cultural heritage promotion and tourism and crafts sector are inextricably linked. Taping the inherent potential in the tourism and crafts sector in Kenya can be strategically perceived in such an integrated approach. In light of this, People to People Tourism is actively involved in promoting home based income generating activities like handicraft making as a meaningful economic activity through which the nation's deepest heritage and traditions, cultural roots and customs of folk and art can be passed on from one generation to the next. In addition to that, a well organized and managed crafts industry has the potential for employment and wealth creation. It can also help in curbing rural-urban migration.

2.4. Lack of finances to develop cultural activities

Namayiana is a self-help group run by Maasai women in Ngong, Kajiado District, Kenya. The group was formed in 1990 with the amalgamation of Nkanyuak and Enkerai women's self-help groups, which were both dedicated to fundraising for the benefit of the community, especially children. To generate income, the women of Namayiana create elaborately beaded jewelry, based on traditional and modern designs. The money raised by the sale of the beadwork is used to help community members pay for basic amenities such as food, clothing and school fees. This money is extremely valuable to the community, and has even saved lives during times of drought. However, most of the women still don't have the money necessary to send their children to secondary school.

2.5. Challenges of illiteracy and exposure

Merigo Women's Group is based in Marsabit District, Kenya. The group formed in 2002, and is run entirely by indigenous women. The aim of the group is to promote Rendille culture and environmental conservation. In 2002, the group acquired land on which they built traditional huts as a campsite, and they plan to establish a Rendille cultural centre and a curio shop within the near future. Other activities include the planting and conservation of endangered indigenous trees. Though they are facing the challenges of illiteracy, lack of finances, lack of exposure and lack of environmental specialists, the women are not discouraged. They continue to work towards the development of the campsite, and the establishment of adult education classes in the area.

2.6. Provision of a unique, special, and participatory tourist experience

Cultural tourism is often seen as a means to maintain the past, as well as to improve a community's quality of life, provide economic development, and create jobs. The challenge for communities and heritage sites is to provide a unique, special, and participatory tourist experience that will bring with it jobs and economic development in terms of investment in a range of initiatives. The challenge is further complicated by the need to preserve the character of the community and its cultural resources, offer an authentic experience, respect the social and cultural way of life of the host community all the while ensuring the sustainability and authenticity of the tourist product.

2.7. Cultural tourism versus other tourism products

Setting up new products poses the problem of relations between cultural and coastal resort tourism, Most of the other tourism products are way developed and Cultural Tourism is an emerging Tourism activity this has posed challenges in the marketing of Cultural tourism as a tourist product Ondimu, (2002)

2.8. Little or no relevant training on how to value Cultural tourism products/destinations

Little or no relevant training is available to help people with development and presentation of the tourist product to foreign tourists. Thus things like the lack of an unequivocal pricing structure puts off lots of potential tourists

2.9 Risks of deterioration of the cultural product and monuments

A massive demand from tourism for cultural tourism products can have harmful effects. The Cultural tourism industry, while benefiting from the demand from tourism, loses out on quality because this demand sometimes goes hand in hand with a dramatic degeneration of the finished product. This "degeneration" of the craft industry is certainly not due to tourism and, in the case of the the rapid decline in the quality of the finished craft products, which occurred more on the artistic level (colours and designs) than in quality, is an inevitable consequence of the new conditions of production. Pressured by orders from a trader in a bazaar or from a large holiday village, and limited by the tastes which mass production imposes on them, artisans turn to mass-producing valueless objects with which they no longer identify. The urban and rural architectural heritage is suffering obvious damage as well as a lack of resources to restore or renovate monuments, when that heritage is put to uncontrolled tourist use, there is a great risk of increased damage. The kind of use that can lead to deterioration ranges from just ordinary visits to rampant urbanization, the organization of festivals or the change of use of a monument for accommodation or catering purposes. The monuments there while benefiting from tourism, tend to suffer damage caused by the pressure of the heavy tourist numbers. WTO, (1985). It is also important to consider the extent to which these cultures of

mountain or desert people i.e the architecture, heritage, socio cultural behaviour in general can resist the culture shock that is suddenly introduced by this type of travel tourism and effective solutions for bearing the costs of cultural projects. In order to enable tourism to help to fund culture, the proposals favour a cautious contribution from the private sector (patronage, sponsorship, reuse of the architectural heritage by private companies for tourist purposes such as accommodation and restaurant facilities) and the setting up of funds for regenerating and restoring heritage sites. Bachleitner, R. and Zins, A. H. (1999).

