

## **New forms of Tourism: Potentials & Challenges**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*Tourism is of great importance in many ways as it can be for leisure, business, education, medication, religious purposes, culture and for fun. Tourism industry is a fast developing sector for the economy worldwide. Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. Touristic events can offer various economic and social benefits for the host countries, and therefore these countries should employ events effectively in a tourism role. It has become widely accepted that every community and destination needs to adopt a long-term, strategic approach to event tourism thereby planning and development in order to realize the full tourism potential of events. With the development of Tourism, new branches of tourism started to sprout out. This paper would highlight some of the newer forms of tourism and also would speak about the potentials and challenges that these new branches of tourism face.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, New forms, Types, Cruise Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Religious Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Medical Tourism*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience including accommodation, eating, transportation and drinking establishments, and other hospitality services provided for individuals travelling away from home. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) states that Tourism is presently world's largest industry (Parilla *et al.*, 2007). The WTO defines tourism as travels that include a stay of at least one night away from home, but less than one year (Shaw and Williams, 2000). Tourism has got lot of potential to contribute to socio-economic achievements in a positive manner (Liu *et al.*, 2013). Tourism certainly constitutes an opportunity for economic development, diversification and growth of related activities in developing countries, as far as its economic benefits are concerned. It is a catalyst for economic development and is rightly called the fourth dimension of modern economics. Tourism is a composite phenomenon and a human activity of great economic, socio-cultural, educational and political significance. Despite tourism's economic benefits especially in parts of the developing world, where it is the main source of foreign exchange, the tourism industry can have many negative impacts on the local ecological, social and cultural climates of the area (Mirsanjari *et al.*, 2013). In many developing countries even the financial success of tourism is often overshadowed by effects of tourism on local economy caused due to over exploitation of local natural resources.

## **II. DIFFERENT FORM OF TOURISM:**

### **Cruise Tourism**

The cruise industry has become lately the most exciting segment of the travel industry throughout the world. Over the past 10 years, the industry has responded to extensive market and consumer research that has led to the addition of new destinations, new ship design concepts, new on-board/on-shore activities, new themes and new cruise lengths to reflect the changing vacation patterns of today's market. This phenomenal growth has fuelled the continuing evolution of the cruise industry product. Cruise companies have expanded itineraries to include more exotic ports of call.

Cruise tourism generates an estimated \$18 billion a year in passenger expenditure and has been the fastest growing sector of the travel industry for the past twenty years with an average annual growth rate of passengers of 7.4%. It has increased at almost twice the rate of growth of tourism overall and this growth is expected to continue in the future. The North American cruise industry is the dominant in this market with 12 million of passengers embarked in the US ports. The Caribbean region, continue being the most preferred cruise destination; according to FCCA statistics, accounting for 41.02% of all itineraries. The cruise passenger arrivals in the Caribbean region increased from 3 million in 1980 to more than 25 million in 2007 (Brida and Zapta, 2009).

Cruise tourism is the fastest growing segment of leisure tourism. With its growth it became very important to study the effect of cruise tourism on coastal and marine environments, local economies, and on the socio cultural nature of port communities. These three areas are key elements in analyses focused on responsible tourism (Klein, 2011). The primary focus when it came to cruise tourism was waste management practices and procedures (UNEP, 2002). These were addressed solely from an industry perspective.

Immediately preceding the World Summit on Sustainable Development was the first International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (RTD). The conference shared the same concerns as sustainable tourism (i.e., a focus on environmental, economic, and socio cultural impacts), but was grounded in ethics and human rights - companies are expected to do what is morally and ethically 'right' from the perspective of consumers and communities. It is not a matter of simply reducing negative impacts, but of mediating and/or ameliorating those that persist.

1st International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (RTD) concluded with the Cape Town Declaration. It defined responsible tourism as:

- Minimizing negative economic, environmental, and social impacts.
- Generating greater economic benefits for local people and enhancing the wellbeing of host communities, improving working conditions and access to the industry.
- Involving local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances.
- Making positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity.
- Providing more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues.

- Providing access for physically challenged people.
- Maintaining cultural sensitivity, engendering respect between tourists and hosts, and building local pride and confidence.

Responsible Cruise Tourism has three broad areas of concern:

- (a) Tourism's impact on the environment.
- (b) The equitable distribution of economic benefits to all segments of a tourist destination.
- (c) Minimizing negative socio cultural impacts.

