

# **TOURISM AND THE COMMUNITY: DIRECTION, PURPOSE AND CHALLENGES IN CARIBBEAN TOURISM**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In the Caribbean, communities are often left out of tourism development and planning which results in resentment and negative actions against the industry such as visitor harassment. A number of countries have therefore, demonstrated initiatives geared to include local communities in the tourism industry by ensuring that they have meaningful participation. This paper examines the dynamics of the tourism sector and the community, and the relationship that may exist between the two. The author also categorises various levels of community involvement in tourism. Two models are presented to demonstrate the importance of community in the tourism experience. The author then redefines the term "community" in the context of the tourism sector and discusses community tourism and its implications for sustainable tourism development. Suggestions and recommendations are made for the inclusion of communities in the tourism sector.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism was not a planned strategic option in most Caribbean countries. The industry is at times faced with challenges such as crime and tourist harassment. The need for planned sustainable development is, therefore, essential for the future of tourism in the Caribbean. Efforts have been made by countries such as Belize, Dominica and Guyana to develop alternative forms of tourism such as eco-tourism, agro-tourism and community tourism to address concerns that have arisen as a result of conventional mass tourism activities.

This paper begins with an examination of tourism within the Caribbean. A new model – Pyramid of Tourism Segmentation (POTS) – is explained and the development of special interest tourism is advocated. The tourism sector is the main industry in the region both in terms of employment and revenue generation. As such, sustainable development of Caribbean tourism has become paramount. The term “community” in the context of the tourism sector is redefined and divided in broad segments. Community tourism and community involvement in tourism is identified as essential in the process of sustainable tourism development.

Traditional models for tourism development excluded communities and other stakeholders for various reasons. If the industry is to develop sustainably there is therefore, the need for a paradigm shift in the way in which planning, managing and decision-making is conducted. Such challenges faced in developing tourism sustainably are not limited to the Caribbean region, but to other parts of the world as well. These challenges are examined and recommendations and suggestions are made to advance the cause of community involvement and participation, and to achieve the ultimately goal of sustainable tourism.

## **TOURISM IN THE CARIBBEAN**

The term “Caribbean” is used in this chapter to identify 34 destinations that are members of the umbrella organisation of the region’s tourism industry, Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). In this definition, the Caribbean region includes a few countries / regions on the mainland in South America and Central America. The area between the south of Florida in the USA, Cancun in Mexico, Belize in Central America, Venezuela, and Suriname in South America, is now referred to as the Caribbean. Although in the Atlantic Ocean The Islands of Bahamas and Bermuda are treated as Caribbean Countries by the CTO for statistical purposes. The Caribbean as a single destination usually ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of tourist receipts.

The Caribbean attracted 3.1% of tourist arrivals in the world in 1999. The tourism sector in the Caribbean has assumed prominence as a result of consistent stagnation in the traditional economic sectors. As such, the region is often referred to as the most tourism dependent region in the world. Tourism earnings account for approximately 25% of the region’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 1999, the Caribbean region recorded US\$17,733 million tourism receipts with 20.32 million tourist arrivals and 12.1 million cruise passenger arrivals (CTO, 2001). Based on the latest arrival figures issued by the Caribbean countries, and reasonable estimates, the total for the year 2000 too should be around 20 million. The benefits of tourism are not, however, evenly distributed among the 34 countries and destinations in the Caribbean. For example, in 1999 the top 10 destinations in the Caribbean accounted for over 81% of the tourism receipts in the region (Jayawardena, 2001a). Five years ago, these 10 countries accounted for 77% of total

tourism receipts in the region. Phenomenal growth in tourism receipts over the last five years in Cuba (75%), Dominican Republic (58%), Cancun (56%) and Aruba (48%) have contributed to the increase of the market share of the top 10 Caribbean destinations as shown in table 1.

**Table 1. Visitor Expenditure of Top 10 Caribbean Destinations in US\$ Millions**

<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>1995 TOURISM RECEIPTS</b>	<b>1999 TOURISM RECEIPTS</b>	<b>INCREASE %</b>	<b>1995 RANK</b>	<b>1999 RANK</b>
Dominican Republic	1,568	2,483	58.35	2	1
Puerto Rico	1,842	2,326	26.28	1	2
Cancun	1,371	2,144	56.38	3	3
Cuba	977	1,714	75.43	6	4
The Bahamas	1,346	1,583	17.61	4	5
Jamaica	1,068	1,279	19.76	5	6
US Virgin Islands	822	955	16.18	7	7
Aruba	521	773	48.37	9	8
Barbados	612	677	10.62	8	9
Bermuda	488	479	(1.84)	10	10
Total of Top 10 Destinations	10,615	14,413	35.78	-	-
Total of Other 24 Destinations	3,258	3,320	1.90	-	-
Total of all 34 Destinations	13,873	17,733	27.82	-	-
% of Top 10 Destinations	76.52	81.29	-	-	-

