

# The Negril tourism industry: growth, challenges and future prospects

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**ABSTRACT.** An isolated and remote fishing village until the late 1960s, Negril has grown to become one of Jamaica's largest and most rapidly expanding resort towns. This chapter seeks to chronicle the growth of the Negril tourism industry since its formal inception in the late 1960s and explore some of the major social and economic challenges that have emerged in recent decades as a consequence of the town's expansion and development. The chapter ends with a discussion on the possible avenues for local stakeholders in the Negril tourism industry (and in extension, Jamaica) to achieve a more sustainable form of development.

**Key words:** Negril, Jamaica, Tourism Industry.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism was formally introduced to Jamaica in the late 1800s, first with the passing of the Hotels Act of 1890 followed by the staging of the Great Exhibition by the Jamaican government in 1891 (Sealey, 1982). Most of the early years saw Jamaica being marketed as a health and pleasure retreat for the rich and famous (Taylor, 1993). It was not until the end of the Second World War that mass international tourism started to develop due primarily to improvements in travel and communication technologies (Cooper, 1990; Gilmore, 2000). This prompted the Jamaican government to shift from a class-based to a mass-based tourism product (Dodman, 2004).

Since then, Jamaica has experienced a remarkable increase in both visitor arrivals and revenue and is now considered one of the leading tourism destinations in the Caribbean (Dodman, 2004). In 1988 annual visitor arrivals (figures include data on both stopover visitors and cruise passengers) exceeded 1 million for the first time. This trend continued into the 1990s, increasing from approximately 1.4 million in 1990 to 1.8 million in 1995 and surpassing the 2 million mark in 1999 (Planning Institute, various years; Jamaica Tourist Board, 2003). This figure increased to an unprecedented total of 3 million in 2006 before declining to 2.8 million visitors in 2008, generating some US\$1.98 billion in gross visitor expenditure (Planning Institute, 2009).

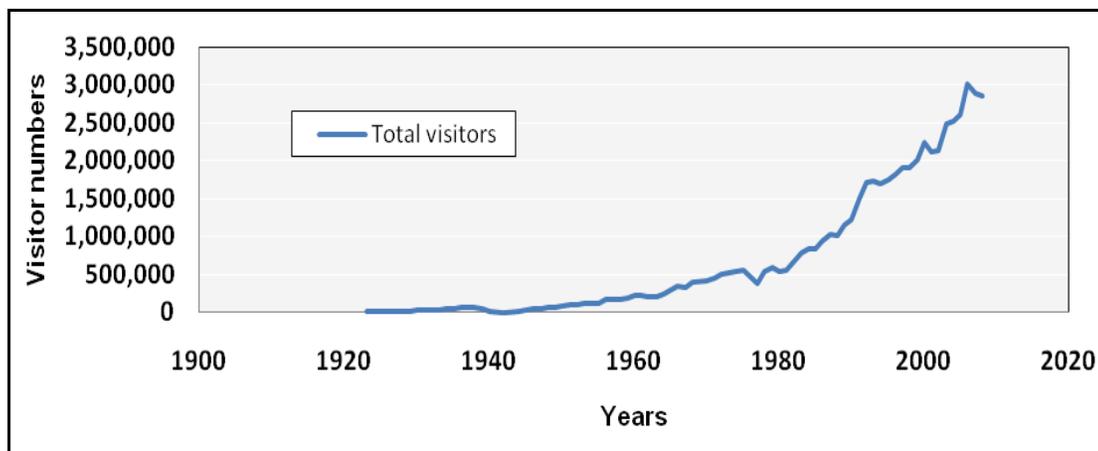


Figure 1. Trends in visitor numbers to Jamaica, 1923-2008. Source: Jamaica Tourist Board, Annual Travel Statistics (various years).

Most of the growth witnessed in the Jamaican tourism industry over recent years has been accredited to the operations of all-inclusive hotels (Issa & Jayawardena, 2003; Boxill, 2004) and is largely confined to the island's north coast in general, and three resort towns – Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Negril – in particular. Together these three resort towns accounted for more than three-quarters of the island's available rooms and direct employment and over two-thirds of stopover arrivals in 2008.

