

The Socio-cultural Impacts of Tourism Development in the Okavango Delta, Botswana

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The objective of this article is to assess the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. This paper largely relied on the research work and reports by the author in the Okavango Delta from 1998 to 2004. In all instances, both primary and secondary data sources were used. However, much of the paper is based on the results of a survey carried out between April 2001 and July 2002. Findings indicate that tourism development in the Okavango Delta has both positive and negative socio-cultural impacts. Some of the positive socio-cultural impacts include income generation and employment opportunities from both community-based tourism projects and safari companies, infrastructure development such as airport and airstrips, tarred roads, hotels, lodges and camps, the improvement of social services such as banking, health, telecommunications and access to electricity. The negative socio-cultural impacts include enclave tourism, racism, relocation of traditional communities, breaking up of the traditional family structure, increase in crime, prostitution, the adoption of the Western safari style of dressing and a traditionally unacceptable 'vulgar' language by young people. This article argues that tourism needs to be sensitive to local cultural norms and beliefs for it to be accepted by local people and promote sustainable development. This is possible if all the stakeholders (government, operators and local people) collaborate in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. This can minimise the negative cultural impacts and instead promote the positive.

Keywords: Okavango Delta, socio-cultural impacts, tourism, sustainable development, community-based tourism

Introduction

Tourism has been one of the global economic success stories in the last 40 years (Coccosis & Parpaires, 1995). It is arguably the world's largest industry, accounting for about 5.5% of the world's Gross National Product (GNP) and 6% of the employment, and it is growing fast (Glasson *et al.*, 1995). In Botswana (located in southern Africa), tourism was almost non-existent at her independence in 1966 (Mbaiwa, 2002a). However, by 2000, it had grown to be the second largest economic sector, contributing 4.5% to Botswana's Gross Domestic Product (BTDP, 1999; DoT, 2000). Most of Botswana's tourists (that is, photographic tourists and safari hunters) visit the Okavango Delta (an inland wetland) and rich wildlife habitat located in northwestern Botswana. On average, about 50,000 tourists visit the Okavango Delta annually (Mbaiwa, 2002a). Tourism has stimulated the development of a variety of allied

infrastructure and facilities, such as hotels, lodges and camps, an airport and airstrips, in the Okavango region. Through its backward linkages, wholesale and retail businesses have also been established, especially in Maun (the main tourist centre in the Okavango), to offer various goods to the tourist industry. Tared roads and other communication facilities have also been developed in the region, partly to facilitate tourism development. These tourism services have led to a booming tourist economy built around what is perceived internationally as a 'new' and 'exotic' destination (Mbaiwa *et al.*, 2002).

As with any type of economic development, tourism creates changes that threaten the quality of life. Changes in the host community's quality of life are influenced by two major factors: the tourist–host relationship and the development of the industry itself (Ratz, 2002). Social and cultural changes to host societies include changes in value systems, traditional lifestyles, family relationships, individual behaviour or community structure (Ratz, 2000). Previous studies on tourism in Botswana and the Okavango Delta (e.g. BDTP, 1999; Fowkes, 1985) mainly focused on positive economic impacts of tourism, such as foreign exchange earnings, employment creation and infrastructure development without attention to negative socio-cultural impacts. Because of this approach, the rapid growth of tourism in the Okavango Delta raises questions of its sustainability, particularly due to its socio-cultural impact on host communities.

Using the concept of sustainable development, the objective of this article, therefore, is to assess the socio-cultural impact of tourism development in the Okavango Delta. In terms of structure, the article is organised as follows: the first section describes the concept of sustainable development and how it relates to issues of socio-cultural impacts of tourism development in destination areas. The second section describes the methodology that was used in the study. The third section provides a description of the traditional socio-cultural organisation of the Okavango. The fourth and main body of the article discusses the positive and negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Okavango while the fourth section concludes the article.

Sustainable Development and the Socio-cultural Impacts of Tourism

Sustainable development became a buzzword within the international development community in 1987 (Ahn *et al.*, 2002). According to Ahn *et al.*, sustainable development evolved from maintaining natural resources for present and future generations to emphasising values associated with cultural and community diversity, concern for social justice and fairness, and a strong orientation towards stability. Sustainable development has, as a result, been applied to tourism, particularly tourism that relies on natural resources and involves human beings and their cultures. The sustainable development approach to planning tourism is important because most tourism development, involving stakeholders such as tourists, tourist businesses and community residents, depends on attractions and activities related to the natural environment, heritage and culture (Ahn *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, if tourism is to become sustainable, it should adhere to economic, social, environmental and ethnic considerations in host regions. Because of its nature, it becomes necessary that a rapidly growing

tourism industry, as is the case in the Okavango Delta should have its socio-cultural impact designed to achieve the ideals of sustainable development.

If there is a domain of tourism research associated with developing countries, then it is the socio-cultural impacts that tourism has on these countries (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Socio-cultural impacts of tourism results from the interaction between 'host', or local people, and 'guests', or tourists (Smith, 1995). As Glasson *et al.* (1995) puts it, socio-cultural impacts are the 'people impacts' of tourism, with a focus on changes in the day-to-day quality of life of residents in tourist destinations, and cultural impacts concerned with changes in traditional ideas and values, norms and identities resulting from tourism. Oppermann and Chon (1997) state that, while it has been recognised that tourist–host interactions not only have an effect on the hosts and the host society, but also on the tourists and the tourists' societies, most studies are concerned with negative impacts on hosts and the host society. This limitation in research is recognised by Cooper *et al.* (1998), who state that much of the literature on socio-cultural impact of tourism is biased in that it focuses attention upon the detrimental impact of tourism on the host population. Little attention has been paid to the fact that there can also be socio-cultural impact on the tourist population, which can again be either positive or negative. In reality, socio-cultural impacts tend to contain a mixture of both positive and negative strands and affects both hosts and guests (Cooper *et al.*, 1998; Oppermann & Chon, 1997). As a result, in spite of the fact that some researchers regard socio-cultural change as one of the evils of tourism development, any form of economic development will, by definition, carry with it implications for social structure and cultural aspects of the host population (Cooper *et al.*, 1998). Therefore, this article argues that tourism in destination areas should be sustainable. Sustainable tourism development in this case is not only advocating a tourism sector that is economically viable and environmentally friendly, but that is also sensitive to socio-cultural aspects in destination areas such as the Okavango Delta.

