

Tourism Business Opportunities for Community Development among Tribes/Indigenous Communities in India & Canada: Anthropological Dimensions.

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Introduction

The contributions of anthropology towards national policy formulations in respect of tribes, Aboriginal or Native or First Nation or indigenous communities (small-scale societies) all over the world have been well established. In an increasingly globalizing world the small-scale societies are keen to participate in the development process on their own terms. The traditional abodes of the tribes and other small-scale societies are fascinating tourist destinations that trigger “human exploratory behaviour” because of cultural, geographical, ecological peculiarities and remoteness of their habitats; in order to satisfy the fundamental human curiosity to experience other ways of life and other cultures.

Tourism industry has attained the stature of a major player in the new economic order. Global tourism is dominated by transnational corporations, having national and local tourism development initiatives. Many nations see tourism as a means for speedy economic development. Tourism industry being run by the corporate sector and promoted by the Governments have a negative image among the people and communities at the local level. A realization is setting in that tourism destinations are limited and a successful strategy is in addressing the concerns of all involved, primarily the development concerns of local communities in order to sustain the tourism project itself. In such a scenario tourism is being situated in the domain of development initiatives.

India and Canada, two Common Wealth Member States, who are also members of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) share the belief that tourism can be effectively used as a programme for sustainable development and eliminate poverty. In this direction the Ministry of Tourism and the India Tourism Development Corporation being the nodal agencies for promoting tourism in India, assist the States and the respective state corporations to promote tourism. India is ranked by the World Travel and Tourism

Council (2005) as the world's 3rd fastest growing travel and tourism economies. The *Incredible India* tourism drive offers the concept of *Tribal Experience* in Central India, North East India and Western India. Tourism in India has evolved from its early 'cultural tourism' days to aggressive marketing today wooing the world tourists. The Central Government is keen to promote tourism in the North East by opening up hitherto 'restless areas'. Much skepticism is expressed by the people of the region.

Canada, ranking 10th in the world's most populous tourist destination (WTO 2003) was envisaged to generate up to 20% of the revenues in 2005 from the cultural heritage tourism sector. The Canadian Tourism Commission has identified *Aboriginal Tourism* as one of the unique brands of cultural and heritage tourism, under the auspices of *Aboriginal Tourism Canada* (a partnership based organization of Canada's Regional Aboriginal Tourism Associations). 'The revenues of the Aboriginal tourism industry in 1995 were estimated at \$270 million or just 0.5% of the entire Canadian tourism industry. Estimates of 2003 put the industry's value at \$474 million with 6,400 people directly employed' (ATC 2003).

Historical parallels in Tribal/Aboriginal enactments in India & Canada

The anthropological usage of the term 'tribes' in the context of India basically refers to all those communities who are notified by the President of India under Article 342 as 'Scheduled Tribes' (ST). The criteria adopted for consideration are characteristics like socio-economic backwardness, geographic isolation, distinctive culture, linguistic and religious traits and shyness from outsiders. The distribution of the ST communities numbering 698 has concentration in the North East, Central, North West, South and the Andaman Island regions, but form only 8.08% of the total Indian population (Census 2001). The North East region of India (one of the research contexts for this paper) comprising of eight States (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura) forms the homeland of 166 ST communities who form 57.3% of the region's population (Census of India 2001). They are of Mongoloid stock and speakers of Tibeto-Burman, Tibeto-Chinese, Kuki-Chin and Monkhmer languages who had specific territorial areas of control till the British Colonial annexation of the region in the mid 19th Century (Bhattacharjee 1977). The Colonial administrators

demarcated tribal inhabited areas as 'excluded areas'-excluded for outsiders or non-tribes. In the independent India, ST communities of some of the states of the North East Region were also granted special constitutional protection under Article 244 (2) known popularly as the Sixth Schedule (Gassah, 1997). The provisions of this enactment provide exclusive right to the ST groups over their land in the defined areas and outsiders including tribes from other regions cannot buy and own land in the notified area; further the tribal customary laws and their political institutions are legally recognized.

