



Beyond COVID-19: An Opportunity for a New Tourism Sector

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Abstract *This article explored the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on society. COVID-19 has shown that its effects are multiple in nature and dimensions. It affects the health of people, the performativity of labour and the capacity to earn incomes and so on. COVID-19 has resulted in society putting the pre-eminence of collective rights over individual rights in times of crises or disasters. This article is based on secondary sources of data. It suggests a panoply of measures that support moving towards a just tourism and just society. It suggests a framework of actions anchored on diversification of tourism products, adoption of innovation/technological advancements, taking care of the environment and labour; localisation of control/ownership of tourism facilities and products; inclusivity and adopting a community-basis for ownership and control of ventures; understanding the carrying capacity and leakages/linkages for they can make or break a venture; and sustainability. It suggests the roles, strategies to deliver these interventions, with roles oscillating from facilitation, control to supervision.*

Keywords: *Tourism, COVID-19, health pandemic, inequality, just tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

Zurab Pololikashvili, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), opened the UNWTO *International Tourism Highlights 2019 Edition* by writing:

Driven by a relatively stable global economy, a growing middle class in emerging economies, technological advances, new business models, affordable travel costs and visa facilitation, international tourist arrivals grew 5% in 2018 to reach the 1.4 billion mark. This figure was reached two years ahead of the UNWTO forecast (Pololikashvili, 2019:2).

Tourism is essential for earning foreign currency, creating jobs, unique experiences for visitors, and allowing host nations to showcase their heritage, cultures, and way of life. With the outbreak of Covid-19, a coronavirus that has reached the stage of being a global pandemic, in practice, the earning capacity of countries to gain foreign currency, retain and create jobs is at risk. Pololikashvili (2019:2) observes

that export earnings from tourism have increased to USD 1.7 trillion, thus raising its prospects to spur economic growth through entrepreneurship and innovation. This positive outlook is a result of the sustained growth of the sector since the post-WWII. Such bludgeoning growth has made tourism attractive for many countries as a source of income and jobs in developed and developing countries (Dogru & Bulut, 2018:430).

Tourism can be a survivalist or grandiose in some contexts and survivagrandiose in others. Survivagrandiose represents a situation in which other players are operating in a survivalist mode while others, usually a few, play it grandiose most of the time. Further, in many circumstances, it is resilient because it relies on innovation in using available and created endowments, both natural, physical, and cultural, to generate unique tourist experiences and performativities. As such, due to its resilience, it has the potential to 'quickly' recover when facing imminent collapse occasioned by exogenous and endogenous factors. Resultantly, tourism growth and expansion has been relatively constant despite the fluctuations in its fortunes. The 2019 UNWTO (2019:3)

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attests to this observation by noting that tourism continues to expand over time, despite occasional shocks that affect it, as representing testimony to its resilience. More recently, the positive growth of tourism has been driven by the “firm recovery of those suffering from security challenges in recent years” (UNWTO, 2019:4). After the immediate drop in growth of tourism caused by the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, there has been “a rebound to near pre-tsunami tourism arrivals once resorts had been repaired or reconstructed” (Khazai, Mahdavian & Platt, 2018:75) indicating the capacity and propensity to recover of the tourism sector. It also quickly recovered in the aftermath to the financial crisis and showed excellent performance (Dogru & Bulut, 2018:430) to the extent that a study on economic recession in Italy observed that tourism is more resilient to economic crises than many other sectors (Cellini & Cuccia, 2015:352). Its resilience is beyond doubt, all things being equal. However, the Covid-19 has affected all sectors, including tourism and its entire value chain. Because it is operated by large and small operators (SMMEs) and employs many people with low skills, its resurgence under the coronavirus is wobbly and precarious. Precisely because SMMEs are run by operators who lack resources such as capital and physical assets, which explains their precarity. With countries closing their borders, the only hope for a resurgence of the sector can be found in domestic tourism. The rebound of domestic tourism is also affected by low incomes among citizens as a result of job losses occasioned by Covid-19. The need to reorganise the tourism enterprise to accommodate the requirements of COVID-19, such as social distancing as well as the sanitisation of workplaces and facilities, will entail gaining new importance.