2.10 Entrance fees for museums and historic sites

An entrance fee which is quite a substantial sum goes straight into the State's coffers. There is a recommendation that part of the profits received from visits to museums and monuments be devoted to their restoration, conservation and security. This will make the Cultural Tourism industry thrive

2.11 Access & infrastructural inadequacies to the cultural sites/villages

Some of the cultural sites are deep inside the rural areas where most of the infrastructure especially roads are in bad state making these inaccessible during the rainy seasons e.g in North rift most roads are dry weather. Although Kenya's road transport accounts for more than 80 percent of the total passenger and freight traffic, the road network has seriously deteriorated because of low maintenance standards. (Musuva 1992). The roads connecting the country's cultural tourist attractions and those within national parks and reserves require to be rehabilitated. Customer research indicates that tourists are unhappy about the condition of Kenya's roads, travelling is uncomfortable and prolonged. Consequently, the ambitious itineraries drawn up by tour operators are frequently unfulfilled. Besides, Kenya's roads are notoriously accident-prone. The railway system which was planned for different purposes is unsuited to tourist traffic. The trains move slowly and pass through scenic areas at night. Also, Kenya's railway system is a single tree-shaped network which is too rigid to accommodate tourism. Lacking in specific market targets and operating on principles other than commercial. (Musuva, 1992). At the Coast, water continues to be a problem. Indeed, in most areas of the country, water supply schemes are over-extended and grossly under designed for their populations. Inadequate sewage disposal has released raw effluent into the open sea (Sinclair, 1990). Finally, Kenya does not generate sufficient electricity. During peak periods, demand is greater than production leading to irregular supply and rationing. In other destinations these public utilities are not available or in deplorable conditions if any, making these regions unattractive to cultural tourism tourists.

2.12. Socio-cultural impact

The subject of the socio-cultural impact of Western tourism on third world peoples has attracted much attention in the tourism literature (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). A few critical reviews have dismissed tourism as a final form of colonialism in which Europeans subjugate Africans (Middleton, 1992). Their main argument is that international tourism is controlled by European and American entrepreneurs and that the benefits that trickle down to local communities are meagre. In addition, tourist lifestyles in their isolated enclaves tend to accentuate the dramatic differences between affluence and poverty. The differences may be perceptual or actual. Other objections relate to the superficial packaging of culture for tourist consumption, cultural erosion, and poor employment opportunities for the local people.

2.13. Uneven distribution of cultural tourism benefits

The international distribution of Kenya's tourism benefits is skewed to the advantage of multinational corporations in Kenya/well connected individuals; these do the marketing of cultural products thus denying the locals optimum profits from the products this has been cited by many Maasai Women at the Sekenani Gate of Maasai mara (Jommo, 1987, Rotich et al 2010). Also, because many tourism enterprises are foreign owned and expatriate managed, Kenya loses tourism generated foreign exchange through the repatriation of wages, management fees, profits, dividends, and franchise agreements. Green (1979) suggested that small African economies can mitigate against inequitable division of benefits from tourism through negotiated agreements. Such negotiations must be done in the knowledge of planned growth and development of the

Sector. There must also be skilled personnel to plan and manage tourism enterprises. Such people who should be educated to degree level. They are expected to replace expatriate personnel and to start indigenously-owned tourism enterprises. Ultimately, controlling the ownership of the major subsectors of tourism will lead to a more equitable distribution of benefits. However, without policy resolution, this would be difficult to achieve in the short term

because it involves competition with multi-national companies which are better-endowed with resources. (Sinclair, M.T, 1991).

2.14. Non Competitiveness of Cultural tourism

As noted above, Kenya's tourism is meeting with stiff competition with other African destinations. To cope with the competition, Kenya needs to upgrade the quality of its tourism product, and conduct an aggressive promotional and marketing campaign overseas. Kenya's tourism promotion and marketing has benefited from the work of private tour operators and travel agents both at home and overseas. The private sector contributes 60% of the promotional costs of participating in international fairs, exhibitions, seminars, workshops, and road shows and the government meets the balance (Mbova, 1996). Also, Kenya's reputation as a tourism destination is passed on by word of mouth by people who have already visited the country. Another strategy for increasing Kenya's competitiveness is regional cooperation within the eastern Africa region. Regional cooperation is intended to encourage the easy movement of tourists across common borders and to establish joint packages for multi-destination travellers. Kenya already has cooperation packages on tourism marketing and promotion with the Seychelles and Mauritius (Mbova, 1996). At present regional tourism packages are hampered by immigration and customs regulations which make it difficult to move people and vehicles between countries; and remittances of proceeds by tour operators from one country to another. It would be very attractive to develop and market tourism on an East Africa basis as was the practice until the 1970s.