Negril is located on the western tip of Jamaica and according to the last population census is home to a resident population of 5,670 (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2001). An isolated and remote fishing village until the late 1960's, Negril has expanded to become one of Jamaica's major resort towns – hosting an estimated 351,404 stopover visitors in 2008, representing approximately 20 percent of Jamaica's total (Jamaica Tourist Board 2008).

This chapter briefly chronicles the history and development of the Negril tourism industry since its formal inception in the late 1960s. Despite being one of Jamaica's premier resort towns, references to Negril's past have hitherto been brief and lacking in detail. The intent here is to illustrate how the industry, since its inception, has impacted on the development and expansion of the town, and to comment on some of the social and economic challenges associated with this growth. The chapter ends with a discussion on possible future prospects for the resort town. The chapter is informed by an in-depth review of literature and archival research.

## **2. THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEGRIL TOURISM INDUSTRY**

For most of the early 1900s, Negril remained a sparsely inhabited coastal village situated on the island's remote west coast and separated from the rest of Jamaica by an extensive tract of wetland known as the Great Morass (Larsen, 2008). Other inland communities such as Logwood and Sheffield were slightly less remote (Lalor, 1980). Persons residing in these inland communities relied on agriculture as a major source of income. Farmers in these communities were involved in the cultivation of sugarcane – which was sold at Frome, as well as various domestic food crops that were sold in the nearby produce markets situated in Lucea and Savanna-la-mar. Piped water and electricity were non-existent before 1960. Drinking water had to be obtained from natural water holes which led to numerous illnesses related to contaminated water supplies.

Efforts to develop Negril as a tourist centre did not materialize until the early 1960s, starting with the construction of an all-weather surfaced highway linking Negril with Lucea and Montego Bay in 1959 (Lalor, 1980). Prior to this, there was no direct route linking Negril with Montego Bay, which by then, had successfully replaced Port Antonio as the island's leading resort town and had emerged as a key port of entry for Jamaica's overseas visitors. The coastal road from Montego Bay ended some 16 kilometres (10 miles) to the north at Green Island (Lalor, 1980: 130). The village was served by a single dirt track which connected it to the inland community Sheffield, located 6 kilometres to the east. The main modes of transport at the time were mules, donkeys and horses.

Negril's expansion came in the wake of efforts by the Jamaican government in the period leading up to independence in 1962, to diversify its economy away from agriculture and its decision to pursue tourism as a major post-war development strategy (cf. Jamaica Tourism Development Board, 1945). The construction of the highway linking Negril with Montego Bay was just the first in a series of strategies to make the town more accessible and attractive to tourism investment. By the end of the 1960s the Jamaican government had completed a second main road leading from Negril to Sheffield; canalized an extensive portion of the Morass to facilitate increased drainage and to make land available for agricultural use; built a water treatment plant; and extended water and electricity services to the area (Lalor, 1980; Utuokon, 2001).

Interestingly, not much tourism development took place in Negril during the early 1960s. In fact, it was not until 1965 that Negril's first resort – the 26 room Sundowner Hotel – opened for business. Negril's economic base did not shift away from fishing and subsistence agriculture until the 1970s when numerous small and medium sized hotels, guest houses and resort cottages were erected (Lalor, 1980; Pariser, 1996). Prior to this, the tourism industry played little or no part in the town's economy.

The slow pace at which the formal tourism sector grew in Negril was due in part to several key reasons. Firstly, although the area became more accessible with the completion of the highway in 1960, the transportation system was still poorly developed throughout the island. In addition, the main road leading from Montego Bay to Negril was in parts narrow and winding, and over time became laden with potholes (Reimer, 2002). The second reason relates to the high prices in which land (especially beach front properties) was being sold for and the ensuing land speculation that occurred

among potential investors (Lalor, 1980). The third, and probably most important reason for the slow rate of land development in Negril, was the indecisiveness of the then government as to the exact type of development strategy that was appropriate for the area, with a proposed Peat Mining for Energy Project probably being the most controversial of the list of options that were being contemplated. The proposal entailed the mining of peat situated in the more than 6,000 acres (2,430 hectares) of wetland comprising the Negril Morass in an effort by the Jamaican government to diversify the island's energy mix. This however, soon came under strong opposition spearheaded by the Negril Chamber of Commerce (Pariser, 1996). Negril's remoteness and sparse population also served as a disincentive to electorally-minded politicians to promote its development in the early years following Jamaica's independence.

