



Overseas Development
Institute



Mainstreaming pro-poor approaches in tourism: How did we get here and where are we now?

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Views differ

'Services in general and tourism in particular, are increasingly viewed as the best opportunity and the most viable option for the sustainable economic and social development of the least developed countries.'

'Tourism bureaucrats and policy makers do all they can to conceal massive amounts that stay back in the countries of tourist's origins... host countries must count themselves lucky if they get even 30% of the end transactions.'

'Policy-makers... can and should focus on country-specific interventions that may make growth more poverty-reducing'

This presentation:

- The roots of pro-poor tourism thinking
- Pro-poor tourism as a concept – uptake, progress and challenges
- Signs of convergence in tourism and development thinking?
- Today's challenges



First tourism, then tourism research, then a 'development stream' of research

Initial research

- Mass tourism starts in mid-19th century.
- International mass tourism in mid-20th century.
- Academic focus initially on developed societies MacCannell 1976: tourism as a reaction to Western alienation & search for the authentic

The 'development stream'

- In late 1970s a 'development stream' of tourism research emerged, focusing more closely on tourist destination societies.
- Academics, primarily anthropologists and geographers were taking an interest in tourism's role in poverty reduction.

Positive development benefits in some conditions

Smith (ed. 1978)

- Economic benefits depend on:
 - The type of tourism; and
 - The expectation of tourists and host's ability to meet them.

'The effects of tourism can be assessed along a continuum from a highly positive relationship that benefits all, to a highly disruptive, negative interaction fraught with conflict'

de Kadt (ed. 1979)

Tourism can:

- Create jobs;
 - Bring backward linkages with agriculture and other sectors;
 - Provide opportunities, especially for young and women;
 - Encourage entrepreneurial activities; and
 - Improve quality of life for the poor through funding basic facilities, training & education.
- Growth alone may not suffice to overcome poverty within a reasonable time and the distribution of the material benefits to the **poor requires special attention.**

Emergence of the great divide between academics and agencies

Academics

- Focus on empirical case studies of destinations; or
- Theorising tourism as 'modernisation' or 'underdevelopment,' then as a feature of 'globalisation' and 'integrated sustainable development.'

Funding agencies:

- **Lost interest** in funding tourism projects because of 'negative socio-cultural impacts.'
- No demand for policy-relevant research.

In general:

- **Widespread rejection of large-scale tourism** in favour of small-scale 'community-based tourism' and 'ecotourism.'
- Long & misguided discussions over multipliers and leakages.

How development approaches have altered perceptions of 'good' tourism



1999, pro-poor tourism was put on the agenda

'Pro-poor tourism' (PPT) = tourism that generates net benefits for the poor

- In response to MDGs: putting poverty at the heart of the tourism agenda.
- Target: tourism planners and development practitioners.



Progress since 1999 in commitments and knowledge

Application of PPT

- Many organisations and policies embrace PPT.
- We now know several key ingredients for pro-poor destinations.
- Emerging work with businesses
- Work at destination level, in different contexts – beach, safari, backpacker destinations

...and lessons learned

- **How businesses can create linkages.** The business cases for corporate action.
- **Working at destination level:** joint action to boost market access of the poor.
- **Joined-up thinking:** supply side, demand side, market functioning, macro-meso.

Diverse outputs include guidelines and case studies, but till 2006, scattered and piecemeal.



Negatives since 1999 in actual application and impact

- More policies than action
- Business as usual in many 'master plans'
- In PPT, excessive focus at micro level not the mainstream.
- Inappropriate business models – not commercial, not market-oriented
- Lack of rigorous data

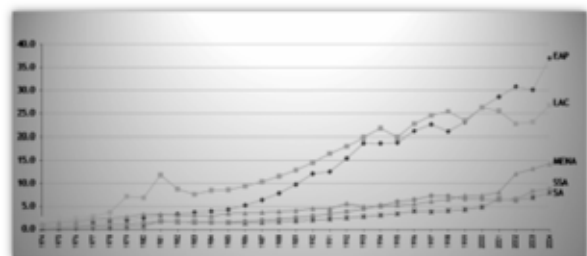


Uptake of PPT among different constituencies

- Tourism promoters (WTO) a flag
- Tourism ministries – address national goals
- Sustainable tourism – more than a bullet point
- NGOs and communities – the only local option on offer
- Conservationists – create incentives
- Private sector - a business case for some
- Consumers – upward trends in awareness
- Development professionals ? mixed

Development agendas shifting towards tourism

- **Development agendas and tourism**
 - Search for growth and particularly pro-poor growth – now shared growth
 - Market access for the poor – e.g. SNV
 - Where high poverty coexists with tourism, search for motors of devt. E.g. Siem Reap
 - Where tourism is linked with lower poverty, e.g. Tanzania, recognition of its role.
 - Tourism in 80% of PRSPs. On the radar.



Development professionals wary of tourism but interested to harness a growing sector



Signs of convergence?

Tourism planners
Arrivals, receipts,
Marketing & statistics

Companies
Profits
Competitive advantage

Development practitioners
Wary of tourism special-pleading

Pro-poor tourism practitioners
Community tourism, micro business
Conservation
Livelihood impacts

Local economic development
Local linkages,
enterprise development

Signs of convergence?

Tourism planners
Arrivals, receipts,
Destination devt
& development impact

Companies
Profits
Using core competencies for
local impact
Competitive advantage

Economists
Tourism is large and growing
Searching for 'shared growth'

Pro-poor tourism practitioners
Need to scale up effort & impact
Link with private sector

Local economic development
How to use tourism for
linkages & enterprise?

Priority question today: how to harness tourism for reducing poverty at a significant scale ?



Challenges

- Get tourism and development thinking back together.
- Bring PPT approaches into mainstream tourism.
- Get the evidence: what impact does tourism have on poverty? What types of tourism bring what benefit? What interventions work?