

Sustainability of Heritage Management in Aksum: Focus on Heritage Conservation and Interpretation

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Abstract : The management of the fragile, unique and irreplaceable cultural heritage from different perspectives is becoming a major challenge as important elements of culture are vanishing throughout the globe. The major purpose of this study is to assess how the cultural heritages of Aksum are managed for their future sustainability from heritage conservation and interpretation perspectives. Descriptive type of research design inculcating both quantitative and qualitative research methods is employed. Primary quantitative data was collected from 189 respondents (19 professionals, 88 tourism service providers and 82 tourists) and interview was conducted with 33 targeted informants from heritage and related professions, security employees, local community, service providers and church representatives by applying probability and non probability sampling methods. Findings of the study reveal that the overall sustainable management status of the cultural heritage of Aksum is below average. It is found that the sustainability of cultural heritage management in Aksum is facing a lot of unfavorable factors like lack of long term planning, incompatible system of heritage administration, limited capacity and number of professionals, scant attention to community based heritage and tourism development, dirtiness and drainage problems, problems with stakeholder involvement and cooperation, lack of organized interpretation and presentation systems and others. So, re-organization of the management system, creating platform for coordination among stakeholders and developing appropriate interpretation system can be good remedies. Introducing community based heritage and tourism development concept is also recommendable for a long term win-win success in Aksum.

Keywords : Aksum, conservation, interpretation, Sustainable Cultural Heritage Management

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