Khazai et al. (2018:75) note that events such as volcanos, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, war, and terrorism have the potential to affect a tourism destination. Health pandemics are breaking out and affecting the tourism sector with equal measure. In the last fifteen years, health-related crises have caused immense damage to the sector and pose risks to local communities (Novelli et al., 2018:77), and such calamities have a bearing on the choices that tourists make regarding a destination (Brown et al., 2017:362). In the case of the novel Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19), the destination is irrelevant, given that the disease is practically affecting the whole world, from New Zealand to Greenland, from the South to the North, it is affecting countries severely. During the lockdowns imposed by countries as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is virtually no tourism destination available to visit, and there was no tourism during May 2020. This is also because flights and many other means of transport had been drastically reduced in their capacity and schedule or have been temporarily wholly halted. Lockdowns meant countries closed their borders and restricted movement between states and provinces within countries. Tourism needs to do a check-up as Jamal & Budke

(2020:2) observe that tourism stakeholders need to assess the impacts of geological and health emergencies in terms of their costs and risks to society and especially on the sector.

This article takes a cue from the observation of a recent article by Novelli et al. (2018:77) which indicated that while many studies have focused on the crisis impacts of events such as terrorism or oil spills on various tourism subsectors such as airlines and hotels “few studies have focused on health-related disasters or epidemics” such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) or Foot and Mouth Disease. The analysis of the impacts of a pandemic such as COVID-19 should be done looking at the monetary and non-monetary aspects as well as considering structural and global issues such as climate change and vulnerability of more impoverished regions not only from an economic perspective but also concerning “intangible injustices resulting from discrimination, racism, emotional responses and fear” (Jamal & Budke, 2020:5). Covid-19 has also shown that inequalities and inequities are exacerbated during such times. Matters of justice during pandemics are essential to investigate in order to inform both policy and practice (Jamal & Budke, 2020:5). Tourism must consider the global issues of poverty and inequality because of its stature as a significant global sector, for it can contribute immensely to development in many communities of the world (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020a:14). However, current tourism “– especially conventional/mass tourism – seems not to have fulfilled its potential and has also negatively impacted on tourism destinations” (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020a:14) because of massification of the experiences and neoliberal approaches in tourism.

In the field of sustainable tourism, while many studies have looked at negative impacts after crises, not many in tourism look at recovery mechanisms after the disaster (Khazai et al., 2018:6). This article aims at going beyond the monetary/economic value of disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic and suggests short-term recovery solutions. Instead, the article aims to pronounce possible guidelines to reinterpret or restructure the sector in the long-term and propose a shift to a more just tourism compared to what it is. It contributes to the literature on tourism about development in general and tourism post-crisis recovery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Tourism

Tourism is a primary global economic sector and has the potential to contribute to economic development and environmental conservation. Thus, the importance “of tourism makes it urgent that it actively contributes to the creation of a more equal and just society” (Mtapuri &

Giampiccoli, 2020:2). Given the evidence of the sector's negative impacts, issues such as inequality, poverty, and the environment should feature prominently in tourism debates (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2020:2). The current embedment of tourism in neoliberalism means that the pursuit of profit at all costs is paramount irrespective of the impacts on people, communities, the environment and protrudes into other forms such as 'volunteer tourism' in the name of profit (Wearing et al., 2019:27). While international tourism has made tremendous positive global contributions in terms of national income and jobs, overall its benefits have been mainly uneven such that in some countries, due to neoliberal policies, wealth and income inequalities have widened and poverty deepened (Wearing et al., 2019:27). Within a neoliberal capitalist system, "tourism is just one example of how the capitalist production mode increases poverty" (Palafox-Muñoz, 2019:468). International tourism has been likened to colonialism as it brought an increase in crime and prostitution in developing countries (Bianchi, 2017:3). Thus, the question that begs an answer is whether tourism is 'a passport to development,' or is a mere extension of colonialism in a different guise (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2020:2). Because of its current value and growth, it is expected that tourism should be a significant player in the fight against both poverty and inequality (Giampiccoli, 2020:2). Change is required. If mainstream tourism continues to work in a business-as-usual mode, a people's organisation alliance "at global and local levels is necessary to push for substantial change – beyond small local projects – of the tourism sector towards a more CBT, the redistributive and egalitarian pattern of development" (Giampiccoli, 2020:12). If 'business as usual' will continue, global inequality will widen (Alvaredo et al., 2018:13). A neoliberal system led to inequalities, and it cannot be the same system that will resolve them (Scheyvens and Hughes, 2019:1065).

