

COMMUNITY TOURISM: GATEWAY TO POVERTY REDUCTION?*

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African governments are showing increasing interest in developing tourism as a source of growth and diversification. It is said that, in the right circumstances, tourism can contribute effectively to economic development because: barriers to entry into the international market are lower than for most external trade sectors; tourism expenditures can provide a significant stimulus to other production and service sectors; properly managed, tourism has the potential to alleviate poverty, preserve cultural heritage and protect natural resources; and international tourism is a relatively high-growth industry. Attempts to develop the industry aggressively have been taking place within the broader framework of the crisis and adjustment. Over the years the International financial Institutions (IFIs) have attributed the economic crisis facing African countries to the *predominance of welfare-oriented policies* pursued by various governments and the neglect of pure economic concerns. The perception that states are the driving force of economic growth has increasingly been replaced by the perception that of an increased role for market forces in the allocation of resources and a much enlarged role for the private sector in production sector and the management of the economy.

Over the past thirty years or so, African countries have been liberalizing internal trade markets by removal of price controls, de-confinement of industrial products, liberalization of interest-rates, etc. They further introduced management reforms so as to bring expenditure into line with real resources, in terms of control of growth of money supply, cuts in government spending for social and productive services provisioning through “cost-sharing” measures, eliminated subsidies, etc. Together with these, they have restructured the public sector through removal of protection, subsidies, and support for parastatals; privatised public enterprises; reformed civil and parastatal service by firing workers (euphemistically re-labelled, retrenchment or down-sizing); and, restructured agriculture (by introduction of individualization, titling and registration of land), etc. These countries have even created “enabling environments” for foreign investors through tax exemptions and holidays and protection of their interests.

It was in this context that the question of poverty alleviation as a social policy was brought to the fore as part of the adjustment package by 1990s. A school of the World Bank-related investigators produced a series of studies on Living Standards Measurements and Poverty Studies as an element of the global economic reform programmes, and took income and ‘current consumption’ as the main measurement. Part of the reason was, literature emerging from the Third World countries themselves

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was increasingly becoming more critical, and theoretically more radical as the socio-economic crisis of these countries deepened over time despite the restructuring of the economies. The method adopted by the World Bank-related investigators was based on the identification of basic needs and intuitively identified the poor through qualitative deficiencies in indicators such as shelter and other basic needs and services.

It was this approach that was employed by the World Bank in its 1990 Report. In this report and subsequent ones, poverty was defined as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living measured in terms of basic *consumption* needs or *income* required for satisfying them. Poverty was characterized by failure of individuals, households or entire communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy their basic needs. The first *Human Development Report* by the UNDP in 1990 played a critical role in refocusing attention on poverty and its distribution. It demonstrated that development involved much more than economics alone. With the launching of UNDP's Poverty Strategies Initiative (PSI) in response to the appeal made by the World Summit for Social Development, and its adoption by the World Bank and IMF by the launching of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in the same year, a direct link was made between debt relief and poverty reduction. Henceforth, the primary mechanism for this connection was the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that countries had to produce so as to qualify for a debt relief package and any economic assistance from the World Bank and the IMF.

The significance of the above is the fact that, with poverty alleviation becoming part of the agenda among the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), a justification for support of the social sector has been found on development grounds. There has also been a significant reversal of the previous policies that undermined the role of the state in development issues and the weakened states by the SAPs are increasingly expected to play a role in addressing social concerns in the form of targeting resources only to the poorest sections or certain groups which are considered to be vulnerable. Within this context, the states are expected to create dual systems of social services: for the poor and vulnerable funded by the state and for the rest of the population, which can afford to pay for private services. The other side of this approach is the fact that it has tended to focus only on poverty alleviation, while ignoring the broader issues of improving the quality of life throughout society and those of distribution, equality and equity.

