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Do indexes assess poverty? Is tourism truly pro-poor?*

[a] Sagar Singh

[a] Centre for Tourism Research & Development, A-965/6 Indira Nagar, Lucknow 226016, India

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ABSTRACT

The basic premise of tourism economics that money, however used, can alleviate poverty is flawed, since monetary systems are not 100 per cent efficient, and the Law of Entropy explains declining efficiency, hence declining profits for all, but more so for the poor who have no investment capability. However, a yardstick for assessing tourism's economic benefits is still required. An index reflecting the state of the poor in developing as well as developed countries is suggested, that, used with measures of education of tourism practitioners and the poor, can help plan tourism. The index is not a 'universal tool', though it can be used for quick assessments of the poor in post-COVID social systems, to help stave off increase in poverty due to perishable rural goods that tourism can consume. The paper explains the frequent failure of tourism to alleviate poverty through descriptive explanation and simple econometrics of Marx's 'rule of falling rate of profit', which explanation has not been suitably addressed in modern economics.

I. Introduction

Almost all theories in mainstream economics, including tourism economics, revolve round the relative value of money as a necessary condition of growth, development (balanced growth of various sectors of the economy), and distribution of benefits to as many as possible, in order to justify 'the greatest good for the greatest number of people', or welfare economics. The study of tourism and economic growth, versus what is termed 'economic development' (that is growth, with a balance of economic and social-ecological costs versus benefits), has been marked by considerable disagreement among experts.

There seems to be no general consensus between economists and economic anthropologists, on the one hand, and economists and ecologists, on the other - including those who study both angles, like environmental economists - as to how much, and how exactly tourism and money benefit those who really need it more than others (Young 1973; Getz 1983; Greenwood 1989; Holden 2000; Becken 2013). So the beneficial effects of tourism, in general, and pro-poor tourism (PPT) are often questioned (e.g., Young, 1973; DeKadt, 1979; Nash 1989; Nash, 1996; Harrison, 2008; Dyson, 2012). The hidden losses not accounted for, in multiplier effects of tourism spending on economies, for instance, which are relevant in this context, were pointed out early (Archer, 1984).

This research seeks to throw light on the little-discussed basic fact: does money itself set the value of commodities, or is it *people in a system, which is lacking in equity*, hence favouring those who already have money, as compared to those outside the system? More directly, do we consider the fact that monetary systems, like other systems in this universe, lack full efficiency - hence, when the system is extended to include those not part of the system, or those who are like parts of less efficient sub-systems (cf. Becken, 2013), then, following the Law of Entropy, the system's efficiency will keep decreasing drastically, leading to losses – A direct result of the foregoing decreasing benefits of the monetary system, even with tourism? To put it even more clearly, while tourism does mean input into an economic system from outside, yet, given that *monetary systems in themselves are not hundred per cent efficient*, as they are assumed to be, and given leakages of income that are widely known by those who have studied tourism economics (e.g. Tribe, 1995; Sinclair & Stabler, 1997), how can application of the Law of Entropy be denied? If admitted, it means that profits will keep declining, hence the poorer sections of society, who have least investment, but depend on labour for income, will not benefit as widely as presumed? While efforts to ensure that the poor benefit from sustainable forms of tourism are laudable (e.g., Mitchell & Ashley, 2010), the criticism has to be met with a realistic outlook (e.g., Hall, 2007): what is required is a yardstick for measuring the benefits of PPT or mainstream tourism. Dwyer (2009) has pointed out that tools of analysis of tourism and economic development are often disregarded. This paper outlines an approach mindful of the pitfalls of eulogizing all tourism as beneficial for the poor, as well as aware of the many factors that are responsible for continuing poverty, which can both be the result of the culture of the poor (Lewis, 1959) that tourism is unmindful of (Dyson, 2012), or a result of 'culturalization of poverty' through tourism (Steinbrink, 2012). Tourism may not be itself an instrument for relieving poverty any more than money infused 'for the time being' can help the poor get rid of their circumstances and those conditions that exacerbate poverty, including the need for money itself. Harrison (2008) has pointed out that PPT is distinctive neither theoretically nor in its methods, and is too closely associated with community-based tourism. This researcher sought to address another issue: in the absence of a widely used method, to develop one that can be used easily and quickly; for, if we have to act to prevent poor people from death by starvation, or due to natural disasters and other events due to the effects of climate change and COVID on tourism, our foremost duty is to act globally and locally, mindful of the deterioration of the environment even more than apparent poverty. But from it arose an issue that questioned the researcher's efforts at developing such an index: can monetary measures to assess poverty be ultimately useful?

2. Literature Review

The complexities in the study of economics and tourism are well recorded. For example, balance of trade and exchange rates with respect to tourism have been studied (Dogru, Işık & Sirakaya-Turk, 2019), and the relationships between economic growth and tourism development have also been critically examined (Işık, Dogru, Sirakaya-Turk, 2017). Both cited studies show that the results, as to the precise effects of tourism on various economies, are not universally valid, hence the question of cause and effect cannot be presumed (beneficial). Indeed, the very question of causality between tourism expenditure, international trade, financial development and carbon dioxide emissions in Greece (Işık, Kasimati, & Ongan, 2017) shows that tourism increased CO_2 emissions and led to 'serious negative environmental impacts' on Greece in the long run. It is well understood that the poor are most impacted by negative environmental impacts, as they cannot isolate themselves from poor air quality and have to make do with poor drinking water, among other things, that impact their health, hence their deteriorating economic condition (e.g. Roma or "Gypsy" people" in UK & ordinary

* Corresponding author. E-mail address: sagar_66@hotmail.com (S. Singh).
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people in north Goa, India: Cemlyn et al., 2009; Centre for Tourism Goa, 2012).

This leads us to the question: Why should money be used as a measure for poverty in tribal and peasant societies where self-dependence and the ability of the environment to support that self-dependence was, and is, a more useful indicator of poverty or lack of poverty? A reading of Marx's explanation of his three-volume work (*Capital*) in his later published notebooks in one volume, *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1973), shows that money is not only basic to capitalism as a critiqued form of economy, but that even post-capitalistic societies that allow use of money and the commodity-money-commodity transformation, money may be a measure or yardstick of *the value of labour relative to capital* and industrial investment, not capitalism *per se*. As a consequence of the spread of capital, or after-effects of colonialism, the money-as-value system spread to those systems where the equivalence of money/price as value and the value of labour is not taken as absolute or indicative of true value. Marx said that the rule of 'the falling rate of profit' of the industrialist in the medium to long term was his 'greatest achievement' (Marx, 1973). This study will explain the poverty index developed and its theoretical ramifications, as well as establish this often-questioned 'rule' of the 'falling rate of profit' both logically and econometrically.