Tourism, Disasters, and Crisis

Reports of crises or disasters lead to decreases in international tourist arrivals, and this has a socio-economic impact in the destination country as well as the world economy (Cró & Martins, 2017:3). Even if the tourism sector continues to post positive growth overall, tragic events continue to happen so destinations anywhere in the world are affected in one way or another (Cró & Martins, 2017:3). Disasters and rebuilding are not new to current times but having been part of the human experience since time immemorial. Contemporary times have brought specific differences to current disasters some of which have the following characteristics – they can hit across a nation-state; it can be a considerable hazard but can disappear overnight; the risks and threats are amplified by the media and the sector due to flight cancellations; and agents responsible for disaster management being unable to cope with it (Korstanje, 2011:62): Cró & Martins (2017:4)

defines a disaster as a severe natural or unexpected human-made event for which communities have to take exceptional measures to respond to it.

Disasters can take the form of terrorist attacks, war, natural disasters, economic recession, diseases, biosecurity, and so on (Cró & Martins, 2017:3). However, while tourism is more often greatly affected by disasters, it is also often quick to recover from it. Hence, tourism can be a pivot sector for economic recovery after a disaster, so tourism cannot be divorced from efforts at economic recovery (Cheng & Zhang, 2020:1). With Covid-19, that has still to be seen because its whole value chain was severely dismembered.

Economic crises impact tourism. While the global economy did not completely recover from the most recent financial crisis, sectors recover at different paces, but tourism has shown greater resilience (Dogru & Bulut, 2018:430). Its resilience is a function of each destination's specific specialisation and endowments, implying that those with diversified bases show greater resilience than those who do not (Cellini & Cuccia, 2015:352). For instance, a shift in domestic to foreign demand may ameliorate the effects of a domestic crisis (Cellini & Cuccia, 2015:352). Current tourism trends show luxury tourism giving way to tourists cutting on expenditure but not giving up the holiday (Cellini & Cuccia, 2015:352).

Problems in the tourism sector can emanate from other disasters besides economic such as an earthquake (Cheng & Zhang, 2020; Orchiston & Higham, 2016), flood (Ghaderi, Mat Som & Henderson, 2015), Tsunami (Biggs, Hall & Stoeckl, 2012), forest fire (Hystad & Keller, 2008) and health issues (Novelli et al., 2018;; Dass & McDermott, 2020:6; Torres Villanueva, 2009:3). A study in Thailand noted that both public and private sectors were affected by rebounded after a short period following a flood disaster (Ghaderi et al., 2015:412). Similar trends of recovery have been observed following earthquakes. For example, the Wenchuan earthquake in China showed that counties with strong tourism sectors experienced faster recovery than those with others (Cheng & Zhang, 2020:18). The same study (Cheng & Zhang, 2020:18) recommended that incentives can stimulate recovery in the tourism sector, however, if they fail, the study recommended channelling the resources towards productive industries.

The impacts of a health crisis are somewhat different from the impact of say, earthquakes, or floods. In a health crisis, tourism is affected, but, ironically, it can be tourism (the tourists) itself that can be a significant contributor to the same pandemic. Tourists can carry microbes. Baker (2005:5) notes that "Travelers can be victims, sentinels, couriers, processors, and transmitters of microbial pathogens." Tourism facilitates the spread of epidemics (Novelli et al., 2018:77). Thus tourists can spread the pandemic during their

trip as they share the local environment with hosts (Baker, 2015:5). International travel increases the complexity of pandemics as local outbreaks can be transformed into a global pandemic propagated by the accommodation sector in the hotel industry (Hung et al., 2018:1) This following excerpt can also highlight the epidemiology dilemma of Covid-19:

A medical professor from Guangzhou in China arrived in Hong Kong on 21 February 2003 and checked into a room on the ninth floor of the Metropole Hotel in Kowloon. During his stay, he infected at least seven other guests and visitors staying on the ninth floor of the hotel, including three visitors from Singapore, one visitor from Vietnam, two visitors from Canada, and a local individual (Hung et al., 2018:3).

