A CASE STUDY ON SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been a major source of intercultural contact. Research on many touristic countries suggests that their socio-cultural structures have changed considerably under the influence of tourism. These changes, both positive and negative, have varied from country to country. The reactions of the hosts in the face of these changes have been quite diverse, ranging from an active resistance to a complete adoption of Western culture. The choice of strategies to cope with changes wrought by tourism depends on the socio-cultural characteristics of the host community and the level of change affected by tourism. It is proposed that a previously homogeneous community characterized by a particular responses to tourism becomes diversified and groups exhibiting different responses to tourism emerge within the community as a result of touristic developments. Tourism has forced the Balinese to reflect on their artistic output as just one cultural identifier. Tourism has significant effects at social level: both on travellers and on the inhabitants of the visited regions.

INTRODUCTION

The social structures, the culture and traditions can be influenced, changed or even completely substituted due to tourism. This can be mainly noticed by the local communities themselves and is less obvious for the tourists. Tourism has forced the Balinese to reflect on their artistic output as just one cultural identifier. The presence of visitors who continually praise Balinese art and culture has given people a kind of confidence and pride in their art, and made them truly believe that their culture is glorious and thus worthy of this praise and therefore justly admired. This realization removed any possibility in the people's mind that their art was in any way inferior to the art of advanced nations, and plays an important role in conserving and developing the art in general.
SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS

Tourism is one of the foremost drivers of cultural exchange, providing a personal experience, not only of that which has survived from the past, but of the contemporary life and society of others. Tourists are not only bringing their suitcases in the destinations they visit; they are bringing their lifestyles, habits and customs. At the same time tourists are willing to discover a different culture, a specific lifestyle, to enjoy local food, see other aspects of daily life, even living in local homes to experience "exotic" customs. The host population is exposed dilemmas related to the satisfaction of "tourists' demands" and the preservation of local identities. The tourists want to go home with proof of their experiences "in exotic lands and new cultures," as one of the elements they will use to build their identity within their own social groups. As the modern consumption theory supports "people are not consuming products and services, they are consuming symbols". Unfortunately in many cases we are observing situations were the main motivation of tourists - being aware of it or not- is mainly to consolidate their own image, rather than really exchange experiences with the host populations of the destinations they have chosen.

The issue of social diversity, with reference to the phenomenon of tourism in India. Social inequality influences numerous socio-economic phenomena: tourism has been scarcely examined under this perspective. Tourism has significant effects at social level: both on travellers and on the inhabitants of the visited regions. India that is one of the most important touristic nations is significantly affected by the phenomena we are studying and, therefore, is an ideal context to analyse and identify the characteristics of tourism and its interaction on various aspects of social diversity. We could consider the interactions on tourism by persons with different economic and social conditions, race, gender, age, religion, mentality. These issues are usually considered by qualitative approaches. This paper attempts to give a quantitative dimension to these phenomena looking for possible statistical and administrative sources. We examined some, direct and indirect, official sources of the National Statistical System and other sources disseminated by India projects and research institutions. To get a more detailed picture of a particular form of social tourism, we used the data provided to us by a very active association in this area. This study is only a first approach in order to find a strategy to help assessing some quantitative characteristics of accessible tourism. The development of this type of tourism shall imply actions, techniques, and policies aimed at reducing the problems about social diversity in the sector, in order to make tourism become factor of social inclusion.

RESIDENTS ATTITUDES

Tourism can contribute to positive developments, not just negative impacts. It has the potential to promote social development through employment creation, income redistribution and poverty alleviation. Other potential positive impacts of tourism include:

Travelling brings people into contact with each other and, as tourism has an educational element, it can foster understanding between peoples and cultures and provide cultural exchange between hosts and
guests. Because of this, the chances increase for people to develop mutual sympathy and understanding and to reduce their prejudices. For example, jobs provided by tourism in Belfast, Northern Ireland, are expected to help demobilize paramilitary groups as the peace process is put in place. In the end, sympathy and understanding can lead to a decrease of tension in the world and thus contribute to peace.

Demographics - It is the most important external factor that will shape the future of the tourism. Current demographic trends will change the demand for tourism and the available workforces, which will fundamentally impact on how the industries are structured, how they operate, and how they develop in a sustainable manner. India the third rank among countries with the fastest growing tourism industries over the next decade. India has a large medical tourism sector which is expected to grow at an estimated rate of 30% annually to reach about ₹ 95 billion by 2015. According to provisional statistics 6.29 million foreign tourists arrived in India in 2011, an increase of 8.9% from 5.78 million in 2010. This ranks India as the 38th country in the world in terms of foreign tourist arrivals. Domestic tourist visits to all states and Union Territories numbered 1,036.35 million in 2012, an increase of 16.5% from 2011. The most represented countries are the United States (16%) and the United Kingdom (12.6%). “In the last one year, inbound tourism has not grown to our expectations due to sluggish economic climate in source markets. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in 2013 grew 2.2 per cent to $18.1 billion, compared to a growth of seven per cent in the previous years.

Heritage Destination of Tourism ----- The number of heritage destination place in India. Ellora Caves, Agra Fort, Taj Mahal, Sun Temple, Konark Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram, Kaziranga National Park, Assam.

CONCLUSION

The socio-cultural impacts of conventional tourism described here, are the effects on host communities of direct and indirect relations with tourists and of interaction with the tourism industry. Tourism affects the economy and lives of communities and has proven to be a lifesaver for many destinations. There are real and perceived fears that are sometimes attributed to tourism and largely related to poorly managed or mass tourism ventures. As with any economic activity, tourism can have negative impacts on communities.
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