Methodology

Whereas economic and environmental indicators of tourism do lend themselves to objective measurement, the socio-cultural impacts are often highly qualitative and subjective in nature (Cooper *et al.*, 1998). In this article, some of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Okavango Delta have been subjected to quantitative assessment. The article largely relies on the various reports on tourism development in the Okavango Delta written by the author between 1999 and 2004. In all instances, both primary and secondary data sources were used. However, much of the article is based on the results of a survey carried out by the author between April 2001 and July 2002. In all these studies, secondary data collection centred on the use of literature from government policy documents, reports and in any other published and unpublished documents on socio-cultural impacts of tourism, particularly in the Okavango Delta and Botswana. In the 2001–2002 study, primary data collection involved the administration of structured and semi-structured questionnaires to 65 safari managers and 98 safari workers in the Okavango

Delta. These respondents were from 65 tourism facilities that were randomly selected from a total of 162 tourism businesses that were registered and given a tourism license by the Department of Tourism to operate in the Okavango region. Information from safari managers and workers centred on their views on socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Okavango Delta. Informal interviews were also conducted with government officials at the North West District Council, Departments of Wildlife and National Parks and Tourism, and those of community-based tourism organisations in the Okavango Delta. Only one person was interviewed from these institutions since a spokesperson from each of them became a respondent. These interviews were meant to assess the perceptions of these officials towards the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Okavango Delta.

The Socio-cultural Organisation of the Okavango

The Okavango Delta (Figure 1) is located in northwestern Botswana. It is a vast swamp and floodplain area measuring about 16,000 square kilometres (about 3% of the total area of Botswana), of which about half is permanently flooded (Tlou, 1985). Ellery and Ellery (1997) state that the Okavango Delta covers a total of some 22,000 square kilometres. The differences in the size of the Okavango Delta are mainly because the Okavango is not fenced and different researchers measure it from different positions. The Okavango is home to 122,000 people (CSO, 2002), who belong to various ethnic groups such as Bayei, Bakgalagadi, Basarwa (San), Bambukushu and Batawana. It is estimated

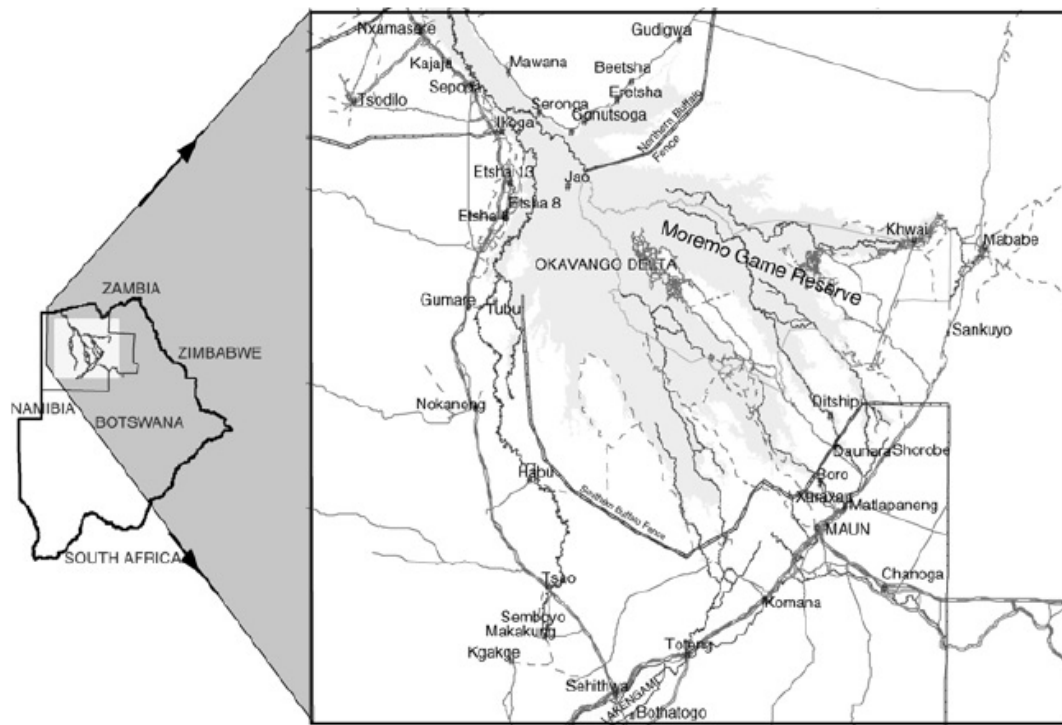


Figure 1 Map of Botswana showing the Okavango Delta, Botswana

that over 90% of these people directly or indirectly depend on resources found in the Okavango Delta to sustain their livelihoods (Mbaiwa, 2002a; NWDC, 1997). The population of the Okavango is very unevenly distributed, with vast areas unpopulated (NWDC, 1997). The major areas of population concentration occur along the main road from Maun, via Sehitwa to Shakawe.

Ethnic groups in the Okavango can conveniently be categorised into two: the Khoisan-speaking people such as the Basarwa (San) and the Bantu-speaking groups. These groups settled in the Okavango River at different times. The oldest inhabitants of the Okavango Basin are the Khoisan speakers, in particular the Basarwa who are traditionally nomadic and lead a hunting and gathering economic life. Evidence based on Early and Middle Stone Age implements found at sites on or near the delta margins seem to indicate that human beings have inhabited the Okavango Delta for about 10,000 years or more (Tlou, 1985). The Bantu-speaking groups, on the other hand, have lived in the Okavango for not more than 500 years (Mbaiwa, 2001). For example, the Bayei and Bambukushu were the first groups of Bantu speakers to arrive in the Okavango region around 1800 (Tlou, 1985; Mbaiwa, 2001).

The main economic activities for the rural people in the Okavango Delta are rain-fed and *molapo* (flood recession) crop farming and livestock production (Bendsen & Meyer, 2002; Mbaiwa, 2004b). Fishing, hunting and gathering of veld products are carried out to supplement agricultural production (Mbaiwa, 2004b). In addition to crop and livestock farming, the Bantu-speaking groups have always taken advantage of the surrounding Okavango environment to collect edible plants, fish, small game and insects, which supplement their diet. Although various ethnic groups practise different socio-cultural and economic activities in the Okavango Delta, there are similarities in their life styles in terms of norms, traditions and customs.

Positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism

Botswana's tourism industry largely depends on wildlife resources and the wilderness experience in the Okavango and Chobe areas. As a result, resources such as museums, national monuments, historical sites and ruins, rock paintings, cultural events, sports and recreational activities remain untapped in terms of their potential contribution to the tourism sector (Government of Botswana, 1997). Despite this limitation, tourism in the Okavango Delta has several socio-cultural benefits to the local people, which include the following:

Access to land for tourism development and formation of local institutions

The rapid growth of tourism in the Okavango in the last 10–15 years has led to the need for access to land and its resources for tourism purposes by local communities in the Okavango region. This has been made possible through the adoption of several government policies and strategies, notably, the Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986, the Tourism Policy of 1990, the National Conservation Strategy of 1990, the Tourism Act of 1992 and the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992 (Mbaiwa, 2004a). These strategies laid the foundation for Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRM), not only in the Okavango Delta but in

Botswana as whole. Each of these documents calls for increased opportunities for local communities to benefit from wildlife and other natural resources through tourism development. As a result, local communities in the Okavango Delta have formed institutions to ensure their participation in natural resource management and tourism development. These institutions are known as Community-based Organisations (CBOs) or Trusts. Trusts or CBOs are a legal requirement by the Botswana Government before a tourism licence is issued and land and its natural resources are allocated to a community. A Trust can be composed of one or more villages, and this depends on geographical location and availability of land with wildlife resources. Trusts therefore provide leadership in the use of land, wildlife and veld resources for tourism purposes. In 2001, there were 12 trusts in the Okavango Delta, that is, about 27% of all trusts in Botswana (National CBNRM Forum, 2001).

The Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986 led to the demarcation of land in the Okavango Delta into small land units known as Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs). On average, a CHA covers about 1000 square kilometres (Mbaiwa, 2003e). Government allocates a wildlife quota to a community in a CHA after an annual assessment of wildlife statistics in the area is carried out. It is in these small land units that local communities control and have access not only to land and wildlife resources for tourism purposes, but also veld products such as reeds and grass that are commonly used for thatching in some of the lodges in the Okavango. For example, the Khwai community cut thatching grass and then sells it to operators for thatching lodges in the delta. Local communities can both sub-lease their CHA and sell their wildlife quota to a safari operator for photographic and hunting safari or operate the business for themselves. Apart from the Khwai community, all the communities in the Okavango have chosen the former. Access to land and its natural resources for tourism purposes and the formation of institutions (CBOs) can therefore be described as socio-cultural benefits and a form of empowerment to local communities in tourism development in the Okavango Delta. These benefits are in line with the ideals of sustainable development of social equity and access to resource use by stakeholders, particularly rural people (WCED, 1987).

Employment creation and financial benefits

One of the most important socio-economic impacts of tourism in the Okavango Delta is its potential to create jobs. Botswana's tourism industry employs over 10,000 people and this accounts for 4.5% of the country's formal employment (BTDP, 1999; DoT, 2000). The majority of the people employed are in facilities found in the Okavango and Chobe regions (BTDP, 1999; Government of Botswana, 1997). This survey found that, in 2001, 923 people were employed in 30 accommodation facilities in the Okavango Delta and 727 other people were employed in 35 tourism-related businesses in Maun. A similar survey conducted in the Okavango Delta at the same time as this one, but on different camps and lodges, by Scot Wilson Consultants in April 2001 indicate that 735 people were employed in 20 safari camps in the Delta (Scot Wilson Consultants, 2001). This suggests that a total of 50 or 79.4% safari camps and lodges in the Okavango delta employ about 1658 people or 16.6% of the formal employment in the tourism sector in Botswana.

The implementation of the CBNRM programme in the Okavango since the late 1990s increased employment opportunities in the area. CBOs provide less than 1000 jobs, mostly in administration, management and as escort guides. Safari companies that sub-lease community CHAs employ close to 500 people, of which the total employment generated by CBNRM in the Okavango is estimated to be 1500 (Arntzen *et al.*, 2003). The Okavango Community Trust, which comprises five small villages in the northern sandveld of the Okavango, employs 95 people, while the Okavango Wilderness Safaris (a photographic tourism safari company that has sub-leased their CHA) employs 137 people from these villages (Mbaiwa & Rantsudu, 2003). The Khwai Development Trust employed 78 people in its tourism camps in 2001 (Mbaiwa, 2002a). The Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust had 69 people employed specifically for hunting activities, Mababe had 21 jobs while Sankuyo had 49 workers (Mbaiwa, 2003e; NWDC, 2003). This indicates that local people are now able to generate employment opportunities for themselves instead of relying on foreign safari companies in the Okavango. Since there is neither industrial development nor manufacturing industries in the Okavango region, tourism has become the major employing sector in the area (NWDC, 2003).

In relation to financial gains, tourism in the Okavango Delta has successfully generated considerable income for local communities through community-based tourism projects. In terms of raw income, Trusts or CBOs in the Okavango Delta generated an estimated 4.8 million pula (about US\$ 800,000) through contracts and joint venture partnerships with safari operators, sale of hunting quotas, crafts and veld products, and small-scale tourism ventures in 2001 (North West CBNRM Forum, 2001). Part of this money has been reinvested in community development projects such as recreational facilities (e.g. sports ground and community halls), vehicles for transport, lodges, camp sites, small general dealers, bars and bottle stores, as well as payment of salaries of employees in Trusts. This therefore indicates the positive socio-cultural impact of tourism in the Okavango Delta.

The cultural rejuvenation

Tourism in the Okavango Delta has also promoted the rejuvenation and preservation of some of the following cultural products and practices:

- (1) *Traditional villages* – the formation of Trusts by local communities for tourism purposes has resulted in some of those communities, such as Sankoyo, Seronga and Gudigwa, establishing tourist camps and lodges which they call traditional villages. The traditional villages provide services such as accommodation in traditional huts, traditional dishes, music and dance, walking trails and animal tracking. In curio shops located in traditional villages, they sell traditionally made souvenirs such as baskets, wood-engraved products and beads. Traditional villages do not only promote and preserve local culture, but also provide employment opportunities for local people. As part of tourism development, traditional villages play a significant role in that they promote and preserve local culture that would otherwise be lost. For example, elderly people do the music and dance at the Gudigwa Camp. Young people

are noted to be unfamiliar with some of the traditional songs and dancing as they spend most of their time at school especially at boarding schools in far away towns (Mbaiwa & Ranstudu, 2003). Traditional villages therefore play a significant role in reviving and preserving the local culture in the Okavango Delta.