The media is prone to negatively report on the health-related crisis, which makes it hard for the tourism sector to manage its own business (Novelli et al., 2018:76). For example, during the Ebola crisis, when expatriates left, in August 2014 hotel occupancy rates fell to below 25 percent in Sierra Leone and Liberia and 40 percent in Guinea Conakry (UNDP, 2015:9). Also, health issues negatively affect destinations near the epicentre and those further to it. Ebola-affected countries in West Africa where the booking was at 30% (UNDP, 2015:89), including South Africa, which was 6,000 kilometres away from the Ebola epicentre where arrivals also plummeted by 30% (UNDP, 2015:103). The effects of SARS harmed tourism well beyond the SARS impacted areas (Hung et al., 2018:5). SARS epidemic “exemplified the link between travel, tourism, and infectious disease, that spread globally through international tourists returning home after visiting affected areas” (Novelli et al., 2018:77; on the global impact of SARS in tourism also see Abdullah et al., 2004:107).

This implies that countries and regions need to collaborate and provide each other with mutual assistance in case of a crisis that goes beyond each other's borders, precisely because viruses do not obey borders. Conversely, when health dangers are limited or eliminated tourism, benefits immensely as it is estimated that if malaria, ebola, dengue, and yellow fever were eradicated in Asia, Americas and Africa, an additional 10 million tourists would travel bringing into the sector US\$12 billion (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020:4).

Crises can also happen simultaneously. The global economic crisis of 2008/9 occurred, followed by the swine flu pandemic in the second quarter of 2009, with severe impacts on tourism (Page, Song & Chenguang Wu, 2012:142). A single matter can have more than one outcome. In the case of COVID-19, two issues are conspiring together, health and economics. The IATA's Director General and CEO (in IATA, 2020, online) mentions that “Passenger confidence will suffer a double whammy even after the pandemic is

contained—hit by personal economic concerns in the face of a looming recession on top of lingering concerns about the safety of travel.”

Despite the various shocks that have affected the sector over time, tourism has shown remarkable recovery. For example, a study on tourism in Malaysia found out that despite a series of shocks in the past decade, tourism showed high resilience due to a resurgence of international tourists from its primary source markets (Lean & Smyth, 2009:319). An IATA-commissioned survey of recent travellers found that (from IATA, 2020, online):

- 60% anticipate a return to travel within one to two months of containment of the COVID-19 pandemic but 40% indicate that they could wait six months or more;
- 69% indicated that they could delay a return to travel until their financial situation stabilizes.

Dass & McDermott (2020:1) postulate that if the virus is brought under control soon in the case of China, its impact will be high but short-lived. During disaster recovery, the role of Government is central, as was the case during the Wenchuan disaster as well as was the rebuilding of Christchurch in New Zealand in 2010, which adopted a command and control agenda (Cheng & Zhang, 2020:19). However, for developing countries as compared to developed countries, the fragility of the state can impair efforts aimed at tourism recovery (Novelli et al., 2018:77). These countries have limited financial and human resources coupled with poor planning and weak governance structures as some rely on external support such as NGOs and donors for tourism development and in response to disasters (Novelli et al., 2018:77). Global and justice issues are also fundamental:

Global crises, such as disease outbreaks and pandemics, raise serious questions about the preparedness of global and regional tourism-related institutions to coordinate crisis management and recovery actions. The challenges are not merely economic. Issues of justice arise as vulnerable destinations, and more impoverished populations are often disproportionately burdened by disease outbreaks. These communities often lack adequate resources to mitigate and recover from outbreaks. Vulnerabilities also exist concerning their citizens abroad during disease outbreaks (Jamal & Budke, 2020:4).

Tourism recovery strategies can vary based available time and the magnitude of the event as well as the appropriateness of the decisions that are taken during the crisis (Novelli et al., 2018:78). Measures instituted during a health crisis often include various actions by Government such as aid packages and changing some of the tourism products (Novelli et al., 2018:78), promotional and marketing initiatives (Haque & Haque, 2018:99), social media campaigns and “spreading the word that they are up and running and open for business”

(Burkehart, 2019, online). Innovation is also significant, for example, it assisted the recovery of businesses after the Christchurch (New Zealand) earthquake (Khazai et al., 2018:76). Recoveries require specific policies supported by resources (Cró & Martins, 2017:8).

In disaster situations, some countries lose more than others. Concerning COVID-19, the impact on the so-called SIDS (Small Island Developing States) will be substantial because tourism accounts for 30% of their GDP and losses in tourism revenue may imply a failure to service foreign debt and impair the capacity to import goods with similar effect Africa on Sub-Saharan Africa where one in twenty workers belongs to the sector (Maniga, 2020). The African Union estimates that the sector on the continent will lose about \$50 billion due to COVID-19 as well as about 2 million jobs affecting tourism spots such as Seychelles, Mauritius, Cape Verde, and The Gambia with a likelihood to shrink by about 7% (Maniga, 2020).