The North East India tribal context in particular and the protections granted to the STs of the region under the Indian Constitution have many parallels with the provisions of the Aboriginal rights granted to the Aboriginal Americans, known variously as the 'Indians', indigenous people, First Nations, Native peoples, Métis and Inuit. Kulchyski (1994:5-6) quotes Slattery (1987) to introduce the issue of Aboriginal rights that 'it originated in the colonial law that defined the relationship between the British Crown and the native peoples of Canada and the status of their lands, laws, and existing political structures articulated through the Royal Proclamation of 1763. At Confederation they passed on to federal sphere, and formed a body of basic common law principles operating across Canada. These principles were protected in part by the provisions of constitutional instruments such as the Proclamation of 1763, and the Constitution Act, 1867. With the enactment of the Constitution Act in 1982, they have become constitutionally entrenched'. Kulchyski (1994:11- 13) further examined 'the structural aspects of the Canadian Aboriginal rights and divided it in to two main categories: property rights and political rights. Property rights included land rights and rights over resources (hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering rights); the foundation of these rights is the doctrine of prior occupancy. Aboriginal political rights involve Aboriginal self-government and a variety of freedoms -of movement beyond provincial or national borders, of religion and spirituality, from taxation and so on'.

The above brief examination of the historical political background of the North East India tribes and the Canadian Aboriginals amply demonstrates that development planning for the ST/Aboriginal communities is a very sensitive in both countries. The indigenous

communities are eager to convert their handicaps into advantages by availing the opportunities coming their way in terms of tourism activities.

Methodology of study

The tourism development efforts in the ethnically sensitive region like North East India created an academic interest in the author to look for similar efforts in the Canadian Aboriginal context and got an opportunity to take up a project under the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute's Faculty Exchange Programme 2006-2007. During a four week visit to Canada in May-June 2006, affiliated with the Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba, an attempt was made to grasp an understanding of the 'Aboriginal Tourism Canada' and compare with the efforts of 'Tribal' North East India. The North East India context was examined through case studies prior to the Canadian phase. The approach of the study is basically qualitative with an emphasis on observing and studying the activities in their natural settings, gaining an insiders perspective of the phenomenon not only that of the hosts but also that of the guests and the facilitators. Social Anthropological method of qualitative research has been employed in the fieldwork. Tourism research though traditionally weighed in favour of quantitative research method is slowly but steadily realizing the advantages of 'qualitative research methodology' (Phillimore and Goodson 2004:4). Participant observation and ethnographic method have been used to gain an insider perspective of the stake holders in the tourism generating situations that were investigated.

Tourism models

At international and domestic levels tourism industry is very competitive and the resource base is large scale and high volume with immense potential for flow of foreign exchange. In such an environment, developed, developing and poor nations are eager to capture maximum market share of the global industry by packaging and marketing tourism of all hues. Tourism typologies are innumerable and new brands keep emerging. Smith (1977) identified five types of tourism in terms of the kind of leisured mobility undertaken by the tourists, ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental and recreational. The multiplicity of tourism activity and the negative impact of tourism on the host

nations/communities have given rise to the concept of *'Practicing Responsible Tourism'* (Harrison & Husbands 1996:2). Though responsible tourism initiatives did not intend to evolve a new brand or type it ultimately gave rise to a product or brand called 'ecotourism' and the brand (new phenomenon) encompasses all shades of responsible tourism (alternative, appropriate, sustainable, progressive, soft, sensitive, green, nature, postindustrial and other appropriate terms; Addison 1996:297).

Tourism's positive impacts on indigenous populations around the world in terms of economic growth and development (jobs and business opportunities); increased government expenditure on tourism infrastructure that may also benefit residents (improvements to roads, water supply and sewage treatment, electrical servicing); cross-cultural education/communication; and preservation of local traditions among others have been highlighted by Mansperger (1995) as quoted by Addison (1996:299). Addison also referred to the 'social costs, disruptions to normal economic or subsistence activities; adoption of tourists' consumer behaviour; interference with social reciprocity and kinship obligations and social differentiation as a result of money flow; social factionalism caused by disagreements over specific projects; allocation of public sector capital resources to tourism infrastructure overlooking the needs of the local community'. Community development and tourism development conceptually are multi-disciplinary fields which utilize various academic perspectives, theories and methods; however the complimentary nature of the two in terms of sustainable development is widely recognized (Nelson 1993:2-3, Butler 1993:28). The 'community-based approach to tourism development' (Reid 2003:135, Woodley 1993:137) especially in the context small scale societies has not received serious consideration as yet. Community centric tourism initiatives of the tribes/indigenous people in India and Canada under the brands of ecotourism, cultural and heritage tourism models are significant and recent initiatives. Ethnographies of the such initiatives and an interventional research approach by social anthropologists is urgently required to provide a holistic approach for representing environment, local people, and tourists as interlinked components of community tourism policy making and planning.