Throughout the 1960s Negril became increasingly popular among North American tourists, mostly draft-dodgers, Vietnam veterans and college-aged counter-culturalists from the United States (Lalor, 1980). Being one of the most remote areas in Jamaica at the time, Negril became a popular destination for these "hippies" who were seeking another isolated location to indulge in their activities unmolested. Often times these activities entailed the smoking of marijuana (Lalor, 1980; Pariser, 1996). The majority of these visitors either resided in the homes of local residents along the Negril's West End or set up their own tents and slept along the beach strip situated to the north of the town centre (Lalor, 1980).

Tourism development burgeoned in Negril during the mid-1970s with the large-scale construction of several resort properties including one of the island's first all-inclusive hotels, the Negril Beach Village (renamed Hedonism II in 1981). The highway linking Montego Bay with Negril was renovated in 1973 and a 670 metre (2,200 feet) long air strip was built a few years later in 1977. What was a mere isolated fishing village in the 1950s was now fast becoming a major resort town. It is instructive to note however, that Negril was only formally recognized as a separate resort area in 1975. Prior to that, the town was included as an extension of the general Montego Bay area in all official records.

The expansion of the formal tourism sector in Negril continued into the 1980s. However, most of this development took place north of the town centre along approximately three miles of pristine white sand beach. Over the years this has produced a distinct pattern of development with medium to large-scale hotel establishments dominating the

Long Bay beach strip and smaller-scale boutique hotels, villas, guesthouses and resort cottages dominating the town's West End (**Figure 2**).

Negril's rapid expansion has gone hand in hand with the growth of the Jamaican tourism industry. By 1982 tourism became Jamaica's main source of foreign exchange – replacing the declining bauxite industry (Hayle, 2005) – and has retained that position since then. Throughout the 1980s, the formal tourism sector expanded rapidly in the Negril resort area. By 1985, Negril recorded a 65.8 per cent hotel room occupancy compared to a national average of only 48 per cent. The same year, direct employment in Negril's tourism accommodation sub-sector totaled 1,610 jobs, representing approximately 12 per cent of the total number of persons directly employed in the island's accommodation sub-sector. A few years later, direct employment in the town's accommodation sub-sector increased by more than 150 per cent to reach 4,061 jobs in 1989, accounting for as much as 22 per cent of the national figure (Planning Institute, 1990).

Tourism's remarkable growth in Jamaica was highly driven by a mix of state incentives ranging from tax cuts to import duty concessions. By the turn of the twentieth century, a total of 5 Hotels Incentive Acts (1968, 1971, 1972, 1985 and 1991) were passed by the Jamaican government (Taylor, 1993; Hayle, 2005). Generally the incentives under these Acts extend to 10 years for approved hotel enterprises and up to 15 years for convention-type hotels having an aggregate number of not less than 350 bedrooms. Likewise, the tourism industry in Negril has benefitted both directly and indirectly from a number of different state incentives and development projects over the years. The construction of the Negril Beach Village in 1976 by the Jamaican government for instance, formed the catalyst for the large scale erection of a number of other resort properties in the area (Winston, 1984). This hotel was owned by the government but sub-contracted to a private-run resort management company headed by John Issa (founder and chair of the SuperClubs all-inclusive chain). The Lucea-Negril water supply system expansion project in 1989 was another development initiative co-financed by the Government of Jamaica in collaboration with the Japanese government and the USAID as part of its drive to develop the island's tourism product.