Towards a New Pathway/Framework

There is a growing recognition that the social structures that are decaying and crumbling – locally, regionally, globally – are built on traditional or industrial (modern) ways of thinking and operating that are compounded and entrenched by neo-liberalism. While initially successful, these are now obsolete. We need to discard the old body of institutionalised collective behaviour in order to allow a new quality of more profound social presence to arise (Dwyer, 2018:45).

The hostile impacts of tourism in destination countries include low wages, financial leakages, and poor participation of locals in the sector (Dwyer, 2018:29). Most importantly, notwithstanding extensive acknowledgment of the significance of the sector and the adoption of “best practices” such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and triple bottom line (TBL) reporting, things remain inadequate in the sector (Dwyer, 2018:29). Others have postulated that no meaningful change will happen without altering the North-South economic relations for developing countries to achieve their developmental goals and equitable distribution of resources (de Kadt, 1979b:xii).

In a “one –world’ scenario, it is not possible to sustain current mass consumption patterns, which are associated with exhausting non-renewable natural resources (De Kadt, 1979a:38). Operators and destination managers are always pursuing the expansion of opportunities in the sector. However, continued practice in its current form is now producing diminishing returns for businesses that are based on volumes making it evident the link between resource scarcity and environmental problems (Dwyer, 2018:29). Tourism also affects communities with adverse sociocultural impacts (Dwyer, 2018:29). Tourism forms

which allow community participation such as community-based tourism is suffering, and development agents and tour operators should not be viewed as direct ‘intermediaries’ but, instead, be ‘facilitators’ – or sources of information for use by communities (Wearing & Macdonalds, 2002:203). Conceivably, local participation that can alter current patterns of unequal power and development is found in local communities (Mowforth & Munt, 1998 in Mitchell & Eagles, 2001:5).

Also, the ‘new’ Glocalization’ approach has its limits, and while it searches for a balance between the global and the local, it does not support equity and does not give locals the chance to own the venture or to share in the profits. What brings new hope is the application of innovations such as hopeful tourism, the alternative economy, the sharing economy, fair trade, and social justice (Souard, Gard McGehee & Stern, 2019:103). The sector should transform from an industry of profit accumulation to a human effort steeped in the rights and interests of local communities (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019:1941).

Alleviating the effects on climate change and promoting inclusive economic growth, which is sustainable, requires structural changes in the sector (Slocum, Dimitrov & Webb, 2019:40). Academia can also have a role to play in this change because changes in the science and scholarship of tourism will result in changes in mindsets and practices (Dwyer, 2018:44). For example, contrary to a neoliberal approach that focuses on skills and industry training, learners need to learn the many ways of knowing how to inform the role of the individual in society as well as the role of the sector to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Slocum et al., 2019:40). The SDGs require a concerted effort at the community, sub-national, and national levels because the goals are about improvements in the quality of life of people who are at the centre of development, however defined.

Proposing a Long-Term Shift

Tourism recovery strategies can have variegated time frames in terms of short-medium and long-terms (Khazai et al., 2018:76). A key issue is that small tourism enterprises provide jobs to local communities and much-needed services and clients to other businesses (Brown et al., 2017:364). Beyond this, disasters affect everyone in the community, and recovery efforts must be harnessed at the same time while helping people understand risks as a cornerstone of building resilience (Brown et al., 2017:365). Small and medium businesses, as well as informal businesses, play a crucial role in tourism recovery by placing community issues high up the recovery process. Small and medium enterprises (which consist of about 80% of the tourism sector) are anticipated to be particularly affected by millions of livelihoods globally

facing a similar fate (UNWTO, 2020b, online). At the same time, a study on the impacts of the 2004 tsunami and the 2008 political crisis on tourism also in Thailand mentions showed that informal businesses recover quicker than a formal business after a crisis (Biggs et al., 2012:660). The UNWTO (2020b, online), about the COVID-19 crisis, mentions that because of its cross-cutting nature, tourism is poised to assist communities to return to economic stability (UNWTO, 2020b, online). For tourism to be a global contributor to a more just world, local communities should be the drivers of change in pursuit of an egalitarian society (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2020:16).