Contextualizing tribal /aboriginal tourism

The indigenous people are longing for a self-reliant, communitarian and spontaneous development, which is not happening at the ground level. Development no doubt has been occurring but not suitably adapted to address the problems specific to small geographic pockets within their regions and the ethnic groups living therein, in short development planning has to be community specific because communities occupy specific territories. Communities should be the 'micro' unit for development planning and there should be a working definition for the concept of community itself. In the context of 'tribal/aboriginal' community development in North East India or Canada the communities can be viewed as ethnic geographic units. Macro planning for the regions of their distribution as a whole alone may not yield positive results. The ethnic groups may be feeling threatened by the domineering nature of exogenous development planning and implementation that is submerging the indigenous. The fear of the marginality originates from the fear of being swallowed up by the globalizing forces.

The aboriginal areas are not an exemption to the influence of the 'new economy' and its globalizing forces. The 'new economy' is the all-concurring force of capitalism powered by competition. The simple subsistent economies of the aboriginal communities need to be protected against the marauding 'new economy', though in economic terms the market forces constitute the core and the weaker economies constitute the 'periphery'. But in the context of tribal areas of North East or the Aboriginal territories of Canada, the 'core' is now the periphery because of the widening gap between rich and poor. In such a context the appropriate strategy for development planning is 'globalization from below' (Falk, 1993 quoted by Reid 2003:58). Globally this sort of movement has become frequent in recent times as a reaction to corporate globalization that is affecting poor regions of the world.

In the concept of 'globalization from below' the central theme is coalition building in and between communities. In the context of the Aboriginal communities of Canada such coalition building has emerged in political, economic, cultural and socio-religious levels. From the angle of tourism development the Aboriginal Tourism Canada (ATC) formerly Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada (ATTC) has been operative over a decade. Community

development through tourism development could be the focal point for this coalition building. The working definition provided by Reid is very appropriate for conceptualizing community development or tribal development, (especially in the context of the aboriginal communities of Canada & North East India) which suggests that the focus is on change, indigenous problem identification, participation of all concerned community members in the activities and process of development of the community, the notion of self-help and community control of the process and outcome (Reid 2003: 90). The over arching principle is the stress on process than product.

According to ATC, Aboriginal tourism is defined as “any tourism business that is owned or managed by Indians, Inuit or Métis people. It comprises the full spectrum of tourism products and services, be it traditional or contemporary. This includes: accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, attractions, travel trade, events and conferences, adventure tourism, recreation, and arts and crafts.” (Rostrum 2002). A recent Alberta study (i.e. Alberta Aboriginal Tourism Product Opportunity Analysis undertaken by PWC Consulting 2002) defines Aboriginal tourism as “all tourism related businesses that offer an aboriginal themed experience”. ATC vision is to ‘represent Aboriginal people as world leaders in tourism in harmony with their culture’ with the mission to ‘help with cultural revival within a community, foster a sense of pride, teach young people about their history and heritage, help employees develop front-line and management skills, help dispel the stereotypical image of Aboriginal people, help employees gain transferable skills, allow new Aboriginal partnerships with neighbors and businesses, & share aboriginal culture and heritage with rest of the world’ (ATC Web).

Though not comparable with the Aboriginal Tourism Canada initiatives, the ST communities in India in general and the STs of North East India in particular are keen to avail the tourism business opportunities. The destination ‘*India’s North East*’ is being marketed as ‘*Paradise unexplored*’ by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The official position of the Government of India is that the land locked North East is the gate way to South East Asia under the ‘Look East Policy’ to open up & promote North East to forge economic cooperation and promote tourism (cf. Bezbaruah 2005). ‘The infinite variety of its geographic setting, its topography, its varied flora and fauna and

avian life, the history of its people and the variety of its ethnic communities and their rich heritage of ancient traditions and lifestyles, its festival and crafts make it a holiday wonderland that's just begging to be discovered afresh' is how '*India's North East*' is officially described by the 'Traveller's Companion' (2005). The above portraits mostly depict the tribal life in full splendor, variety and colours.

