

CHAPTER 15

Ecotourism and its Potential for Community Development in Kenya

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15.1 Introduction

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2005), tourism is an activity that has grown by around 25 per cent in the past 10 years. It now accounts for around 10 per cent of the world's economic activity and is one of the main generators of employment. However, it also has major impacts on the natural and built environments as well as on the well-being and culture of host populations. In roughly that same period, the concept of sustainable development has become widely accepted as the way to a better future, even though its roots go back to the 1980s. The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is still that given in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), i.e. sustainable development is 'a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Sustainable development is therefore about creating a better life for all people in ways that will be as viable in the future as they are at present. In other words, sustainable development is based on principles of sound stewardship of the world's resources, and on equity in the way those resources are used and in the way in which the benefits obtained from them are distributed. Tourism can play a significant role in sustainable development. Many countries declare that they are pursuing, or wish to pursue, policies for 'sustainable tourism'. Despite this interest, there remains a degree of uncertainty over the scope and priorities for making tourism more sustainable and only partial appreciation of how to put this into practice.

The concept of sustainable development has evolved since the 1987 definition, notably through Agenda 21, the plan of action which emerged from the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio, 1992, and the plan of implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, 2002. Three 'pillars' of sustainable development are now recognized, thus:

- Economic sustainability, which means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially, it

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is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term.

- Social sustainability, which means respecting human rights and equal opportunities for all in society. It requires an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty. There is an emphasis on local communities, maintaining and strengthening their life support systems, recognizing and respecting different cultures and avoiding any form of exploitation.
- Environmental sustainability, which means conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable and those that are critical in terms of life support. It requires action to minimize pollution of air, land and water, and to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage.

It is important to appreciate that these three pillars are in many ways interdependent and can be both mutually reinforcing or in competition. Delivering sustainable development means striking a balance between them.

Sustainable tourism must therefore embrace these three pillars of sustainable development.

Sustainable tourism is not a discrete or special form of tourism. Rather, all forms of tourism should strive to be more sustainable. Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry; it is also about enhancing the positive impacts. Tourism is in a very special position to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment. Within the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces rather they should be pursued hand in hand as aspirations that can and should be mutually reinforcing. Policies and actions must aim to strengthen the benefits and reduce the costs of tourism (WTO and UNEP, 2005). In short the WTO (2005) has defined sustainable tourism as, Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

15.2 Tourism Industry, the Community and the Environment

Tourism is in a special position to contribute to sustainable development because of various reasons. Firstly, the dynamism and growth of the sector, and the major contribution that it makes to the economies of many countries and local destinations. Secondly, tourism is an activity, which involves a special relationship between consumers (visitors), the industry, the environment and local communities. This relationship opens up opportunities to address poverty, by bringing sources of income to the heart of some of the poorest communities and improving their standard of living. Tourism has immense power to do well. Halving world poverty by 2015 is the foremost United Nations Millennium Development Goal. The potential

for tourism to contribute to this reduction is increasingly recognized, partly because it is one of the few sectors in which poor countries' cultural and natural resources give them a comparative economic advantage. The development of tourism provides a good opportunity to help alleviate poverty because it is often a new source of revenue in rural areas, where three-quarters of the world's poor are to be found. It is also a labour intensive activity and one that has low entry barriers. The challenge is to find better ways of channelling some income accrued from tourists to communities residing in destination areas. The rationale for this lies in the inherent positive linkages between the three spheres of tourism industry, community local authorities and the environment supporters. The hypothetical area where the three spheres intersect represents improved quality of life (World Tourism Organization, 2002). Essentially, the environment supports various tourist attractions while communities play important roles in wildlife and nature conservation, and hence the continuity of the industry. Tourism also makes a major direct contribution to income for protected areas and heritage sites, through entry fees, permits and concessions.

