

**THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE
CULTURAL HERITAGE/COMMUNITY TOURISM**

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1.0 Introduction

Tourism is a development indicator. Indeed, it is an index of mobility and a factor of socialization. It calls and creates an opportunity to transfer income from the more privileged to the less privileged, access to knowledge, expansion of partnerships, enhances diversified involvement and participation and cross-fertilization of cultures. It is also an indicator of levels of cross boundary achievements (*Kamamba 2003*). Tourism, which literally means traveling for pleasure, has been defined as traveling away from home for a period exceeding 24 hours. Tourism has increased due to more leisure time, more income and high mobility, a result of increased car ownership, national and international road/sea/air public transportation systems and information technology. Tourism is arguably the largest industry in the world, generating close to million dollars in GOP - which is 12% of the world total (*UNESCO 2003*). It is a highly productive sector, which has the capacity to create jobs, and boost local and national economies.

Cultural heritage which is another touristic attraction is a vast concept that transcends the old time realm of artifacts, architecture and history. It includes language, folklore, ethnographical objects, traditional natural environment and intangible culture such as group legacy. Tangible cultural heritage assets include old constructions such as roads, buildings, graveyards, archaeological sites, rock paintings, old settlements, museums and immemorial site only to mention a few.

Intangible cultural heritage include languages, tales, myths and history, music, songs, dances and traditions, handicrafts, literature, rituals, customs and life styles current or not, that have got the capacity to inform the present about the past. It is a soft culture, the people, their traditions and what they know (*Mckercher & duCros 2002*); a folklore that is the totality of tradition - based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals, and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identify (*UNESCO 1998*).

Tourism poses a major element in demand upon land. Most of the cultural resource, particularly, the tangible that is a non-renewable resource and once lost there is no wealth that can bring it back. Therefore, sustainable tourism calls for national utilization of cultural resources and demands for effective management of tourists for proper land and environment conservation, protection and utilization. Therefore, tourism if badly planned, can cause severe damage to the land and particularly to the heritage; whereas if planned well can support and encourage the efforts of conservation. Hence, tourism is a double edged sword, and unless managed properly, it can be potentially a negative force. Similarly, cultural heritage is a valuable yet vulnerable and unrenewable resource.

2.0 Sustainable tourism

Tourism is or should be a refreshment of body, mind and spirit, a *relaxation* after toil, a change of scene which restores *personal* strength and balance. Hence, while conservation is concerned with conservation of the environment, its wealth of man-made artifacts historic buildings and areas which embody and express the long evolution of civilization, tourism demands the utilization and enjoyment of this environment.

Agenda 21 adopted at the Rio Summit, underlines the possibilities for using sustainable tourism as a tool for poverty eradication. Sustainable tourism has the potential to contribute to an area's economic growth and development through various means, particularly, employment generation. General ideas of development include cultural, economic, social and aesthetic values. The social-cultural and environmental areas can equally gain, this encourage sustainability where the tourist activity occurs (*Pereira et el 2003*).

Sustainable tourism has been defined as development that meets the needs of today's tourists and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future (*WTO 1997*).

Recognition that cultural heritage is worth protecting is only a recent development dating back to the second world war (*Hall & McArthur 1996*). Cultural heritage among other things, helps to forge individual, community and national identities; may have educational, scientific and conservation significance; has assumed economic significance, and is an integral component of sustainable development. Therefore, cultural heritage promotes community advancement and tourism, through enhancement and implementation of sustainable practices (*Pereira et el 2003*).

Cultural heritage tourism is often related to the question of authenticity and it is regularly assumed that cultural tourists are pre-occupied with authentic experiences. It is assumed that authenticity is to be found in other cultures and in purer and simpler lifestyles. The quest is often related to the authenticity of material objects, such as the tangible parts of cultural heritage (*Pereira et el 2003*).

There are various school of thoughts on the authenticity of the cultural heritage. However, the most prominent ones are those of hot and cool authenticity (Selwyn 1996), and existential authenticity (Wang 2003). Hot authenticity refers to the myths of authentic "other" and the idea that the natives are always friendly in successful tourism destinations. Cool authenticity is related to a search for knowledge, in instances when both knowledge and critique are possible. On existential authenticity, unlike object related authenticity, existential authenticity often is indifferent to the issue of whether or not toured objects are authentic.

In search of travel experiences that are existentially authentic, vacationers are preoccupied with an existential state of being, activated by certain tourist pursuits (Wang, 2000). It should be noted that not all visitors go mainly "to see the sights". Visits are sometimes focusing on, for instance, recreation, sport, play and miscellaneous forms of sociability. People go abroad in order to experience "home plus" something else. In this perspective, visiting a place like Bagamoyo, may become "*home plus sunshine*", "*home plus beaches*", "*home plus history*", "*home plus dishes*" etc. Some visitors may be essentially holiday makers, and only part-time sightseers. In many instances, sightseeing and other experiences of place may absorb these tourists in a pre-reflective way but the cultural sightseeing may still be regarded as indispensable to their travel experiences. Even some of those visitors who take a great interest in the tangible cultural heritage, might partly search for amenities and services that may be seen as an elongation of the overseas tourists home culture (Pereira et al 2003).