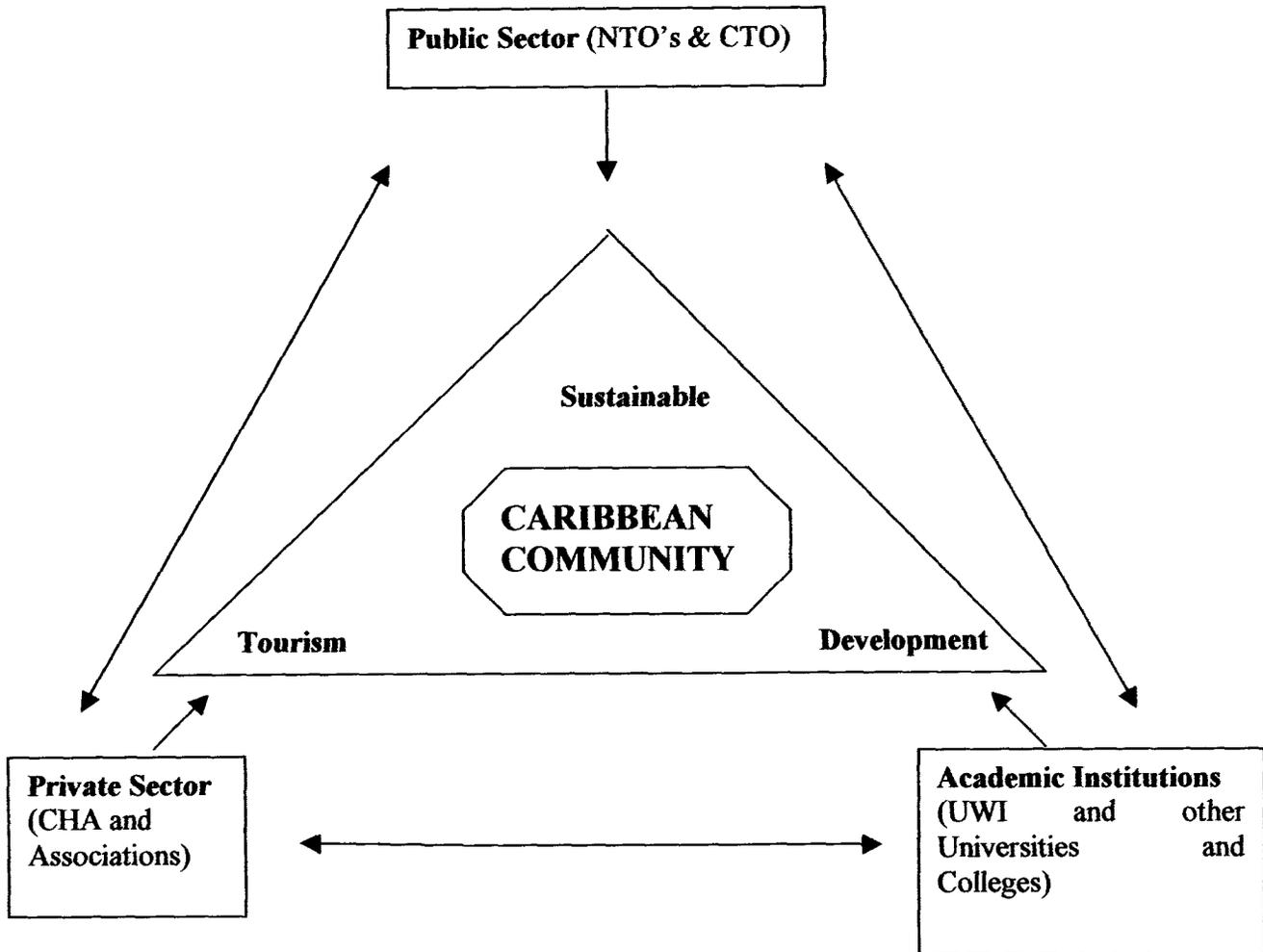
The top 10 destinations have not changed over the last five years. However, slight changes in the ranks (based on tourism receipts) have been observed over the five years. Barbados, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Puerto Rico have slid one position each. Cancun, US Virgin Islands and Bermuda remain in the same position held in 1995. Dominican Republic and Aruba have advanced one position. Cuba is the only country in the top 10 that has advanced by two positions (Jayawardena, 2001).

