

Conference Paper

The Impact of Tourism on Indian Culture

Pratheep P. S.

Mahatma Gandhi University, India

Abstract

Tourism is an important, even vital, source of income for many regions and countries. Increased leisure time and changes in lifestyle and consumption have given renewed importance to tourism. Travel outside a person's local area for leisure was largely confined to wealthy classes, who at times travelled to distant parts of the world, to see great buildings, works of art, learn new languages, experience new cultures, and to taste different cuisines. Tourism also encourages respect for and preservation of monuments and heritage properties." At the interface between culture and tourism lies a series of deep and challenging issues relating to how we deal with issues of political engagement, social justice, economic change, belonging, identity and meaning. Tourism is a cultural phenomenon. It both impacts cultures and society, and is shaped by cultures and society. There is a deep influence of tourists and tourism on host country. Tourism is genuinely powerful and unique force for change in the community. Tourist impact has been most noticeable in lesser developed countries but is not entirely restricted to them. The cultural impact of tourism is concerned with the question of protecting and maintaining the cultural heritage and certain allied issues. The paper is an attempt to discuss the impact of tourism on Indian culture. The research design of this paper will be descriptive in nature.

Corresponding Author:
 Pratheep P. S.; email:
 drpspratheep@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

Tourism emerged as the largest global industry of the 20th century. In the new millennium global economy will be governed by technology, telecommunication and tourism. Tourism has the potential to create the maximum number of jobs. Tourism is an important, even vital, source of income for many regions and countries. Its importance was recognized in [7] as "an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies and on their international relations" [7]. Increased leisure time and changes in lifestyle and consumption have given renewed importance to tourism, leisure and recreation in both the developed and the developing world, and tourism has become one of the fastest-growing industries in the world economy [4]. According to [12], the motivations for individuals to travel are many and varied, but the foundation of tourism rests on three key elements (all must be operative) which form an equation:

$$\text{Tourism} = \text{leisure time} + \text{discretionary income} + \text{positive local sanctions}$$

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Today, tourism is a major source of income for many countries, and affects the economy of both the source and host countries, in some cases being of vital importance. Leisure travel was associated with the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom – the first European country to promote leisure time to the increasing industrial population [11]. Initially, this applied to the owners of the machinery of production, the economic oligarchy, the factory owners and the traders. These comprised the new middle class. Travel outside a person's local area for leisure was largely confined to wealthy classes, who at times travelled to distant parts of the world, to see great buildings, works of art, learn new languages, experience new cultures, and to taste different cuisines.

There has been rate race among the developed and developing countries to expand tourism indiscriminately, which has resulted, in severe cultural and ecological damages to the host country. In [1] says that, "Development does not mean increase in GNP and GDP alone. It must add to prosperity and happiness. An important feature of the tourism industry is its contribution to the national integration and creation of harmonious social and cultural environment. It also encourages respect for and preservation of monuments and heritage properties." At the interface between culture and tourism lies a series of deep and challenging issues relating to how we deal with issues of political engagement, social justice, economic change, belonging, identity and meaning [11].

As mentioned earlier, tourism should contribute to the national integration and respect for culture and subculture. But in practice tourism caused serious damages to culture, subculture and micro cultures. Many micro cultures vanished from our globe. Serious study is imperative to analyse the impact of tourism on Indian culture.

2. Method

The design of this research is descriptive in nature. The method of data collection is mainly based on secondary data.

2.1. Definition of Tourism and Culture

Tourism is difficult to define because business travelers and convention-goers can combine conferences with tourist-type activities; but, in general, a tourist is a temporarily leasured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing change. The Macmillan Dictionary defines tourism as the business of providing services for people who are travelling for their holiday. The World Tourism Organization defines tourism more generally, in terms which go "beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only ", as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

Culture can be defining in many ways. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2002) defined *culture* as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to, art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs’. In [2] defined ‘society’ as the arrangement of social relationships in a group, and ‘culture’ as the group’s shared beliefs and symbols. Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe. Mathew Arnold writes, “culture is the acquainting by ourselves with the best, that has been known and said in the world”.