While tourism may not introduce capitalism, and thus may not, arguably, always be a force for neo-colonialism (cf. Nash, 1989; Kobasic, 1996), it cannot do away with the problem of measuring all economic value (labour value) through money, since all modern tourism is based on money. Money cannot do away with the problem that it itself begets; or, at least, where only money is what Marx calls a measure of 'use value', and the environment itself is seen from the viewpoint of only 'use value', no degree of introduction of money that generates tourism, with its lopsided preference for those already with money and external to the local system, can improve indigenous systems if they appear 'poor'. In other words, no poverty index can theoretically, allow insights for improvement of the conditions of existence of those who are introduced to this 'new value system' at the 'periphery' and where alternative systems to monetary capitalism may still exist, making (monetary) 'poverty' a biased and biasing system. Poverty cannot be eliminated by merely giving money to or artificially increasing the income (which includes the benefits of replacing non-monetary transactions with monetary ones) of those who are considered poor. That is why the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations set targets to reduce poverty and provide basic amenities and education to the poor, especially in developing countries. The nature of poverty lies also in failure of the system to sustain equity – political, social, economic and educational – which is a more deep-rooted problem.

Scheyvens (2007, 2009) has emphasized that while one need not be in opposition to the concept of PPT as such, one must note the apparent lack of proper approach and the realities of tourism with respect to generating and sustaining equity. In other researches, Meyers (2009, 2010) points out that the difference between the work of academicians and practitioners on this aspect is significant, while Harrison (2009) says that though the debate is two-sided, rhetoric alone is not responsible for a critique of PPT (Harrison 2008). But the overarching question is: just as the generalized negative impacts of tourism do not apply to all cases of tourism development, so the positive impacts are varied with respect to situations found across the globe. So, given that the negative and positive impacts of tourism are not triggered by the same causes, the same type of tourism, and given that there is a lot of inequity in the world – with or without tourism – what is the solution? In other words, do we know how to assess and measure poverty and hence understand *where* and *when* tourism is more likely to be a tool for poverty alleviation? This is assuming, of course, that PPT, once utilized, continues to generate benefits for the poor, which has both administrational and political implications and ramifications (Tolkach, Pearlman & King, 2012; see also Greenwood, 1976). The evidence from anthropological study of tourism, such as Greenwood (1976) on a Spanish Basque case and Adams (1992) on a group of Sherpas in Nepal shows that initial responses may be 'positive' but if the community does not resort to culturally-bound responses (as among Sherpas) or when tourism develops with little monitoring, it easily introduces changes in political and economic structures that are detrimental (Greenwood, 1976, 1989).

Yet, this obviously cannot be done, and tourism made truly sustainable, unless we have a measure to indicate in which projects tourism is really pro-poor or where applicable, and what kind of planning is required (Tolkach et al., 2012). So, is poverty alleviation a tool that can be devised by only looking at money as a measure of all economic values in the world? To put it differently, how can tourism help where 'poverty' is being increased otherwise by capitalist ventures – like logging and felling of trees, mining, commercial fishing, dumping trash, and industries like oil that extract from the natural environment or deplete those features on which locals have traditionally depended for sustenance, and on which their tribal or peasant economy is based and culturally adapted to ? A literature survey reveals that no index of poverty was developed till now that can allow assessment of how much is sustainable tourism 'pro-poor'; or 'how pro-poor is tourism generally'? Meanwhile, substantial leakages in income from tourism, high unemployment or under-employment of both unskilled and skilled labour, high rates of import of costly food, beverages and other items, commoditization of culture, seasonal employment, and exacerbation of class differences have been reported widely for long (e.g. Young, 1973; Finney & Watson, 1977; DeKadt, 1979; Smith, 1989; Sinclair, 1997; Sinclair & Stabler 1997).

A critical review of 122 research papers on PPT from 1999 to 2013 found that most research focused on African countries (Truong, 2014); though, since then, quite some work on Asia, especially China, has been published. The basic findings of the paper that '*much less research has been done in developed countries* where a large number of PPT scholars are based' (emphasis added) and that '[t]heories and models underpinning PPT studies are not only diverse in origin but also in usage, resulting in difficulties in identifying common theories and models' (Truong 2014), remain true. To counter this, an index was developed by this researcher that had universal value, though only when knowledge of tourism's economic benefits-generating value is understood. Relevantly, Trau (2012) has also emphasized the importance of an 'approach to PPT which [underlines] grassroots perspectives [and] promotes local cultural reconfigurations of tourism through a process of glocalization.' Trau (2012) admits that 'without the implementation of broader support structures, mechanisms and networks, these globalized business models will *struggle to compete* in the global market economy and to meet local community expectations.'

The paper first offers a solution that is independent of the Human Poverty Index and the Oxford University-developed Multidimensional Poverty Index that are used for measuring poverty and related conditions for whole countries, such as relative poverty, or the percentage of the poor below what is often called 'the poverty line' (that is, income 50% below the median income of the country), and absolute poverty, where a person cannot maintain the basic levels of food, shelter and housing/clothing for even a defined minimum period. It should be noted that there are poor people even in the USA, UK and other developed countries in Europe, many of whom, though they get some money as 'social security', may not be able to live with the lack of psychological or health security that relative poverty brings, for long. For many millions in developing countries, there is not only no 'social security', but it is still worse for them as they have no home, are deprived of their right to cultivate land, or get fruit from trees, or grow plants for vegetables because they 'have no backyards' (Farrell, 1977; Finney & Watson, 1977; Greenwood, 1989), water is getting scarce even for drinking and they have no 'neighborhood kitchens', as sometimes exist for the poor in some cities of the developed world. Moreover, wars have made access to food and shelter very difficult. How can formulas to assess poverty be able to overcome such biases?

Also, discrimination cannot be eliminated by just using a formula to calculate 'true poverty'. However, it can suggest on which front more emphasis is needed, such as, in poor families, the tendency to maintain family ties/familial bonding, friendship with other poor people, sharing whatever gains one might make from 'chance gains', which is part of the nature of poverty in both developed and developing countries (Goodwin & Bah, 2012). It is necessary to emphasize that for PPT to be sustainable, simply satisfying people's basic needs is not adequate to ensure that those people can rise above and stay above absolute poverty (Beckwith 2000). Sustainable livelihood security of a household depends on three fundamental attributes (see also Montesquiou et al., 2014):

(i) Possession of human capabilities (e.g., education, skills, health, psychological orientation);
(ii) Access to other tangible and intangible assets (social, natural, and economic capital); and
(iii) The existence of economic activities (like tourism that pays more to the poor; alternative activities supplementing agriculture).