Considering the governmental focus and attention to rapid development of tourism in Cuba, the author predicts that by 2010 Cuba will be elevated to the number one position in Caribbean tourism, with or without a change in the policy of the USA towards this country. Another reason for this prediction is the current drive to develop the human resources needed for Cuba's tourism sector. As an example, in the year 2000, Cuba had 19 hospitality schools, which employed 1000 professors and issued some 20,000 certificates. By and far, Cuba has the most educated community within the Caribbean today. Now Cuba is using that significant ingredient to choose and train employees for tourism. Conversely, in other parts of the Caribbean tourism education and training by both the public and private sector has never been adequate.

A model of sustainable tourism development for the Caribbean region is provided in figure 1. The need for partnership, co-operation and collaboration between the main stakeholders in the industry such as local communities, universities and the academic community, the private sector Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), the public sector

Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and CARICOM is emphasised in this model (Jayawardena, 2000).

**Figure 1. STD Model for the Caribbean**



It is suggested by this model that the local community must be the main focus of tourism development to ensure sustainability. Critical areas such as destination marketing, product promotion, customer service and guest safety and security are also areas that

should be addressed. Nevertheless, the successful future of Caribbean tourism lies ultimately in teamwork, communication and a united effort by all main stakeholders.

### **PYRAMID OF TOURISM SEGMENTATION (POTS) MODEL**

For future Caribbean tourism, the total market can be broadly grouped into five segments.

The first three segments are usually branded as 'mass' tourism. The five segments are:

- **Cruise Ship Passengers**

The first segment is the cruise line passengers, who spend the least (per capita) but is a large market segment. This sector is frequently criticised by others involved in tourism for creating lower than potential income for host destinations. On the other hand, it is viewed alternatively as a captive audience, which can produce future stay-over tourists. This sector represents 37% of total visitor arrivals and 10% of visitor expenditure in the Caribbean. 45% of the total cruise ship berths out of the US are for Caribbean cruises. 10 years ago this share was 57%.

- **All-inclusive Tourists**

Not all Caribbean destinations have seen investment in developing this category of hotels. Although there may be exceptions, a typical all-inclusive hotel guest may spend very little time visiting attractions, meeting local people, taking tours and experiencing the local culture. Often all-inclusive hotels will package the "tasting of local elements" in their products within the limits, or within the walls of these hotels.

According to Paris & Zona-Paris (1999), 48 of the best 100 all-inclusive hotels are in the Caribbean. Out of these, 17 are in Jamaica, which is not surprising. The original

concept of the French company “Club Med” was refined and introduced to the Caribbean by the Jamaican hotelier John Issa in 1976 and the world renowned hotel company Sandals was launched by Jamaican entrepreneur Gordon “Butch” Stewart in 1982.

- **‘Sun-lust’ Tourists**

The third segment is tourists attracted to other beach resorts and inns in the Caribbean. A new wave of tourism in the Caribbean started with this segment after World War II with the leaders being Cuba, Jamaica, Bermuda, Puerto Rico and The Bahamas.

- **Special Interest Tourists**

While research on this type of travel is comparatively limited, international trends are signalling that more people want action and the opportunity to experience new activities with a sense of personal adventure in a safe environment. Research in the United Kingdom suggests that as travellers mature in age and gain experience in travelling, they are more likely to become interested in special interests travel. Unlike the mass-market tourist who asks himself/herself “where would I like to go and what can I see?” the special interest tourist asks, “what are my interests and where can I pursue them?” Mass-market tourism will continue to be important to the Caribbean and is expected to grow when it is considered that most North Americans are yet to travel to another country. At the same time special interest tourism is increasingly capturing more attention of more seasonal travellers.

