

# **RESEARCH REPORT ON ECO – TOURISM POTENTIAL IN KAMOGICH LOCATION OF KEIYO – DISTRICT – RIFT VALLEY PROVINCE.**

## **ABSTRACT.**

This research report is based on a survey carried out on ecotourism to establish the understanding and experiences of the local leaders and members of the local community of Kamogich location of Keiyo District.

The main objective was to assess their knowledge and attitudes towards eco tourism and to obtain their views and opinions on the establishment of an eco-tourism project in the location.

Research methodology involved the administration of open ended questionnaires, interviews and literature review.

The findings revealed that most of the local leaders and community members of Kamogich location had low to moderate level of knowledge and understanding of ecotourism. However upon explanation of the meaning and importance of ecotourism, and their attitudes were very positive to the concept of ecotourism and readily welcomed the idea of the establishment of an ecotourism project in their location.

The findings also revealed that there is need to create more awareness by providing information regarding ecotourism potentials in the location and its benefits so as to encourage the local leaders and community members to conserve natural tourism resources and hence improve the economy of the locals.

The findings also revealed that Kamogich location has a lot of eco tourism potential that needs to be tapped mainly for the benefit of the local economy and the country in general.

## **ECO-TOURISM**

Eco tourism is the practice of involving local community living around areas of tourist attraction on the management and conservation of tourist attraction sites and the surrounding natural environment.

The locals benefit economically from proceeds accruing from ecotourism, therefore the locals come to appreciate nature and conserve it for their own benefit. Thus this helps combat the issue of human – wildlife conflict, reduce cases of illegal killings of wild animals and destructions of the natural environment.

Ecotourism is also a term generally used to describe responsible travel to areas where natural cultural or historical resources are managed and conserved to improve the well being of the local community through accrued benefits.

In recent years, the Kenya government has shifted its focus towards the development of ecotourism due to its contribution towards the conservation of the environment. Laws and master plans have been enacted and developed respectively to reinforce the idea of ecotourism.

The Keiyo county Council local authority has enacted by-laws aimed at protecting wildlife and the environment within the Rimoi National Reserve and conservation area. The local authority has also set up a few campsites to accommodate visitors within the game reserve and proposed several suitable campsites within the tourist attraction areas.

However limited funding is a real challenge, thus the idea of donor assistance is very much welcomed and deeply appreciated

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS.**

To assess the knowledge, understanding, views and opinions of the local leaders and community members on ecotourism, the students of Anin Secondary school administered questionnaires, interviewed the local leaders and read research reports on ecotourism. In the research study, a sample size of 100 people was considered sufficient to provide representative information on the population for a quantitative research.

The questionnaire had a total of 25 open ended questions. Section A of the questionnaire was on the personal data of the respondent, while section B was on their understanding, views, opinions and knowledge on ecotourism.

The questionnaires were either filled by the respondent or the researcher depending on the respondents, level of education. Those who were unable to fill the questionnaires due to illiteracy were interviewed while the literate filled the questionnaires themselves.

The research study found that most of the respondents had a low to moderate level of knowledge on eco tourism. They appeared to have a positive attitude and supported the idea of setting up an ecotourism project in their location due to the benefits that are likely to accrue.

The analysis of variance indicated that knowledge, understanding, views and opinions on ecotourism differed significantly on the basis of the level of education. Those with a secondary level of education and above had a moderate level of knowledge and support of the eco tourism idea than those with a lower level of education. The disparity was contributed to the fact that those who are educated travel more and thus are more exposed than those of little education.

The educated also expressed their attitudes, views and opinions well and made more rational judgments than less educated people. The research findings revealed that Kamogich location and Keiyo district in general has a lot of eco tourism potential, that needs to be developed.

## **LOCATION**

Keiyo district is located in Rift Valley province of Kenya in the North Rift, with its headquarters at Iten town. Iten is located about 35km to the East of Eldoret Town. Keiyo District borders Marakwet District to the North, Baringo District to the East and Uasin Gishu to the West.

The neighbouring districts have great tourist attractions and in particular Baringo District has diverse tourist attractions which include:

- Hot springs and geysers along the shores of the Lake Bogoria.
- Aquatic animals like hippotamus in lake Baringo.
- Camping site on an island in lake Baringo which provides a great viewing site of the lake and its environs.
- Lake Baringo reptile park.
- Lake Bogoria game reserve with a variety of wild animals and birds.
- Kabarnet Museum containing Artefacts of the Tugen people

- Beautiful scenery consisting of hills, ranges, escarpments and snake winding roads across the Keiyo escarpment and Kerio Valley.