3.0 Tourism and community involvement

Tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry. For the year 2020, tourist growth of 1.6 billion, corresponding to receipts of two trillion u.s dollars is projected (*WTO 1999*). The main growth in tourism in the next decade is expected to take place outside the industrialized countries. Africa will be the third fastest growing area with 7% annual increase in tourism traffic (*WTO 1999*).

UNESCO has pointed out that travel and tourism "is one of the few sectors which has major growth potential. For example, it provides opportunities for job creation and economic development; enhances social progress and strengthens communities, encourages the protection of the environment and contributes actively to conservation. Over the next decade, international travel and tourism is expected to add 5.5 million jobs annually, while the share of tourist arrivals in "developing countries has increased from 19% in 1980 to over 30% today. Cultural heritage has not contributed much to tourism in developing countries. However, cultural tourism is a noteworthy part of leisure travel and it has a potential to contribute to an areas" sustainable development. This development includes five dimensions, and these same dimensions have direct link with tourism. These include economic, cultural (the protection or affirmation of cultural identify, self esteem and empowerment) and the full time paradigm (systems, symbols, and beliefs in society) components. It also includes social health, education and housing, and political dimensions (human rights, and political freedoms and expressions). Cultural heritage may thus warrant the economic base of given area and contribute to a higher standard of living and local population's quality of life (Pereira et el 2003).

4.0 Challenges

There are numerous challenges that are posed through diversified factors towards sustainable cultural heritage tourism.

4.1 Globalization

Globalization is a development factor. Indeed it is index of closeness and a factor of multiplication. It creates and it calls for an opportunity for access to knowledge, expansion of partnerships, enhances diversified involvement and participation and cross-fertilization of cultures. However the effect of globalization on the intangible cultural heritage is eminent. Customs, traditions, handcrafts and folklores are adversely affected. The rate of dynamism in cultures has accelerated over the years. This trend continues at a higher rate than it used to be. This effect, deeply and greatly affects the thinking and altitudes of the people, particularly, the young generation, towards the conservation of the very tangible and intangible heritage that contacts and sustain cultural tourism (*Kamamba, 2003*). Hence, the challenge is how to sustain the intangible and tangible heritage in this globalized world.

4.2 Tourism negative Impacts

Whereas, we are talking of tourism being a fortune to developing countries, it should also be noted with concern that tourism can bring exploitation and degradation to an area's social cultural, economic and environmental arenas if mechanisms to control and manage its negative impacts are not in place. Good examples are those where most of the profits leak out from the local communities mainly due to

vertical integration. It is important to look into the levels of power and control, the uneven and unequal levels of development relationship of power and globalization (*Pereira et al 2003*). It is important to note that effective and proper management of tourism is very important so as to control excessive exploitation and degradation of land and cultural norms and traditions.

4.3 Local communities participation and involvement

The challenge on this particular area is how best and effectively, the communities are participating and involved in the planning processes. Local communities are subject to large influxes from tourism traffic, noise and possible price increase in goods and services. It is, therefore, necessary that their well being needs be addressed in the planning, development, implementation and management processes. It is important to solicit attitudes and perceptions of residents' views on the environment, the development of tourism, community aspirations and on the tourists themselves. Alternative management approaches should be sought in accordance with the views of the inhabitants and stakeholders to achieve pro-active planning as opposed to the typical remedial planning. By involving the local communities and other stakeholders in the planning process it might, be possible to avoid some of the potential conflicts between visitors, residents and the environment (*Timothy et al 2003*).

4.4 Attitude towards cultural heritage and development

Just as cultural systems have tangible and intangible components which can not be segregated, and just as cultural heritage has a profound intangible dimension, so development itself has a profound intangible dimension which must be recognized and nurtured so that sustainable development can be truly realized (*UNESCO 2002*).

Sustainable diversity is a critical requirement for intangible development and without intangible development there can be no sustainable development. In spite of many efforts to envision development in a holistic manner and to see people, values and social capital as an integral part of development, there remains a powerful tendency to define and measure development through methods and measures which are primarily material: schools, hospitals, dams, factories, seeds, ploughs, houses, clothing, medicines etc. Challenges of development recognizes that these material goals cannot be sustained by material means alone. They require knowledge, vision, commitment and training to make them democratically driven, culturally legitimate and socially sustainable. These intangible dimensions of development have not been adequately linked to cultural capacities and cultural diversity. This behavior is an attitude of mind. Unless such an attitude is removed through various means including education, training, and youth participation in local traditions, customs and culture in general, the very tourists attraction - cultural heritage - will vanish.