However, the last partly presupposes that economic activities are only those that generate money-measured 'utility' of goods and services. Consequently, the formula that is proposed is more effective for the 'monetarily poor', rather than those who voluntarily choose to stay away from such poverty as capitalistic systems build and exacerbate. It may be argued that the formula will *not* be effective for those afflicted with 'the culture of poverty' (Lewis, 1959), a concept forwarded by Oscar Lewis: 'The subculture [of the poor] develops mechanisms that tend to perpetuate it, especially because of what happens to the worldview, aspirations, and character of the children who grow up in it' (Moynihan, 1969, 199). Some scholars contend that the poor do not have different values. The term 'subculture of poverty' (later shortened to 'culture of poverty') first appeared in *Five families: Mexican case studies* (Lewis, 1959/1975). Lewis struggled to classify 'the poor' as subjects whose lives were transformed by poverty. He argued that although the burdens of poverty were systemic and so imposed upon these members of society that they led to the formation of an autonomous subculture, it was so because children were socialized into behaviours and attitudes that perpetuated 'their inability to escape the class of the downtrodden'. The logical points against the existence of a 'culture of poverty' are two-fold. First, peasant societies (and tribal-peasant ones) choose not to participate in 'money economies' precisely because they know that the attempt to succeed in such systems will lead to economic and cultural deterioration: they are 'included' in the system only with a disadvantage that will soon show up in differences in status based on money. Like a game of chess between a novice and a grandmaster, the first two moves appear equal, and then the novice loses: it is not a case of 'culture of poverty', but choice to be free from further oppression.

Second, these parts of larger societies (peasantries) or tribes have been 'marginal' for hundreds of years, and are not recent, because they have tried and tested the 'monetary system' and found it to be not in conjunction with their values, which do not place an emphasis on general purpose money. The case of tourism in a Spanish Basque community discussed by Greenwood (1976) emphasizes this point.

So if we examine the Nuer tribe of Sudan of yore (limited natural resources were primarily the cause for poverty) (Evans-Pritchard, 1940), they *did not use* money, though they *did* have some 'cultural-economic commodities' (like spears) and non-monetary 'commodities', like cattle, used as 'bride wealth'. How would tourism, introduced in such a society, lead to 'all-round development', except through the use of money-produced or money-producing commodities? In other words, a formula for poverty measurement and its 'utility for tourism' cannot be done in a generalized manner, in the sense that both fully capitalistic or partly-capitalistic societies can be assessed; but only where money is symbolic of economic value (or actually, labour value is 'measured' by exchange of commodities through use of money, which is the 'only', universal, representative of exchange). It can also be noted that attempts to formulate the effects of tourism on poverty have been well documented (e.g., Goodwin, 2007a, 2007b; Harris,, 2009; Lo et al., 2019; Roe et al., 2004; Torres, Skillicorn & Nelson, 2011; Trau, 2012; Truong, 2014), but the precise relationships between poverty and PPT have yet to find a yardstick other than money. The first section explains the index, and the next section develops the theoretical basis of not considering any poverty index as a universal panacea for solving the problem, delving on Marxian economics and the 'falling rate of profit'; with the caveat that an index can be used, *provided* the benefits of tourism are properly assessed and appropriate sustainable development projects/strategies developed. As suggested by Harris (2009), pro-poor community-based tourism has to be integrated into community development as a whole, yet families that are more affected should be identified.

3. Methodology

The ability of the poor to participate gainfully in PPT projects is an important but understudied factor in determining poverty alleviation impact; it has been found that participation in tourism projects significantly increases the income of poor families; research by Lo et al. (2019) found that participating households had significantly higher material, financial, political, social and human capital. This basic fact – that communities do not always respond or benefit as whole from tourism – formed the basis of this research. Research orientation was developed by analysis of texts presented in the anthropology of tourism (Graburn 1983; Smith 1989; Smith and Brent 2001) and economics of tourism (e.g. Tribe 1995; Sinclair and Stabler 1997; Lanza, Markandya and Pigliaru 2005) and gender, work and tourism (e.g. Kinnaird & Hall 1994; Sinclair 1997). The formula was first conceived after study of poor tribal people in the hill area of a mountainous state who have been exposed to very little tourism, and have not opted for it until the past decade. It was noticed that the people were poor and due to lack of resources, with a joint family structure and traditional ways of living, money was channelized into culturally-dictated areas of spending and the people seemed to 'choose' to remain poor in the 'material sense'. This has changed in recent years, but lack of education and employment of family members seemed not to bother them in previous years. Observation and interviews of the poor over the years, such as cycle-rickshaw pullers and betel/tobacco sellers, most of whom live in cities where tourism is significant, and interact with visitors and tourists, but originate from rural areas, further allowed development of a theory of the reasons for poverty, and its relevance for pro-poor tourism.

Secondary research was done on PPT, which allowed formulation of the relative poverty index (RPI) as a quick means of assessing poverty. Study of the anthropology of tourism and Marx's theory of capitalism was also done over the years and results are discussed in the follow up sections. A claim made early in the literature of poverty reduction through tourism, that the 'policy context matters a lot, the type of tourism matters little' (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010, p. 134) is analysed for veracity through the RPI. The index was developed and honed keeping in mind the important research by Torres, Skillicorn & Nelson (2011) that showed that community-based rural enterprises can have an option to low wage labour (that is often offered through tourism to villagers), such as shown by their research in Yucatan, Mexico, through community corporate joint ventures. Yet, as not pointed out in their research, a widely applicable, quick measure of (relative) poverty is needed today in the wake of tourism restarting from scratch in the post-COVID world, including Europe, where poverty has increased, and strategies such as used in rapid rural appraisal techniques (Towner & France, 1992) are the need of the hour.