The Economic Benefits of Tourism

According to the WTO (2002) when tourists spend money, they create a chain reaction that produces additional economic benefits to the community (Figure 1). They trade with businesses that purchase supplies and services locally or elsewhere. The business, in turn, purchases supplies and services they need to operate and, through successive rounds of purchases, the initial direct expenditures of visitors spread and multiply throughout the local and regional economy. The following figure demonstrates how tourism spending flows through the economy

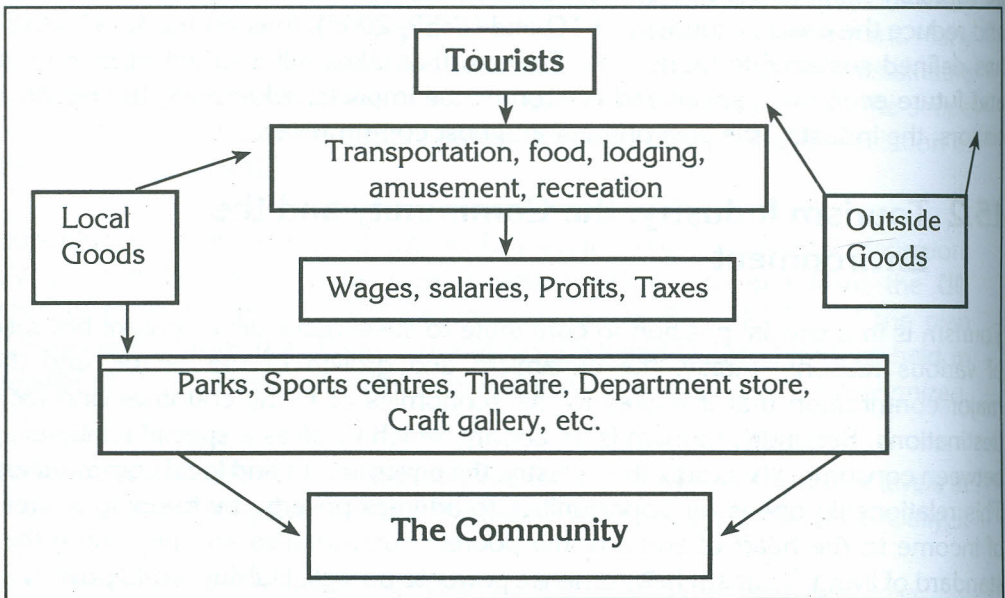


Figure 1. Cash Flows between tourism and the community (Modified from World Tourism Organization, 2002)

It has been argued that tourism has a larger multiplier effect than any other sector since every unit of tourist expenditure goes through several rounds of income creation and expenditure before its effect is exhausted. For instance, money spent by a tourist on hotel accommodation, food and beverages, shopping, entertainment and transport, does not stagnate but provides an income to hotel staff, taxi operators, shopkeepers and suppliers of goods and services. They in turn spend part of this income on their daily requirements of goods and services. Hence money accruing from tourism circulates through numerous segments of the economy through the multiplier process (Economic Survey, 2007). Yet tourism can also destroy the assets on which it depends, destroy societies, damage the environment, and also marginalize communities economically. These concerns among others have seen the emergence of a new approach and philosophy in the industry, which is called ecotourism. This paradigm shift has also been championed by the tourist destinations globally with a view to changing the big "five" mammal mentality and developing other environmentally friendly types of tourism.

15.3 Understanding Ecotourism

Unlike conventional tourism, ecotourism incorporates a strong commitment to nature conservation and a sense of social responsibility. According to the WTO's Guide for Local Authorities (2002) ecotourism is a form of nature tourism in which utmost consideration is given to conservation of the environment, including biological diversity, wildlife and ecological systems, with emphasis placed on educating tourists about the environment and how to conserve it. Ecotourism areas often include existing communities, especially traditional peoples, and ecotourism considers ways to conserve local cultural traditions and identities and how to bring benefits to the local communities.

Although still a minor component of overall tourism development on a global basis, ecotourism is expanding rapidly and tends to attract tourists who are respectful of the natural environment and local cultures. Ecotourism particularly has potential for development in local areas that offer ecologically interesting natural environments, which are often combined with settlements of traditional ethnic peoples. Because it normally tends to be small-scale, ecotourism can usually be developed within the scope of local resources, but technical assistance to the local community is often required to ensure proper development and management. Also, some financial assistance may be necessary to help the communities become involved in ecotourism.