- (2) *Mekoro (dug-in canoes) safaris* – the wooden dug-in canoe (*mekoro*) has been used by traditional societies in the Okavango Delta for thousands of years as a mode of transportation. For example, the Bayei used it for hunting purposes, especially for hunting hippos (Tlou, 1985). Although *mekoro* are still being used in the Okavango, the introduction of tourism in the region has added another aspect to their use, which is *mekoro* safaris. *Mekoro* safaris are popular with international tourists. Some of the safari companies, such as those running Audi Camp, Gunn's Camp, Crocodile Camp and Oddballs, provide it as one of the major tourist services. In addition, some 75 canoe drivers (polers) at Seronga took advantage of the popularity of *mekoro* safaris and formed the Okavango Poler's Trust (OPT) with the primary objective of offering *mekoro* safaris to tourists (Mbaiwa, 2002a). In less than 10 years, the OPT has reinvested their financial benefits from *mekoro* safaris by establishing a lodge and campsite along the Okavango River at Seronga. This infrastructure benefits the local people in terms of income and employment opportunities. The use of *mekoro* for tourist activities in the Okavango Delta is one way in which cultural tourism is being promoted. As a result, the history of the people of the Okavango Delta is preserved while at the same time information is provided to visitors on how the different societies in the area were able to move from one point of the delta to the other. Glasson *et al.* (1995) state that, without visitors, local culture and traditions may be lost. The popularity of *mekoro* safaris also confirms Cooper *et al.*'s (1998) notion that tourism can stimulate interest in, and conserve aspects of, the host's cultural heritage. If tourists appreciate the cultural heritage of a destination, that appreciation can stimulate the host's pride in their heritage and foster local crafts, traditions and customs.
- (3) *Basket production* – basket-making is a traditional activity carried out in most parts of the Okavango Delta by the different ethnic groups, mainly for the tourism market (Mbaiwa, 2004b). Baskets were traditionally produced for household and agricultural use not only in the Okavango area but in most parts of Botswana (Groth *et al.*, 1992; Mbaiwa, 2004b; Terry, 1999). Because of the influence of tourism, basket production has become commercialised in the last 20–30 years (Mbaiwa, 2004b; Terry, 1999). Basket-making has resulted in income generation for the rural communities in the Okavango Delta. Most (63.2%) of the people involved in basket making for the tourism market are the elderly (over 40 years of age) without formal education (59.8% have never been to school) and cannot easily get employment in the formal sectors (Mbaiwa, 2004b). As a result, basket-making is one of the cultural artefacts that play an important role in the development of cultural tourism in the Okavango. It also promotes income diversification and improves rural livelihoods in the area.

- (4) *Positive attitudes towards wildlife conservation and tourism by local communities* – Mordi (1991) and Perkins and Ringrose (1996) indicate that communities living in wildlife areas in Botswana had a negative attitude towards wildlife conservation. However, since the late 1990s, when CBNRM was implemented in the Okavango, there has been a positive development of people's attitudes towards wildlife conservation and natural resources among communities involved in the programme. This is shown by 60.9% of the respondents, who stated that it is important to conserve wildlife resources in forests and grasslands around their settlements as wildlife play a vital role in community-based tourism (Mbaiwa, 2002a). In addition, 84.2% of the respondents stated that it is important to encourage and support wildlife-based tourism development in the Okavango Delta (Mbaiwa, 2002a). The socio-economic benefits accruing to local people through community-based tourism might be the main reason why there has been a development of positive attitudes towards wildlife resources and tourism development in their area. This confirms the CBNRM assumption that, when local people derive socio-economic benefits from natural resources in their area, they are likely to have a sense of ownership and stewardship over them and hence use them sustainably (Murphree, 1993; Mwenya *et al.*, 1991).

Negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism

Some of the negative socio-cultural effects of tourism development in the Okavango Delta include the following.

Enclave tourism and socio-cultural impacts in the Okavango Delta

Although local people and citizens of Botswana are beginning to participate in tourism development in the country, the tourism industry that has so far developed in the Okavango Delta is largely owned and controlled by foreign safari companies and investors (Mbaiwa, 2003b, 2005). Tourism that develops in remote areas and is largely owned and controlled by outsiders (e.g. expatriates) has in recent literature been referred to as 'enclave tourism' (Britton, 1982; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Ceballos-Lascurain (1996) defines enclave tourism as tourism that is concentrated in remote areas in which the types of facilities and their physical location fail to take into consideration the needs and wishes of surrounding communities. The goods and services available are beyond the financial means of the local communities and any foreign currency created may have only a minimal effect upon the economy of the host location. Enclave tourism has also been referred to as internal colonialism (Dixon & Hefferman, 1991; Drakakis-Smith & Williams, 1983). Internal colonialism is a phenomenon whereby natural resources in a host region mostly benefit expatriates or outsiders, while the majority of the locals are marginalised either financially or otherwise (Dixon & Hefferman, 1991; Drakakis-Smith & Williams, 1983). In enclave tourism, facilities are characterised by foreign ownership and are designed to meet the needs and interests of foreign tourists (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996).

As tourism in the Okavango Delta is enclave in nature and characterised by foreign ownership of tourism facilities, much socio-economic benefits such as