Thus, when considering environmental responsibility, it may not be whether a company uses 'best practices' or follows international regulations, but instead the environmental impact on people of those practices. In the case of wastewater treatment for example, the issue is not whether cruise ships have installed advanced wastewater treatment systems, but whether the effluent of these systems has harmful effects. Similarly, when considering economic benefits of cruise tourism the focus may not be on whether a port community realizes income but rather the degree to which economic benefits are distributed equitably between the cruise line and port and among the stakeholders and segments of society in the port. Environmental Issues A cruise ship produces a number of waste streams. Some, such as oily bilge water, ballast water, and air emissions 108 Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management Responsible Cruise Tourism from fuel are common to most ocean-going vessels. Other waste streams are specific to cruise ships, such as the volume of human waste and grey water, solid waste, and incinerator emissions and ash (Copeland, 2009; US Environmental Protection Agency [US EPA], 2009). Three waste streams will be considered here for illustration: wastewater treatment, air emissions from engines, and solid waste. Wastewater Treatment Many notable technological advances have been applied to cruise ships in recent years including systems for treating the roughly seven gallons of sewage and 90 gallons of grey water per person per day. These new systems, however, can produce as much as 28,000 gallons of sewage sludge per week (National Marine Sanctuaries, 2008, p. 43). While land-based tourism also produces grey water and sewage, treatment systems on board cruise ships are often less effective given the limited space available for the full suite of treatment systems commonly found on land.

### III. RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Religious tourism, also commonly referred to as faith tourism, is a type of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. North American religious tourists comprise an estimated \$10 billion of the industry. Tourism in any region needs to be regulated to prevent the negative impacts. Major problems include:-

1. Infringement of carrying capacity: Most religious centers in the country, major or minor, suffer from short but intense seasons that alter the dynamics of the region for the rest of the year.
2. Waste Management: In part a derivative of the problem of carrying capacity, management problem has aggravated as science and technology grew to usher us into the 'era of plastic'.

3. Air Pollution: The sheer volume of travel in this niche makes the figure mind boggling. While trains still manage to absorb a majority of travel volume, quite a major religious tourism sites in India are still accessible by road or foot only.
4. Monetizing Religion: In the race for developing as many niches as possible, there is often the issue of religion being monetized, as the host community gets increasingly driven by the profit motive.
5. Lack of scrutiny of religious trusts: There is a need to put forward regulations which govern the financial status and regulations of religious trusts as it looks to allay global concerns about money laundering and terrorist financial activities.

#### **Solutions to the problem:**

1. Developing religious tourism circuits through a hub model.
2. Providing the tourists with a holistic tourism experience.
3. Developing integrated infrastructure for religious tourism development.
4. Scrutiny of religious trusts.
5. Pricing of religious tourism products.
6. Improving connectivity to specific religious tourism circuits to promote them (Gupta, 2017)

#### **IV. CULTURAL TOURISM**

Cultural tourism has always had a special interest in tourism market. One of the biggest beneficial features of cultural and heritage tourism is that it helps protect and preserve cultural resources. The economic opportunities it provides stimulate local communities to conserve their heritage in order to continually attract visitors. For example, Lijiang, an ancient town of China, expanded its budget for heritage maintaining from 1998 to 1999 since its total income had increased significantly due to the developing tourism industry. Traditions, customs, traditional art and techniques and other cultural inheritance are at a greater chance of being survived; there may even be a revival of them because local people can make money from their cultural resources. Another significant positive impact is that cultural tourism promotes local culture whereby tourists get an opportunity to know about the traditions, values and lifestyle of indigenous communities.

On the negative side, as tourists coming to the place, cultural tourism causes pollution, congestions, increased costs for public services (e.g police service) and infrastructures, and destruction of cultural resources. There is an example that the profit of cultural tourism excited the government to build roads which resulted in the siltation of the lake nearby. Also, when people from outside of the local community come to the place, cultural interaction, which is local people and foreigners exchange their beliefs and values as well as other things occurs. This can broaden the limits of local culture, yet can damage its authentic identity. Example to this can be Sauraha of Nepal, a popular tourist attraction by the reason of its cultural amazements and natural resources. Due to tourism, hotels were built there and the price of land was very high. Many local people sold their land to non-local groups for money. Now Sauraha is a place of diverse population, therefore, its cultural identity is at a risk of being lost, and the culture and society has been altering on account of external influences.

Tourism has multiple economic benefits for host countries that receive tourists. Policy makers are becoming more and more aware of the importance that appropriate tourism management has to maximize the benefits that tourism flows can bring. However, many developing countries suffer from a lack of an integrated tourism policy. Particular issues are faced in those countries that are dealing with local conflicts (sometimes over many years). These countries often lack investment in tourism resources even though they might have a huge potential and are rich in heritage and cultural assets.

## **V. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

Developing tourism in least developed countries can greatly benefit these countries economically. Effective tourism strategies of a developing country can create revenue generating opportunities (tax revenues) and provide a lot of job opportunities for skilled, semi-skilled and even unskilled workers. Such tourism development strategies require systemic thinking and comprehensive investment portfolio strategies regarding the tourism industry as a whole, i.e. going beyond investing in hotels, but also including transportation infrastructure, catering, restaurants, safe water, financial system etc. In other words, the destination countries need to review their tourism value & supply chains and identify structural impediments to the full utilization of their tourism assets and facilities.