In 1999 Negril had approximately 5,048 visitor rooms available, with a total of 724,203 hotel room nights sold and an average hotel room occupancy rate of 62.1 per cent (Jamaica Tourist Board, 1999). A total of 53 hotels were now in operation,

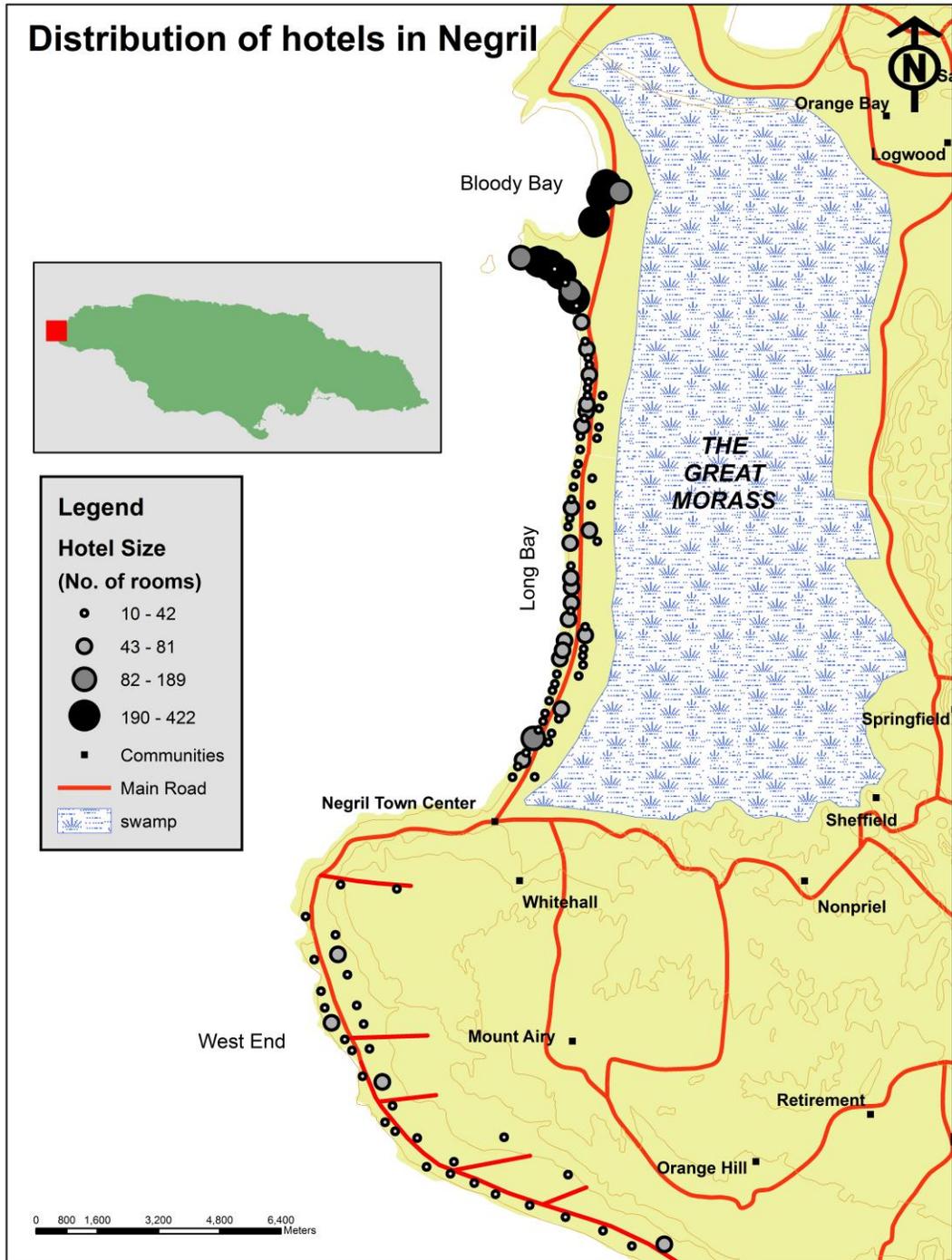


Figure 2: Major hotel zones in Negril

accounting for approximately 63 per cent (3, 194 rooms) of the town’s visitor accommodation capacity. Since then the town has continued to experience remarkable growth in its visitor accommodation sub-sector. Between 1998 and

2008 Negril’s hotel room capacity increased by approximately 34 percent – more than five times that of Montego Bay, the island’s leading resort town. By year end 2009, Negril had some 68 hotels in operation and recorded a total of 7,647 visitor

rooms, representing more than one quarter of all available visitor accommodation for the entire island (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2009). The same year, Negril hosted an estimated 396,848 stopover visitors, accounting for approximately 21.7 per cent of Jamaica's total.