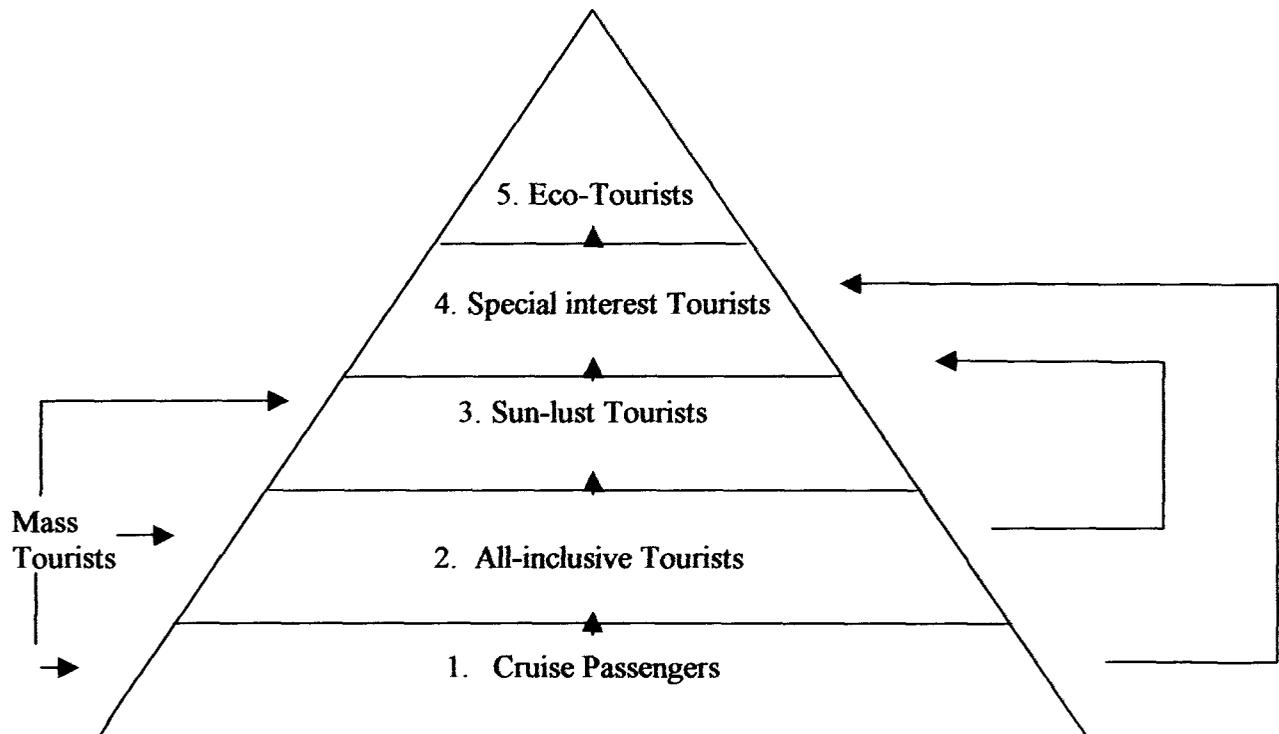
- **Eco-tourists**

This segment is still very small in comparison to the other segments and is often seen as a niche market. In general, hard-core eco-tourists are more educated, well read and often have more disposable income than the other segments. Eco-tourism is often described as “responsible travel to natural areas that concerns the environment and improves the welfare of the local people”. Eco-tourism has the potential of receiving greater support from local people even in countries where institutions geared towards developing tourism often face hostility, cultural barriers, challenges and objections.

These segments can be grouped in a pyramid and lines of maturity, and the graduation to higher, but smaller segments can be identified (Jayawardena & McDavid, 2000:1-23).

This new model (POTS) is summed up in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Pyramid of Tourism Segmentation (POTS)**



It is not essential that all visitors must graduate from level 1 to level 2 and so on. Some will remain on their respective levels throughout, as they will not be attracted to the products designed for tourists at other levels. Some may by-pass a level or two in the graduating process. At the same time, it is unlikely that a mass tourist will overnight develop a desire to become a hard-core eco-tourist. Some tourists of level 5 may eventually graduate to level 1. Special interest tourists are similar to the middle class of a country. It is the backbone of the future of tourism. On reaching this level, it is unlikely that most special interest tourists return to become mass tourists. Countries such as Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Suriname, etc., are attempting to attract more eco-tourists. These countries should look at the potential increase of special interest tourists as an initial strategic step. Having that segment of special interest tourists will strengthen the structure and lay a good foundation for the growth of Eco-Tourism in a strategic sense. Usually community involvement in tourism is high in special interest tourism and eco-tourism. Hence, another valid reason to plan for these segments in the Caribbean to ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector.