This article aims to go beyond the ‘normal’ concerning tourism recovery actions – but to suggest actions towards structural/radical changes to take ‘advantage’ of a global tourism crisis, which requires serious revamping with possibilities of restarting from ‘zero’ due to the pandemic. The recovery efforts must be championed by local communities, small and informal businesses (with dense local ownership), while addressing specific issues of poverty and equality. Regarding the recovery of tourism from COVID-19, the UNWTO (UNWTO, 2020a, online) recently stated:

This [COVID-19] crisis has shown the strength of solidarity across borders. However, kind words and gestures will not protect jobs or help the many millions of people whose lives are dependent on a thriving tourism sector. Governments have an opportunity to recognize tourism’s unique ability to not only provide employment but to drive equality and inclusivity. Our sector has proven its ability to bounce back and help societies recover. We ask that tourism is now given the right support to once again lead recovery efforts (UNWTO, 2020a, online).

For the Asia-Pacific region, and everywhere else – if interventions do not address the needs of the poor and vulnerable at the margins, the pandemic will deepen poverty and widen inequalities (UN-ESCAP, 2020:32). Thus, the current health disaster should provide to build solidarities between regions and countries to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in the interest of inclusion, human rights, and solidarity (UN-ESCAP, 2020:32). In the tourism sector, post COVID-19 pandemic, amongst others, it is mentioned that:

Planet and People Matter- Ultimately, tourism depends on the environment and people. If there is anything the novel coronavirus has taught us, it is that the earth will fight back if we do not protect it. We must reimagine what sustainable tourism is for Ghana and Africa. Communities of people are relevant, without that, there can be no travel and tourism. Tourism futures must take cognizance of the fact that the earth has enough to support everyone’s needs if we are sustainable, but not enough to support corporate greed (Akyere Mensah, 2020, online).

Based on the above, this article aims to advance a few

underlying issues that should be considered and form the guidelines to advance a mid/long-term shift in the sector, towards a more just, redistributive, equitable, local-people-centered industry (with a big emphasis on the disadvantaged sectors of society) and sustainable sector.

The COVID-19 crisis can necessitate temporary technical changes and also gives the opportunity to restructure the tourism sector. In other words, COVID-19 will provide ‘necessary’ technical changes but can also, and more importantly, open up chances to introduce structural changes in the sector. Societal rights took pre-eminence over individual rights. On the one hand, technical changes can include the application of COVID-19 protocols such as social distancing, enforcement of washing with soap and observing hygienic water practices, providing and wearing of masks, manufacture of masks and sanitisers, and the reconfiguration of reception areas to accommodate social distancing seem to become the new normal going forward. This will also entail drastic changes in the tourism value chain from logistics to ground and air travel. Tourists will be extra cautious about traveling to destinations with weak health systems, given the risks of falling sick. On the other hand, structural changes can be instituted as they are *fundamentally* important as shown in the general shifting framework/model which we propose. These can be divided into issues related to the general approach to be adopted in tourism and the specific actions to be taken. The general issues in tourism approaches are:

Governments/Public Institution Key Roles: governments and other public institutions and organisations at the local, national, and international levels should promulgate policies and strategies to facilitate the change of the tourism system. The private sector and its professional bodies, with a focus on its private interests and profit, cannot, and should not, left alone to establish and monitor specific changes and rules (including norms and standards such as codes of conduct). Government entities should also consider to (re)gain control of ownership and management of some tourism products and facilities. Public entities should move towards owning and controlling tourism products and facilities. While the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should be seen positively, it should be considered temporary and not become substitutive of the government duties in shifting the government’s responsibilities and roles. NGOs can complement and cooperate with governments but not replace it.

Legal Enforcement of Rules: Besides legally enforceable regulations such as taxes, ‘normal’, environmental protection, and so on also other rules or programs should be legally enforceable to guarantee its implementation. Issues such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and any other similar ‘charity’ or responsible/sustainable initiative or code of conduct should be managed and monitored by the

government entities. While the private sector and NGOs can collaborate to establish the rules, all stakeholders, such as trade unions and community-based organisations, should be involved in the collaborative approach, and once established rules or codes of conduct are legally enforceable.