Most of the growth observed in the town's accommodation sub-sector in recent decades can be attributed to the establishment of an increasing number of large-scale all-inclusive properties in the area (Dodman and Rhiney, 2008). More than twenty large all-inclusive resorts are now located along Negril's north end, spanning close to three and a half miles of beach extending from Long Bay to Bloody Bay (Larsen, 2008). The majority of these properties were constructed during the 1980s and the 1990s, several of which are owned and operated by the SuperClubs and Sandals all-inclusive chains. The Negril Beach Village was leased from the Jamaican government in 1981 by the John Issa-owned company, SuperClubs, and was renamed Hedonism II. In 1989, Issa purchased the Hedonism franchise from the government and proceeded to complete construction of his second all-inclusive resort in the area (Grand Lido Negril) one year later. Couples Negril was opened several years later in 1998. The first Sandals property that was established in Negril was opened in 1988. Beaches Negril was opened nearly one decade later in 1997.

The last few years have seen major developments occurring along Negril's famed "Seven Mile Beach". All-inclusive resorts such as Couples Swept Away, Point Village, Negril Gardens and Sunset at the Palms have opened in steady succession during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. The Spanish-owned Riu Negril and Riu Tropical Bay, the most recent additions to the expanding list of all-inclusive properties currently operating in the resort area, were opened in 2001 and 2004 respectively.

### **3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES**

Though remarkable, the rapid expansion of Negril has raised concerns about the viability of the present model of tourism being promoted and its implications for future sustainable development. As with any economic activity, tourism can have serious negative social and economic impacts on local people and their communities if left unchecked or if improperly managed (cf. Dunn and Dunn, 2002; Patullo, 2005). While the effects of the Negril tourism industry on the natural environment are fairly well documented (see for

example Olsen, 1997; Otuokon, 2001; Mitchell et al., 2002), little is known about the nature and extent of the social and economic challenges that have emerged as a result of the town's expansion.

It is also important to note, that when compared to other resort areas in the Caribbean Basin such as Cancún in Mexico and Varadero in Cuba, Negril has developed only to a limited degree. As such, some of the challenges the town faces – as well as the solutions to these problems – may be more relevant and applicable to other small and medium-sized resorts throughout the Caribbean region as a whole.

Given the rapid and unplanned manner in which tourism-induced development has occurred in the resort town, it is not surprising that a number of social and economic issues have emerged as a consequence of this growth, including the selling and use of illicit drugs to tourists, the emergence of squatter communities, privatization of local beaches, and the inflation of real estate prices. However for the purposes of this paper, specific focus will be given to two major problems currently plaguing the local industry – the growing prevalence of sex tourism and the issue of visitor harassment. These problems are inter-linked and are representative of some of the larger macro-economic and planning challenges national policy makers and development planners have been contending with in recent years.

#### **The localization of sex tourism and its implications**

In recent decades sex tourism has emerged as a dominant feature of the Negril tourism industry. While this illicit practice involves a large number of female prostitutes, there is a high and increasing incidence of female tourists indulging in sex tourism with young local men nicknamed "rent-a-dreads" or "beach boys" (Pruitt and La Font, 1995; Blindel, 2003; Johnson, 2009). A survey of 240 foreign female tourists holidaying in Negril and two similar resorts in the Dominican Republic discovered that almost one third of the interviewees had engaged in sexual relationships with local men during their vacation (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor, 1999). A significant number of these women admitted to having exchange money or material goods for sex with local males. More recently, journalist Lorna Martin (2006) writing for the UK based magazine 'The Observer', posits that thousands of single women travel to the island each year, mostly from North America and Europe, in search of young Jamaican boyfriends. It should be noted also, that this illicit practice is not limited to single female tourists as based on personal

observation and other anecdotal evidence, even women vacationing with their partners are having sex with local men.