### **SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM**

Special interest tourism can therefore be sub-divided in to 5 main sections such as:

- Cultural / Heritage tourism
- Adventure tourism
- Community-based tourism
- Health tourism
- Agro (or agri) –tourism

Each of these sections can be placed very close to Eco-tourism. In some cases overlapping areas can be identified. It is also possible to combine two or more of these sub-sections in tourism development. As such, a community-based approach to tourism development is becoming increasingly popular especially in developing countries where local citizenry have often been left out of the planning and development process. The promotion of small-scale tourism is intuitively perceived as a suitable form of economic development in rural areas. However, its impact is controversial and not always obvious (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000). This form of tourism should ideally serve as a catalyst for the sustainable development of the tourism industry. It also ensures that locals maximise the benefits received from tourism since community decisions should ultimately decide the type of tourism development within the community.

In agricultural communities, for example, a community-based approach to agro-tourism provides excellent opportunities for locals to bring about a marriage between the agricultural industry and the tourism industry. It provides a unique experience for tourists who may be desirous of experiencing rural life and meeting and interacting with the local people. Agro-tourism also emphasises and encourages respect for local cultures through education and organised encounters. In addition, effort is placed on the preservation and protection of the resource base, which is fundamental to tourism itself (KPMG, 1996:1-16).

## **COMMUNITY**

Today when one speaks of “community” in the context of the tourism sector, often reference is made in a narrow sense to a rural community living in an area attracting tourists. However, the term “community” may mean different things to different people. In the context of Caribbean tourism, “community” may mean any of the following:

- A group of local people living together in a location attracting tourists.
- A group of local people living together and sharing common ownership of a touristic attraction (as an example, Amerindian peoples in the South American rainforest).
- People of a large tourist resort city (as an example, people living in Montego Bay, Jamaica).
- People of a country primarily dependent on tourism (as an example, all the people of Jamaica).
- People living in a region primarily dependent on tourism (as an example, all people living in the Caribbean).

Community referred to in this chapter relates to people living in the Caribbean. The level of community involvement in tourism may vary from person to person or group to group. In the context of the tourism and hospitality sector, “community” can be categorised into four broad segments. These are:

- **Communities that has invested in tourism**

This includes leading businesspersons as well as small time entrepreneurs such as vendors and guesthouse owners.

- **Communities directly employed in the sector**

This includes hotel employees, airline employees and travel agency employees.

- **Communities indirectly employed/benefiting from tourism**

This includes fishermen supplying hotels and local farmers in tourist areas. This also includes infused labour such as domestic employees of a hotel manager and hotel products supplier (e.g. diver who is employed by a fish supplier to a hotel).

- **Other communities**

This includes all others that are not benefiting from tourism, or communities that are affected negatively by tourism (e.g. residents in tourist areas in Negril and Montego Bay that are annoyed with the noise pollution during spring break promoted by the Jamaica Tourist Board).

### **Communities Invested in Tourism**

In many countries the main reason for locals being excluded from the planning and development of the tourism industry is because they lack the resources (mostly financial) needed to make an input into the industry. Communities, however, possess indigenous knowledge and expertise that is often critical to the sustainable development of the tourism industry. In other instances, they are capable of becoming major stakeholder in the industry through financial investment. Jamaica, for example, has one of the highest ratios of locally owned tourism business in the Caribbean. Companies such as the SuperClubs Resorts and Sandals Resorts have become major players in the Jamaica and Caribbean tourism landscape. Small-time entrepreneurs are also gaining a foothold in the accommodation sector. Many of the small hotels and guesthouses (often converted family

homes) in the Caribbean, like those along the south coast of Barbados, dotted around St. George's basin in Grenada and at Negril in Jamaica are owned by (local) women (Patullo, 1996). The high degree of local ownership within the industry contributes to the overall development of the country since financial leakage through the repatriation of funds is minimised. The success of such companies is often accompanied by a demonstration of social and environmental responsibility and respect for the environment and the communities around the resorts. Such actions enhance the chances of destination in the Caribbean to truly achieve sustainability in tourism development.

Countries such as Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru have developed and promoted sustainable tourism since the mid-1980s to generate revenue and employment while striving to reduce the negative impacts of tourism (Mitchell, 2000). In some countries tourism have evolved to become the mainstay of the local economy where communities are almost totally dependent on tourism and tourist dollar for their survival. Agriculture and other traditional industry may still exist within these communities but these activities are geared towards satisfying the needs of the tourist market.