2.15 Awareness, Conservation of cultural tourism products and destinations

In Kenya, there are a number of known rock art sites, which represent a variety of different painting and engraving styles dating back as far as 7,000 years. Many other sites probably exist but are unknown except to people living close by the caves. The art consists mainly of paintings on rocks, while rock engravings are found near Lake Turkana. For example in Mount Elgon area, some rock paintings and engravings are themselves magnificent art, comparable to some of the finest works found in the World's art galleries. African rock art is not just an African, but also a World Heritage. Kenyan rock art offers a potential tourism resource to local communities and the country generally, but is poorly known within the country, exposing the sites to threats from vandalism, theft, and negligence.

2.16 Insecurity

Insecurity is rampant in the cultural sites destination, the case of Mt. Elgon forest is one cultural tourism area but early 2007 and 2008 there was a lot of insecurity, Northern Kenya, Turkana and samburu are areas rich in cultural tourism activities but these areas are prone to cattle rustling among others.

2.17 Negative ethnicity

The biggest challenge for the government in the recent past has been negative ethnicity; the ministry fully supports the festival objectives and hopes that it will continue to promote peace and appreciation of other cultures to forge lasting bonds amongst communities living in this region. "Kenya has a rich cultural heritage and the country must recognize that cultural heritage is indeed a major resource for the sustainable development. Indeed the creative cultural industries in developed nations are among the most dynamic sectors of their economies contributing to about 7% of world GDP. Currently all over the world there is cultural re-awakening and many countries have now realized that their cultural heritage is part of their national wealth that must be integrated into national development" e.g Maasai clans in mara trianlge

2.18 Non favourable policies of Cultural tourism development & Government inter-fearance/participation

For a long time policies of Cultural Tourism never existed in Kenya. It is not until the last few years that culture was taken seriously by the Government as a tourism product and the minister of culture recently launched the Cultural Tourism policies. In Kenya the government interfearence is so prevalent throughout the continent, and particularly in the traditional societies which are the likely targets of cultural tourism development. These societies are not accustomed to taking the initiative independent of historic or present government involvement. Independence will need to be fostered and encouraged. One government minister in Kenya for example hijacked a stadium and build his own home

3. Conclusion and Recommendation

With or without tourism, the culture of people and communities is dynamic. That means that changes in the culture is not so dangerous; the real threat lies in the erosion of the power of communities to control the boundaries of tourism (Graburn, 1989). If indigenous people retain control, indigenous culture will be less influenced by western culture and impacts on cultural resources will be reduced. On the other hand, if control is entirely out of the hands of local communities, outsiders will increasingly dictate tourism and its consequences. Cultural tourism shows us the great value of our traditions and our community spirit, and by encouraging and celebrating culture, we should ensure it is preserved and protected for the future. Increasingly, more and more communities are turning to tourist projects as means of sustaining and enriching their lives. Heritage resource management must integrate tourism planning and concerns within the management process. This will require a number of changes in practice as well as new issues introduced into the realm of cultural tourism planning.

There are a number of actions which must be considered if we are to achieve the true potential of heritage resource management and tourism imperatives. They include: Better planning and management: Cultural tourism strategies and plans must be linked with a broader set of initiatives and community or economic development plans. There needs to be more coordination at both policy and action levels among the various agencies involved and among the different levels of government. This is particularly relevant to tourism and environmental policies. Also, service provision, such as transportation, parking, and water and sewer capacities, must also be considered in conjunction with tourism plans and developments. Cooperation among local sites, businesses and tourism operators is essential given that one business or operation can be directly affected by the success or quality of another. There is a definite need for impact assessment of tourism development proposals. The capacity of sites must be considered, including physical, natural, social, and cultural limits. The scale and pace of tourism development should be compatible with local and environmental limits. Establishment of guidelines, for tourism operations, including requirements for impact assessment must be put into place. There should be codes of practice established for tourism at all levels national, provincial and municipal. There is also a need to develop indicators for measuring the impacts and success of local tourism ventures, and more comprehensive education and training programs at the local or regional levels are necessary. Links with academic institutions can help provide a range of educational services to small communities.

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