Coordination/Cooperation: While the government should maintain control and take the lead, a robust collaborative approach should be adopted. In other words, all stakeholders in the tourism sector, such as Government, private sector, NGOs, labour organisations, community organisations, and so on, should work together, especially at the local level, to formulate concrete tourism plans with implementable strategies for the short, medium and long-terms. For example, also in the current specific case of COVID-19 specific fora of entities could be established at various levels to regularly work together in planning for the sector that looks at the health of both hosts and tourists aligned to WHO sanctioned COVID-19 protocols on social distancing, wearing of masks, testing and so on both on land, in the air and seas. Hotel facilities have to be re-arranged to take into account current COVID-19 realities, while staff has to be trained on new etiquette and decorum, ways of doing things, presentation, and observing health and safety protocols. Collaboration is also very relevant in monitoring any subventions along those lines. While COVID-19 is a health issue, it is cross-cutting in effects and outcomes and is multi-dimensional. Its multi-dimensionality reflects in health, education, labour, environmental, and income effects.

The various specific actions to be taken are:

Diversification of Tourism Products: Localities should promote and facilitate the diversification of tourism products to be more flexible in shifting demand types in order to be more resilient and ready for recovery. Diversification is essential to ensure the inclusion of more people in the sector. It is possible to promote small micro and medium enterprises and community-based tourism ventures in the accommodation sub-sector.

Innovation/technological Advancements: Promotion and facilitation of the development, learning, and adoption of innovation related to the tourism sector must be advanced. Specific attention should be placed on innovations that support the expansion of workers and community benefits. Environmental issues should form part of the innovations in tourism in order to protect and conserve it as opposed to denigrating and negatively exploiting it.

Environment and Labour: A comprehensive package of legally enforceable rules about labour conditions and environmental use should be established, managed, and monitored by the government with other stakeholders in a new novel way to bring about collective accountability and responsibility. Specific internationally recognised and legally enforceable limits on minimal labour conditions

and the exploitation and use of natural resources should be established and locally and then internationally agreed upon. Preference on this score should be given to the local.

Localisation of Control/Ownership of Tourism Facilities and Products: A strategy to facilitate the move towards an increase in local ownership of tourism facilities and products should be advanced and implemented. Micro-small and medium enterprises should be deliberately supported. Specific limits of foreign ownership should be established in all sizes of companies.

Inclusivity/Community-Based: More inclusive tourism and still better CBT approaches should be facilitated, implemented, and monitored by a designated collective of stakeholders. Controlling, owning, and benefitting from the local tourism sector by local people eager to participate in the on-going development of the local tourism sector is anticipated. Similarly, specific rules that emphasise and support disadvantaged people for inclusiveness and control, ownership, and gaining the maximum benefits from tourism versus local elites must be put in place and collaborate monitored closely. A strong intervention that favours disadvantaged people needs to be put in place in order to rebalance the control of and benefits from tourism.

Understanding Carrying Capacity and Leakages/Linkages: Strict carrying capacity regulations based on each specific local context, (but also at the global level), should be developed and monitored by the collective of role players. As such, carrying capacity should be linked to social, cultural, economic, and environmental issues. Importantly, carrying capacity should be linked to the local capacity to supply goods, products, and services to the tourists so to either decrease or eliminate leakages. In this context, programs and rules that favour the strengthening of local linkages to other sectors of the local economy are enhanced and encouraged.

Education/Academia: The relevance of tourism in the current global context should make tourism a subject in school from primary to high school. Specific university qualifications related to alternative types of tourism, such as ecotourism, CBT, justice tourism, and so on, should be expanded and enhanced. Importantly, the curriculum should not focus on 'technical' issues in tourism, especially private sector needs only, but should fundamentally also comprise critical thinking and social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects related to the tourism sector.

Sustainability: Comprehensive approaches aimed at the sustainability of the tourism sector in the social, cultural, and economic and environmental aspects need to be adopted. In other words, specific attention needs to be given to the interrelation between humans and the environment such that the environment can thrive as it showed during the period of lockdowns where animals and birds could take over empty cities, beaches, and streets.

Investment and Incentives Rules. Investment and, often accompanying incentives, should specify in regulation various issues such as ownership, labour conditions, and environmental aspects, to avoid a ‘race to the bottom’ in the competition between localities.

Redistribution. Measures to introduce, facilitate, and implement redistributive interventions, such as favouring collective ownership/management or shareholding models, must be put in place and monitored by all concerned parties (see Table 1 below for detail).

In summarising the framework, two issues are proposed to government entities in relation to the actions to be taken, these are, the roles and the strategies. Thus, roles can control, facilitation and supervision (sometimes it might include formal monitoring and evaluation), whereas strategies can be consultative, and formal collaboration with other stakeholders such as the private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations, communities or labour organisations, or independent agents.