In Peru, for example, "new" forms of tourism that include community tourism have been encouraged. These ventures have been successful because the country possesses unique historical and cultural / heritage attractions. In Taquile island in southeastern Peru tourism development began reluctantly in the 1970s but is now embraced by the community members. The main attraction for this community is the artisan stores that sell elaborate and sophisticated textiles. According to Mitchell (2000), the form of

tourism in this community is significantly controlled in its type, intensity and direction by the Taquilenos. Tourism has developed as a major source of income and employment in this community.

### **Communities Directly Employed in Tourism**

Often disguised as a simple act of hospitality, tourism conceals a complicated web of intricate business activities, relationships and negotiations conducted across international borders (Holder, 2000). As a result, a large number of the tourism sector employees are employed by the hotel industry. A number of persons also find employment in traditional tourism sectors such as travel agencies, airlines and at attractions and heritage sites. It is noteworthy that hotel workers have many other benefits such as tips (in guest contact operational areas), service charge, meals whilst on duty and on a few resorts hotels, free accommodation. In general, employees face long and extremely flexible working hours, split shifts and stressful peak periods coupled with the seasonal labour needs. As such, conflicts sometime occur, resulting in instances of strikes, "go-slows", "sit-ins" and "sick-outs" that have had a serious impact on the sensitive hotel industry. These are more prevalent in some Caribbean countries than in others. Hotels have used three strategic approaches in dealing with labour situations, which are:

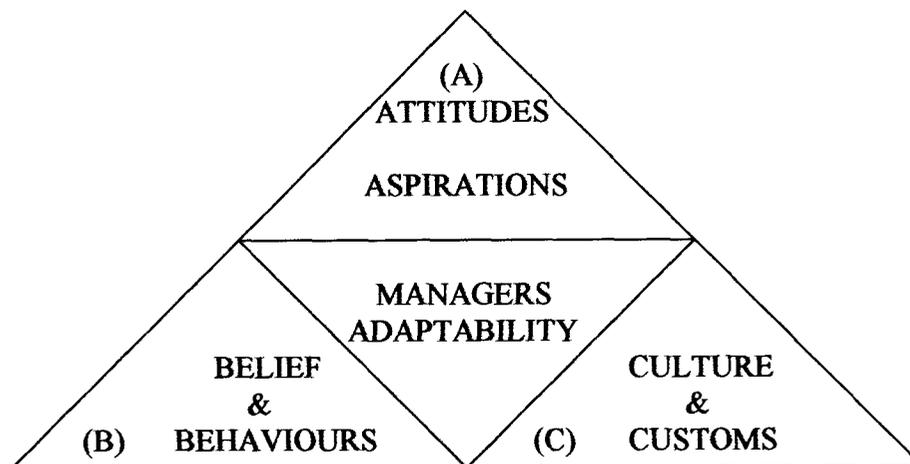
- Trying to prevent the formation of a union;
- The paternalistic approach;
- Collaboration with the union (Jayawardena & Crick, 2000:113-128).

Where unions have managed to establish a foothold in the hotel sector particularly in the

English-speaking Caribbean, they have managed to negotiate reasonable wages and conditions. In Antigua, for example, where agreement has been made with 13 hotels in 1962, the Antigua Workers Union (AWU) now negotiates with 106 hotels and guesthouses and represents most of the islands 6,000 hotel employees. Agreements made include clauses on equal pay, maternity leave, redundancy payments, holidays and sick pay (Patullo, 1996). Many hotels are therefore, constantly trying to develop incentives and benefits that meet workers needs and keep them happy.

One of the primary factors affecting motivation in the workforce is the relationship between management and workers. The region's institutions and management styles have been greatly influenced by the plantation structure in which the organisation was owned by absentee management. The European owners, local or localised overseers and African slaves maintained a tense working relationship. In this structure, the primary means of motivation was coercion, while leadership was authoritarian and communication was top down. Unwittingly, many tourism and hospitality companies replicate the old structure by having an expatriate management team that may not be familiar with the customs and value systems of the workers they supervise. Expatriate manager, therefore, need to be able to understand and respect the customs and habits, values and norms, and the attitudes of the individuals that they are dealing with as shown in figure 3.

**Figure 3. ABC x 2 Model for International Managers**



**Communities Indirectly Employed/Benefiting from Tourism**

As a result of the multiplier effect, the benefits of tourism are usually filters into many communities. “Beyond the hotels, restaurants and casinos, an unknown amount of ‘indirect’ employment is generated by the industry, especially in agriculture and handicrafts, transportation, construction and some manufacturing” (Patullo, 1996). The benefits to communities are multiplied because of the pervasive and invasive nature of the tourism industry. From airports and seaports to the areas in and around resorts men women and children earn money selling craft and other items to tourists. According to Boxill (2000) vending has been an important source of income generation for a large number on people in the formal and informal sectors in the resort areas of Jamaica for many years. He further states that the tourism industry has created a viable market for persons who are in need of income and who are able to manage their own businesses. In

Guyana, for example, some Amerindian communities such as the Santa Aratax Mission of the Pokerero River earn an income from the manufacturing of handicrafts, which are sold to both domestic and international tourists who visit the community. Craft items are also sent to the capital city Georgetown where they are sold at gift shops.

