

Ecotourism and Tanzania

Ecotourism is defined as, "The practice of low-impact, educational, ecologically and culturally sensitive travel that benefits local communities and host countries"

Ecotourism, responsible tourism, and sustainable development have become widespread since 1980s, and ecotourism has practiced possibly the fastest growth of all sectors in the tourism industry. The attractiveness represents a change in tourist insights, increased environmental awareness, and a desire to explore natural environments. Such changes have become a statement affirming one's social identity, educational superiority, and disposable income. With its great potential for environmental protection, the United Nations celebrate the year for Ecotourism in 2002.

Ecotourism was first introduced in Africa in the 1950's with the justification of hunting. This need for recreational hunting zones led to the creation of protected areas, national parks, and game reserves. Today these areas have become very significant revenue-earning sites with the establishment of lodges and tourist campsites. Many of the ecotourism projects are not meeting these standards. Even if some of the guidelines are being executed, the local communities are still facing other negative impacts. South Africa is one of the countries that obtain significant economic benefits from ecotourism, but negative effects - including physical displacement of persons, gross violation of fundamental rights, and environmental hazards - far outweigh the medium-term economic benefits.

Normally ecotourism measure several criteria in the societies these measures are toward the following;

A/ Protection of the biological diversity cultural diversity, through ecotourism protection.

B/ Promotion of the sustainable use of biological diversity by introducing opportunity of jobs to the community.

C/ It promote the sharing of socio-economic benefits with local communities and indigenous people by having their informed consent and participation in the management of ecotourism projects

D/ It improve minimization of tourism's own environment impact by introducing several laws toward the boundaries.

E/ Also it promote the maintenances of the tourism attraction, such as local culture flora and fauna.

The ecotourism system workout fantastic financial and political influence. The evidence above shows that at the very least a strong case exists for controlling such activities. Funding could be used for field studies aimed at finding alternative solutions to tourism and the diverse problems Africa faces in result of urbanization, industrialization, and over exploitation of agriculture. At the local level ecotourism has become a source of conflict over control of land, resources, and tourism profits. There are many problems with the idea of ecotourism. Environmental, the effects on the local people and conflicts over profit distribution are only a few of the negative effects of ecotourism. In a great world more efforts would be made towards educating tourists of the environmental and social effects of their travels. Very few regulations or laws stand in place as boundaries for the investors in ecotourism. These should be implemented to prohibit the promotion of unsustainable ecotourism projects and materials which project false images of destinations, degrading local and indigenous cultures.

Although ecotourism is intended for small groups, even a reserved increase in population, however temporary, puts extra pressure on the local environment and demands the development of additional infrastructure and facilities. The construction of water treatment plants, sanitation facilities, and lodges come with the exploitation of non-renewable energy sources and the utilization of already limited local resources.

Apart from environmental degradation with tourist infrastructure such as motor vehicles, which tend to disturb the covering of the grass due to crossing of the vehicles in the park and the construction of the road this effect the animals and the plants species, apart from these there is also the distraction of local culture due to the interference of foreign culture. Population pressures from ecotourism also leaves behind waste and pollution associated with the Western existence. Although ecotourists claim to be educationally complex environmentally concerned, they rarely understand the ecological consequences of their visits and how their day-to-day activities affix physical impacts on the environment. Ecotourism activities are issues in environmental crash because they disturb fauna and flora. Ecotourists believe that because they are only taking pictures and leaving path, they keep ecotourism sites faultless, but even harmless sounding activities such as a nature walk can be ecologically destructive. Where the ecotourism activity involves wildlife viewing, it can fright away animals, disturb their feeding and nesting site or adapt them to the presence of people. In Kenya, interruption of wildlife observers drive cheetahs off their reserves, increasing the risk of inbreeding and further endangering the species.

Most forms of ecotourism are possessed by foreign investors and firms that provide few benefits to local communities. The majority of profits are put into the pockets of investors instead of reinvestment into the local economy or environmental conservation. The limited numbers of local people who are employed in the economy enter at its lowest level, and are unable to live in tourist areas because of low wages. Management of ecotourism sites by private ecotourism companies offers an alternative to the cost of regulation and deficiency of government agencies. It is believed that these companies have a self interest in limited environmental degradation, because tourists will pay more for faultless environments, which translates to higher profit. However, theory indicates that this practice is not economically feasible and will fail to manage the environment.

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About the Author

Frederick Mlaponi is a Tanzanian Student researcher on work experience with Wild Things Safaris in Tanzania <http://www.wildthingsafaris.com>.
<http://www.mksafaris.com>.

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