

JOHN KIOKO MUSINGI, SHADRACK MULEI KITHHA &  
BONIFACE NZUVE WAMBUA

*Department of Geography, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya*

**Abstract:** Mombasa is the second largest urban centre in Kenya after the city of Nairobi. The historical development of the town dates from the 15th Century during the Arabian rule of the coastal strip. The town which is about 500 km south east of Nairobi is situated on Mombasa Island with an extension on the mainland. It has the largest harbour in eastern Africa with good sheltered harbour facilities at Kilindini port, and is the gateway to the East and Central African regions. The major industrial activity is associated with oil refining but the town is a major tourist destination due to its natural clean beaches. The city experiences acute water shortages due to increased demands from both industrial and population growth. This paper describes the historical and current growth of Mombasa town in terms of population and industrial activities as it affects water demand and use. The geology is examined as a means of quantifying groundwater resources and pollutant sources and the overall effects are examined in view of suggesting possible strategies to ensure continued urban growth without further environmental degradation impacts.