“Globalization”, “civil society”, “citizenship”, “poverty alleviation”, “Participatory Poverty Assessment”, “partnership in development”, “social safety nets”, “participatory development”, “community based projects”, “informal sector”, “entrepreneurship”, “vulnerability”, “targeting the poor”, etc: these are among the ubiquitous concepts, which have become fashionable in the past twenty years or so in Africa, popularised by the media, academia, international and regional financial institutions, advertisers, publicists, and so on. These concepts have become so popular at a time when even the IFIs have admitted that there has been no convergence of per capita income levels between the North and the South. They have shown that the number of low-income countries has actually risen from 52 in 1965 to 105 in 1995. That is not all: they have further admitted bluntly that “capital has gained in comparison with labour, and profit shares have risen every where.”

The number of the absolute poor countries in Africa, according to UNCTAD's 2002 Report, has risen particularly in the past 15 years, with the implementation of the SAPs. Accordingly, those living on less than USD 1 per day rose from 217 million in 1987 to 291 million people in 1998. The Report further showed that the rich even within these countries have been doing better than the poor. The latter have experienced steeper decline in their per capita incomes than the economy as a whole. That is not all: they have further admitted bluntly that "capital has gained in comparison with labour, and profit shares have risen every where." Even George Soros, the financier turned philanthropist and leading critic of globalization has recently admitted that, "The trend of globalization is that surplus capital is moving from the periphery countries to the centre, which is the US." Moreover, "The US government view that markets are always right....My view is that markets are always almost wrong, and they have to be made."

It is within such a context that I have been assigned to talk about Community Tourism-Gateway to Poverty Reduction! The terms of reference require me to give my views on how to bridge the gap of the have and have-not regions of the world. I am to particularly focus on the Conference Goals which aim at: harnessing the immense power of tourism as a leading force for poverty reduction in Africa; to identify the needs that should be met to implement socially, culturally and environmentally responsible tourism; to show case studies of 'success stories' and models of best practice; and, develop concrete action programs and pilot projects to facilitate and nurture sustainable community tourism development. It will be imprudent on my part to claim that the issues required of my attention are of common agreement, since it is common knowledge that even the industry that we are dealing with—tourism and its role in the promotion of peace and reduction of poverty is not devoid of vested interests and real conflicts. In fact, the history of tourism in Africa has been a process of conflicts in most cases.

Therefore, my "roadmap" (if it will lead me anywhere) is very simple. The first task will be to explore the contemporary images, sites and sounds of tourism together with the economic policies and social policies.

Nimrods,¹ Thomas Cooks² and Globetrotters

Tourism is the second largest industry in the world after oil. It is said that it is one of the "globalizing" factors in today's world. In tourism, there "is the post-modernizing declassification of tourist and non-tourist areas and the accompanying declassification of cultures". Tourism has become an avenue through which "world-views" are shaped and then concretised by multi-media experiences (travel reviews, travel programmes, travel brochures, travel documentaries, advertisements, etc.). According to World Tourism Organisation, world tourism was growing at the rate of 3.8 per cent annually by the early 1990s. From a mere 25,000,000 arrivals of tourists from abroad who spent USD 2,100 million in 1950, it is estimated that there were 475,580,000 travellers in 1992 who spent USD 278,705 million. The number of tourists by 1995 stood at 567

¹ Nimrod refers to hunters. Genesis 9: 6-9 states "...Nimrod;...was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.'"

² Thomas Cook was the first person to organize a Grand Tour and charter a train from Leicester to Loughborough. He was to organize a trip to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1869.

million and the income from tourism totalled at USD 372,000 million. In the latter year, Africa had a share of 18.8 million tourists who spent about seven billion dollars.