In summary, a culture as we know it today is the result of an ongoing dialectic among numerous stakeholder voices, including, and certainly not limited to, political parties, religious organizations, economic interest, global media, local elites, educational institutions and, of course, the tourism industry and visitors, and through the everyday behavior of people living their lives. This culture-forming process applies equally to our interpretations of the past (historic sites) and our treatment of nature (wilderness areas), as it does to the cultures of contemporary societies.

2.2. Tourism and Culture

Tourism is a cultural phenomenon. It both impacts cultures and society, and is shaped by cultures and society. It is often difficult to distinguish cause and effect in the relationship between tourism and society. This is further complicated by the fact that cultures change through time, and despite efforts by preservationists and conservationists to *museumize* sites and landscape to maintain their authenticity, this is never really possible [3].

In what ways does tourism change the host community? There is a deep influence of tourists and tourism on host country. Tourism is genuinely powerful and unique force for change in the community. The most profound impact that tourism can have in the personal arenas of the private household, the domestic lives, emotional experiences, deeply held beliefs and the moral fabric of the group of people who form the community. It is more apparent that social and cultural ideas influence the younger generation who have had direct contact with foreign tourists [6].

Culture and tourism have a mutually beneficial relationship which can strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of places, regions and countries. Culture is an increasingly important element of the tourism product as it creates distinctiveness in a crowded global marketplace. At the same time, tourism provides an important means of enhancing culture and creating income which can support and strengthen cultural heritage, cultural production and creativity (OECD, 2009). Culture and tourism are linked because of their obvious synergies and their growth potential. Cultural tourism is one

of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets and the cultural and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote destinations.

2.3. Cultural Problems and Prospects

Although tourism has become of very great economic importance to many Third World countries, its potential to contribute very significantly to better socio-cultural understanding among peoples and bring awareness of the essential common denominators of humanity has been almost totally ignored. From the outset, total concentration has been on the financial benefits. Recently, a number of more broad-based studies have come to some disturbing conclusions about the mixed contribution of tourism to developing countries and its impact on host communities [10].

The President of Philippines, Marcos in 1980 at the opening ceremony of the Second World Tourism Conference in Manila speaking generally about developing countries, talked of "the means to transform material conditions of life" but warned that these were at best ambivalent in that they disturbed the equilibrium of our societies which "have become unmoored from our roots and our traditions trying desperately to find some synthesis". "International tourism as a force that fosters this kind of interaction between peoples and cultures assumes, it seems to me, a far more significant role in the global scene than we usually allow. And I should think that the closer it identifies itself again with this mission, the more easily will its problems submit to resolution, and the more will it contribute to global community" [10].

There may be several host cultures as well as several tourist cultures represented at one place at one point of time, so one cannot see cultural impacts simply in monolithic terms of 'host culture' and 'visitor culture'. However, tourist impact has been most noticeable in lesser developed countries but is not entirely restricted to them. Contact between different groups of people having different backgrounds and cultures may result in the transformation of values. This phenomenon, also known as the demonstration effect, has been particularly noticed in the developing countries, especially small islands, as a result of frequent encounters between the hosts and the guests. The contacts have generally led to the "democratization and modernization of attitudes" among the young generations in those countries.

Tourism accentuates the values of a society that gives growing importance to leisure and relaxation activities which demand a high-quality environment. It determines areas to be developed for leisure purposes and consequently in most cases provides a check on unplanned development. With proper development it can ensure the long-term preservation of areas of outstanding beauty having aesthetic or cultural value [10].

| Benefits | Costs |
|---|---|
| Host Culture: Development due to demand for traditional entertainment, demand for traditional art, crafts and music. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of original state and stability. • Loss of cultural pride. • Status relationship between host and guest. • Cultural changes. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumption changes. • Introduction or expansion of gambling, drunkenness, prostitution and other excesses. • Vice and drugs, theft and petty crimes. |

TABLE 1: Indicative Costs and Benefits arising from the Cultural Impacts of Tourism. Source: [10], p. 211.