3.1 The relative poverty index

In a destination country or destination communities, one comes across differences among people such as classes, ethnicity and culture, access to capital, educational levels, as well as income. Merely noting low incomes is not sufficient as a measure of poverty since some families may be quite independent in terms of food production from self-owned land, others not. Even land-owning families may have the same income, but be relatively poor in comparison to each other. This is obvious since the size of the family also matters and the more the members of a family, the greater the number of mouths to feed, bodies to clothe, and help required for health maintenance (unless alternative systems of medicine are used). Moreover, the sources of income may be less or more reliable, even though the total income remains the same for either of the compared households. To overcome some of these problems, a formula was developed that could potentially allow measurement of relative poverty sociologically, and also reveal the effect of conditions that perpetuate poverty. Among them are size of family where total income remains fixed, and underemployment, which may be the result of either exploitation of the poor or what are called 'economic structural problems' like unemployment or underemployment of skilled or non-skilled labour. This index, known simply as the Relative Poverty Index (RPI), is as follows.

$$\text{RPI} = \frac{\text{Total household income}}{\text{Size of the family}} \times \frac{\text{No. of working family members}}{\text{No. of non-working members}}$$

This formula can be explained with the help of some figures. Suppose the total household income is Indian (Rs) 500 (US$ 7) and the members of the family 10 (since very many families in India and other developing countries are joint families or extended families, and larger than the usual nuclear family of Europe and North America) (Srinivas 1962). Accordingly, this income divided by family size works out to be 50. Suppose, again, that the number of working members are only two and non-working (out of 10), 8. This means we multiply 50 by 2/8 and get the score of 12.5. Naturally, this index should signify *greater poverty by higher scores*. Supposing, now, the total income is the same and the number of family members is also the same, so the first part still calculates as 50. However, if there are a greater number of working members than non-working, say, the reverse of the previous: now we have 8 working members and 2 non-working members, or 8/2 (or 4). This results in 50 × 4, or 200. That is, if the total income remains the same despite the fact that there are more working members, in the second case they are poorer, since there are more working members but the net result is the same.

If the total income and size of the family remains the same but the number of working members are greater, it also implies that (i) there is under-employment; (ii) deriving from (i), there is exploitation of the poor; (iii) the families are poorer since working members (any sort of work, but especially manual labour) need more food as they spend more energy, but need more money to buy (or produce) extra food and do not have it; hence, either they are malnourished or compromise on clothing and health to buy more food; (iv) education relevant to better employment is missing or not affordable. In case this is a rural family, the likelihood of intervention for poverty alleviation through tourism may prove beneficial, assuming that they have arable land and do cultivate crops and vegetables for consumption by their own family, and for some extra money (and sell extra produce in the local market, provided there are no problems in cultivation), which could be sold to be consumed by rural/village tourists.

Even in case the family has no land of its own, but resorts to rural labour to earn money or get their supply of crops without the use of money (such as former Indian *jajmani* system) (Epstein, 1967), the labourer family is likely to earn more money through tourism, since they would then get employment in the non-agricultural season in rural areas. In developing countries, this would have another spin-off: retention of paid labourers in relatively-less-rich rural areas, instead of their seasonal migration to find employment in richer agricultural areas.

3.2 Refining the formula

At the level outlined, some important factors regarding poverty can be assessed using RPI. However, it may be pointed out that lack of education and vocational training is important as much in tourism (and hospitality) as a tool for alleviating poverty as in other spheres. It can also be pointed out that most better-paying jobs in tourism are taken up by outsiders rather than local people not just in Asia but also Europe (e.g. Holden, 1984; Greenwood, 1976, 1989), since the former are skilled with respect to services utilized in the industry (like hotel managers, waiters, bell boys, room service and housekeeping in general, as well as in food and beverages in hospitality; ticketing, guiding and other aspects of tour operations in tourism). Of course, taking care of the poorer or poorest is important, and PPT is not likely to eliminate inequities and inadequacies in the system altogether.

If we exclude lack of education and vocation skills among the poor, it may be argued that we are quite obviously considering those who *do not* have modern education and modern vocational skills (that are relevant to tourism) and are therefore poor, but *do have* 'traditional education' – or the kind of education that is culturally relevant – and culturally important skills, such as using the plough, harrow, hoe, spade in agricultural labour; know-how of planting seeds and watering crops and vegetables (which will help in producing crops and vegetables that can be sold to local tourism establishments and help make profit); making traditional artistic things (sold as souvenirs), or dresses and headgear (sold to tourists), etc.

Yet, it must be pointed out that two aspects are missing. The first is the education and attitude of owners, managers and workers in the tourism and hotel industry in areas that can be identified for utilizing the concept of PPT. For example, it is seen that slum tourism in India (Dyson, 2012) and elsewhere (Steinbrink, 2012) can result in people, both tourists and tourism managers, unable to totally change the negative image of slum dwellers and the poor and the circumstances of poverty, termed the 'culturalization of poverty' (Steinbrink, 2012), which is not dissimilar from Lewis' (1959) 'sub-culture of poverty'. Unless managers and administrators seek to do away with poverty through tourism, the problem will remain.

The second is the education of the poor concerned, which involves intervention by tourism researchers and practitioners – including managers, social workers and administrators – who have to involve the poor through sustained communication about *how* they benefit from PPT and *how must they act* in order to benefit. Obviously, if there is little or no education of managers and practitioners, there will be no education of the poor, and if that happens, the poor will not see tourism as a viable option to the other alternatives: selling their produce in distant markets and migrating seasonally or permanently to distant places to earn wage labour. Should, then, planning for PPT be top-down? Feasibility studies will first have to be conducted in identified areas and this will require the services of social workers, as well as administrators involved in tourism development, and the solution can be worked out through both development of infrastructure for tourism and identification of attractions/cultural uniqueness of rural areas and education of rural people: the index may suggest using either (or both) bottom-up and top-down approaches.

So, how does one include education in this formula? If we reduce the formula to just RPI, and where the applicability of sustainable pro-poor tourism is termed SPPT, and managers and administrators' education as a mathematical function, e(MA), while the education of the poor as a function, e(P), we can state it simply as:

$$\text{SPPT} = e(\text{MA}), e(\text{P})$$

Where the value of RPI is dependent on the function of the education of tourism managers and administrators (on the x-axis) and the function of education of the poor regarding tourism (on the y-axis). Therefore, the graph is 'weighted' by RPI, without mathematically doing so. In other words, both the 'education' of practitioners and the poor concerned will ideally be taken into account. As long as the values remain equal, they can be mapped as a straight line that shows a continuous upward trend, at 45 degrees (where both x and y have the same value, the graph is a straight line at 45 degrees to the horizontal). The higher the RPI, the greater the poverty and the lesser educated, for example, we can assume a group to be, the more the need for intervention by various agencies.

The two variables are weighted by the 'education' of the two groups (or knowledge of 'how to benefit' from tourism), which is why we have to refer to RPI. By this means, one can ascertain whether the weight of an on-going tourism project for a group of families is sustainably pro-poor by consulting a graph.

Using symbolic whole numbers for summation of both education of managers (e (MA)) and education of the poor (e(P)), a higher angle would reflect when lower education of managers (lower value of x in relation to y) suggests a bottom-up approach to planning and projects (as the 'knowledge' of the poor is higher) and when, in the opposite case (higher value of x in relation to y), a top-down approach is favoured; or both. In any case, both sides have to be consulted in any monitored tourism project that aims to help the poor.