The degree of indirect benefit received by communities is directly related to the level of linkage between tourism and other sectors of the economy. In most agricultural communities, the benefits received from tourism are great since the hotels often depend on these communities to provide produce needed for the guests. Smaller hotels in the region are more likely to contribute to the indirect flow of benefits to these communities, however, since they more readily depend on agricultural communities for their food items. Because of their size and relatively small budgets, they are less likely to import food to be served to their guests. The primary concern when such arrangements exist is the quality of the produce provided to the hotels. In instances where the quality of goods is inadequate, local farmers may need assistance and technical expertise from the hotel and tourism sector, as well as from the government, to assist in upgrading their standards and increasing the quality of their product.

As a result of this multiplier effect, which generates indirect benefits for local communities, many governments find it difficult to quantify, categorise and capture the 'real' earnings from tourism. Statistics on the economic benefits from the tourism industry is therefore, usually restricted to restaurants earnings and room revenues while in reality the true benefit of the industry may have been felt by the man who sell coconut

water on the corner, by the farmer who plants onions and carrots, as well as by the businessman who owns a 200 room hotel.

### **Other Communities**

There are a number of communities that depend on the tourism industry for their existence. Invariably, most of these communities may have developed into squatter settlements. In Jamaica, for example, squatting around tourism resorts is prevalent. According to Boxill (2000) there is a relationship between perceived economic opportunities and migration, and migration and squatting. In most instances, migration is not accompanied by the provision of appropriate housing and other facilities for residents. On the other hand, tourism may develop in well-established communities because of a need to provide jobs and generate revenue within communities. This development may result in negative consequences that reduce the quality of life for residents such as overcrowding and congestion, inflated prices, reduced access to beaches and pollution.

As such, even though some communities receive direct or indirect benefits from the industry, over time they begin to resent the industry. Holder reiterates this point by stating that there appears to be a deep-seated resentment of the industry at every level of (Caribbean) society – a resentment which probably stems from historic socio-cultural associations of race, colonialism and slavery. He further states that the people of the Caribbean are forced to choose between an industry that it “deep down” does not really want, and the economic fruits of that industry which it needs and which, it seems more

then becomes a “necessary evil”.

It is therefore, important to evaluate the community’s sensitivity to tourism as a first step in planning sustainable tourism. Community involvement and participation in the development process should be ensured. This may include the use of participation techniques that recognise the needs and sensitivities of the local community. These techniques, along with educational and promotional inputs, should be geared to inculcate positive attitudes by community members towards the tourism industry.

### **COMMUNITY TOURISM**

Community tourism can be defined as tourism developed by the people, for the people and ran by the people. It is essentially a collection of businesses that sell a variety of goods and services to visitors. Community-based tourism development not only supports community initiatives, but allows direct tourist dollars to flow into and stay in local communities. Community tourism may take many forms, from the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation in homes in less favoured tourism areas to eco-tourism projects (McHardy, 2001:15). It is a form of tourism that has inclusiveness as its primary goal. It requires that residents be involved throughout the tourism planning process in a two-way exchange of information and views. Community tourism should also provide local residents with ongoing control over tourism development.

According to Boxill (2000), this form of tourism presents only a partial solution to social problems that plague the tourism sector. This is especially true in developing countries

such as those in the Caribbean region that are dependent on tourism for their economic survival. The primary reasons for communities becoming involved in tourism are to create more jobs, for general community development and for increased revenue (Severin, 2001). In Jamaica, for example, where community tourism came to prominence in around 1978, this form of tourism holds the key to raising the standard of living for every Jamaican regardless of his/her direct or indirect involvement in tourism (Hayle, 2000). However, community tourism is not a very lucrative enterprise, but provides a means of supplementing the income of locals. It also provides a means of ensuring that the benefits of tourism are share equitably among the stakeholders in the industry.