Keiyo District is divided into three topographical zones namely.

- Highland Plateau.
- Keiyo escarpment
- Kerio Valley

The general climate of Keiyo district is warm to hot tropical climate. The temperatures on Keiyo escarpment and the Kerio valley is high, with erratic rains thus limiting both agricultural and livestock production, hence the need to develop alternative sources of livelihood like ecotourism because the area has a lot of potential. Due to the nature of climate, poor soils and rugged terrain, 60% of the people live below the poverty line.

Kamogich location has a lot of eco tourist potential sites both undeveloped and underdeveloped that can be of benefit to the local communities. Tourism potential sites include the following:-

### **NUMEROUS WATERFALLS ALONG THE KEIYO ESCARPMENT.**

Examples is Torok falls which is about 100m drop from the top of the escarpment to the base. At the base of the falls are caves that residents say were used as hiding places during the second world war. There are also cataracts and cascading falls preceding the water falls.

### **ITEN AND KOLOL VIEW POINTS**

Iten view point provides a magnificent view of step faults on Keiyo escarpment, lake Kapnorok Oxbow lake on the floor of Kerio valley and nearby is an enormous outcrop rock. With a powerful binoculars one can view elephants grazing in the Rimoi game national reserve from the Iten View Point

Kolol view point on Iten Kabarnet winding road is a natural physical attraction providing an exciting viewing point of part of Kerio Valley, Torok falls and generally a magnificent scenery. Its also a good viewing point for the meandering Iten Kabarnet road. Kolol view point is very ideal for the establishment of Hotel and camping site for visitors and locals to rest and have a great view of the Kerio valley from a vantage point.

### **RIMOI NATIONAL RESERVE**

Rimoi game reserve is located in Kerio valley 13km off Iten Kabarnet road. The national reserve was established in February 1983 and the main attraction being that of Elephants numbering about 300. Other animals found within the national reserve include Warthogs, Antelops and unique indigenous plants like acacia trees.

Within the game reserve are numerous hills where proposed camping sites can be developed for viewing Elephant population as they come to drink water along the river Kerio.

### **CHEPLOCH RIVER GORGE**

Cheploch river gorge is on river Kerio. It is about 20m deep and is said to be the deepest gorge in Africa. The gorge is infested with crocodiles. Fishing is carried out in the shallow parts of the river. The gorge presents a fascinating view and also geological research can be carried out

## **PROPOSED ECO-TOURISM POTENTIAL PROJECT.**

In view of the research findings presented, Keiyo district in general has a lot of tourist attractions both undeveloped and underdeveloped. The available tourist attractions can be integrated with proposed projects to enhance ecotourism in Keiyo district in general, and Kamogich location in particular.

One of the potential projects proposed by the local leaders and members of the community that can help generate income and alleviate poverty is the establishment of a culture village within the location particularly Anin area

### **ESTABLISHING OF A CULTURAL VILLAGE.**

Traditional dancing troops for both men and women can be initiated within the culture village to entertain foreign tourists, domestic tourists and travel within the district and other parts of the country to entertain during National holidays and other special occasions.

Within the culture village also the Keiyo traditional Regalia can be displayed such as-

- Traditional Keiyo Homestead
- Keiyo traditional dress
- Keiyo traditional weapons
- Keiyo traditional cooking equipments and utensils
- Wood and stone Carvings
- Making of necklaces, Belts , Bangles and other items using beads

The Members of the dancing Troops and the community in general would benefit in the following ways-

- a) Generation of income
- b) Preservation of Keiyo traditional songs and cultural activities
- c) Creativity and proper utilization of leisure time
- d) Appreciation of Keiyo cultural traditions and the Keiyo as a people by other Kenyans

To start off this project, the interested groups would need to do the following

- a) Register with the Government through the Ministry of culture and National Heritage.
- b) They would also require financial assistance to
  - purchase a plot where they can build a cultural centre,
  - payment for construction work at the proposed cultural village

- hire a skilled person to training them,
- purchase dancing costumes and musical instruments,
- travelling and accommodation expenses and other logistical support

## **CONCLUSION**

The local leaders and the members of the community are fully in support of the proposal due to monetary and non-monetary benefits to be realized from the proposed project. If approved, we shall then embark on budget preparation and submission .

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We do sincerely thank students of Anin Secondary School members, of the Proposed Ecotourism Project for working tirelessly to ensure success of this project proposal. We also thank the teacher members of the Ecotourism proposed project for providing leadership and the local leaders and the members of the community for their support

## **TEACHER MEMBERS**

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