4. Discussion

The RPI can prove useful for assessment of the economic situation in poor areas, especially rural areas, where a majority of the population resides in developing countries like India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in so many countries in South-East Asia, Africa, and Pacific Islands; but is also useful in areas of Europe or USA that are poor. In Africa, a lot has been done through use of mobile money like M-Pesa. However, poverty remains, which is why it appears we need an index such as this. It also helps us to understand where – in which areas and in which families – low level of education or lack of opportunities despite education leads to unemployment or under-employment. That vocational education is necessary for tourism is an assumption that needs to be examined, as can be done by using the RPI; we can also better understand practical aspects such as how important is primary and secondary education and whether, consequently, there can be more stability in the otherwise seasonal employment often found in the tourism industry.

The implications are that RPI can help assess the need for numerate young adults in getting stable jobs in roadside restaurants in urban areas in India, or co-managing tourists in European rural areas that households could host, since they would, then, deal more efficiently with customers and would be able to, say, help in revenue management or at least cash flow. Moreover, NGOs could administer the index and not only inform the poor when tourism projects are being undertaken to uplift the poor, but also make the latter more aware and mindful of 'leakages' that afflict all tourism. This would make PPT more sustainable and check for suitability of 'appropriate projects' in the medium term.

By collecting the above information and putting it to use, a lot of inferences can be made and by preliminary analysis of the ground situation in host communities we can be more certain – if not fully certain – whether PPT initiatives are going to substantially help the section that is more poor.

This technique, of course, has some limitations. (1) People often do not disclose their income or lie about it, in case they feel they can get some benefits from government schemes. Naturally, though, the researchers who employ this technique would be social workers or NGOs concerned about development through tourism, and since the benefits and costs of tourism would be communicated to the host community, and the social workers would be those on whom local people rely on and have faith, then this problem could possibly be overcome. (2) Care is needed that overall values of education of the poor in a community are not merged with the values of the community as a whole, since it would submerge the important differences: the index helps only by calculating relative poverty of families, and its implementation needs care. (3) The index allows use of only one value for a group of individuals or family, or of a group of poor families (depending on how the formula is used), rather than using different values for different families.

The RPI should always be referred to when assessing the value of education vis-à-vis tourism, and is a measure of a *family's poverty*, not that of a community. It also only infers differences that will have to be noted in each case: however, as most rural and/or urban communities that live in the same area behave *as a group* towards community (tourism or other) projects, rather than as families, average RPI for a section of a community will reflect group behaviour. However, this is still a limitation in the sense that 'working out an average response' of families to a development project/tourism shall allow a certain view of 'how the poor respond to' or 'benefit' from tourism, rather than how each and every family fares.

The formula, moreover, does not work overtly for the 'relatively poor' in above-average income countries. For example, if a middle-aged man and his wife run a bed-and-breakfast (B&B) establishment in Spain, and are poor by Spanish median income standards, but if they are not supported by their son(s)/daughter(s), who are adults and work elsewhere, or jobless but live elsewhere, the formula cannot be used, for two reasons: (1) a man and his wife do not constitute a family; unless the progeny are associated, it cannot be considered a family and hence cannot utilize the index; but even if we do consider the couple a family, the RPI, taking the children as non-working 'members', it would not help or make sense mathematically. Taking family members as four, with an annual income of € 5,000, or monthly income of € 417 (US$ 458), the RPI would be

$$\text{RPI} = \frac{417}{4} \times \frac{2}{2} = 104$$

This is too high a figure for RPI (double that of the poor Indian family in its second calculation, half that of its final case), and the European family's 'poverty' seems to assume a significance that would not be found in developing countries. However, this says a lot about the fact that poverty *in terms of money*, in relation to the size of the family, can be even *more important* in *monetized* (developed) economies. Relative poverty can cover millions of people who suffer, but are usually not taken into account, or, at best, assessed by their overall income, rather than means of sustaining that limited income in an increasingly commoditized, consumer culture which mere figures for inflation do not reflect.

(2) Second, even if we do not take the children into account, Bed & Breakfast establishments may utilize the services of the wife, but it may be registered as run by the husband, where the services of the wife are *not* directly remunerated (Sinclair, 1997). The number of working 'family' members would be 1 and the number of non-working members would also be 1, hence it would report no difference if RPI is utilized; rather, the total income would only be halved (total family members being 2), and report a very high RPI, which is not suggestive of the actual poverty of the family; but if, as in UK, there is a new law that taxes even old people whose old age pension has, in net effect, decreased, and who let out an extra room to make ends meet, then *there is poverty in a real sense*. The formula, however, works best for those economies that are usually not 'modern' in the typical sense, though developed countries are accounted for.

Lastly, why does the RPI in the above-mentioned cases, magnify what seem to be, if not trivial, economic realities that appear not so significant? This tells us some important things about not only relative poverty, but also absolute poverty. (1) It speaks of the relation between people (families) as important in economics, not individuals who earn money. (2) It reminds us that we live and earn often as families, and this was the traditional way of life, and still is in many, both developing and developed countries. (3) Even couples, traditionally, earned and lived by dividing their labour (not *irrespective* of the lack of remuneration of work done by women at home, but *despite* it) between employer and home, and managed; now they and their children all earn to meet the 'standards of living'.

(4) More people in a family are separately earning 'income' (either wage labour or business), but the consumer culture of which they are, willingly or not, a part of, demands that they earn more and yet more, and spend still more, but remain not any more happy: a greater part of their lives is spent on earning to buy new consumer technology (plasma televisions, smart televisions, new mobile phones every 2-3 years, new laptops, new software for their computers that must be upgraded every 3-4 years, 'better' broadband, digital dishwashers, etc.), apart from money spent on shopping malls, 'convenient' radio-taxis, vacations, dining out more frequently (with software and advertisements 'suggesting' that there is no need to cook at home).

In short, people are earning more, but spending far more, often 'beyond their means' by credit cards and rented condominiums/rented rooms in 'vacation houses', and are still not 'satisfied', while some people are unable to get basic necessities. More money for the self is being generated by all grades of working classes, more money is in circulation, yet the differences between the well-off and the poor are increasing.