The increasing number of local men and women engaging in sexual relationships with foreign tourists is a direct result of the high rates of unemployment and poverty characteristic of resort areas in Jamaica as well as the exclusionary and highly uneven way in which the tourism sector is structured. Tourism development in Negril has grown alongside the exclusion of a large segment of the town's local work force. Opportunities to work legally in the tourism sector are usually limited, and the majority of persons who have gained access to formal employment opportunities in the industry hold menial low-paying jobs that are usually seasonal in nature (Dunn and Dunn, 2002; Pattullo, 2005; Johnson, 2009). The result is a proliferation of informal and illicit tourism-related practices that are carried out primarily by those individuals excluded from formal sector employment in order to earn a living. Transactional sex with foreign tourists therefore represents one of the few livelihood strategies used by some local residents in their bid to generate income for themselves and their families.

While the Jamaican government has been cautious in addressing this growing trend (Mullings, 1999), the increasing popularity of sex tourism poses a severe threat to the health of an increasing number of local residents. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) such as HIV/AIDS are a major hazard associated with this unregulated form of tourism. Studies have shown that persons involved in sex tourism are generally at a greater risk (even when compared to other sex workers) of contracting STDs as they are more likely to engage in unsafe sexual practices in order to satisfy the demand of their foreign clientele (Mullings, 1999; Boxill et al., 2005; Grenade, 2008). This is seemingly the case for Jamaica. In 2008, there was an estimated 25,000 Jamaicans living with HIV/AIDS, with approximately 1.5% of the adult (15-49) population estimated to be HIV-positive (one of the highest in the Caribbean) (Ibid). More persons were found living with HIV/AIDS in the major resort towns of Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Negril than anywhere else in the island. While no specific data exist for Negril, a behavioral surveillance survey conducted in 2005 reported a 20 per cent prevalence rate among female sex workers operating in the neighboring resort town of Montego Bay (Hope Enterprises Limited, 2005).

Aside from the spreading of infectious diseases, sex tourism can also lead to the disruption of local families. Studies have shown that many of the

persons who partake in transactional sex with tourists in Jamaica have a main partner with whom they either live with or have a visiting relationship (Mullings, 1999). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the actions of these sex workers are often a source of tension and dispute with their family members or common-law partners (Pattullo, 2005).

Amidst these worrying trends, are reports indicating that there are an increasing number of children participating in Jamaica's sex trade (Dunn, 2001). While the sexual exploitation of minors seems to be an island-wide problem, it has become a relatively common practice in major tourist centres such as Negril, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios (Myers, 2004). A large number of these children are said to be victims of domestic human trafficking (Dunn, 2001; USAID, 2005). These children are reportedly recruited from low-income communities located throughout the island and are then moved to and from resort towns and nearby coastal communities to satisfy both local and foreign demand (Dunn, 2001).

#### **Visitor harassment and the perception of fear among tourists**

The high and persistent levels of violent crimes plaguing Jamaica in recent decades pose a potentially devastating threat to the viability of the island's tourism product (King, 2003; Bourne, 2010). Jamaica currently has one of the highest murder rates per capita in the world (Erikson & Minson 2005; Mullings 2009). Jamaica's murder rate increased by 308 per cent between 1990 and 2005, from 542 to 1,674 homicides (Wortley et al., 2006: 3). Though serious crimes against tourists are few, the island's unprecedented crime level has been a major source of contention both locally and abroad and the subject of extensive debates among key stakeholders within the local tourism industry (Alleyne & Boxill, 2003; Boxill, 2004; Larsen, 2008). The negative publicity afforded to Jamaica overseas not only threatens to impact visitor arrivals to the island but also serves as a major disincentive to potential investors. King's examination of travel agents' attitudes towards tourist harassment in Jamaica reveals that they perceive the threats to tourist safety as real and are largely stimulated by extensive media coverage of particular incidents (King, 2003: 174). The recent unrest in West Kingston that unfolded between May 24 and 26, 2010 being a case in point, culminating in the decision by the Jamaican government to embark on a US\$10 million promotional campaign in key North American and European markets in an attempt to mitigate a projected US\$350 million fallout in tourism revenue (Rose, 2010).

