

# Sustainable Tourism Practices on the South Coast, Jamaica: Lessons for the North Coast? A Case Study: Jake's Hotel, Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica.

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## ABSTRACT

The island of Jamaica presents an interesting case of 'two types of tourisms' largely dichotomized by two defined spatial locations. On the north coast, the tourism development is typified by the rapid growth of 'mega' all-inclusive hotels, which are criticized for excluding local residents from some of the most beautiful parts of their coastal environment. On the south coast, however, particularly in the parish of St. Elizabeth, tourism product development is largely centered on integrating the local people and their economy in tourism development. With the use of Jake's Hotel as a case study, the aim of this explorative research was to highlight the main characteristics of the sustainable practices of tourism development on the south coast, with the hope that it will provide a prototype for sustainable tourism development to the rest of Jamaica and other Small Island Developing States (SIDs). Data collected through a qualitative framework, with the use of observations and in-depth interviews, showed that the tourism product there is on a sustainable path of development. Although the hotel is a private development, community members expressed their sense of ownership and inclusion in a plethora of social and environmental benefits derived from the industry, such as, employment opportunities (including the disabled) and the formation of significant economic linkages with the fishing and farming activities.

## INTRODUCTION

The exclusive practices of hotels on the north coast of Jamaica have isolated locals from some of the most beautiful parts of their country. Tourism in 2017 accounted for 32.9% of GDP (JIS, 2018), yet owing to the inequitable distribution of economic benefits, the local people's involvement in the industry on the north coast has been limited. On the contrary, the model applied to tourism on the south coast used a sustainable approach, focusing on the social and environmental pillars of sustainability. The aim of this study is to understand the effects of sustainable practices on the community of Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. This study used the pillars of sustainability concept with specific focus on social and environmental sustainability.

The objective was to identify the social and environmental dimensions of the sustainability practices at the hotel, with the hope that lessons will be provided for the north coast.

## METHODOLOGY

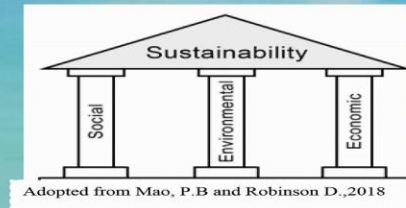
**Data Collection:** May 2018-February 2019

**Semi-Structured Interviews:** This instrument was administered to hotel managers, employees and community members.

**Observation:** The use of the environment was photographed.



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## FINDINGS

Two of the most observable elements seen at the hotel were social and environmental sustainability.

### ➤ The social elements included:

- Establishment of the Breds Foundation which sponsors sports park, coaching in swimming, tennis and football at the primary school level.
- Youth development initiatives focused on socialization and leadership.
- Provision of employment for community members, even those with physical disabilities.
- Support for local businesses by allowing guest to use services provided by them.
- Accessibility of facility to locals.
- Contribution to local culture, through the hosting of the annual Calabash festival.

### ➤ The environmental elements included:

- Buildings of a low density.
- Eco-friendly approach used in building construction e.g. wattle and daub and glass bottles to filter light through building.
- Use of alternative energy sources.
- Use of saline pools instead of chlorine pools.
- Applied engineering approaches to preserve the disappearing coastline.

## CONCLUSION

- The research has established that Jakes Hotel infuses social and environmental sustainability in their product development.
- Measures are taken to protect the environment and preserve local culture.
- The measures used at this hotel to achieve sustainability can serve as examples to the north coast tourism development.



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