better paying jobs, particularly those in management, are occupied by expatriates (Mbaiwa, 2002a, 2005). The dominance of the industry by foreign investors and the non-local investment can reduce control over local resources (Glasson *et al.*, 1995). Glasson *et al.* further note that the loss of local autonomy is certainly the most negative long-term socio-cultural effect of tourism in a destination area. A local resident may also suffer a loss of sense of place, as his/her surrounding is transformed to accommodate the requirements of a foreign-dominated tourism industry. Interviews with the local people in the Okavango indicate that there is a general assumption that the delta has been taken from them by government and given to foreign tour operators. For example, the inner parts of the Okavango Delta have been demarcated into concession areas and leased to safari companies. Out of 15 concession areas leased to safari companies by the government, four (26.7%) are leased to citizen companies, six (40.0%) to joint venture companies (between citizens and non-citizens), and five (33.3%) to non-citizen companies. Non-citizen companies are thus directly involved in 11 (73.3%) of the 15 concession areas (Mbaiwa, 2003c). In Moremi Game Reserve, also located in some inner parts of the Okavango Delta, there are 10 camp sites allocated the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana, which is mostly composed of foreign companies in membership. There are also three safari lodges and a boat riding facility all operated by foreign companies (Mbaiwa, 2002b). Local communities, particularly CBOs, operate their businesses on the outskirts of the Okavango Delta. Because of this nature of tourism development, some citizens view the approach negatively because they perceive the domination of inner parts of the Delta by non-citizen companies as 'selling out' of their resources (Mbaiwa, 1999, 2002a). The fact that the tourism industry is predominantly foreign-owned and -controlled indicates that there is no equal access to the use of resources and decision-making between the local people and the tour operators. This is not in line with the ideals of sustainable development as they do not promote equal access and opportunities to all user groups. Glasson *et al.* (1995) and Ceballos-Lascurain (1996) note that tourism should be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the host population. It should provide for local participation in decision-making and the employment of local people in order to make it sustainable. These factors are not necessarily the case with enclave tourism in the Okavango Delta.

Butler (1982), Prosser (1994) and Ceballos-Lascurain (1996) note that resentment, antagonism and alienation often emerge between the host communities and the foreign tourism investors if efforts are not made to include local communities in the tourism business. Cooper *et al.* (1998) state that the negative socio-cultural impacts can be generated if tourism development is not managed properly and the full economic potential of that development is not realised. For example, foreign employment in tourism-related jobs and foreign investment in tourism projects both add to the local resentment of tourism development. The exclusion of hosts from certain tourist facilities and jobs (such as management) increases the pressure of resentment and may create conflict between the host population and the tourists. Suspicion and mistrust between local residents and foreign investors also develop in a foreign-led tourism sector. The problem of suspicion and mistrust between

local people and operators is more pronounced in those communities involved in community-based tourism that have formed joint venture partnerships with foreign safari operators. Gujadhur (2001) notes that the communities feel that the private sector might be 'cheating' them, and the government is 'trying to control them', the private sector believes that communities are 'blackmailing' them and the government is influencing the communities to do so, and the government thinks that communities are 'stuffing their pockets' and the private sector is 'only interested in maximum profits'. Because of this suspicion and mistrust, the communities are the major casualties, hence their poor participation in tourism development. Part of the solution to the problem of enclave tourism in the Okavango is through the adoption of policies that promote a citizen and locally controlled tourism industry.

The development of racism in the tourism industry

Racism is a broad concept with diverse definitions and meaning to different people. In this article, it is used to refer to the unfair treatment of an individual based on their racial background by another person(s) belonging to a different racial group or colour. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between whites (e.g. Afrikaners and Europeans) and blacks in the tourism industry in the Okavango Delta. Safari workers and managers in the Okavango Delta were asked to state whether they believed racism exists in the tourism industry. The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate that 60.0% of the safari managers in Maun and 53.3% in camps and lodges in the Delta confirmed that racism exists. As for safari workers 73.0% of them in camps and lodges confirmed it and only 47.6% in Maun said it exists. On average 59.6% of the respondents (workers and managers) confirmed the existence of racism in the tourism industry in the Okavango Delta. They noted that racism is, among other things, characterised by white operators discriminating against blacks. Local people and politicians in the region accused tour operators from South Africa and Zimbabwe of practicing racism.

Both safari workers and their managers further explained that racism in the tourist industry in the Okavango Delta is associated with factors such as discrimination in employment in management positions, ill-treatment and unfair dismissal from work of black workers by white employers and the

Table 1 Racism in the tourist industry in the Okavango Delta, 2001

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No idea</i>
Safari managers in Maun	21 (60.0%)	9 (25.7%)	5 (14.3%)
Safari managers in the Delta	16 (53.3%)	14 (46.7%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Sub-totals</i>	<i>37 (64.9%)</i>	<i>15 (26.3)</i>	<i>5 (8.8%)</i>
Safari workers in Maun	29 (47.6%)	29 (45.8%)	4 (6.6%)
Safari workers in Delta	27 (73.0%)	8 (21.6%)	2 (5.4%)
<i>Sub-totals</i>	<i>56 (56.6%)</i>	<i>37 (37.4%)</i>	<i>6 (6.1%)</i>
<i>Totals</i>	<i>93 (59.6%)</i>	<i>52 (33.3%)</i>	<i>11 (3.8%)</i>

Source: Mbaiwa (2002a)

unpleasant working conditions that they are subjected to by employers. None of the managers in the 65 safari companies visited was found to be black, except for assistant managers. Safari workers, who were all black and citizens of Botswana, hence noted that there is a deliberate attempt by safari operators not to recruit educated blacks who can occupy management positions that attract high salaries, as such jobs are 'reserved' for whites. Interviews with safari workers indicate that, in cases where locals or blacks occupy management positions, blacks are paid lower salaries than those of their white counterparts in similar positions [e.g. in 2001 at one of the safari companies, two workers, one black and one white, with the same qualifications and experience were paid P2000 (US\$333) and P3200 (US\$533) respectively as their starting salaries, this excludes benefits such as those the white expatriate worker was entitled to]. These differences in salaries and benefits between citizens and expatriates in the tourism industry are confirmed by other researchers such as European Union consultants who produced the Botswana Master Plan of 2000 (BTDP, 1999; DoT, 2000). The European Union consultants, whose main focus was salaries in the tourism industry at the national level, note that, even though the percentage of foreigners in the tourism employment is small (about 4% in the hotel and lodge sectors), they dominate the better paying jobs (BTDP, 1999). On average, local people are paid P500 (US\$83) per month while expatriates are paid P5000 (US\$833) per month (BTDP, 1999; DoT, 2000). The European Union consultants further report that the gap between citizen and expatriate levels of remuneration becomes still wider when benefits and allowances are taken into consideration. Most expatriate employees qualify for generous tax-free gratuities, home leave passages, children's education allowances furnished housing allowances and encashment of leave allowances (BTDP, 1999).

