

## ABSTRACT

One of the missions of tourism is to contribute significantly to alleviation of poverty in the world's poorest countries including Tanzania. The overall purpose of this study is to examine the benefits obtained from tourism and how it has helped Tanzania in poverty alleviation based on the survey of three tourist centres in three regions of Tanzania; Arusha, Manyara – Mto wa Mmbu and Tanga – Pangani district. The study addresses questions related to tourism development for example what is the role of the tourism sector in Tanzania towards poverty alleviation through employment, income and foreign exchange? What are the tourism policy and plans for tourism development in Tanzania? What are the constraints which affect the performance of tourism opportunities? The delimitations of this study are time which was too short to observe all the data required and limits the population size interviewed which is only ninety. The data used are both primary and secondary data and with the help of statistical data collected by the government. Data were collected by reading various publication, reports, statistical data on tourism, and observations through field work, well structured questionnaires and face to face interviews.

Based on the findings obtained, tourism is considered as a very important sector for poverty alleviation. The advantages include income generation and job creation, natural resource conservation, cultural protection and boosting of sales experienced in sectors that support tourism such as transport, communications, agricultural products and handicrafts. Tourism also is the most viable and sustainable economic development option and the main source of foreign exchange earnings. Also tourism has some negative economic impacts which are degradation of the environment; increases in crime, traditional residents are displaced, increased cost of leaving for local people, cultural pollution and immoral behaviour for example prostitution.

Tourism should not be seen as the only answer to the poverty alleviation but it can make a powerful contribution. The competitiveness and economic success of tourism businesses and destinations is critical to poverty alleviation, without this the poor can not benefit.

