

# **Coastal Resource Valuation, a Tool for Policy Development and Implementation in a Small Island Developing State.**

**Peter Edwards**

**MAST 883-010 Spring 2005**

## **Abstract**

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Jamaica are faced with increasing economic challenges as a result of the impacts of globalization and changes to the existing systems of world trade. Increasing reliance on the service sector is seen as one answer to these challenges, and one of the most important sectors is tourism, particularly the coastal tourism industry. High unemployment and poor educational opportunities for many citizens has resulted in an increase in fishing pressure on the coral reef ecosystems. This has resulted in severe depletion of the nation's inshore fisheries which is considered to be a major contributor to coral reef degradation. This has meant that there has been a steady increase in the level of dependence on the natural resources of the Coastal Zone for economic development with a concomitant increase in the threats to the very same resources. These issues confirm the need for the development of alternatives to existing tourism and coastal resource management policy in Jamaica. In order to develop alternative policy strategies it is important to first determine the primary targets of coastal resource utilization by the major stakeholders (such as, hotel developments, beaches, diving, reef products). It is also important to understand what the challenges to policy implementation and management of Jamaica's coastal resources are, and if current coastal resource management policies are achieving their intended goals. Because a monetary value for the coastal resources is difficult to determine, it is often politically difficult to rationalize funding for resource management. It is therefore useful if a value for the coastal resources that require management can be estimated. The use of environmental valuation survey methods has proven to be useful for estimating the use and non-use values for coral reefs. It is proposed that these methods could be applied to two resort areas in Jamaica. The estimates of economic value provided from this exercise could then be used to contribute to the development of an improved sustainable tourism and coastal zone policy framework. The information could also be used to develop economic models to see the how the use of economic incentives on the tourism sector (taxes, marketable permits etc.) could be used for the generating income to support coastal zone and fisheries policy development and implementation.

Peter Edwards