

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the mass tourism model that has traditionally been practised in Jamaica and the relationships, perceptions and expectations of both tourists and locals that are produced within this setting. The negative consequences of mass tourism, the need to remain competitive and the issue of sustainability have pointed to the necessity of looking at alternatives to the existent mass model. Additionally, alternate forms of tourism are being driven by globalised changes in cognition, desires, needs and the behaviour of people, tourists as well as locals. This paper proposes Community Tourism as a viable alternate model, whose underlying philosophy and process of implementation could be beneficial in a sustainable developmental and economic way for the country. Therefore, it critically examines the necessary components of Community Tourism and the extent to which they can be realised. Issues such as the need for community participation, the potential for increased individual and communal empowerment, self-esteem and efficacy are examined within this context.

The paper also highlights the problems associated with the Community Tourism model, such as a tendency towards romanticising community, the ongoing tensions that exist between personal and community development and the significant time investment needed to build community participation, all of which are critically examined.

The paper also recognises the need for commitment, at the micro and macro level, to a pervasive Community Tourism ideology that will drive policy and programme formulation and implementation for future directions.