Arrivals and receipts reached records at close to 592 million in 1996 (4.5 percent increase over the preceding year) and a respective figure for receipts at USD 423 billion (a 7.6 percent growth from 1995). The International Civil Aviation Organization indicated that the number of passengers carried in the same year increased by 8 percent. While it was the advanced countries which were getting the largest share of tourists for many decades, the fastest rates of growth those years was achieved in East Asia and Pacific, followed by Middle East, South East Asia and Africa. Visitor arrivals worldwide reached 698 million in 2000 (a growth of 7.4 percent over 1999). The World Travel and Tourism (WTTC) calculated that tourism generates 8 percent of total exports and of all jobs worldwide. In Sub-Saharan Africa its contribution was about 10 percent of GDP (at a growing rate of 5 percent annually in real terms) in 2000. By then, Africa tourism growth rate was 7.2 percent—the highest compared to other regions of the world, with South Africa within the region and worldwide being on the top list. Much of tourism in Africa is based on nature and wildlife, as in Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia. It was in mainly the 1990s that cultural tourism began to be developed in Africa, with West Africa introducing the Slave Route. Many of the game reserves, sanctuaries and other attraction in Africa were often built on human tragedy and that tragedy still persists in the form of alienation of lands and natural resources, given the nature of the industry in its current form.

Investments in the industry in recent years are taking place in the form of privatization of the tourist attractions. Globally, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), a specialized World Bank Group, has recognized tourism as the most dynamic industry for the developing countries. This agency has the mandate to encourage the flows of foreign debt investment in developing countries and transitional economies to fulfil its objectives by providing guarantees to foreign private investors against risks of currency transfer restrictions and expropriations. It is supposed to protect tourist foreign investors against war and civil disturbances in those countries where investments are taking place; and also facilitate public and private partnership.

In Namibia, for example, a safari company, Conservation Corporation Africa (70 per cent owned by South African Pension Fund, Hambros Bank and Getty family), which manages 300,000 hectares of “African bush” with wild animals floated on the London Stock Exchange the bush. The company’s turnover for 1996-97 was estimated to be STG 22 million. The company was being floated because of need of access to capital. The Financial Director Martin Edge was to say: “We want to show real capital growth and dividend income to shareholders. But we also want to demonstrate that management of wildlife and the sustainable use of national resources in Africa can be profitable.” The company was involved with a British entrepreneur Stephen Boler who had bought a 60,000 hectares game park in Kalahari Desert, which was managed as a safari lodge. The head of field operations of the company quipped: “The future is with eco-tourism. We want to make it clear that wildlife is a viable investment.”

In 1998, Martin Plaut was to report for the BBC that a South African company had plans to take over a string of national parks throughout Africa. According to him, The scheme, which is the brainchild of a Dutch multi-millionaire and nature

conservationist, Paul van Vlissingen, has won the support of an extraordinary range of groups and individuals, including former South Africa president Nelson Mandela, the US State Department and even the World Bank. The Dutch tycoon, whose family runs the Makro chain of wholesalers, came up with an initiative designed to save Africa's ailing game reserves. The scheme was to found a private company, African Parks Management and Finance Company, to take them over. As a company, it was designed to bring together public and private resources. According to the tycoon, "The state could bring in expertise, scientists, animals from other national parks and land, and I could bring in management expertise and the drive to make it go." Mr van Vlissingen claimed that the Marakele national park which the company was running north of Johannesburg had been a success, with a number of rare species having been well established.

To understand this rapid growth of tourism industry, it is imperative to go beyond simple economic or environmental considerations. The key issue here is, a tourist is a consumer of leisure. Tourism is a commodity, therefore, an expression of *social relations*, which is differentiated in time and space. It exists outside of a daily social space, and like all other commodities, it has value as a social sign in the mind of those who produce it. This manifests itself in the way the commodity is represented as a way to convince the consumers. These representations, especially in advertisements, are a discourse, which gives a certain image as a "sign of belonging to a group and thus a social status". Tourism has historically represented particular forms of life style, i.e. a specific way of life of a group of people within society. Sociologists have demonstrated that the economists' assumption that commodities merely satisfy needs is insufficient: they also have a function of social signification. They have the value of an ideological reference. There are hierarchical indications revealed by conspicuous consumption. It is the dominant classes that define for other classes and sub-groups the model of vacation consumption.