Racism within the tourism industry in the Okavango Delta was first reported by the then Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr George Kgoroba, when addressing a Hotel and Tourism Association of Botswana Annual General Meeting in 1998. The minister made these remarks, 'discrimination against Batswana in the tourism industry is beginning to attract the attention of both tourists and international pressure groups'. The minister observed, that in their recent visit to the Okavango Delta, some tourists from the United States realised that Batswana employees were not holding positions of higher responsibility. The American tourists stated that 'at one of the camps that hosted them, the assistant manager was a very young expatriate girl of 22 years whose qualification for the job was that she happened to be the future bride of the camp manager' (*Botswana Guardian*, 2000b). What the American tourists observed is an employment problem where colour instead of merit determines the position that a worker should hold in the Okavango Delta. To these tourists expatriate whites occupy positions of higher responsibility even when their qualifications are doubtful.

A British tourist also noted racism in the tourism industry after visiting the Okavango Delta in 2000 (*Botswana Guardian*, 2000a). The tourist published an article describing racism in Botswana's tourism industry in the Okavango Delta in a British magazine, *Marie Claire* magazine. The article was then quoted by the Botswana Guardian on 11 August 2000 and was entitled 'The Racist Industry'. In the article, the British tourist noted, 'the Botswana

tourism industry is run by racist whites with deep seated prejudices'. She further stated, 'it seemed a foregone conclusion that black Batswana should automatically assume a lower status than their white counterparts and employers'. The fact that white expatriates occupy management positions in the Okavango Delta while citizens occupy lower positions has already been elaborated upon earlier in this paper.

Racism is further noted by an observation made by a white manager of one of the camps in the Okavango Delta about black citizens of Botswana. The British tourist quotes the manager as having said that black citizens of Botswana are 'generally ignorant, lazy and promiscuous. Its not unusual for a black Motswana to have thirteen sexual partners'. As a result, this explains the manager's 'deep-rooted prejudice' against black workers in the Okavango Delta and the nation of Botswana as whole. That is, it shows the manager's negative attitude towards Botswana and that she looks down upon black citizens of Botswana as a cultural group. This explains the ill-treatment of local black workers by some of the white employers in the Okavango Delta as shown by lower salaries and poor working conditions.

According to Minister Kgoroba, racism in the tourism industry in the Okavango Delta has been observed by international pressure groups such as the British-based Action for Southern Africa, Tourism Concern and Volunteer Services Overseas. These groups were understood to be lobbying British tourists to spend their money on tour packages of southern African countries whose governments ensure that local communities get more meaningful benefits from tourism (*Botswana Guardian*, 2000b). Therefore, if the problems of racism in the Okavango Delta are not addressed, they are likely to negatively impact Botswana's tourism industry. International pressure groups have the potential to successfully lobby for a boycott of the Botswana tourism industry and this will not only affect the economy of the Okavango region that has come to rely on tourism but that of Botswana as a whole.

Socio-cultural effects of tourism on relationships and family structure

Most of the lodges and camps owned by foreign safari companies in the Okavango Delta are located in wilderness areas that are not easily accessible to human settlements or surrounding villages. As a result, safari workers stay for two to three months (depending on a particular company) in the Delta before they are allowed to visit their families or partners in the villages (managers in all camps work as couples or with their partners except for assistant managers and other workers). Safari workers have between seven and 27 off-days (also depending on the company) at the end of a two or three months stay in the Delta. While in the Okavango Delta, safari workers are provided with food rations as well as accommodation. Because of this arrangement, they receive their salaries at the end of two or three months when they return to the main tourist centre of Maun during their off days. Safari workers noted that the long stay away from their families and spouse negatively impacts on their relationships and the family structure. They stated that it often leads to unplanned and extra-marital relationships by partners both in the Delta and at home. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that workers are not allowed visits of any nature while in the Okavango Delta

(Mbaiwa, 2002a). Results indicate that only 8.1% of the safari workers were found to be living with their spouses or partners in the Okavango Delta. This was, however, not because their companies made arrangements for them to stay together but because they met each other and got married while working in the Delta (Mbaiwa, 2002a). Results also show that 35.8% of the workers were married but not staying with their spouses. Although 56.1% of the safari workers were single, it should not be assumed that they do not have partners in the form of girlfriends or boyfriends at their respective villages. Therefore, staying in the delta for a long time can also affect their relationships, resulting in most of them failing to keep to one partner as encouraged by the Government of Botswana in an attempt to control the spread of HIV/AIDs. Apparently, 89.9% of the safari workers in the Okavango Delta fall within the most sexually active age group of 19–49 years (Mbaiwa, 2002a). It is this age group that is most affected by HIV/AIDs in Botswana (Government of Botswana, 2003). This problem needs to be worked out between stakeholders with a view to allowing frequent contact between spouses at least once or twice a month during weekends as opposed to the current state where contact comes after two or three months.

The relocation of some traditional settlements from the Okavango

The Government of Botswana has either relocated or continuously makes suggestions and attempts to relocate some traditional settlements from the Okavango Delta in order to allow tourism and wildlife management (Mbaiwa, 2002b). These suggestions and attempts have in the process caused land use conflicts between these rural settlements on the one hand and the wildlife and tourism sector on the other. The people of Gudigwa and Khwai have been relocated from inner parts of the Okavango when the area was designated as the Moremi Game Reserve (Mbaiwa & Rantsudu, 2003). The people of Jao Flats, Ditshiping and Xaxaba are also being encouraged to relocate from their present sites for tourism and wildlife management purposes.

After being relocated from present day Moremi Game Reserve, the people of Khwai are once more been asked to move from their current site on the fringes of eastern parts of the Okavango Delta. For illustration purposes, this paper uses the case of Khwai to show the cultural change and land use conflicts between the wildlife and tourism sectors on the one hand and rural communities on the other. The Government of Botswana has persistently encouraged the people of Khwai to relocate from their current site to make way for tourism and wildlife management in the area. The tourism and wildlife sectors have proposed that the Okavango should be kept a complete wilderness area for tourism and wildlife management without human settlements (Mbaiwa, 1999). These ideas have become a source of conflict between operators and wildlife managers especially the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) on the one hand and the people of Khwai on the other. Mbaiwa (1999) writes that the management of Tsaro Game Lodge (which has been closed since 2002), Khwai River Game Lodge and Machaba Lodge located along the Khwai River consider the Khwai village to be poorly situated within a wildlife and tourist area, a sentiment that was also expressed by officials from the Departments of Tourism in Maun and DWNP at North Gate in

Moremi Game Reserve. The Khwai settlement is assumed to be destroying the wilderness picture that tourist clients pay to see. The presence of domestic animals such as donkeys and dogs and littering at Khwai is also perceived as destructive to the tourist industry, which prefers a complete wilderness in the Okavango Delta.