In keeping with the now widely accepted concept of sustainable tourism, there has been a move away from mass tourism, which was based on traditional tourist attractions like beaches and wildlife viewing to alternate forms of tourism, which have developed over the years. Ecotourism is one alternative that is fast gaining popularity the world over. But what exactly is ecotourism? The following definitions

may shed some light on this. Ecotourism is one of those terms that have been around for a bit more than 20 years and nobody has been quite able to define it. Ziffer (1989) highlighted this definitional challenge very well by stating that, "the term has eluded firm definition because it is a complex notion, which ambitiously attempts to describe an activity, set forth a philosophy and espouse a model of development."

People tend to define things in terms that are beneficial to them, hence the variety of definitions (Merg, 1999). It is important to keep in mind that what policy-makers, travellers and locals consider "ecotourism" to be may be very different also. There are, however, several definitions that are commonly used around the world. According to Ceballos-Lascurain, who is generally accepted as the first person to define ecotourism, ecotourism is tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991).

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. The Green Globe 21 International Ecotourism Standard has adopted Ecotourism Australia's definition of ecotourism, ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.

Merg (1999) holds that since the publication of Martha Honey's book "Ecotourism and Sustainable Development" her definition has become an accepted standard. Martha Honey presents her definition as; ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveller; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights. Fennell (1999) after reviewing 15 definitions of ecotourism provides his own definition, thus: Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented (control, benefits, and scale). It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas.

While the details vary, most definitions of ecotourism boil down to a special form of tourism that meets four criteria, thus, it provides for environmental conservation; it includes meaningful community participation; it has an educational component and it is profitable and can sustain itself. If projects are to be considered as promoting ecotourism, they must meet these criteria. This is not to say that tourism services that don't include these components are not "good", they simply are not ecotourism.

Some benefits of ecotourism are captured in Plates 1 and 2 below.



Plate 1. Curio trader in the South Coast
(Photo Credit: Gabor, 2004)



Plate 2. Mangrove Board Walk in the
North Coast (Photo Credit: Gabor, 2004)

These two plates show examples of the kind of ecotourism activities local communities can become involved with. One shows a craft curio shop that is an outlet for crafts made by a community in Kenyan south coast. The other shows a mangrove board walk developed by a community in the north coast where tourists pay to be given guided tours. These activities generate income for the communities, contribute to the conservation and preservation of the natural environment and cultural artefacts and help to educate tourists about culture and the natural environment.

15.4 Principles of Ecotourism and Institutional Structures

Fennel (1999) identified 13 principles of ecotourism while Honey (1999) identified 7 principles (Table 1). A comparison of these main principles shows existence of an overlapping similarity in Fennel's and Honey's work except the "supports human rights and democratic movements" which only Honey included in her list. Clearly all these principles are a tall order to fulfill for anyone claiming to run an "ecotourism" enterprise and it is highly doubtful that any one project or operator can claim to meet all these criteria. However they do give a base of ideas to work from when looking into whether or not something is or isn't "ecotourism". Most operations, which can truly be called ecotourism should be striving to meet as many of these criteria as possible (Merg, 1999).

Table 1. Principles of Ecotourism

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Interest in nature ⊙ Contributes to conservation ⊙ Reliance on parks and protected areas ⊙ Benefits local people/long-term benefits ⊙ Education and study ⊙ Low impact/non-consumptive ⊙ Ethics/responsibility ⊙ Management ⊙ Sustainable ⊙ Enjoyment and appreciation ⊙ Culture ⊙ Adventure ⊙ Small scale <p>Source: Fennell (1999)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Involves travel to natural destinations ⊙ Minimizes impacts ⊙ Builds environmental awareness ⊙ Provides direct financial benefits for conservation ⊙ Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people ⊙ Respects local culture ⊙ Supports human rights and democratic movements <p>Source: Martha Honey (1999)</p>
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For ecotourism to be successful in any country the following institutional structures, as put forward by the World Ecotourism Summit (Québec, Canada, 19 – 22 May 2002), must be in place:

(i) Ecotourism policy and planning structures

These include sustainable ecotourism plans, policies and programs at international, national and local levels; integration of ecotourism policies into sustainable development plans and frameworks; land use planning; use of natural parks and protected areas; balance between development and conservation objectives in policies; development agency programs on ecotourism and their role in funding related pipeline investments and plans for human resource development in ecotourism. More specifically some policy and planning principles for ecotourism include:

- ⊙ Application of strict conservation measures to the natural area to protect the flora, fauna and ecosystems and any existing archaeological or historic sites.
- ⊙ Establishment of carrying capacity standards so that there is not over-development of tourist facilities or over-use of the environment by visitors.
- ⊙ Development of small-scale tourist facilities in environmentally suitable locations, with locally based design, use of local building materials, energy-saving devices and proper disposal of waste material.. A visitor centre with exhibits about the site and local conservation techniques should be developed.
- ⊙ Preparation and distribution of ecotourism codes of conduct for tourists and tour operators, and monitor application of these codes.

- ⊙ Provision of well-trained tour guides who will give accurate information to tourists, educate tourists about biological diversity, conservation techniques and observe good conservation measures during tours.
- ⊙ Integration of local communities into tourism development by providing them jobs and income from tourism.

(ii) Regulation of ecotourism

Regulatory measures include legislation, norms and other regulations for ecotourism activities; voluntary schemes and self-regulation; certification, accreditation and eco-labels; international and intergovernmental guidelines, principles and codes; roles of different stakeholders in ensuring compliance with regulations or voluntary schemes.

(iii) Product development, marketing and promotion of ecotourism: fostering sustainable products and consumers

Building sustainable ecotourism products requires multi-stakeholder cooperation for product development especially in protected areas and biosphere reserves; market research, marketing techniques and promotional methods; information to tourists; ethical behaviour; environmental education for consumers; public-private sector relationships for marketing and promotion and co-operative marketing for small ecotourism operations.

(iv) Monitoring costs and benefits of ecotourism: ensuring equitable distribution among all stakeholders

Measuring economic, ecological and social costs and benefits of ecotourism is challenging but imperative as is measuring contribution to conservation; assessing potential and actual environmental and socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism; taking precautionary measures at local, national, regional and international levels; integrating monitoring and evaluation procedures; research needs and adaptive management systems.

15.5 Africa's International Comparative Advantage in Ecotourism Development

Advantage National parks and protected Areas Summit (2002) stated that ecotourism is a great opportunity for African countries as their parks; reserves and protected areas are an international level resource. Thus, many African countries can base their tourism development on their natural assets and develop them based on the

rules of sustainable development and more specifically they can develop ecotourism concerns. Conservation of natural resources can become a key to socio-economic development in Africa. National parks and reserves in Africa can be considered as a basis for regional development that involves communities living within and adjacent to them. Given their strong international recognition, parks and reserves can be turned to brands that provide an advantage in tourism marketing and promotion.

Ecotourism in Kenya

Kenya as a country is famous for its wildlife tourism, and is considered as one of the most successful wildlife tourist industries in the developing world. This has been proved by the steady growth of the number of visitors. International tourism went up by 5.5% to 808 million arrivals in 2005 despite the industry's threat from issues ranging from terrorism, natural disasters, health scares, oil price rises, exchange rate fluctuations and economic and political uncertainties. Kenya witnessed an average growth of 9.8% for international tourist arrivals between 2000 and 2005. This was more than 3 times the average growth of 3.2 % globally. Africa had a growth rate of 5.4% while North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa had a growth of 5.9% and 5.2% respectively over the same period. Kenya accounted for 0.2 % of the total international arrivals worldwide by receiving 1.62 million of the total international arrivals of 808 millions worldwide. Africa accounted for 4.5% of the total international arrivals while Sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa accounted for 2.8% and 1.7% respectively.