Tourism generating situations in North East India

All the eight States of the North East Region are keen to promote tourism. But unlike the Canadian context the efforts of the communities here are disorganized & sporadic. Two situations in North East India were investigated:

1) Community tourism initiative in Mawlynnong village in Meghalaya State

The Khasi inhabitants of Mawlynnong village, in the Pynursla block, East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya are horticulturists. They came in contact with the Anglican Missionaries from Dhaka in the year 1903. The cynic beauty of the village cradled in the southern slopes of Khasi Hills overlooking the flat landscape of Bangladesh literally makes it 'God's Own Garden', the initial reaction of the British Missionaries of Anglican Church and the slogan by which the villagers have decided to attract tourists to their village is for a 'little while in the God's own garden'. The appreciation by the outside world has encouraged the villagers for three to four generation now to develop an excellent system of cleanliness and the village *dorbar* (council) decided to turn the flow of tourists into business opportunity. Accordingly resolutions were taken to form a body "Mawlynnong Tourism Promotion Group" under the village council to implement and monitor cleanliness measures such as ridding the streets and footpaths from all kinds of waste & plastics, beautification measures such as planting flowering plants, ornamental trees and fruit bearing trees; not allow the cattle to roam freely & control the canine population. Eco conservation, wild life protection measures and restrictions on uncontrolled fishing were also implemented democratically. Essential infrastructure like guest houses using traditional architecture and locally available building materials were constructed and with common fund available with the council. Tourist guides were also appointed by the council to accompany the tourists on forest trekking expedition from Pynursla to locations like spots like Urtyrming water falls, Riat Kajeet falls, Niriang falls

and the unique Riwai Living Root Bridges. The route also has calm swimming opportunity down stream of the Niriang falls. Tourism related employment (for about ten individuals) apart the income generation activities for the village council are the rentals on the guest house and a share in the guide payments. Some of the households also provide food to the guests on payment. The community based eco-tourism efforts and the tangible achievements of 'Mawlynnong Tourism Promotion Group' have inspired the adjoining village of Nongeitniang to construct a guest house overlooking the Bangladesh valley and the famous Riat Kajeet water falls. Initiatives are afoot to involve more villages of the Block in the ambit of this ecotourism effort.

2) Cultural Heritage Tourism effort in Kisama, Nagaland State

At Kisama, 9kms from Kohima the state capital of Nagaland (in the historic Kohima-Mayanmar road), the State Government has established the 'Naga Heritage Complex' in the year 2000. The state of Nagaland was formed in the year 1963 (state formation has not yet solved the issue of Naga nationalism). The concept of the heritage complex (initially 'heritage village') in the context of the Naga tribal conglomeration of sixteen major sub tribes (with in the state of Nagaland), has its origin in the realization of the need for unification efforts of the highly territorialized groups by emphasizing on their common heritages. In the Kisama complex there are sixteen traditional buildings, representing the unique architectural feature of each group, all are built using traditional building materials of bamboo, wood and grass thatching. Traditional wood carving motifs are extensively used in the structures. The representative buildings of each group are either the youth dormitories along with huge log drums, traditional houses of the chiefs and rich men decorated with trophies of the wild games and replicas of human skulls (reflective of the past head hunting practices of the Nagas). The buildings also house the all traditional furniture, implements and weapons that are associated with each group, including the fireplace area. The 1st December marks the State formation day and all the festivities that are associated with the occasion has now moved in to the Naga Heritage Complex and now it is marked by a week long cultural extravaganza termed 'Hornbill Festival' sponsored by the State Tourism Department. The complex comes alive during the festival, all the buildings are lived in by the representative groups in their traditional colorful dresses, cook their own food and visitors can savor Naga delicacies which

include pork, beef, *mithun* (*Bos frontalis*-semi domesticated buffalo), fish, Naga rice beer, exotic wasp and caterpillar *chutnies* (paste) which are normally taboo for majority Hindu section of India. In the amphitheater at the centre of the complex the traditional ceremonial dances and folk games of each group are staged. There is also sale of authentic Naga traditional craft and handloom products and evening are meant for the rock bands which is the main attraction for the Naga youth. The whole event is a celebration of the rich cultural heritages and traditions of the Nagas (which they are willing to present to the world), an endeavor to improve the fraternal feelings among the Nagas themselves and an expression of a sense of pride in their heritages. After the conclusion of the week long 'Hornbill Festival' the complex though wears a deserted look is open to visitors. The 'Hornbill Festival' also is instrumental in promoting tourism in the trouble torn state (the restrictions of inner line/restricted area permit for domestic/international visitors notwithstanding), village based community tourism initiatives (under heritage village concept that provide actual village life experiences eg:- Khonoma, Kohima district, Chuchumiliyang, Mokokchung district) are also slowly picking up.