Even if we explain the 'cause' of this as marketing and advertising, they are triggering causes, and do not explain why this happens to 'modern' societies. As Marx explained long ago, the commodity-money-commodity relationship ensures that more and more of our lives are devoted to 'giving away' that portion of our labour which we formerly devoted to 'ourselves' (our private and social lives) to employers, not just our own, but those of others who produce the 'new goods' that we find ourselves buying yet more. It is this tendency of money to take more and more of our labour without seeming to (surplus), that creates a ripple of money, then a tornado and a whirlpool into which people are sucked. Like quicksand, once you set foot in it, the more you struggle, the deeper you sink. Once you become part of monetary systems, you get more stretched out: either you go up, or you go down. If you start with a disadvantage (lack of money), you are likely to get 'some money, for some time', and then, the more dependent you become on it (*irrespective of ideology*), the more you either sink or swim.

As is natural in a whirlpool or quicksand, swimming or floating requires increasing energy, or what is, in monetary systems, either labour time or money. Without the money to get education, people become divided into economic and social classes, where more money favours those who have more, or at least access to honing their intellect in a way that they can earn more than others. The greater competition between people and *means of acquiring opportunity*, not just 'plain opportunity', ensures that all do not remain equal: that is, poverty, relative or absolute, is ensured.

The foregoing seems a confirmation of Marx, but may seem to some as his theory's repudiation. As some would have it, it is *capitalists* who profit, *but not labour*, and that the increasing prosperity of some 'high-wage labourers' who are actually working less hours a day (7.5 or 8 hours, in place of 12 hours in Marx's economic period), for less days a week (5 – or even 4 days a week, in a few countries – in place of 7 or 6 days, in former times), means that at least 'some' labourers are benefiting more. Marx had said that the essential thing for capital to remain in its advantageous position is circulation. But he also said that commodities represent capital in the same way as money represents a 'measure' of labour: hence the 'selling a commodity to get money, and giving money to buy a commodity' relationship *as circulation of capital* is not apparent to an ordinary worker who produces the same commodity again and again. Of course, s/he buys other commodities as well. The point that needed emphasis is that all the commodities represent all the 'extra labour taken by employers from labourers' that translates as 'profit' for the capitalist. We need, therefore, to examine the statement that 'the type of tourism does not matter for tourism to be pro-poor' (Mitchell & Ashley 2010, p. 134).

Logically, the more money one invests, the more the percentage of profit that one takes from the resultant good or service. Following from this, the less money invested by the poor in tourism infrastructure, basic necessities required for tourism (i.e. machinery, like refrigerators, air-conditioners, food processing or cooking equipment, beverages that have to be imported) mean a lesser percentage of profit. Theoretically, such capitalist ventures will be funded from the outside, so the poor could profit more even if only all they give is 'labour'.

But there is no straight relation between 'labour time' and 'surplus labour' that produces profit. First, Marx says, that labour exists not as a 'thing' as most economists, including political economists, make of it, 'but as the capacity of a living being' (Marx, 1939, p. 323, quoted by Nicolaus in Marx, 1973, pp. 45-46). '*Labour* is the *activity* of the worker. It *creates* all value and is itself invaluable; its only measure is time. The commodity the worker sells the capitalist is his power to labour, or, yet, more accurately, the 'right of disposition' over his (or her) labour power' (Marx, 1939, pp. 284, 293), that is, the right to determine how this power will be used. The sale of disposition of labour power is therefore not a 'purely economic' but also 'a political act' (quoted by Nicolaus in Marx, 1973, p. 46). 'Labour time' is divided into 'necessary labour' or that amount of labour and time that goes into 'self-service and self-maintenance' (or that needed for maintenance of the labour, for society as a whole to function), and 'surplus labour'. 'Surplus labour time' is the *extra time* that the employer takes (over and above that required to generate minimum necessary profit) which allows or generates 'surplus labour value' which converts into greater profit, say, 2 hours out of 12 hours a day [without an increase in real wages (that is, the actual wages may go up and be 'fair' outwardly, but do not represent the share of the profit from sale of commodities that ought to accrue, in economists' 'real' sense)].

This is because capital has both to circulate (through continuous sale of commodities; not only the old, but also new ones) and 'accumulate'. While money seems a fair system of 'exchange', it hides this tendency: that while more money that is 'still' does not translate into profit, its inter-changeability with commodities, given in the process of 'production of a commodity for money, which money goes into buying another commodity that we need' (Commodity-Money-Commodity), the circulation of capital produces more capital through capturing or objectification of more and more 'surplus labour value'. 'The repetition of the process from either of the points, money or commodity, is not posited within the conditions of exchange itself. The act can be repeated only until it is completed… It cannot ignite itself anew through its own resources. *Circulation therefore does not carry within itself the principle of self-renewal*… Commodities constantly have to be thrown into it anew from the outside, like fuel into a fire. … It is commodities (whether in their particular form, or in the general form of money) which form the presupposition of circulation; they are the realization of a definite labour time' (Marx, 1973, emphasis in original). Capital, therefore, accumulates by labour being converted into fixed capital, such as machinery for production of goods on a large scale, or of 'instruments' that may result in smaller production, but which increasingly represents, or is the result of the accumulation of, 'extra' labour or 'surplus' that goes into producing any sort of commodity, whether capital goods, luxury goods, or so-called wage - labourer goods. In other words, as more and more labour -saving devices and machinery are produced, they embody accumulation of surplus labour. As these produce still more goods and services, while require 'labour' to work for shorter hours, the surplus value 'objectified' increases, while need for 'surplus labour time' decreases: less total labour time, including that essential for 'labour maintenance' (that labour necessary to maintain a minimum standard to life, to exist in a minimally healthy way) decreases, the 'surplus time' remains equal to before; their *ratio*, therefore, does not decrease (if *total capital* increases as profits increase, with fixed capital just as before, production requires only 5 hours where it needed 6 hours before, but total hours worked that are decreased by the employer only, say, half an hour): in other words the *surplus now* is equal to the 'surplus value' that extra labour time invested did before. What we see as capital, is, therefore, an embodiment of past labour and labourers as well, when they (or you) had to work extra time, which some may not need to, now.

Marx (1973, pp. 51-52) clearly explains that machinery and automation do not decrease 'the value of surplus labour' but increase it for the investor. Yet machines do not mean that human labour is less required. 'It does not mean that industrial work, or the class that represents it, will disappear, replaced by a class of technicians and engineers.' Nicolaus (in Marx, 1973, pp. 51-52) points out Marx's 'unambiguous statements' that this does not happen, but rather on the contrary, 'there are counter-tendencies that prevent mechanization and automation from advancing beyond a certain point under capitalism'. Such a counter-tendency 'is the decline in the rate of profits which results from increased investment in machinery relative to living labour' (Marx, 1973, p. 52) and 'the most developed machinery thus forces the worker to work longer than the savage does, or than he himself did with the simplest … tools' (quoting Marx, 1939, pp. 708-9). While Marx seems to contradict himself, admitting, using an example, that when 'total capital' (machinery + raw material + variable capital or labour) increases, not only does 'invariable capital increase' and 'surplus labour value', that is part of it, larger, 'the number of working hours would have to become smaller' (Marx, 1973, p. 380). This is due to the strange fact, though not strange to physicists (refer to the Second Law of Thermodynamics or the Entropy Law), that as the percentage of 'extra' or 'surplus labour' that *becomes part of the commodity* through 'objectification' of labour, increases, it may require less effort of labour, *but requires increasing efficiency even if less labour*. According to the Law of Entropy, *the efficiency in a system will decrease over time, if no 'extra' input in made from outside*.