4.5 Integrating cultural heritage and tourism

Cultural tourism is linked with the desire of people to learn about others and to explore their history and culture. The development of cultural tourism is linked with the growth of "culture" of tourism. It is recognized as a resource that can alleviate poverty.

Cultural resources are commodities that can be sold by allowing people to see or visit them for purposes of visual enjoyment and recreation, memorial curiosity and historical satisfaction; academic and scientific investigations; camping and picnicing and souvenir purchases. So the challenge is to put in place effective and practical strategies so as to make this potential commodity marketable. Once these cultural resources become really commodities then, appropriate strategies are necessary so as to use this commodity to alleviate poverty among the communities nearby.

To create a commodity out of cultural heritage resources, strategies creation for tourism promotion in museums, cultural centers, monuments and antiquities sites is a pre-requisite. Basic issues that need to be taken into consideration in relation to cultural tourism promotion are proper management of the resource marketing and impact of cultural tourism on peoples economy and preserved cultural heritage.

4.6 The Quality of cultural heritage

The quality of the cultural heritage and its presentation is the key factor to tourism benefits. Tanzania for example, is considered to be the cradle of mankind due to uncomparable human evolution evidenced in Olduvai; it has 2,000 years history and urban remains on the coast including the Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara world heritage sites, and handcrafts such as the famous makonde carvings. The quality of the cultural heritage is inevitably one of the best in Africa. But, this heritage has to be easily accessed; has to be well presented, - has to be adequately interpreted and has to be supported by facilities and amenities. In the absence, of the above mentioned, then the quality is marginalized. It is the responsibility of the society to make sure that the quality of the cultural heritage products are supported and enhanced effectively. There are shortages in various fields such as qualified experts, funding, marketing, facilities and amenities in most of the developing Africa, particularly Africa South of the Sahara.

4.7 Cultural heritage and funding

A study on African tourism concludes... *"Tourism can make a significant contribution to their economies: ... tourism will only develop sustainably if it is integrated into the country's overall policies, economic and physical planning mechanism".. (Pereira et el 2003).* The World Bank report (tourism in Africa 1999) concludes: *Optimism about tourism's future growth is leading several countries to consider ways in which tourism could accelerate economic growth and diversity their economies.* Many governments do not know how or where to initiate action, or whom to approach for assistance in getting started.

The funding of cultural heritage activities is an area of concern as very few people have a will and support to cultural activities in developing countries as they are seen as issues of less economic enterprising.

4.8 Tourism-Delicate Business

African countries, particularly, those of the sub-saharan stand a chance to attract tourists from all over the world because of the prevailing peace, political stability in most of the countries, ethnic diversity and cultural richness. However, it is important to note that tourism business is very delicate. It easily responds to political, social, economic, cultural and religious events positively or negatively. Tourism is also very responsive to hygiene and disease epidemic. We note with concern to see big investments put in place to tape the tourism business and at the end of the day such investments are not fully utilized. They are not fully utilized because of inadequate demand - customers-due to reasons mentioned above. There are examples, where hotels or restaurants are put in place so as to tape this important business. But a single event whether political, religious or cultural, that threatens the lives of the very tourists or customers expected to use the products such an event will leave the restaurants or hotels empty. Such a situation is not only a challenge to the business owners but also to the communities whose outcrop benefits also dwindles.

5.0 Conclusion

Heritage tourism in developing countries can be an instrument for improving heritage conservation, as tourism generated revenue may contribute to conservation efforts. Heritage tourism can also reduce seasonality and vulnerability to the tourism sector. Heritage tourism may be used as an instrument to change or broaden the image of run-and-sea resorts into more sophisticated destinations offering multicompany, dimensional quality tourist experiences and thus being more beneficial to the local community and the regional and national economy. A strong link with heritage-conscious hotels guides and tour operators is often seen as decision in order to substantiate economically and environmentally sustainable tourism development. If we think that the positive side of tourism, should reach the proper segments of society, then different stakeholders should be involved right from the initial development steps and maintain their participation active.

It is also argued that if opportunities for the poor could be opened up in all places where tourism is significant in the south, it would affect millions of the poor (*Pereira et al 2003*). Recently, for the same reasons, the world bank has renewed its belief in the role that culture and tourism can play in poverty reduction. Its president, J. Wolfensohn, stated that *"... culture is an undervalued resource in many developing countries. It can earn income, through tourism, crafts and other cultural enterprises.*

Hence, stakeholders perception of tourism and cultural heritage conservation dynamics is a necessary prerequisite for the development of a synergistic relationship between the two heritage being the catalyst that attracts visitation, empowers hosts, and promotes sustainable practices.

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