The fact that Europe and North America have been getting the largest share of tourists since post World War II demonstrates the nature of historical variation in vacation consumption. In the 1960s and 1970s tourism expanded in response to increasing demand of certain types of leisure activities, namely, indulgence in fun, food, frolic and exotica. It was that tourism, which was premised on travelling for the sun, sand and sex adventures (the triple "S"). This explains why the uneven distributions of tourists share world wide and within Africa. Indeed, in those years, North African countries that are closer to Europe used to receive 62 percent of tourist traffic in Africa. East and Southern Africa used to receive 22 percent, 11 per cent went to West Africa and Central Africa received only 5 percent of the traffic. In those years, countries that stood at the top as far as this industry was concerned were Morocco, Tunisia and Kenya.

Although the fauna and flora of Africa were not yet adequately protected in the 1920s, there were already holidaying visitors by this time. There were also scientific expeditions, but game-hunting expeditions remained the most dominant. "Big game massacres and berserk drives" according to some of the colonial agents, was one of life's greatest sports. It was the "...old fashioned *safari* of white men...that is, a leisure affair of porters, tents, and chops of boxes, where one covered a dozen or fifteen miles a day for weeks at a time,..." Africa had drawn famous hunters such as Frederick Selous who hunted in Southern Africa and Tanganyika in late 19th century and early 20th century. Selous had his own trophies museum in England. As a famous hunter, who acted as

adviser to many hunters and collectors, from the then future British Prime Minister W. Churchill, the then ex-US President Theodore Roosevelt (who killed 512 heads of big game and many more other species in a single expedition in 1909), Baron Lionel Rothschild, and many others. The biggest game reserve in the world, which is in Tanzania around the Rufiji area, is called Selous Game Reserve.

Africa even drew the famous writer Ernest Hemmingway, in the early 1930s. He was to recount his experiences of the one-month big game hunting in East Africa in his autobiographical novel, *The Green Hills of Africa*. In this novel and other short stories he wrote, Hemmingway portrayed the love of the unspoiled natural beauty of Tanganyika, the cool nights and the wonders of game hunting. In the green hills of Tanganyika one could forget the cities and their neurotic inhabitants and instead plunge into the world of greater kudu hunting, campfires, books and lots of booze. This was a symbol of masculinity and purity. In a Foreword to Francois Sommer's book on hunting in Africa, Hemmingway was to praise the author for his historical research and sound technical information which showed "the hunter as a man of delicacy and good will to animals", a quality which only hunters could "appreciate or know to be possible". He was to further quip that; "it would be a strange thing if people with hunting in their blood for many hundreds of years would suddenly be without taste. But it is a taste, and a hunger too, that can be satisfied or partly satisfied."

These were years when the hunting and safari industry dominated with those involved making huge profits. Some of the companies (all European) which existed by then were genuine, but there were also impostors, with no experience, who simply cashed in because of the profits out of the industry. While white hunters in Rhodesia charged STG 50 per month to lead six or twelve month safaris, "in East Africa 'white hunters' not fit to be gun bearers" extorted (STG) 200- (STG) 300 per month to secure trophies..." It was noted that in the East African British territories, besides the professional hunters, game wardens were responsible in the destruction of most animals under the pretext of 'control operations' ("good farming and safety of human life"). Poaching started in this way. Colonial officials and the hunters were doing it themselves, although it was mostly Africans who were blamed for it. Taxes and licences, instead of slowing down the rate to kill, had simply made ivory and other trophies a more important source of revenue of the colonial government and its officials. The rangers had become hunters rather than keepers.

The introduction of the Ordinances and regulations on fauna and flora in Africa was a response to the pressures of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire. There were already intense debates on the question of Wild Life Policy in the East African territories by 1930s; with some Europeans being not in favour of game reserves since these were in conflict with the settler interests as far as land issues were concerned. Such opposition also came from Africans whose land and natural resources rights were being infringed upon. Some of the European sections voiced the view that such policies merely served the wealthy and privileged. Accordingly, governments introduced vindictive sentences and repressive measures on poachers, while granting land use for sport to a few, instead of allowing land to be employed usefully or for the pleasure and health for all (meaning all whites).