In response to suggestions on relocation, Mbaiwa (2002b) notes that the majority (85.7%) of the people of Khwai are opposed to it. About 11.4% of the respondents either had no idea or did not want to comment on the issue of relocation (this was because some of the respondents felt they could be victimised by government if they opposed its plans for re-locating the village). The people of Khwai are opposed to relocation mainly because they regard the wildlife and the tourist sectors as having intruded into their territory. The suggestion of relocation by tour operators and government is perceived as a way of trying to deny them the use of resources upon which their livelihoods depend. In response, the government has so far implemented draconian measures designed to indirectly force or intimidate the people of Khwai to consider relocation. These measures include government suspension of the provision of all services such as water supply, clinics, shops, schools and communications in the hope of forcing the people to consider relocation (Mbaiwa, 1999, 2002b). These measures by government increase the hostility and conflict that exists between the local community and the tourist industry. The suggestion to relocate Khwai village is based on the assumption that wildlife and people cannot co-exist and utilise the same area (Dikobe, 1995). This contradicts the government's strategy of CBNRM, which is designed to promote local community involvement in the management of natural resources, thereby ensuring them direct resource benefits from these resources (Government of Botswana, 1986, 1990). These contradictions show the lack of harmonisation in government policies in resource use and hence land use conflicts amongst different resource users.

Other negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism

Some of the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Okavango can arguably be caused by both tourism and urbanisation, particularly of Maun. These include the following:

- (1) *Dress* – one of the major impacts of the tourist–host relationship is the demonstration effect, that is, when the host behaviour is modified in order to imitate tourists (Ratz, 2002). Tourists visiting developing countries introduce and display a foreign way of life to host populations, especially if these tourists come from different societies (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Jafari (1974) states that local people often tend to imitate the seemingly rich tourists. As a result, a shift in local consumption patterns occur (Wood, 1979) towards Western products (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). In the Okavango Delta, foreign tourists and tour operators have influenced the dress code, particularly of young people. Young people generally imitate tourists in wearing safari-type clothing, such as khaki trousers/shorts and shirts, skirts and blouses, which were not common in the area before the introduction of tourism in the Okavango (Mbaiwa, 2002a). Some young local females have also been influenced to

wear mini skirts and clothes that expose parts of their bodies such as the belly and part of their breasts. Some wear clothes that expose part of their underwear. A manager of Afrikaner origin in one of the main supermarkets in Maun stated that some tourists pass through Maun 'half-naked', meaning that clothes that they wear expose much of their bodies. This manager noted that exposing one's body in public has the potential of being culturally unacceptable to rural communities, especially to the elderly in the area. This confirms conclusions by Cooper *et al.* (1998), who state that tourism has socio-cultural impacts, including the clothes we wear, the food we eat and our general lifestyles and attitudes, which can all be influenced by places we visit.

- (2) *Prostitution* – the problems of prostitution undeniably existed before tourism development in developing countries (Cohen, 1982; Oppermann & Chon, 1997). However, tourism has undoubtedly contributed to an increase in prostitution in many countries, even though it is difficult to determine exactly by how much (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). In the Okavango, prostitution is common in areas which are commonly visited by tourists. This includes main restaurants such as Bull and Bush and key hotels such as Sedia Hotel and Riley's Hotel in Maun (Mbaiwa, 2002a). In her survey, Stallenburg (2003) found that prostitutes at Sedia Hotel and Riley's Hotel are described by managers of these facilities as a problem. Although Stallenburg found that prostitutes target business people coming from other urban areas of Botswana such as Gaborone, tourists from Europe and North America were the most preferred. This is because tourists from Europe and North America pay more money and at times pay in stronger foreign currencies such as the United States dollar, British pound and European Euro. Stallenburg (2003) states that the major reasons why women engage in prostitution in the Okavango include: the need to increase their income to support their families and for pleasure where local black women want to have an experience of having sex with a white person, that is, a European or North American. Some of the prostitutes in the Okavango have full-time jobs during the day where they work as secretaries or primary school teachers. Some were found to be University of Botswana students on long winter vacation (Stallenburg, 2003). Although most of the prostitutes were local residents, some were found to be coming from neighbouring countries of Zimbabwe and Zambia (Stalleburg, 2003). The rapid growth of tourism, particularly the increase in hotels, lodges and camps in the Okavango and tourists in the Okavango Delta, can be assumed to be contributing to prostitution in the area. This also attracts prostitutes from countries such as Zimbabwe and Zambia which are currently experiencing economic hardships. The movement of prostitutes from other countries or from one part of the country to areas where there is a tourism boom is not unusual. Cooper *et al.* (1998) state that, more recently, a major tourism market has grown up around sex tourism in destinations such as Thailand, The Gambia and some of the Central European countries. Commercial sex in these countries may not be officially marketed but tourism in the areas attracts it. Sex tourism or prostitution is not legally allowed in Botswana; however,

it continues to be a growing social problem in destination areas such as the Okavango Delta. The danger of prostitution is that it is associated with cultural breakdown and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially the deadly HIV/AIDS. Stallenburg (2003) found that some prostitutes in the Okavango Delta were not using condoms, mainly because prices charged depended on whether the client wanted to use a condom or not. If a condom was not used, the price was higher. This may not be unique to the Okavango Delta, but is also common in the sex industry in other parts of the world.