Tourist industry in Kenya has proved to be quite resilient over the years that in the year 2005, the industry earned Ksh.49 billion and projected to earn Ksh.54 billion

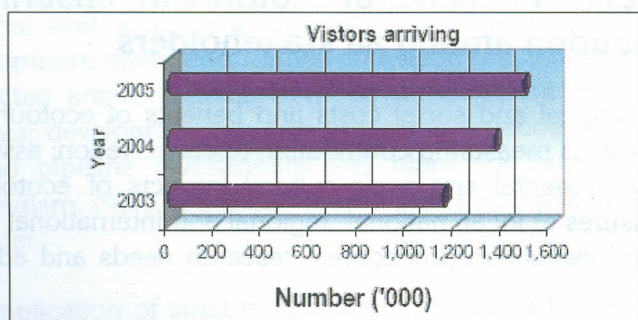
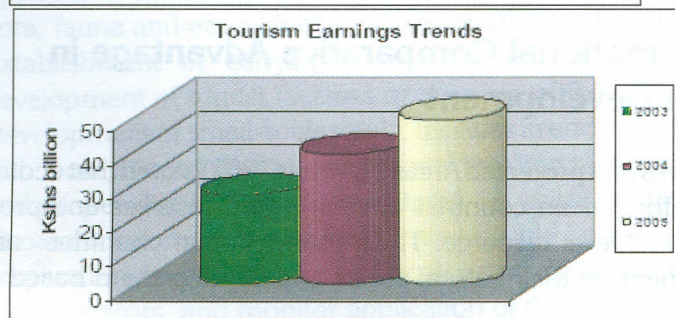


Figure 3. Tourism trends in Kenya to 2005 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006)



in the year 2006 and this would represent 10% annual growth in the industry. The 2005 figures also represent 12.5% contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product-GDP. Visitor numbers have also continued to increase. These trends are illustrated in the figure 3 below.

According to an ecologist who has been involved in Kenya's wildlife research for a long time, David Western, "The Big Five Pitch, which did so much to promote Kenya's tourist economy in the 1960s, cashed in on a safari hunting image perpetuated by Hemingway and other writers. Today the big game mentality is doing more harm than good. "Traffic jams" are forming around prides of lions in the vastness of Kenya's wildlife areas. Over 50% of the visitor's time is spent on five species" (Gakahu and Goode 1992). It is obvious that the subsequent congestion lowers visitor satisfaction, adversely affects the predators and above all, lowers tourist satisfaction. This in turn lowers the visitor's willingness to pay and reduces the income Kenya as a country could derive from each tourist. The matter is further complicated by the fact that Kenya offers some of the cheapest beach holidays in the World.

Lack of market diversity in Kenya's nature tourist industry has further complicated the issue and limited the exploitation of the country's heritage to its maximum. The over-preoccupation with the marketing of the big game safaris has blinded potential visitors to the diversity of attractions in the country. Such opportunities include wilderness trekking, grand scenery, adventure safaris, recreational trips, indigenous architecture, historical sites associated with local folklore, art and culture tours. These are some of the many options Kenya has to offer the ecotourist and special interest visitor outside the national parks and reserves.

The ecotourist market unlike the conventional tourist market has, by and large been demand driven. It is, in other words, the visitor's environmental awareness that has driven the movement, not market promotion. Subsequently, clinging to the weather-beaten conventional tourist market promotion strategies would put Kenya at risk of losing some of its market share of tourism, given the shifting of attitudes and environmental awareness of potential visitors. With its long history in marketing nature-based tourism Kenya has great potential for developing ecotourism. Indeed there are many ecotourism concerns in the country especially in the arid and semi-arid areas where pastoral communities are found. The Maasai in particular have established some successful ecotourism projects for example Il Ngwesi group ranch described in the case study below.