These debates had coincided with the new developments in tourism, whereby game viewing was increasingly becoming an important aspect. The governments in

Africa were making some money out of game licences, and private firms and individual hunters were making even greater sums of money by outfitting game safaris and advising and guiding sportsmen. Even if the sums were trifling, according to the governments of East Africa, for example, in comparison to what the countries “could make by exploiting [...] humanity’s interest in living wild animals, in grand and strange scenery, and in unfamiliar and exciting holidays, instead of merely capitalizing its atavistic hunting propensities. East Africa is unique in the variety of large animals which can be easily seen there”. It was in the 1930s that regulations for setting up national parks were introduced. It had become clear that game-viewing tourism promised more revenue for the government than sport hunting.

The creation of national parks in Africa began after 1930s. These were being designed at an era when motorcars and the camera had become common, and therefore the age of viewing tourism. National parks were to exclude hunting tourism, which still remains the attribute of game reserves. While game reserved represented the demarcation of land use between rural dwellers and fauna, national parks were designed for an urban society from within and without the territory. They were designed for “middle-class national and international tourism promoted by comfortable steamships, railways, motor vehicles and hotels in newly opened regions of the globe”. This was the period when the hunting elite were expanding into tourist elite. The concept of national parks became even more popular in the post World War II period.

The tourist expansion of “mass” in the 1960s onwards was an outgrowth of the tourist patterns set in the 1940s and 1950s. This was a model that was based on the myths of Mediterranean tourism, formulated by the youths of the industrial bourgeoisie and intellectuals. The structure of consumption of tourist leisure in those years was essentially aristocratic, that of an idle class that had infiltrated even the lower classes. Thus in the 1960s, the advertisements would focus on the elegance, sophistication, fantastic view, superb cuisine, the sail boat, the big game fishing, the sophisticated beach girls, the sun, etc. African countries that were able to offer these were among those which received a higher number of tourists. Once this became a “mass” phenomenon with the development of packaged tourism and the decreased price of transportation, this model was increasingly becoming unstable as it tended towards the destruction of the consumerist aristocratic model. The model remained, but since the social distance had been blurred, of necessity, new destinations had to be sought for the middle classes. The result was the diffusion of tourist markets all over the world and search of new forms of tourist consumption.

The new wave of growth of tourist industry in the 1980s was to coincide with global campaigns for environmental conservation. What was increasingly being revealed was the fact that the Mediterranean is the dirtiest sea in the world, with a huge amount of polluting elements in the sea and air, the result of which many resorts were being polluted. The same was being said of most beach areas in the world. And so, the new tendency was to uphold with high esteem environmental beauty and ecological diversity. It was in this context, as Munt observed, the new middle classes in the Atlantic world began to promote travel to third world countries “as a means of preserving fragile ecological landscapes and providing an ‘ethnically’ enhancing encounter” (so-called eco-tourism). The old type of mass-packaged tourist holidays which were premised on travel for the sun, sand and sex adventures were and are increasingly being replaced by adventurous forms of tourism within which travelling,

trekking, trucking, hunting, fishing, ballooning, mountain climbing, hang gliding, river rafting, etc. are becoming the principal activities. Most of these reflect the exciting and adventurous life style of the new middle class, at the same time it is a resurrection of another aristocratic model: *the old adventurous 'heroic' conquistador*.

This trend in tourism is posing new challenges to established holiday destinations in Africa such as Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, etc., since it involves new forms of discrimination. Holidaymakers who are better enlightened in environmental issues and offered a wider choice of destinations, are spurning over-patronised resorts and seeking out new, safer and unspoilt locations. Countries like Kenya have become victims of this trend, its arrival figures, although still high, are dropping steadily. Tanzania, ironically “lucky” to be a back-marker, is increasingly getting more tourists of recent. Kenyan tourism industry, for example, has been on the slump in recent years. Between 1997 and mid-1998, there was a closure of 15 hotels at the coast for lack of business. Officially, the reasons for this have been attributed to the so-called Likoni “tribal clashes” in the areas (although such “clashes have always been persistent in Kenya without necessarily affecting the sector!)