2.4. Negative Cultural Impacts

The cultural impact of tourism is concerned with the question of protecting and maintaining the cultural heritage and certain allied issues. These broadly include:

1. the threat to traditional customs specific to each country and sometimes to each region.
2. the illegal trade in historic objects and animals.
3. the commercialization and commodification of traditional cultural events and arts and erosion of aesthetic values. The commercialization of traditional cultural events may led to the creation of pseudo-cultural performance for the tourist with no cultural value for either the local population or the visitor. "Culture may be sacrificed for reasons of economy thereby creating an additional economic value at the price of losing a cultural value".

The exposure of resident population to other cultures due to tourism appears to be an irreversible process. It is accompanied by an evolution in attitude of mind, in tastes and in the judgment of values. In view of the evidence of the quantitative and qualitative changes due to international tourism in some developing countries tourism has been described as "a form of neo-colonialism" [8].

2.5. Tourism and Indian Culture

India is one of the few countries in the world which has a very ancient culture and civilization. India's cultural history has a long legacy of several thousand years, on the other hand, shows a subtle but strong thread of continuity, epitomized in the assimilative power of the culture and the unique display of "unity in diversity". India

is environmentally and culturally so diverse that it is not feasible to focus on a single destination or tourist experience to understand the effects of tourism on culture. Tourism would be developed in a manner that our cultural expression and heritage are presented in all its manifestations including support to arts and crafts.

The name India comes from the word Indus, which has been derived from the Persian word for Hindu, from Sanskrit word *Sindhu*. Now India is popularly known as 'Bharat' and also 'Hindustan'. Since ancient times, India has been known for its culture, heritage, and tradition. India's glorious traditions and rich cultural heritage are closely related with the development of tourism. Its magnificent monuments attract a large number of tourists from all over the world. The natural surroundings, the architectural masterpieces, the music, dance, paintings, customs and languages all these go to make India as tourist paradise.

India indeed has a deep-rooted conservative cultural tradition and the remnants of Victorian values. Culture of India which is composite in nature is essentially an expression of inner urges and cumulative beliefs of people gathered through centuries of experience. It is the perennial flow of this cultural stream which determines the nation's strength, character and capacity to survive as an integrated living reality despite heavy odds and its continuous march forward on the path of progress. Keeping this in view, preservation of cultural heritage, inculcation of art consciousness among people and promotion of high standards of creative and performing arts and dissemination of culture have been made part of the objectives of State policy [10]. The most notable feature of Indian culture is the adaptability. The Indian culture has developed consistently because of its quality of adaptability.

Most of the tourists were attracted to India by its centuries old culture. Tourism in India has profound influence on Indian culture. Tourism contributes to the maximum extent to the economic and the socio-cultural well-being of the country and of its people and provides a rewarding recreational and cultural experience for the tourists. The few in tourist circles benefitted from these tourist operations. The vast majority is outside this magic circle, and too often is adversely affected by growing socio-cultural distortions.

2.6. Positive Impacts

Tourism may renew local architectural traditions on the condition that regional peculiarities, the ancestral heritage and the cultural environment are respected. In the most favorable cases, tourism may even offer a way to revive the social and cultural life of the local population, thus reinforcing the resident community, encouraging contacts within the country, attracting young people and favoring local activities.

Tourism provides monetary incentives for the development of many local crafts and culture, thus it has an effect on the income of the local artisans and artists. Tourism

also helps to preserve, retain and enrich our cultural heritages. Besides, tourism will open new vistas for multi-socio cultural activities. Through tourism, culture, subculture and micro cultures reached far off lands via photographs and videos. They will attract and enhance the inflow of tourists.