The relative amount of total labour required, therefore, correspondingly increases in a society (new commodities are being made with new capital and new labour, that are at the periphery); also many of the labourers' share decreases, as it is now in the form of more and more capital (machinery and production processes that generate a good without increasing labour input) and increasing number of commodities, which, however, do not contribute to the labourer's profits as much as they do for the employer of capital. Moreover, capital is seen in the total amount of capital in society, rather than in a particular employer's hands. Those who point out the less hours of work managed by a certain class of workers in a society, do not consider the extra labour involved (not apparent at the surface) when the 'extra money' earned goes into buying 'extra commodities', not only by an individual, but the society *as a whole*.

Since a machine, by itself, cannot increase its value, it is labour that creates value, through production and transferring that 'something extra' (surplus labour time or surplus value). Yet, as more and more machines become autonomous, as is becoming evident today, they must lose value due to less 'circulation', which is the cornerstone of the labour-creating-capital-creating-commodity chain, and when capital starts becoming standalone to a greater extent, while profits increase at first, it becomes limited by its very nature, as capital (commodities) reaches a plateau and hence profits *must fall*. This is due to the nature of increasing investment in labour that is required for profits to keep on increasing exponentially, net: something that the capitalist does not do, as the net profit does not increase in the same ratio (as the extra money invested in extra labour requires) (Marx, 1973, pp. 375-382, 771-72). Also, while labour as a percentage of total capital may decrease, even while fixed capital remains the same and raw material invested increases (as production increases), the ratio of the 'surplus labour' to 'maintenance labour' may remain the same or decrease, but labour remains a true indicator of rise in production and production efficiency. [Thus, as in Marx, 1973, pages indicated above, the argument in mathematical terms seems flawed, but is not; the ratio of fixed capital remains the same (same machinery, etc.), while the ratio of raw materials/instrument to variable capital (labour) changes. But even if the instrument (raw material and production method, as opposed to machinery) becomes more 'productive' and efficient, the relationship between raw material/instrument to increase in production is fixed and proportionate in a limited way, and the increase in production of commodities and profit is *not exponential*; this may be so even if, say, better raw material is used and production method (instrumental efficiency) is better: for example, if denser logs of wood are used to produce tables, resulting in increase in production and profit. The ratio of labour to instrument may be lesser or more, but if lesser labour is used, relatively, then production and profits 'fall' more drastically; yet, even if greater labour is used, the rise is greater than comparable increases that are the result of raw material/instrument increase, yet rise slowly and not exponentially.

Only a substantial increase in labour time results in much higher profits. Since labour efficiency does not remain the same over time, being lesser, say, in later hours of the day if long hours are put in; and since efficiency of labour decreases with the age of the labourer, and the older people get, the less efficient they usually are; and, since, moreover, unlike in peasant societies, efficiency with machinery (as against with agricultural tools) cannot be easily 'transferred' from father to son, or mother to daughter, but has to be 'learned', the replication ('reproduction of labour' in Marxian terms) of labour efficiency is not ensured, resulting in the capitalist not investing in successive increase in investment in labour (as is natural): resulting in a definite 'fall in profits' in the medium to long term.]

Also, since the cornerstone of the industrial profit-making principle is 'objectification' of labour in fixed capital as well as use of 'surplus labour' value to create profit, the capitalist will: (1) gradually increase fixed capital, but wear and tear (and decreasing efficiency), and depreciation will result in lesser profits in the longer run; (2) increasing use lesser skilled labour at lesser wages to compensate for higher wages given to highly skilled labour, from the 'reserve army of labour' of the masses [while wages increase for unskilled labour, they do not do so in the same ratio as they do for skilled labour]. As labour is given more wages (in only a simple sense, not 'real' terms) and total number of hours decline, but given that fixed capital 'uses up' more and more of the 'surplus value', *yet cannot generate that value in the same way as humans* do by labour, profits for the capitalist fall.

This can be explained with econometrics. In a model that conceives of the economy in dynamic equilibrium, moving from stable to unstable and back to stable, inflation can be taken as a 'given'. Systems seek homoeostasis, and unstable equilibriums generated by inflation are 'regulated' by hoarding and relatively less supply of money, resulting in stable equilibriums where values of money and commodities match. So, if 500 commodities are being produced at €1 each, and inflation results in lack of sale/circulation of 50 commodities, then the loss of € 50 will be distributed (50/450 = 0.111) (due to rise in prices, as goods are scarce and demand constant, but the less well-off cannot buy at higher prices), let us say, theoretically, equally, so that each of the 450 goods now cost € 1.11. Since most currencies are divisible by 100 instead of 1000, this new price results in a loss of € 0.5 of the total (450× 1.11 = 499.5). This is, in modern economists' sense, a loss to the producer, as this much money cannot be realized by the seller. But in Marxian economics, this is a loss both to the labourer/buyer and the producer/seller. The 'law' of 'falling rate of profit' explains that losses to the industrialist are inevitable, and so this results in less profits shared with 'labour'.

Let us think in terms of the 'gold standard of economic value' (see, e.g., Johnson and Nobay 1974), which still exists (though not insurable) in that governments issuing modern currencies 'promise to pay the bearer' a sum equivalent to its value in gold. Gold was stored or hoarded, as its value increased over time, many times over, irrespective of what or how many commodities were being sold in the market. In that sense, it was an independent, 'true' value of an economy. If we think in today's popular terms, think of all the people who can access all the music videos on YouTube, versus those who 'subscribe' to singers and music bands on it. Once you press 'subscribe', sooner or later you have to 'run a trial subscription' and then 'pay for the subscribed channels' and/or individuals. Some YouTube channels are free, and are 'paid for by advertising companies / individuals'. Either way, there is one 'true value' of, say, a music band on YouTube based on how many people actually like, see and 'value' it across the world (without necessarily paying for it), and one 'value based on subscriptions'. Money is similarly, according to Marx, not a direct reflection of commodities' true value, but what is ascribed to it by the economic system, which does not know how to value the varieties and skills of various types of labour: it is, instead, based on those who 'subscribe and can pay', to use the YouTube analogy.