The fact that tourist harassment is a fairly common offense in major resort towns across Jamaica can be seen in the many safety advisories available to tourists detailing security guidelines concerning such things as the use of public transportation, hotel security, shopping and even how to identify law enforcement officers (King, 2003). In a 1997 survey conducted by McDowell (1998), 56 per cent of the visitors to Jamaica reported being victimized at least once by either a local vendor, pimp/prostitute or taxi driver. Despite continued and heightened efforts by the Jamaican government to curb these illegal practices, including a five-fold increase in fines associated with offences against visitors since 1997 and increased police presence in major resort towns (called 'courtesy officers'), concerns for tourist safety remain high (Carroll, 1998; King, 2003). In fact McElroy (2003) notes, that the incidence of visitor harassment have escalated in recent decades particularly with the expansion of the cruise trade. In 2001 three cruise lines decided to remove Jamaica from their itineraries in favor of ports in Mexico and Puerto Rico citing persistent harassment of cruise ship passengers by locals as the major determining factor (Rattray, 2001).

While Negril does not cater to cruise ship passengers, there have been numerous reported cases of tourist victimization in the area in recent years. Even though the large majority of these cases have been confined to minor incidents of petty larceny, there have been a few instances where tourists have fallen victim to violent crimes. For instance, on Christmas Eve 1999, a 43 year old American tourist was abducted from his apartment in Negril and was found dead one day later (Jamaica Gleaner, 1999). In 2000 USA travel writer, Claudia Kirschhoch, was kidnapped, never again to be seen (Larsen, 2008). In September 2003, several guests staying in one of the resort cottages located along Negril's West End road were robbed of cash and valuables amounting to more than J\$30,000 and the gardener employed to the property was shot and killed (Clarke, 2004). Four months later a male tourist received serious head injuries during an altercation with gunmen who had invaded another West End property where he was staying (Ibid). During the same incident, 15 other guests were held up at gun point and robbed of cash and jewelry. While these sporadic episodes of violence have not severely affected the resort town's appeal to foreign visitors, there have been numerous counter measures put in place by local authorities and stakeholders in a bid to lessen the potential impacts such negative publicity could have on Negril (Larsen, 2008).

The main response to the issue of visitor safety over the years by private stakeholders in the tourism industry has been the development of large-scale all-inclusive resorts where guests are discouraged from venturing beyond the confines of the hotel (Ajagannu, 2007; Larsen, 2008). In fact, all-inclusive hotels are credited for the continued growth of the Jamaican tourism industry in recent years in light of the island's reputation of having one of the highest crime rates in the world per capita (Alleyne & Boxill 2003; Issa & Jayawardena 2005). The outcome has been the development of a highly 'enclavic' form of tourism that has severely limited the income-earning opportunities of off-site non-inclusive merchants and service providers (Boxill, 2004; Hawkes & Kwortnik, 2006).

All-inclusive hotels are renowned worldwide for their isolationist mode of operation as evident in destinations like the Dominican Republic (see Freitag 1994; Coles 2004; Pattullo 2005) and Cancun, Mexico (see Torres 2002) where they predominate. According to Boxill (2004), all-inclusive hotels in Jamaica are noted for attracting visitors through their promise of a safe and secure accommodation; one that shields and protects guests from the perceived crime problems which exist in the wider Jamaican society. The highly fenced-off compounds, guarded gates and the secluded locations of most of the all-inclusive properties situated in Negril seemingly support this argument. Anecdotal evidence from taxi and store operators in the resort town suggests that, in some instances, guests were being discouraged by hotel staff from taking local taxis or from even venturing outside the hotels' premises. This also poses a serious challenge to craft vendors in Negril, the majority of whom depends almost exclusively on the patronage of tourists. Vendors operating in the Negril Craft Market, situated near the town centre, have been losing out on well needed sales as more and more provisions are being made within the all-inclusive properties. In a recent bid to prevent visitors from leaving their compounds, a number of the all-inclusive hotels in Negril have been earmarking select days where a limited number of craft vendors are being given paid access to the hotel property to setup stalls. Other hotel properties have established their own in-house craft shops furnished with a combination of imported and locally made craft items and hotel memorabilia, competing directly with local craft vendors.