- (3) *Crime* – although Botswana is described as one of the crime-free countries (BTDP, 1999), crime in Maun is noted to be on the increase (Table 2). Cooper *et al.* (1998) state that the link between tourism and crime is hard to establish. Mathieson and Wall (1982) state that it is hard to establish whether crime increases simply because of the increased population density or whether it is more specifically associated with tourism. Cooper *et al.* (1998) note that the presence of large numbers of tourists provides a source for illegal activities including drugs trafficking, robbery and violence. This indicates that crime can be associated with any form of economic development be it tourism, industrial development, agriculture or manufacturing. In the Okavango Delta, tourism is the major economic sector, hence crime can be associated with it. Results in Table 2 show that crime increased by 15.8% between 1999 and 2001 in Maun. However, the Maun Police Station Commander noted that petty thefts, particularly house-breaking and theft, are the major crime in the villages. Oppermann and Chon (1997) state that tourists may be accidental or specific victims of crime violence because they are easier victims. Stealing has occurred of belongings of tourists staying in campsites such as Sedia Hotel Campground, Audi and Crocodile Camp (Stallenburg, 2003). In other instances there is burglary and theft in some tourist facilities. For example, there have been reports of theft of gasoline from bush aircraft that park at Maun Airport and fly tourists into the Okavango Delta (Stallenburg, 2003). Some of the crimes, such as drug trafficking, which are usually associated with tourism were reported to be almost non-existent in Maun (Mbaiwa, 2002a). Although crime rates in the Okavango were described by the area police commander as low, it is accurate to conclude that tourism has an influence on its increase.

Table 2 Crime statistics in Maun, 1999–2001

<i>Year</i>	<i>Theft</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Annual increase rate (%)</i>
1999	431	2343	2774	28.0
2000	501	2568	3069	31.0
2001	642	3429	4071	41.3
Total	1574	8340	9914	

Source: Mbaiwa (2002a)

- (4) *Unacceptable 'vulgar' language* – ECTRC (1988) and Prentice (1993) state that language presents a particular sensitive issue, especially when a new language is introduced in the host region. The growth of tourism in the Okavango Delta is also associated with the introduction of what is locally considered an unacceptable 'vulgar' language. Interviews with safari workers and managers indicate that bad foreign language or words used include: 'fuck you', 'damn you', 'ass hole', 'bad ass' and many other insulting expressions commonly derived from the Afrikaans language and English mostly spoken in United States (Mbaiwa, 2002a). Young people are mostly affected by this language problem, since they copy it easily. Apart from the use of vulgar language, its now fashionable among young people to imitate Americans or speak with an American accent when they have to address someone in English. To most of them, they are considered skilled in English when they speak with an American accent. This attitude has in the process resulted in the distortion and corruption of some local names when pronounced in English. Cooper *et al.* (1998) state that it is not even necessary for tourists to come into direct contact with members of the host population for the demonstration effect to take place. Those members of the host population who are influenced by the behaviour of the tourists are likely to influence other members of their community by their changed attitudes and behaviour. This can be classified as an indirect socio-cultural impact. In the case of the Okavango, it is not necessarily the tourists who are noted for vulgar language but the foreign operators in the region. Foreign operators interact with local people at the work place where the use of this language is common, workers therefore copy it, only for it to spread to their communities.

Conclusion

The development of tourism in the Okavango Delta has both positive and negative socio-cultural impacts on local communities. Its positive socio-cultural impacts include: the improvement of various local services such as entertainment, health, telecommunications, banking and local government administration, infrastructure development such as tarred roads, airports and airstrips, hotels and lodges, and the participation of local communities in community-based tourism and natural resource management. The participation of local communities in tourism has resulted in income generation and employment opportunities for local people. Local communities therefore generate their own jobs and income from tourism without necessarily relying only on safari companies for such benefits. The introduction of traditional cultural villages by some trusts where traditional accommodation, dishes, music and dance are offered as tourist services will go a long way to preserve and rejuvenate cultural practices in the Okavango Delta. This also applies to *mekoro* safaris and basket-making. Glasson *et al.* (1995) state that, without visitors, local culture and traditions may have been lost completely as might the market for traditional products. Tourism development in the Okavango Delta thus promotes the preservation of local culture, at the same time acting as an alternative livelihood strategy at a time when traditional livelihood strategies

such as agricultural production, hunting and gathering are either performing poorly or have since been abandoned (Mbaiwa, 2004b).

Tourism development in the Okavango Delta also has negative socio-cultural impacts which threaten the quality of life among local people. These impacts include: enclave tourism, racism, relocation of traditional communities, break-up of the traditional family structure and relationships, increase in crime, prostitution and the adoption of the Western safari style of dressing and a traditionally unacceptable 'vulgar' language by young people. While culture is not static but dynamic, it is necessary that negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Okavango be addressed by all stakeholders (government, local people, operators) in the industry. As a new economic sector in the region tourists needs to be sensitive to traditional norms, culture and customs of the local people. This will promote its sustainability and acceptance by local communities as an alternative livelihood strategy. Therefore, stakeholders in the tourism industry should have collaborative structures that promote dialogue, not only through the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policy not only for economic gains, but at any time the need arises. For example, the CBNRM Forum in the Okavango which is a composition of CBOs government and safari operators that sub-lease community tourism areas should not only limit themselves to discussing contract and lease agreements, natural resource management and royalties, but should also include labour issues, racism, HIV/AIDS and salary differences in safari camps. The Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB) should also not limit itself to promoting the tourism industry of Botswana but also address these issues with its members between workers. In a similar note, safari workers who are not unionised (Mbaiwa, 2002a) will need to form a union to promote their views and interests at the workplace.

Although the problems of enclave tourism can be addressed through CBNRM initiatives, local empowerment, particularly for citizens who are willing to invest in tourism in the Okavango Delta, should be given priority. In Kenya for example, Ondicho (2000) notes that the Kenya Tourist Development Corporation (KTDC), a government parastatal within the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, was established in 1965 through an act of parliament. One of the main goals of the KTDC was to provide finance and technical support to potential investors in different sections of the tourism industry with emphasis on small and medium-sized hotels, lodges and other forms of accommodation by citizens of Kenya. From this policy framework, Kenya's tourism development objectives were, among other things, to increase tourism's contribution to the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), raise the foreign exchange earning capacity, create more employment opportunities, and increase Kenyan ownership and management of the industry. In furthering its commitment to tourism development, the government of Kenya established the Kenya Tourist Board (KTB) in 1996, to market and promote Kenya as a tourist destination both locally and internationally (Ondicho, 2000). This approach to tourism development in Kenya resulted in increased ownership of tourism facilities by the people of Kenya. In Botswana, much has not been done in that direction. Botswana does not have an institution responsible for financing tourism projects for citizens nor a Tourism Board (the process of

establishing a tourism board is ongoing). The Tourism Board would otherwise relieve government of the burden of tourism marketing both locally and internationally as well as direct monitoring of tourism development, particularly on issues of socio-cultural, economic and environmental concern. This will in the process promote sustainable tourism development in the Okavango Delta.

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