Aboriginal Tourism generating situations in Central Canadian Provinces

Under the Aboriginal Tourism Canada venture two situations were visited and had brief interaction with the stakeholders.

1) Brokenhead Ojibway Nation

The Brokenhead Ojibway Historic Village is 82 kilometers to the north of Winnipeg up the highway 59 in the Manitoba Province of Canada. This is an Aboriginal Reserve, touching the southern shores of Lake Winnipeg, forming part of the South East Tribal Council. The Brokenhead River, after which the village is named, runs through the core area of the community. Upon approaching the village along path 59 the land mark is the South Beach Casino run by the Ojibway Nation. The South Beach Casino is a flourishing tourism enterprise for the community and the time did not permit to gain a perspective on the 'game tourism' ventures by the Aboriginal community. The brand under which the Broken Head community tourism is being marketed is under heritage tourism and hence branding as 'Historic Village'. From anthropological point this was significant and worth

investigating. The 'historical' elements that are projected for tourism are aspects of their traditional way life and economic practices. Visitors can camp in the traditional tepees (with a modern conferencing facility and kitchen located in the camp); a bison ranch; and a native craft centre are the aspects of traditional culture that have become part of the tourism activity. The Casino is thronged by the Americans, tepee camping facility is mostly availed by European tourists, while the ranch is visited by natives themselves to learn about the technicalities of the ranch and to buy bison calves for rearing; and the craft centre is a source for production and sale of authentic traditional crafts, produced locally. The Band Chief of Broken Head Nation is a prominent leader of the Aboriginal Tourism Canada initiatives and tourism enterprise is the main source of income for the community.

2) The Grassy Narrows

Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) is a first nation community located roughly 70 kilometers north of Kenora in the Northwest corner of Ontario. The reserve belongs to the Anishinabek people, a band of about seven hundred people. They are fully depended on traditional ways of hunting, trapping and fishing. Ecotourism activities are also an alternative source other than the Governmental support received. Grassy Narrows is in the lake country of Kenora and surrounded by the boreal forest landscape. The Grassy Fishing Lodge is the main tourist attraction of the village. Anishinabek entrepreneurs have also initiated privately owned sport fishing lodges after obtaining lease license from the band council for a specific period. The tourism activity related to fishing is seasonal starting in the month of May and lasting till the end of August. The American clients (families, corporate houses, associations) who patronize Grassy have long standing association and most of the business is booked well ahead of the season. The lodge provides facility to stay (cottages, dorms) and board. Fishing equipments like motor boats, fishing gear are also supplied. Those who are well off fly in an advance party of crew and equipments. Generally a group stays for a week.

The community is facing a crisis situation emerging out of dispute over land rights .They allege that 'their traditional lands stolen by the crown and forest industry, then their people were poisoned by mercury pollution from a mill in Dryden, and now the Abitibi-Consolidated mill in Kenora is about to clear-cut the last and only remaining mature

forest blocks directly surrounding their community. Abitibi-Consolidated is about to approve a 20 year forest plan that will destroy their traditional way of life. Grassy Narrows Anishnabek cling to the last shreds of their culture. The clear cutting plans will not only destroy community aesthetics, but will also eliminate trapping and hunting and important tradition, income, and food supply for many community residents. If the cutting continues as planned by Abitibi-Consolidated, the community will be left isolated in a devastated landscape. Many members of the community have protested the company's plans at Abitibi's information open houses. The Grassy Narrows First Peoples have started a road blockade to protect their lands from logging by Abittibi Consolidated. Their whole community has come out to support it and they have asked for continued support to assist them in this struggle to protect the land and their way of life' (DaSilva 2006). The fight of the community has been take up by the San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network and it is lobbying investors and bankers of Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd., and publicizes the Grassy Narrows fight for its land in northwestern Ontario. The blocksde is assisted by the volunteers from the Rainforest Action Network. The tourist clients who visit the Grassy are also donating funds to the band in their struggle to protect their land and environs for sustainable community tourism initiatives.

Discussion

The above accounts of tourism generating situations in the context of North East India & Canadian Provinces, though not fully representative of the total situation, have commonalities. In the context of North East India the ongoing tourism ventures operate at two levels

At the community and at the government level.

The village level effort is reflective of the 'bottom up' approach to tourism development in which the members of the community over a period of time have made a conscious choice to host visitors to their village who are keen to experience for a while life in 'gods garden'.

There are many such 'gardens' in the area for that matter in many other rural contexts of North East India. But the crucial element is the conscious decision or choice made by the community.

