



Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Development in Coastal Kenyan Beach Communities: An Ethnographic Exploration

Kamau Kibet¹, Kisito Mwit^{2,3}, Omede Nderitu⁴, Muthomi Mutua^{5,6}

¹ Department of Research, Maseno University

² Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

³ Strathmore University

⁴ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

⁵ Department of Advanced Studies, Maseno University

⁶ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Strathmore University

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Correspondence: kkibet@yahoo.com

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Author notes

Kamau Kibet is affiliated with Department of Research, Maseno University and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Kisito Mwit is affiliated with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Omede Nderitu is affiliated with Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Muthomi Mutua is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, Maseno University and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Abstract

Eco-tourism has emerged as a promising avenue for sustainable development in coastal communities worldwide, particularly on beaches where tourism activities can enhance local economies while preserving natural resources. A qualitative research design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with local residents, focus group discussions with tourism operators, and observations at key sites within the study area. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns. Community members reported a significant increase in income from eco-tourism activities, particularly related to beach cleaning and waste management initiatives (80% of respondents noted improved financial stability). However, there is a notable challenge in aligning community needs with operator objectives, leading to conflicts over resource allocation and control. The study confirms the potential of eco-tourism as an effective strategy for sustainable development in coastal communities. It highlights the need for more collaborative approaches between local residents and tourism operators to ensure equitable benefits and long-term sustainability. Policy recommendations include fostering community-led initiatives, enhancing capacity building programmes for tourism operators, and implementing standardised guidelines for eco-tourism practices that prioritise environmental stewardship and social equity.

Keywords: Kenyan, Coastal, Anthropology, Sustainability, Community Engagement, Participatory Research, Indigenous Knowledge

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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