

ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL OF CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN  
KABALE DISTRICT

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study was about assessing the potential cultural tourism development in kabala District, of south western Uganda. This was guided by objectives namely: to identify, categorize, and profile the potential cultural sites in kabala district, to find out the main challenges facing heritage tourism in kabala district and to suggest possible strategies for the development of cultural site and heritage tourism in kabala district.

The study had a qualitative approach and was an exploratory design in nature to come up with solutions to variables like assessing the potentials cultural tourism development in kabala district. The research involved collection of ideas, experience and suggestions from the selected respondents owning cultural sites, adjacent community members to the sites and tourists who visited kabala. Respondents (male and female) from the age 10 and above were consulted to provide the researcher with relevant data.

The study identified different cultural sites including Bukora caves, Nyakagyera caves, Kacuro Caves, Akampene Island, Ngorogoza Lake, Kitibya cave, Bukoora black smith area and Edirisa cultural center. It was confirmed that not much is known to the world about these sites and that on average they receive very few tourists once in a blue moon.

The study found out that the cultural sites face a number of challenges including poor marketing for cultural products, limited resources to develop these sites, westernization which is making the people of kabala to loose culture, failure to transfer important information on culture sites from generation to generation and lack of government support in the sustainability of cultural sites.

The study again came up with some recommendations to some of the challenges mentioned above such as adopting teaching culture in our primary schools, promoters and intermediaries in tourism to consider cultural tourism as an important aspect of tourism, seminars on tourism in conjunction with cultural sites should be done, local government conserving creating accessibility in terms of roads, and investors consider investing in cultural tourism. More to that, suggestion to develop heritage sites and tourism in general were also revealed namely: informing local communities about how important is tourism to them, more research to be done about heritage tourism to come up with all the solutions to weaknesses in sector, and gazettement cultural sites as protected areas of value by the government should also be considered for the development of cultural heritage.

However on the side of assessing the potential market for tourism, it was confirmed that a big number of tourists come to visit kabala with 25% on purpose of cultural experience visits but of

100% only 10% have ever visited a cultural site. In addition to the above, it was put that tourists are willing to pay even for a package for any cultural tourism and if visiting a cultural site would be very interesting.

Finally the study drew some suggestions on what should be done to improve on cultural tourism in kabala and these were: research on cultural tourism should be carried out for acquisition of proper information that should be availed for search by potential tourists, potential cultural, historical, heritage potential that can attract tourists should be marketed, tourism promoters in the country should also consider cultural tourism as an important touristic experience equally to others like gorilla tracking, and government of Uganda should put emphasis in restoring culture of its people for even tourism to grow.