Case Study 1. Lewa Downs Conservancy / Il Ngwesi

The Lewa Downs Conservancy was formed to manage 55,000 acres of prime wildlife land for the purpose of protecting such endangered species as black Rhino and grevy Zebra, to establish Wildlife as a viable form of land use as well as to encourage the neighbouring landowners maintain wildlife migration routes. The conservancy has

emphasized community involvement by the neighbouring landowners. The projects include:- the development and operation of a health clinic, the establishment of community trust aimed at improving the standards of living of those juxtaposing the conservancy and assisting with the support of two community based wildlife trusts whose prime objectives are to use wildlife as a resource to generate money for people in neighbouring communities.

A unique relationship was created between the Lewa Downs Conservancy and the "IL NGWESI TOURIST LODGE", an income-generating project, with a view to forming an ideal eco-tourism system. The IL Ngwesi Tourist Lodge, which is located on Il Ngwesi Group Ranch (in North Eastern Laikipia) was built with Donor funding for the benefit of both visitors to Lewa Downs Conservancy and Borana ranch. The lodge has four bandas of unique architecture, which are situated on an ideal site that overlooks the Mukogodo Escarpment and forest to the south and southwest and the picturesque hills of Wamba, Samburu Game Reserve, Mathews range and Sapashe to the Northwest. Natural materials have been used to construct the Bandas in order to blend with the environment thus making it an attractive ec lodge. Construction of the lodge started in January 1996 and opened its doors to tourists on 19th December 1996. As of November 1997, it had grossed US\$ 42,000 against an investment of US\$ 140,000. The initial funding came from the Kenya Wildlife Service; and from Liz Clairborne and Art Ortenbury Foundations of U.S.A.

The marketing and promotion of the lodge has been by word of mouth, but nevertheless the lodge has attracted a very enthusiastic clientele of expatriates living in Nairobi who are out to seek quietude and adventure in the in the African bush. To diversify activities, a cultural boma has been opened and is visited by tourists from the lodge, Borana Ranch and the Lewa conservancy. Proceeds from the lodge are re-invested in community based development projects such as schools, cattle dips, water, bursary schemes and the group ranch members share dividends at the end of each year. The community formed a land management committee that limits the land to be set a side for cattle ranching. The losses incurred as a result of limited land for ranching are offset by revenues generated from the operations of the lodge and annual dividends (Source: Economic Survey, 2007)

Case Study 2: Unexploited and or under exploited Destinations for Ecotourism

There is also unexploited ecotourism potential in the country. For example Lake Victoria, which is the second largest fresh Water Lake in the world, spreads between the three East African countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It is interesting to note that in its current marketing strategies, Kenya Tourist Board has identified Lake Victoria and Kakamega Forest as some of the key attractions on the Western Kenya Tourist Circuit. These could be considered as the major attractions and they

had been identified as such in the late 1970s. Besides these, there are a number of attractions which are known to a few tourists with special interests and they include; Kiptum Cave in Eldoret, Kiptile Cave in Bonjoge Hills National Reserve in Nandi District, Kit Mikayi, Seme in Kisumu District, Nandi Escarpment and Kericho tea plantations. Within the Lake Basin there are other unique and historical sites, which have not been marketed as tourist attractions yet they have high potentials.

These include; Kisii Soapstone and Manga Stone in Gucha District, Thim Lich Ohinga (stone wall) in Kanyamwa of Homa Bay District, Lake Simbi Nyaima National Reserve also in Homa Bay District. The lake acts as an alternative home to some flamingoes from Lake Nakuru when their traditional habitat is threatened by adverse environmental factors. Others include; Ndere Island National Park, Nyabondo Plateau, Odino Falls, Sondu Miriu Falls, Ruma National Park which is the home of the rare Roan Antelope, Kanyamgondho Wuod Ombare along the shores of Lake Victoria in Gwassi, Lwanda Magere Rock, Sondu Escarpment, Rusinga Island which is famous for being the home of the Early Man and Kenyan nationalist and Pan-Africanist, the late Tom Mboya, Mageta Island where some Mau Mau freedom fighters were detained, and Mfangano Island which has recently become famous for its old rock paintings.