Charmed by Indian dance and other art forms, many foreigners stayed here to learn *Kathakali* (*Kathakali* is a stylized classical Indian dance-drama noted for the attractive make-up of characters, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion. It originated in the country's present day state of Kerala during the 17th century and has developed over the years with improved looks, refined gestures and added themes besides more ornate singing and precise drumming. The themes of the *Kathakali* are religious in nature. They typically deal with the Mahabharat, the Ramayana and the ancient scriptures known as the Puranas. This is performed in a text which is generally Sanskritised Malayalam.) at Kerala Kalamandalam, a Deemed University in Kerala, and later these foreigners started school in their respective home lands to teach the same to native students. Thus way Indian culture received wide global appreciation.

In the field of languages, most of the tourist centres are turned to be multi-lingual. The guides, shopkeepers, and even street venders can communicate with the tourists in their native languages. That is also a welcoming attitude and makes our culture more flexible and accommodative.

2.7. Negative Impacts

Even though we considered tourism as an engine of growth, it can nurture many undesirable social and cultural changes. Tourism sometimes led to the destruction of the social fabric of a community, the more tourists come into a place, the more the perceived risk of that place losing its identity. Another negative impact of bionomic import on tourist cultural centers is the subversion of value systems, i.e., the overturn of norms, customs, and traditions that causes enormous moral and social problems. The disruption of this ecosystem virtually abolishes the uniqueness of the culture which has served all along as a main attraction for mass tourism. The coming of the "golden hordes", an uninhibited party away from home and uninformed or uncaring of local taboos, exhibits a moral laxity to the residents, insulting their sensibilities and often desecrating their community life. These "barbarians" profane places of worship by unacceptable dress, photographing and recording ceremonies as they are taking place, trivializing objects of veneration.

The most important negative impact of tourism on Indian culture is the transformation and deterioration of values in religion, social and moral. Tourism has profound influence on traditional way of life: on art, music and folklore; on habits and customs;

on daily living. Values may be transformed through the bringing together of different groups of people, even if at times only very briefly. This is commonly known as the 'demonstration effect'. The impact of tourism on traditional life styles is especially important where those traditions form the basis of the development of tourism. Ethnic tourism is particularly a feature of the Third World but the arts in general have been, and still are, a very significant part of Europe's appeal to the traveler. Tourism is held by some observers to have a corrupting influence, brought about by the cheapening of artistic values or the commercialization of local traditions and customs, for example, the performance of religious or historical ceremonies on demand, out of context and for monetary reward.

In India, a classical form of dance known as *Kathakali* originated from Kerala. The facial make-up is so intricate and takes hours and hours to finish. But in many cases, the *Kathakali* actors had given few minutes to perform before the tourists. It is a great insult to this classical art and its actors. The point was made earlier that, not only do countries have unique cultures, but within a country subcultures exist. Each subculture is different in several ways to the national culture. Tourists may not protect or respect culture or subculture of various people or locations caused its extinction.

We have several undesirable social and cultural changes due to tourism. Tourism sometimes led to the destruction of the social fabric of a community. A good example is Goa. From the late 60s to the early 80s when the Hippy culture was at its height, Goa was a haven for such hippies. Here they came in thousands and changed the whole culture of the state leading to a rise in the use of drugs, prostitution and human trafficking. This had a ripple effect on the country

A kind of tourism called Tribal Tourism, the tourists visited and stayed in tribal areas with the tribes to learn their language, customs, traditions and food habits. In many cases, such tourism caused serious damage to the tribal culture. Tourism also encouraged the use of intoxicants and prostitution which caused serious damage to our culture.

3. Conclusions and Suggestions

Tourism is one of the most important income generating source. Tourism resources available in the various countries consist at the same time of space, facilities and values. These are resources whose use cannot be left uncontrolled without running the risk of their deterioration, or even their destruction. The conservation of historical, cultural and religious sites represents at all times, and notably in times of conflicts, one of the fundamental responsibilities of the State for which, the State need huge amount for its preservation and conservation.

For all foreign tourists, any visit to India is a form of cultural tourism. There are; however, those with more explicit interests in the monumental heritage, the religious

heritage, the natural heritage, traditional arts and crafts, music and dance and those help in formulation its scope. Tourism industry in India is growing and it has vast potential for generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the country's overall economic and social development by protecting and respecting our cultural heritage.

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