Exactly how are these new forms of tourist practices advertised? Explorer World-wide Ltd of UK in its 1995/96-brochure put out that it deals with small group exploratory holidays that are mainly adventure type oriented. The company’s approach is to arrange travel in small groups, causing as little environmental damage and cultural disturbances as possible. And of course, Explorer supports World Wide Fund for Nature and donates a percentage of its profits to the organisation. Their advertisement had the following to say as far as Tanzania is concerned:

Only in Africa can you find the spectacle of wildlife in its rawest exuberance, amid an incredible diversity of landscapes. Here in Tanzania are some of the greatest game lands on earth.... We journey through areas that have witnessed the adventurous footsteps of great 19th century explorers like Livingstone, Stanley, Burton and Speke, as well as the infamous passage of slave caravans from the dark interior to the coast. Over 120 tribes, including hunters and warriors like the Masai and Sonjos, live within Tanzania’s borders, and we travel through many of these tribal lands to some of the remotest parts of Tanzania. We explore the vast plains and wild bush country, the great game parks, and the native villages. (*Explorer* September 1994).

Even the Tanzania Tourist Board, a government body for promotion of tourism, not to be left behind in this new way of selling tourist products, advertised in the same manner, at times in cruder terms. In one of the 1995 brochures the Board, beyond mentioning the various attractions, proclaimed that these:

evoke images of the early European adventurers through virgin African-David Livingstone, Henry Stanley, and Johannes Rebman and before them the Chinese, Arabs and Persian traders. With a rich cultural heritage of more than 120 tribes and an abundance of wildlife living in natural habitats, Tanzania today is reputed as the last frontier of the enchanting Africa of the last century (*Karibu Tanzania* 1995).

A foreign tourist hunting company in Tanzania, Wengert-Windrose-Safari Ltd, through Dr Lechner, Jagd International World-Wide Hunting (of Germany) had the following to say in a 1995 brochure: “Best Bongo area in Africa. There is no comparable hunting ground in Africa with a similar diversity or number of species or where such staggering game populations still exist in a wilder, more primitive, and still to a large extent, unspoilt. It is the greatest hunting paradise left on earth.”

The new middle class tourists sound like latter-day missionaries or explorers. No wonder that even the spirits of Livingstone, Stanley and other explorers have to be invoked to “assist in hedonistic discoveries” and attract these tourists. For those who may recall, Stanley for example, was involved in the killing of thousands of Congolese people; and he is the one who paved the way for the colonization of that country by the murderous King Leopold of Belgium. Thus, there has been a re-emergence of luxury safaris of the colonial travel and holidaying type such as “Classic Kenya”, “Classic Tanzania”, “Classic South Africa”, etc., which were described by World Wide Journeys & Expeditions in 1995 as “An escorted private safari in the old-style tradition”; “In the great tradition of ‘old-style’ camping safaris.... the unforgettable experience of life in the bush under canvas, in this case a series of luxurious appointed mobile tented camps in some of the most spectacular locations....”

Today, it is the mythological attributes of the classic aristocratic adventurous model, which are being upheld: the big game hunting, fishing and photographing and various types of adventures. The rules of the game have changed as a way of maintaining social distance between the new middle classes (who rely on wealth) and the rest of the classes (who have to do a lot of saving before they can attempt to go at least for camera tourism). It has been noted that: “In many of the brochures representative of the new tour operators, wildlife and natives are synonymous. Passive, they are to be discovered, sighted, viewed and ultimately ‘shot’”. “Wide-scale repression of human rights, deeply rooted racism and intense class political struggles are null and void in the brave world of adventure travel”. It is not just the multi-media: even prominent politicians in Africa refer to animals as “our cultural heritage”. Naipul noted the following in 1987: “The obsessive concern with wildlife leads insidiously to the denigration of the human population. In the eyes of the beholder, the more backward the tribes become more adjuncts to the animals.... Indeed they are often treated, if they are sufficiently exotic and sufficiently primitive, as their equivalents. Side by side with all the lavishly produced books describing the animal population, are the no less lavishly produced books describing the human fauna of the region.”

