

THE ROLE OF TANZANIA NATIONAL PARKS IN ECOTOURISM



Presented by Bettie Loibooki
Chief Park Warden - Lake Manyara National Park

1. ECOTOURISM DEFINITION

- ❑ **Eco tourism is:** responsible travel to the natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the welfare of the local people"
- ❑ It is a renewed concept that makes the entire travel industry more sensitive to the environment and the local people living in such destinations.
- ❑ Currently, more visitors are attuned to the harm they can do ecologically, to the value of the wilderness and to the concerns of indigenous people. These concerns have given way to 'eco-tourism' as another harmonized sustainable way of conducting tourism.

- Generally, the purpose and focus of ecotourism efforts is to involve local communities directly in the economic benefits of tourism by actively seeking ways for local peoples to co-exist in a beneficial relationship with nature based tourism.
- It has been further acknowledged that, although tourism is a viable economic option, it has its own potential impacts on the environment if not well planned and managed.

3. ECOTOURISM AND LOCAL PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS

- ❑ Tourism activities in the National Parks contribute significantly to a wide range of livelihood strategies within local communities through revenues generated in parks and nature based tourism.
- ❑ Several mechanisms are used to enable local communities benefit directly from tourism within and outside national parks

3.1: Government Initiatives

Tanzania Policy for Tourism/ TANAPA's policy:

- ❑ Seeks to assist efforts to promote the economy and livelihood of the people, essentially alleviation of abject poverty through encouraging the development of sustainable and responsible tourism that is culturally and socially acceptable, economically viable, ecologically friendly and environmentally sustainable.
- ❑ WD has established Wildlife Management Areas pilot areas
- ❑ Currently, local communities are involved in ecotourism and cultural activities (*enter partnership ventures with private sector in communal lands*)....
- ❑ Direct social/economic benefits from conservation (*TANAPA contribution to local development initiated projects*)

3.2 Lake Manyara National Park –Ecotourism Activities

- ❑ The presence of LMNP has given way to growth of local entrepreneurial activities within Mto wa Mbu neighborhood and elsewhere.
- ❑ Local communities living around /adjacent LMNP are highly involved in entrepreneurial activities particularly at Mto wa Mbu area.

Ecot. & people's livelihoods cont.

- ❑ The communities take advantage of the park to open up cultural oriented entrepreneurial activities.
- ❑ Mto wa Mbu area has a good number of attractions including farm irrigation schemes, magnificent views of the banana plantations, water springs, Maasai traditional dances and ceremonies etc
- ❑ Other activities: camping, bicycle cycling, village tours, walking safaris, making and sale of variety of handcrafts from Maasai culture and art, the Makonde sculptures and carvings, blacksmithing, local market, drinking local brew etc.

Esilalei Maasai Women Making Handcrafts



Ecot. & people's livelihoods cont.

- The above activities are aimed at:
 - Giving visitors exposure to Tanzania culture and traditions as it refers to a form of tourism, which aims at encouraging cross- cultural exchanges. It provides an opportunity for a tourist to see, understand and appreciate other cultures as well.
 - Benefiting locals through sales, bed nights and other charges
 - Encouraging local people to support conservation efforts
- Economically, the above activities are viable, as most tour operators include visits to local areas in their itinerary.

Esilalei Women Curio Shop



4. ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY TANAPA

- Livestock keeping and tree planting
- Production of energy serving stoves.
- Livestock zero grazing and poultry
- Mushroom farming
- Schools and dispensary buildings



Economic projects cont.

- Beekeeping
- Curio shops and campsites
- Rehabilitation of roads
- Provision of safe water
- Provision of food to villagers in need



5. HOW COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM TOURISM

- ❑ There is direct employment of local people by investors in lodges, campsites, and tour companies, tour guiding, hotels and tented camps.
- ❑ Improvement of infrastructure and social amenities e.g. roads, water supply, telecommunications, visitors' facilities
- ❑ Provision of financial benefits and local people empowerment e.g. the local community involved in tourism activities receive income as tangible benefits from sales of carvings, art, handcraft, carvings, food, cultural activities, etc.

Communities Benefit cont.

- Poverty reduction by improved living standards through supporting development projects and other livelihood needs e.g. schools, health centers, cattle dips.

6. CHALLENGES

- ❑ Although there are high opportunities for employment with the tourist industry, local people do not have capacity to compete in global tourism market due to low level of education, experience and exposure. Hence, those with qualifications from outside take most of the jobs.
- ❑ Improved infrastructure and facilities that leads to over population and pressure to areas near protected areas.
- ❑ High prices for local products and food stuff due to demand from tourists. High demand of the local products results to increased prices. This also affects the local communities, as they cannot afford the prices of the foodstuff and other items.
- ❑ Dependency on international tourism

Challenges cont.

- ❑ HIV/AIDS is also taking its toll in the third world including Tanzania
- ❑ Insufficient collaboration among different Institutions and key stakeholders on land –use plans, outreach programmes and tourism ventures.
- ❑ Today, international terrorism has magnified the global insecurity and this will greatly affect the envisaged development of the tourism industry that has a multiplier effect.
- ❑ Contradicting and lack of harmonized policies on poverty eradication strategies in the areas surrounding LMNP.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

- ❑ Tourism in National Parks is managed properly using well guided principles, (parks policies, corporate plan, GMPs) hence ensures effective protection of natural resources and contributes effectively to the protection of environment.
- ❑ Experience from other areas shows that, when residents receive benefits they usually support conservation even to the point of protecting the sites against poaching or other encroachments.
- ❑ Conversely, if they bear the costs without receiving benefits, they often turn against ecotourism and might intentionally or unintentionally damage the attraction.

Conclusion cont.

- ❑ Currently, ecotourism remains largely on an experiment but we are seeing enough positive results taking place seriously for instance; poverty alleviation, economic growth, empowerment of the communities, improvement of resource utilization and employment opportunities.
- ❑ However, there is still no real official policy framework or support from government agencies involved particularly in developing notions for how a private sector entrepreneur can carryout effective community involvement with ecotourism.
- ❑ There is nothing that says, 'here is what you can do, here is how to proceed and this is what you must avoid'.

7.2 Recommendations

- ❑ The role of the private sector in increasing and shaping tourism for poverty alleviation among the local communities should be transparent.
- ❑ Eco-tourism should be well planned, coordinated and managed for effective poverty alleviation in rural Africa.
- ❑ Protection of biodiversity for ensuring present and future heritage and protection of the environment is important in the contemporary global debates.
- ❑ Respect for culture and customs for local people should be maintained.
- ❑ Social facilities should continually be improved in order to attain expected satisfaction.

8. REFERENCES

1. Ceballos H., (1996) Tourism, Eco tourism and Protected Areas. The State of Nature Based Tourism Around the World and Guidelines for its Development. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.
2. Cultural Tourism in Tanzania (Experience of a tourism development Project) SNV Netherlands Development Organization September 1999 – Netherlands
3. Honey M., (1999) Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise? Island Press, 1718 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 300, Washington DC. 20009.
4. Kathurima M. Clara, (1997). Ecotourism: A global Force for Conservation. The Role of the Private Sector; A paper presented at the International Conference held in Kenya in 1997, “Ecotourism at cross roads.”
5. Lindberg K. and Hawkins D., (1993) Eco Tourism: A Guide for Planners and Managers. The Eco tourism Society North Bennington, UT 05257.
6. Ministry of Natural Resource and Tourism (MNRT), 1998. Tanzania Wildlife Policy. Unpublished.
7. National Policies for Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA), 1994. Unpublished.

MWISHO