#### **4. CONCLUDING REMARKS: FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Despite the aforementioned challenges, numerous opportunities exist to improve the contributions

made by the tourism industry to the economic and social development of local communities in and around Negril. As with many other destinations, tourism growth in Negril needs to be balanced in its impact on the natural, social and economic environments. Any plan to increase the economic benefits of tourism to local communities has to take into consideration the potential implications it may have on not only the natural environment, but the quality of life of local residents. As it relates to Negril and the wider Jamaica, the issue is not so much a matter of the tourism industry in and of itself, but the way in which the sector has been promoted and structured over the years.

While the promotion of a more inclusive sector will certainly allow for a more equitable distribution of the benefits derived from the island's tourism industry (see Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2001), measures need to be put in place to mitigate against the many possible negative consequences this can have on peoples' lives – the increasing involvement of local youth in the tourism sex market being a major point of contention. While it might not be possible to completely eradicate sex tourism, efforts must be made to reduce this illicit practice and its associated risks.

The prevalence of sex tourism is due primarily to the high incidence of poverty and limited employment opportunities so prevalent in tourist locales across Jamaica. Without a fundamental change in the conditions in which these people live, such practices will continue being a lucrative option to local males and females seeking to earn a living. Prevention efforts, in the form of social intervention programmes geared at empowering at-risk youth living in or near major resort towns such as Negril, are clearly needed to keep them from entering the seemingly lucrative tourism sex market. Several such initiatives, such as the Theodora Project in Negril and Youth Empowerment Services in Montego Bay, already exist. These local programmes provide a variety of certified vocational skills training to young people, who have left school, with little or no subjects and are otherwise deemed unemployable (Shared Hope International, 2008). However more can be done in this arena, particularly at the community level, to get youth more actively involved in similar social intervention programmes.

In the short to medium term, efforts must be made to reduce the vulnerability of local sex workers. One way of achieving this, though highly controversial, is to formalize the practice. By doing so, measures can be put in place to not only regulate the industry but to educate sex workers

about the dangers associated with unsafe sexual practices. As it relates to the problem of child sex tourism, greater legislation is needed to deter the commercial sexual exploitation of minors on the island. Equally important is the need for Jamaican law enforcers to reduce the trafficking of humans (predominantly under-aged females) for sexual exploits. Even though the Jamaican government has made some significant headway in the fight against human and sex trafficking, efforts particularly at the level of legislation, remain ad hoc and inadequate (Luton, 2006; Trafficking in Persons Interim Assessment, 2007; Shared Hope International, 2008).

As it pertains to Jamaica's high crime rate, the problem stakeholders in the Jamaican tourism industry have to contend with have more to do with the negative publicity the island has been receiving in recent decades (Boxill, 2004). As aforementioned, the majority of crimes committed against tourists in Negril (and by extension, Jamaica) have been minor offenses. In fact, the number of violent crimes committed against tourists in Jamaica is lower or comparable to that of other major destinations around the world (Bourne, 2010). Furthermore, the island has been experiencing remarkable growth in annual visitor arrivals over the past ten years, despite having one of the highest crime rates in the world (Boxill, 2004; Issa and Jayawardena, 2005).

While the all-inclusive concept has been credited for much of the recent growth recorded in Jamaica's tourism industry, all-inclusives, in and of themselves, pose a severe challenge to the viability of other providers of goods and services in the local industry. As Dodman (2009: 213) puts 'in spite of the apparent buoyancy of the sector, the benefits from tourism seem to be accruing increasingly to the larger hotels and companies, rather than to poor local residents, who find it very difficult to develop linkages with the tourism industry'. For Negril, the recent proliferation of all-inclusive hotels has meant a reduction in the profitability of the operations of smaller scale family-run resorts, local restaurants and other off-site providers of goods and services. The significance of the all-inclusive accommodation sub-sector aside, effort is needed to make the tourism industry a more all-encompassing and equitable one. The promotion of alternative forms of tourism, such as community-based and heritage tourism could play a greater role in spreading the benefits from the industry to local communities in and around Negril.

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