

Chapter 5

Distributive Justice Issues in Community-Based Tourism

Victor Mawutor Agbo
University of Waterloo, Canada

ABSTRACT

Conventional tourism and its attendant challenges for nature and communities have necessitated the need for tourism to be more sustainable, equitable, and responsible, hence the introduction of community-based tourism (CBT). CBT was developed as a model and a viable instrument for poverty reduction, offering opportunities for conservation and rural economic development. However, despite the potential of CBT to generate welfare for communities, many initiatives have failed to deliver on their promises. Since tourism and justice issues cannot be separated from each other, concerns over the discussion of justice related issues have emerged as a community concept which requires critical investigation. This chapter presents a theoretical exploration of how justice is conceptualized, with an emphasis on distributive justice in the context of CBT, and how it is shaping the production of CBT. It also explores some critical approaches to tourism studies and practice and how justice for local communities is conceptualized in CBT contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Justice as a concept cannot be ignored in any discussion on tourism because many justice issues are embedded in tourism (Fennel, 2006). For this reason, concerns over justice related issues, in the context of Community-based tourism (CBT) have recently become of critical importance to practitioners, policymakers, tourism businesses, and academics. When tourism is produced and marketed from local communities

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many critical issues become note-worthy. It is important to be aware of the impacts that potentially result from the relationship that tourism development has with local community well-being. Many tourism resources of the world including endangered species exist in natural habitats and vulnerable communities, and the ever-growing desire of many travellers to experience and explore the world puts most of these resources at risk. Conventional tourism, and its attendant challenges for nature and communities have raised many alarms over the world. For that matter, many scholars (e.g., Campbell, Gray, & Meletis, 2008; Harris, 2009; Ross & Wall, 1999), have suggested that there is an urgent need for a re-think about tourism, one that ensures the long term economic, social and environmental sustainability, especially in the Global South. Out of this desire came, the concept of community-based tourism (CBT), with its beginnings dating back to the 1980s. CBT was developed as a model and a viable instrument for poverty reduction, conservation and rural economic development. However, despite the potential of CBT to generate benefits for communities, many initiatives have failed to deliver on their promises. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED] (1987), justice and other similar concepts, such as equity and fairness, were the core goals of many pioneers of sustainability; however, in developing new management approaches and principles, many seem to have lost focus on justice-related fundamentals in sustainable tourism. Jamal and Camargo (2014) also lamented that for many local communities who share the bulk of tourism's negative impacts, justice and equity discussions have been slow to address these issues.

This chapter presents a theoretical exploration of how justice is conceptualised, with an emphasis on distributive justice, in the context of CBT, and how it is shaping the planning and development of CBT at the destination level. It also identifies the principles that need to influence policy and guideline formulation, tackle critical issues such as benefit-sharing, and aid in the evaluation of programmes and institutional structures that facilitate sustainable CBT development, management and marketing for destinations. The last part of the chapter explores some critical approaches to tourism studies and practice, and how justice for local communities fit into the production and management of CBT.

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM (CBT)

Community-based tourism is a concept that is difficult to define. This is mainly because of many stakeholders involved in it have made attempts to define it in ways that reflect their respective interests. No matter how it is defined, there are a number of common characteristics in all the definitions. To understand this concept, there is the need to examine what 'community-based' is. Van Bibber (1997) defined

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