The Context of Tourism within Vested Interests

What is on the increase is flexible packaged, individually oriented tourism, which claims environmental and cultural sensitivity (cynically called ego-tourism or eco-terrorism). And thus, for example, there is a growing tendency among countries to advocate for “quality tourism”. It is advocated openly that mass tourism is not necessarily a means to economic well-being; that what is required is a “selected market of more paying tourists as opposed to an uncontrolled influx of clients who could be disastrous to the environment”. Mass tourism has attracted trenchant criticism as

shallow and degrading experience for the host nations and people. The new forms of tourist practices are viewed benevolently: there is hardly any criticism against them. In other words, the outlooks of the new western middle classes have been internalised even in the host countries. The role of these middle classes in the “new social movements” that have arisen especially around the notion of “other cultures and the environment and ecological issues” is hardly questioned. As far as this kind of promoting tourism is concerned, Munt commented; “It is the colonial emphasis on discovery and expropriation that has been rediscovered within a neo-colonial tourism.”

The above merely points to the fact that tourism ethos, as developed historically, relate to a long tradition of social relations, to environmental and ecological ideas of the 19th and early twentieth centuries: those colonial notions about settlement patterns and the need for conservation. Tourism is part of a global complex network of economic, social, racial, legal and cultural relationships. Central to the whole issue is the question of control of land and natural resources. It is this aspect which is completely ignored by those who do not interrogate the ‘universalistic’ conceptions of ‘post-modernity’ and ‘globalization’. How it is possible to have community based tourism under such circumstances as the ones outlined above; that is one problem I have. The very existence of community based is dependent on the existence of poor people! Community-based tourism’s most popular image is that of a rural village far from the beaten path. It is about conservation of large tracts of virgin rainforest, reforestation work and organic agriculture. Travellers are supposed to support this work through their visits. It is some kind of a romantic notion mainly limited to poor rural settlements. And tourism is supposed to be the “Band Aid”, by helping to alleviate poverty.

What is community tourism after all? In simple terms, it is supposed to be that tourism in which local residents (often rural, often poor and marginalised) are active participants as land-managers/users, entrepreneurs, employees, decision-makers, and conservators. The community not only cooperates in running the campsites, but the residents also have a say in decisions over tourism development in their area and work with other parties (so-called stakeholders) to develop opportunities for employment, enterprise, skill development, and other improvements in local livelihoods. The communities are supposed to undertake collectively and in a participatory way planning of the development of tourism, and in some cases as local individuals and families when it comes to enterprise development. Often than not, the history of how these communities became impoverished is not taken into account, and the attempts at alleviating their so-called poverty are considered from the point of view of philanthropy rather than rights.

Given the nature of the industry itself and the vested interests around it, it is clear that community based tourism is a contradiction in terms. Private companies cannot be expected to share profits and power with rural communities simply because it’s a kind thing to do. How does one promote private and community interests at the same time? How does one enrich a few individuals and some companies or even multinational enterprises and at the same time reduce poverty? Community tourism must be practiced within a specific locality. The fact is if there is to be anything like community based tourism, then local people are supposed to have some form of tenure over tourism resources if they are to have the power in the tourism market and a genuine decision-making role in planning. Without tenure they have no security for

making long term investment, and no power to charge for tourist access. In this regard, tenure is critical. For developing wildlife-viewing tourism, communities need rights to control access to land, and not just off-take of wildlife. It means giving the community institutions powers in making decisions, not just receiving revenues.

