

TOURISM CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION

The reality and the myths

GEOFREY CHAMBUA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF TANZANIA
P.O.BOX 70919, DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA
+255 715 254 444
chambuag@yahoo.com
wcst@africaonline.co.tz

Background

The neo-liberal policies introduced in Tanzania in the 1980s created economic, political and ideological conditions for promotion of private economic activities in all sectors including tourism. Tourism is one of the economic activities covered under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), donor agencies (such as the European Union – EU) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs - including) the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – IMF

It was claimed that tourism is sector with significant linkages to other sectors such as agriculture, fishing, retailing and arts and crafts; and that it had economic spin-offs into other sectors such as communication, education, energy, construction and the general development of the infrastructure thereby benefiting the economy as a whole. In the process this could lead to enhanced living standards, economic well-being and human, social and cultural development.

Overall, the sector was elevated to an important position in policies geared towards "poverty alleviation"

Objective

This paper analyses the social, economic and gender context under which tourism development is taking place and provides a critique of the potentials it has as a tool for development. . Specifically, it aims at analyzing as to whether foreign investments in tourism **has any significance in alleviating poverty`**

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Description

`what do Tanzanians actually benefit from tourism` ?

The government claims that besides foreign exchange earnings, TOURISM generates money in the form of taxes, creates employment and self employment, assists in "poverty alleviation" through contributions to the provision of social services in areas around the attractions and stimulates growth in other sectors such as agriculture (through supply of products) and construction (roads and facilities).

A critical examination of these claims shows that although these claims are based on certain facts, the reality is different. What is not concealed behind these claims is the fact that the sector is premised on the destruction of other sectors – such as agriculture, livestock keeping, fishing and other rural and coastal and marine based resources – by encroaching on resources that are indispensable for the survival and prosperity of the rural dwellers. Moreover, the exploitative and dehumanizing working conditions of those employed in the sector are not considered at all.

It is claimed that among the benefits accrued directly to people are employment opportunities. Official figures show that the sector employed about 157,500 workers by 2001. What is not pointed out is the fact that working conditions in tourism are notoriously exploitative and humiliating, given the low wages in the sector as it is difficult to have viable unions in the face of dominance of seasonal, unskilled and casual labor and outsourcing of some functions, too often tourism only creates a few permanent paid jobs, and even these are very lowly paying. Wage

levels are determined by the grade of the restaurant or hotel, whereby workers in five star hotels command higher wages. Tourism is by nature a seasonal industry and all hotels, hunting companies, travel and tour agents employ casual or part time staff at certain times of the year to perform some core services

Land disputes related to tourism development have over the years become very common. There has been allocation of beach plots by the government for hotel construction, since the entire coastal area has been declared to be an area for tourist hotel development. With the development of the more than 10 tourist hotels in Bagamoyo town, local people's land has been bought off or simply reallocated. **The result of this has been the allocating it to large investors) Rich Tanzanians buy the land, title it and eventually resell or enter into joint ventures with foreigners. limiting local people's accessibility to the seafront and activities related to it, which could enhance their income.** It was necessary to forge a compromise to enable the poor to "benefit" from the resources, since unequal sharing of power and resources usually resulted into conflicts in many countries of the world

To protect wildlife, tourism and "alleviate poverty", the government of Tanzania adopted policies and strategies that aimed at integrating "rural development" with wildlife conservation. one reason being to involve people in tourism and enable them to benefit. **But these so-called contributions are mere palliative. All these companies claim to be helping communities in the "alleviation of poverty",** like in the formulation of all donor financed projects in the country, targeting those activities that have direct impact on women and children to provide a justification for the continued existence of the liberalization policies on the ground.

Loksale and Kitumbeini villages in Arusha, for example, lodged complaints to the District authorities against Winger Windrose in 1995, claiming that the company had promised to contribute a mere **Tshs. 200,000 and corrugated iron sheets for school projects. According to them this was not enough since the company was reaping more.**

Given all these problems, people around these hunting areas are extremely bitter with the government and the hunting companies. Beyond issues on land, they are aware of the corruption involved in the sector. **They consider the whole campaign for environmental protection being mere deception for the sake of other people's benefits, and especially foreigners. As far as the so-called creation of Wildlife Management Areas(WMA) is concerned, they are of the opinion that this is simply another means of encroaching on villagers lands by the government, since the land where WMAs are being introduced belongs to the village.**

Conclusions and recommendations

- Since Tanzania is a country of small scale entrepreneurs and the natural resources such as wildlife and land are the major sources of livelihood and sites of cultural formation, the land policies and laws need to put the local entrepreneurs at its centre so that they become determinant and drivers of events, the exclusionary policies and laws that are prevalent can only escalate the levels of poverty.
- The policies of Tourism and Wildlife need to recognize other players and stake holders in Wildlife and Tourism such as the activities of, civil societies and the NGOs as opposed to the current situation where the Government view them as its competitors for donor resources thus endeavors to marginalize and suppress them, while giving undue space for International entities, whose role has been both direct through manpower, technical and financial support to conservations agencies and ideological of western nature, in this then local are viewed as tools for or commodity of conservation and tourists hence perpetuate the extent of poverty, cultural domination, subordination and structures of inequalities