It is important to note that community tourism exists only when there is participation by locals in tourism development (Hayle, 2000). While community participation in tourism development is very desirable there seem to be formidable operational, structural and cultural limitations to this approach to tourism development in many countries. Some of these are as a result of centralised decision-making and administration for the tourism industry; lack of co-operation and co-ordination between agencies and sectors; inadequate financial and human resources and the domination of community ventures by the elite members of the said community (Tosun, 2000). These challenges are not insurmountable. Instead the success of community tourism ventures is dependent on four primary features which are:

1. Empowerment

Members of the community should be part of the decision-making process and also have a share in the rewards of the business.

2. Protection of stakeholders interests

Stakeholders should be clearly identified and their interests protected by legal and policy statements. Stakeholders would normally include community members and/or “outside” private or government investors.

3. Accountability

Mechanisms should be in place to ensure that decisions taken in the interest of the businesses do not create problems for the wider community. Also that the interests of the tourists are served and that those responsible for taking decisions which run counter to the benefits of the community are identified and are dealt with satisfactorily.

4. Monitoring/ evaluation

There should be continuous assessment of the product, correcting negative impacts in the community and the product (Boxill, 2000).

Severin (2001) describes empowerment as an action instead of a process, and it is facilitated by participation or genuine partnership, knowledge, access to resources, training and education and social services. Empowerment is also an improvement in the ability of people to design and participate in the processes and events that shape their lives (UNDP, 1994). McHardy (2001) further states that while it is important that the concept and management of tourism projects be generated within community, it is important that locals are provided technical and financial assistance from government in an effort to help co-ordinate their ideas for projects.

## CONCLUSION

Tourism as a viable industry received less than its fair share of attention in the past from politicians, public sector policy makers, planners, managers, researchers and academics in most of the Caribbean countries. The future of tourism in the Caribbean will depend largely on the ability of the region to deliver a high quality product that corresponds to the changing tastes, needs, wants and demands of the international traveller. Careful segmentation and niche marketing strategies may result in market broadening and growth. This will contribute towards the optimisation of income from tourism, and thereby economic growth. Greater attention will be required in planning of overall infrastructure and logistics for resort cities and villages chosen for hotel development projects. This has to be adequate for expanding local communities, additional tourists, as well as increasing number of direct and indirect tourism employees.

Public sector authorities also have to be fully focused on assessing the carrying capacity for each tourist attraction near these expanding and new resort areas. More importantly, they must take appropriate action to ensure the sustainability of such attractions for the benefit of current and future generations of local populations. External factors will have a significant influence on the future of the tourism industry in the Caribbean. Sound environmental management systems, globally accepted quality assurance systems, growing customer expectations and demands for better value for money will be some of the major challenges for the future. Most importantly, they will have to devise creative and innovative ways of getting local communities involved within the sector.

The future economic survival of the Caribbean region seems to largely depend on the development of a sustainable tourism industry. In achieving sustainability the needs and hopes of local communities need to be considered. It is imperative that they be integrated within the tourism industry. Communities, villagers living near hotels, employees of tourist establishments should be educated about the benefits of tourism as well as the different cultures in that tourist come from. Without the support of employees and the local community, it is difficult to ensure the satisfaction of the needs of tourism in keeping with their expectations.

Tourism in the Caribbean has been characterised as an industry that excludes locals through the creation of tourism enclaves. This is evident with the proliferation of the all-inclusive resorts that reduce the level of contact between tourists and the host population, as well as the amount of benefits that the locals receive from the industry. Such developments have at times resulted in resentment on the part of locals for the industry. The industry's success however, is ultimately dependent on the community whose essence and culture enhances the tourists' experience. Industry operators have to realise that tourists are not attracted to a destination because of spacious hotel rooms and public areas. It is, in fact, the culture of the people and the opportunity to experience life in another part of the world that serves as a major pull factor to many destinations.

In addition to mass tourism, which primarily depends on sun, sea and sand elements of tourism product, the Caribbean needs to develop and market other types of tourism in a strategic manner. Eco tourism and special interest tourism, which includes sub sectors

such as agro - tourism, adventure tourism, sports tourism, heritage tourism, health tourism and community tourism may have a key role to play in this strategic approach. The enrichment of the tourism industry is vital for a healthy and sustainable tourism development. To achieve this all stakeholders including governments as well as community leaders need to meet on a common platform and plan the future of the Caribbean tourism industry. The primary objective of tourism in the Caribbean is to improve the quality of life of the region's people. The community must benefit from tourism in the short-term as well as the long-term. In the absence of this the sustainable development of tourism cannot be achieved.

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