So, in an economy where 'total, ideal or true value' of all commodities is 'v', where 'x' is the amount of all the money and 'y' all the commodities circulating:

(1) ideally, $x = y$, but, more realistically, $x/v = y$

After inflation, with stopping of circulation of some commodities 'z' (unstable equilibrium):

$$(2)\ x^0 = y - z = y', \text{ (or, } x^0 = y' + z)$$

After inflation leads to hoarding, which is a natural process found throughout history (the strange copper hoards problem' in ancient Indian history, which was a case of hoarding wealth when copper was the medium of circulation (and little gold was in existence), supported by religious belief; see Basham, 2004; Sharma 2005), and commodities are first hoarded and then wealth in the form of money is 'stored away to account for future need'; the amount of money 'hoarded' or 'saved for future use' (not invested in the economy) represents an extra, proportionate decrease in value equivalent to 'z', in order for stable equilibrium to be regained from an unstable one due to inflation and hoarding:

(2) $x^0 = x'$, but since 'z' is equivalent of 'y'; commodities are 'stored values' of 'x', and the reduced value of 'y' by 'z' number of commodities has to be balanced money-wise,

$$(3)\ x' = x'/v = (y - z) - z$$

So that what remains of commodities and money after hoarding, is the total value reduced commensurately with the decreased value of now-circulating commodities (measured through multiplication with 'actual value' or 'v'), plus an additional less amount of commodity value 'lost' due to reduction in money (measured by multiplication by the 'actual value' of 'lost' commodities that is not captured by monetarily-accounted economy). That is, the 'accumulation' of wealth due to loss of money circulating is 'subtracted' from the 'commodities value equation':

$$(4)\ x^r = v(y - z) – v(z)$$

But when 'z' commodities are back in circulation due to 'extra hours worked' (previous number of hours worked, would, given the state of the inflationary economy, produce only (y - z), and so, when the value of money is restored to its value as in (1)):

$$(5)\ x^n = v(y' + z)$$

As $x^n > x^r$, the difference between 'x' (in (1)) and the new state of economy x^n, and based on the example of difference due to conversion problems (€500 > €499.5) and because commodities may now be produced in a greater amount, to allow economies of scale, but yet not all be able to sell due to inflationary conditions:

$$(6)\ x > x^n > x^r$$

This explains that *even with additional input of labour* as in (5), to the extent that effects of inflation and hoarding of commodities/money are recovered, *the loss of circulation of goods, once it comes about, results in loss of wealth* which affects both producer and labour; but as investment in capital for production of commodities are the province of the industrialist-producer, and given that inflation is 'natural' to all economies, it results in the 'falling rate of profit'.

5. Conclusion

From the viewpoint of tourism, the above discussion shows how money and capitalism become synonymous and the basis of unequal profits. It has been explained that profits, as analysed by Marx, fall for the capitalist. Clearly, then, they cannot rise for the labourer or small-time entrepreneur, either, who invests hardly any capital, if at all. Leisure time is generated, and tourism is a result of that, but only in so far as it means consumption of more and more commodities, including tourism itself as a commodity. This is like saying that tourists generate 'leisure time' from their own work and others' (of their own society). While a tourist is certainly not a capitalist, s/he is part of the same system that generates inequality. The basis for inequality is money's inability to reflect the true values of various types and extent of labour, and not that every capitalist is lacking in moral value(s).

In plain words, how much inequity is built into monetary systems can be seen in the fact that world-famous people have laboured and become world celebrities only *after death*, like the painter-genius Vincent Van Gogh, who lived in poverty because his paintings did not fetch a good price while he was alive—and now his paintings sell for a million dollars! It is a clear case of inability of people, not money itself, to value his 'commodity' (paintings). *It is hence clear that money, in fact, cannot value commodities, as it has no intelligence of its own, but it is people who value commodities, who 'create markets' that favour some over others, sustaining inequity*. To make negative impacts of tourism less painful in the post-COVID scenario, it is highly necessary today to act and plan tourism in such a way that those most in need of economic assistance are clearly identified, to understand and use the RPI, which clearly shows which families in rural communities, for example, are most in need of help, as money is scarcer and basic perishable commodities, like food grains and vegetables, lie unsold. Use of the RPI can benefit planned rural tourism, guided by tourism knowledge of practitioners as well as the poor, but it reminds us constantly that economic structural inequalities need to be addressed with immediacy in our race to save the planet from economic catastrophe.

To clarify the nature of industrial inefficiency based on money, an analogy can be made with the making of the Egyptian pyramids, which required a lot of physical labour, skill, craftsmanship and intellect, and material. A pyramid can be taken as the structure of an industrial system based on money. Making the bottom slabs is easier than the ones on top, successively, until it becomes very difficult to place a slab on the topmost part, since the labour it requires is too much. The analogy, of course, to the 'pyramid' of economic classes and individuals, with more – or less – money, is imperfect. But it explains modern society's need to constantly create and 'upgrade' commodities.

The same is true for the 'value' of tourism when seen as a viable means of generating money-moderated exchange of economic value. When tourism dies out, whatever be the reasons, it leaves behind gaping housing structures (and ghost towns), trash (some 3,000 kg garbage was retrieved from Mt Everest in 2019) (The Tribune, 2019), and other structures and energy-use methods that have no value to residents: clearly indicating that, for some of the very poor, tourism may create as many (or more) economic and social problems than those it can alleviate. No index can explain this better than the use of RPI, and this, paradoxically, makes use of the index, or any similar index, of doubtful value. *But* the index is of great value in showing the poverty that exists even in developed societies, which can be alleviated by tourism if the 'poorer' sections or families are identified, and if the right approach to economic development through tourism is taken up in developing countries, depending on key knowledge of both local people, and administrators and managers, especially about the 'economic value-generating' capacity of appropriate forms of tourism.

The real 'value' of tourism, though, lies in the understanding it can create of cultures that were or are at the periphery, and how they can promote understanding of the world (cf. Owsianowska & Banaszkiewicz 2018), so that wars and suppression do not happen or less frequent or lesser in scope, at the very least. It will also result in greater economic cooperation supported by cultural exchange and cross-cultural understanding that allows realization of economic value of alternative economic core competencies/mutually supportive economies that can come about through tourism.

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Sagar Singh (ORCID ID: **0000-0002-5406-1808**) has written 42 research papers and three books on tourism, anthropology, ecology, and economics, including Rethinking the Anthropology of Love and Tourism (2019) published from USA. He has been an editor and referee for well-known tourism journals since 1986. He has published 7 books of poems in English.