The success of Mawlynnog has caught the attention of neighbouring villages as well and there are indications that community tourism is about to become a movement in the Khasi Hills.

The Naga Heritage Complex and the 'Hornbill Festival' in Nagaland is an example of 'top down approach' to tourism development. The event is made possible because the different Naga communities are willing to stage their traditional dances and games that are otherwise performed for ceremonial or ritual occasions, during the 'hornbill festival' for the public gaze. The occasion serves for a true celebration of the Naga heritages and in a fast changing society such an event also serves the promotional purpose of traditional elements of culture. The exclusiveness, numerical dominance and the cultural space available for the Naga communities in their own state is primarily the driving force of this venture.

The unique histories of every Naga village and their conscious efforts to preserve the elements of these heritages have received a boost if the efforts in the Ao Naga and Angami Naga villages in Mokokchung and Kohima districts of Nagaland are promoted and supported. But there are many limitations in turning the Nagaland venture into a tourism promotion mode due to the prevailing political tensions.

The Brokenhead Ojibway instance is a typical Aboriginal Tourism business model. Leaving aside the game tourism (casino), all elements of the venture fall in the category of Aboriginal Tourism in its strict sense (but now game tourism is in fact emerging as a major component of Aboriginal Tourism which is a non-Aboriginal product).

The venture is attracting attention of First Nations elsewhere who are in startup modes and are in the look out for success story. The initiators of the Brokenhead experiment are very much in the forefront of Aboriginal Tourism policy planning and implementation.

The Grassy Narrows situation is representative of the ongoing struggle of the First Nations to ascertain their rights over the land on the principle of prior occupancy and the very survival of their own traditional ways of living.

The issue is crucially and directly linked to the continuity of sport fishing and other ecotourism opportunities. The community has been successful to gather

national and international support for organizing and sustaining a prolonged blockade of the logging plans of the Abitibi-Consolidated.

The tourists to Grassy have turned to supporters of the environmental activism initiated by the Aboriginal Anishinabek.

The threat perception that prevail in the minds of the people of Grassy Narrows prompts them to guard their traditional way of life and practices very private and do not allow tourists to witness their ceremonies and rituals as against the Brokenhead situation where the tourists are welcome to experience the culture.

Conclusion

The business opportunity of tourism in the context of developmental aspirations of small-scale societies similar to the Scheduled Tribes in North East India and the Aboriginal Communities of Canada having tourism generating endowments is to be positioned in a special category that draws on the essence of ecotourism, cultural/heritage/community tourism, and responsible tourism practices. Anthropologists need to collaborate and carry out participatory research with such ventures primarily because of the fact that the hosts who are the most critical component of these tourism initiatives are people who should be considered 'humanity's own living heritages' and facilitate in the formulation of projects that addresses the uniqueness of their heritages.

Aboriginal Tourism Canada is a unique brand that has recognized this unique character and built partnership of all Aboriginal groups, whereas the Tribes of North East have not been successful to build partnership so far. There is indeed a need for partnership building and collective action in the above lines, but specific to the needs of the communities in North East India. It is also true that in both contexts the initiatives are in the initial stages of development and can learn from each others experiences. The development of the capacity of the people to establish any project is more important than a given project at a given time, stressing the process over product. The scope of community/tribal/aboriginal development in North East India or Canada appears to be increasingly weighed in favour of community economic development (CED). The development initiatives should transform in to a participatory movement and a process so that it could lead to the empowerment of the people involved in the process.

Empowerment itself is a process not an enactment and can only be achieved in stages of powerlessness, awareness, connecting and learning, motivation, and finally reaching a stage at which the people are able to make a creative contribution. The desirable outcome of community development could be intellectual and emotional development of the individual and the community. Community tourism initiatives can generate this positive energy that can empower the people and be an incentive for cultural conservation.

The cautions that need to be exercised have been amply highlighted by Hitchcock (1997: 93-128) in the context of Kalahari Bushmen. There can be no worst scenario than the community members feeling that 'they were in a kind of "human zoo" in which they were objects of scrutiny by rich outsiders' in the wake of tourism and suffer from 'environmental degradation' and 'increased social stratification' (Hitchcock,1997). The collaboration and participation of anthropologists in the efforts of tribes and aboriginal communities to develop appropriate tourism business strategies is urgent to enable them to participate in the globalization and at the same time protect their environment and achieve self perceived development goals.

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