In the Western Kenya Tourist Circuit, there are other tourist attractions, which include art and culture, which have not been exposed, promoted and exploited by the country's tourist industry. For instance, the few ecotourists who have visited the region have fallen in love with the Luo indigenous architecture of either the traditional round and western - influenced four corner grass thatched huts / houses and the way walls and floors are decorated using local implements. Ramogi traditional dancers from Kagan and Kochia are popular not only with ecotourists but also with other Kenyans. Canoe regatta is another popular attraction along the shores of Lake Victoria. Besides that, Luhya bull and cockfights and Esikuti dancers are other popular attractions.

For souvenirs, there is a rich collection from which ecotourists can choose. These range from calabash drinking apparatus (agwata) to miniature canoes, pottery, paddles, warrior shields and spears, baskets made from either grass or small stems of sticks, traditional beer sievers, fly whisk, Luo beaded caps (ligisa) and banana straw woven hats, Gor Mahia basket woven hats, Luo traditional beer straws and Kisii soapstone products, etc. Most of these attractions would help Kenya diversify the distribution of tourists and benefits associated with the tourist industry. However, most of them are inaccessible due to lack of infrastructure particularly bad roads and tracks. The government needs to allocate adequate funds for infrastructural development to open up these areas and make them accessible.

There are still many opportunities for other communities to develop ecotourism projects based on their culture, cuisine, unique geographic features in their areas, their folklore, etc. However communities may not be aware of the potential

ecotourism holds for them nor do they have the capacity to successfully develop their resources into sustainable ecotourism projects. This is in part because there is no explicit policy or plan on ecotourism development and therefore its potential for development and poverty alleviation has not been fully exploited.

15.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Prior to independence in 1963, Kenya had an appreciable tourism industry unlike many destinations in Africa. The years that followed saw spectacular growth in the tourism industry with strong government involvement and active partnership with the private sector. In spite of increased competition from other destinations, Kenya still maintains a lead as one of the foremost tourist destinations in Africa. Tourism in Kenya is mainly based on natural attractions, which include wildlife in its natural habitats as well as idyllic beaches. Game viewing is a very popular pursuit since most visitors to Kenya are predominantly interested in seeing “the big five” namely the Elephant, Rhino, Lion, Buffalo, and the Leopard, not to mention other unique game and the African savannah and forests. However, mass Tourism and tourists, who were only pre-occupied with the “big five” mentality have in the past years contributed to the degradation of the environment, harassment of wildlife and economic marginalization of communities.

As a result of these factors there is a need to harmonise tourism activities and investment with a view to fostering the growth of sustainable tourism in the country. The Kenya Government has shifted its focus from over reliance on high volume low yield tourism towards the development of other alternative forms of tourism, which contribute to conservation of the environment and community participation. In other words, whereas attention is still focused on tourism segments in which Kenya has comparative advantage, for example, wildlife, sun, sea and sand, special attention is now being given to the impact of the sector on the environment. A new approach, which is aimed at encouraging ecotourism and other forms of alternative tourism needs to be strengthened; so the country can develop low impact high yield tourism concerns. This will contribute to conservation, community development and utilisation of tourism resources in a sustainable manner.

There is an urgent need to:

- ⊙ to establish an ecotourism policy and planning structure in country;
- ⊙ to streamline the regulation of ecotourism;
- ⊙ to strengthen and develop new marketing and promotion structures;
- ⊙ to identify a funding mechanism for ecotourism development;
- ⊙ to establish economic, environmental and social monitoring systems for ecotourism;
- ⊙ to build the capacity of communities so they can participate effectively in ecotourism.

15.8 Review Questions

- i. Using practical examples explain the difference between conventional tourism and ecotourism.
- ii. What kind of institutional framework would Kenya need to support ecotourism?
- iii. In your opinion, is meaningful community participation possible in the quest for sustainable tourism?
- iv. Giving reasons suggest the destinations (operational or non-operational) in Kenya that have the most potential for ecotourism development?

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