Several models of community based tourism exist southern Africa. In South Africa there are initiatives to give communities a secure stake in tourism enterprise *inside protected areas*. Communities can reclaim land tenure through the land adjudication process, or where tenure remains with the park authority, communities can be given an *equity share* in the venture, as has happened, for example, in the tripartite venture in Ndumo Reserve, between Kwazulu Natal Development Corporation, neighbouring communities, and Wilderness Safaris. In Namibia, the government has been devolving wildlife use rights to communities in ‘conservancies.’ Communities are supposed to can establish their own consumptive or non-Consumptive tourism, or sub-lease rights to private investors. The CAMPFIRE programme in Zimbabwe, is premised on the local authority’s authority to lease hunting and tourism rights, and then distributes revenue to local people. In the case of Botswana, rights to allocate tourism concessions lie with Land Boards. Land Boards are informed by a policy which allows them to allocate resource-use leases for hunting and tourism to communities who have formed a legal entity. They can sub-lease their rights to joint venture partners. Within this context, the communities also get wildlife utilisation quotas.

To what extent these models have been able to transform those areas for better, is a question that remains to be answered historically. If this form of tourism is intended to alleviate poverty, then it is doing so within the context of irresponsibilizing the state as a developmental and social provider. It fits well with the policies pursued by most African governments during adjustment. It is well tailored to fit in the poverty alleviation programmes of the IFIs and it aims at an individualist and localized solutions to poverty. What is ignored in such perceptions is the fact that tourism is about profits. It is within this context that tourism is an industry has a leakage factor in that, that a substantial amount of money earned from the industry leaves African countries to pay for the imports consumed by the tourism sector or in terms of repatriation. This is because the economies are not so diversified so as to allow the tourism facilities to be constructed, equipped and supplied largely from local resources. In Kenya, for example, leakage of this kind is in the order of 25 percent. Not only that, even the major share of the money spent by tourists is usually paid to the tour companies in the originating countries.

Concerned people all over the world, as can be seen from the demands made in the World Social Forum in the since 2001 in Porto Allegre, tend to argue through the prism of *risks*, *rights* and *duties*. That is in terms anyone living within a given territory, being granted national rights that anyone should receive, and national duties that are appropriate for all citizens of a society. The fact is poverty, employment and unemployment, benefits, leisure, entertainment, cultural issues, etc. belong to what are usually called public or social policies. Social policies involve the question of rights—rights to decent incomes, housing, health and culture and how these can be provided publicly (*not freely* as they current myth goes!) though taxation of the populace. It is those policies that determine the distribution of resources (productive and reproductive), status and power between different groups. They have a dual and

contradictory nature in that if one takes into account the structural forces involved in their determination, they are not just a means to the existing order, but a locus of tensions and injustices related to that order and ways to overcome them.

The fact is governments have a developmental role to play, in that they must collect taxes and rents so as to provide social services. What the governments are supposed to do is to collect taxes and rents as revenues for local and central government so as to provide social services and infrastructure to the people. These services are such as water, education, health, etc. Tax collection and social provision is the only way to enable the redistribution of resources and a sure way to eradicate poverty. Contemporary 'conceptualisation' of poverty, its causes and remedies, is done imprudently, lacking organic links with the accumulated knowledge and experiences of our societies. Many of the concepts, which express relations of inequalities between people and nations of this world and rebellion against such relations, are not so chic today. In the past, statements such as the following, made by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere to the Maryknoll Sisters in New York on 10th October 1970, were simple and straight forward:

Poverty is not the real problem of the modern world. For we have the knowledge and resources which would enable us to overcome poverty. The real problem—the thing which creates misery, wars and hatred among men—is the division of mankind into rich and poor

We can see this division at two levels. Within nation states there are a few individuals who have great wealth and whose wealth gives them great power; but the vast majority of the people suffer every degree of poverty and deprivation....

And looking at the world as a collection of nation states, we see the same pattern repeated. There are a few wealthy nations which dominate the whole world economically, and therefore politically; and a mass of smaller and poor nations whose destiny, it appears, is to be dominated.

Our knowledge can only be as good as the questions we ask. The question that should be of great significance as far as poverty eradication is concerned is that of the extent to which people's means of livelihood are guaranteed. This means, central is the question of equitable (not equal) distribution of resources.

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