Table 1: Actions by Government Entities for a Just Tourism

| Actions | Role | Strategy |
|--|--------------|----------------------|
| Diversification of tourism products | Facilitative | Formal collaboration |
| Innovation/technological advancements | Facilitative | Formal collaboration |
| Environment and labour | Control | Consultative |
| Localisation of control/ownership of tourism facilities and products | Control | Formal collaboration |
| Inclusivity/community-based. | Facilitative | Formal collaboration |
| Understanding carrying capacity and leakages/linkages | Facilitative | Formal collaboration |
| Education/academia | Control | Consultative |
| Sustainability | Supervision | Formal collaboration |
| Investment and incentives rules | Facilitative | Consultative |
| Redistribution | Facilitative | Consultative |

Actions emanating from specific roles and strategies of governments and based on specific circumstances and needs, may concretised or given force in the form of guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, and standards. For example, in education, Government should take control of legally accrediting institutions and new curricula. Table 1 can be adjusted to suit the prevailing circumstances and context. Some actions may result in adopting a mixed approach. For instance, government could have a supervision (monitoring

and evolution) role in sustainability but a facilitative role could be also be implemented simultaneously based on circumstances.

DISCUSSION

Disasters bring about the destruction of livelihoods and infrastructure and loss of life. Hitherto, post-disaster interventions have concentrated on the restoration of infrastructure with less emphasis on the economic dimensions of the disaster as what COVID-19 has taught us. These economic dimensions include firm bankruptcies accompanied by massive job losses, preference to work was given to those in essential services, working from home was encouraged for those who could work from home and retrenchments in small and big businesses were widespread, there was a marked reduction in taxes because of low economic activity and so on. It resurrected the debates regarding a universal basic income grant for all those who are unemployed. For example, in South Africa, during the Covid-19 lockdown, which started in March 2020, the government introduced the social relief of distress grant of R350 per person per month targeting the unemployed. The real problem goes beyond the virus itself. The virus has just highlighted and reminded us human suffering increased, yes by the virus itself, but also by the fight against the virus-induced inequality and poverty. These two words represent the real failure of our times. They represent the failure of the current neoliberal social-economic system. In the current fight against the virus, life is ‘easier’ for the elite and people with proper jobs/wages, but a different story for the jobless, the marginalized, the poor who are struggling to have money or food to survive. There is nothing to say if not that our society, as it currently works, produces inequality and poverty amplified by disasters. A correlated tragedy is an observation that nobody (if not a very few individuals/organisations) seems to want to address the underlying causes of inequality and poverty (if not with charity and bread crumbs). The risk is that everything will come back to the new normal with its normality, while inequality and poverty persist and exacerbate.

Concerning the tourism sector, the risk is that it may come back in its old form with the only changes being health-related and responding to COVID-19, leaving matters of control and ownership intact skewed against the disadvantaged and marginalised. Global tourism and tourism stakeholders in most localities around the world could promote tourism as a leading sector and avant-garde in promoting transformative and structural changes in the current socio-economic system. Proposals that attempt to change the structures of the current tourism sector have been proposed such as the Investment Redistributive Incentive Model (IRIM) which is a mechanism that suggests incentives for inclusivity

while upholding the private sector to intuitively adopt redistributive approaches for continuity and enduring sustainability (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020b), tourism de-growth and community-focused tourism where the redefinition of the tourism sector places the rights of local community members above the rights of holidaymakers and the rights of the tourism industry corporates to make profits (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019) or by moving towards CBT and cooperative approaches (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2020). Such issues should feature in future tourism guidelines that support a more just tourism sector in the interest of equality and the reduction of inequality and poverty.

CONCLUSION

This article looked at disasters and their impacts that straddle the socio-economic, health, and environmental dimensions of life as experienced by people. Disasters such as the COVID-19 revealed the fallacies of current economic systems in attempting to end poverty and inequality. It can thus be concluded that the system is fragile and vulnerable than it purports to be healthy. Its fragility and vulnerability are evidence of its untrustworthiness. In other words, it cannot be relied upon to address inequality and poverty, but rather it feeds on them. Measures suggested in this article are meant to inform policy and practice towards just tourism and just society. It should be noted that the actions proposed in this article are not comprehensive, but represent a few fundamental issues that should be considered to inform the guidelines for the advancement in the direction of a more just tourism sector.

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