Opportunity for least developed countries recent reports from different agencies have highlighted the importance of tourism for least developed countries. A flourishing tourism sector can contribute to least developed countries' development through its linkages with other economic sectors and through the inclusion of local communities, as well as through job reaction and reduction of poverty.

## **VI. MEDICAL TOURISM**

Medical tourism is not a new concept and is in practice since decades. Generally it refers to the increasing practice of travelling overseas to get health care. This kind of tourism has grown recently as the cost of medical procedures and health insurance has increased. Besides that most patients opt for medical tourism for elective procedures as well as complex specialized surgeries such as joint replacement, cardiac surgery, dental surgery, and cosmetic surgeries. Also called as medical travel or health tourism, medical tourism have several benefits for the patients seeking medical help with limited budget. Easy access to state-of-the-art technological and medical facilities, diagnostics, and procedures makes medical tourism all the more useful.

## **VII. BENEFITS OF MEDICAL TOURISM:**

Even though most medical tourists consider lower cost as one of the main benefits of medical tourism, but it is not the only factor responsible for its rapidly growing popularity. A major advantage of medical tourism is that the patient can travel to any destination of the world to get the best and most cost effective healthcare and treatment. The biggest benefactors are those patients, who are not able to avail and access specialized procedures, surgeries, doctors, and facilities like fertility treatment and alternative therapies, in their home country.

Moreover, individuals with nationalized healthcare services, like the UK and Canada, who don't want to wait for medical treatment, are drawn towards health tourism owing to convenience and quick access to healthcare. The prospects of combining treatment with holiday for recuperating, is an added bonus for the patients. There can be nothing more pleasurable than recovering in a relaxing and spending time in beautiful environment, lying on a beach, or shopping in luxury boutiques.

Besides patients, those involved in medical tourism industry also benefit at-large from it, as the healthcare providers/hospitals/doctors can become world-class experts in their areas of specializations by having a wider patient base from all over the world, which in turn increases their profitability in the long run. Globalizing the opportunities for health care provision, medical tourism also contributes in the increasing flow of health information among doctors worldwide. This way, doctors and health care professionals gain knowledge about the latest development in the medical industry all over the world.

If you are tight on budget, then medical tourism is a sure shot way to get access to advanced equipment and facilities along with better personal care. It is much more affordable to avail luxurious hospital stay in foreign hospital than in the United States. In fact, many hospitals specializing in medical tourism are known to offer outstanding quality and services.

With the increasing competition among healthcare industry in various countries, hospitals and clinics are prompted to raise their quality standards to attract patients, which proves favorable for the local patients consecutively. Even though the quality standard may vary from country to country, which leaves many potential medical tourists in a dilemma, International accreditation of hospitals and clinics can restore the confidence of patients in this amazing option.

## **VIII. CHALLENGES OF MEDICAL TOURISM:**

Even though there are numerous benefits and opportunities provided by medical tourism, potential medical tourists who are looking forward to profit from these benefits, should also be aware of the challenges. Authorization and various quality measures differ widely across the globe that may turn out to be risky and even dangerous for medical tourists to contemplate, making medical tourism a challenging method.

Most patients face major difficulty in getting access to authentic information while researching about various treatment options. Language issues and other communication problems among patients and medical tourism providers also act as a major impediment in getting the correct information. This is also the case when the patients do not ask the right questions to clear their doubts and the health care service providers also fails to provide the right information to potential medical tourists.

Another problem faced by patients is the lack of recourse, in case something goes wrong after the patient returns home following the treatment, then the patient obviously have no way out from the situation. The perception that patients will have no course for retribution should something go wrong is that simple an issue to state and equally that complex an issue to solve and is prohibits the growth of medical tourism to some extent.

Another major concern for a potential medical tourist is to check on the qualifications of doctors and surgeons. A doctor, who has been struck off the medical register in one country, might be able to continue his practice in

another one. It becomes extremely difficult for the patient to get information about the concerned doctor, as till date there are no international databases that stores information about doctors, surgeons and other medical practitioners. Due to this, there is a lack of transparency in the information provided by most health care providers, which makes numerous potential medical tourists unsure about their decision of taking the big plunge.

Ethical/legal complications are a major setback for the medical tourism industry. Simply put, hospitals are answerable to the law in their country and the patient must abide by the destination country's law in the event of bad outcomes or complications after treatment. As the law is associated with the legal recourse, it obviously becomes a major issue. In addition, there are various concerns about the difference in quality of healthcare available to the tourists as compared to the locals of that country along with potential inequities developing in access. Many even predict that in the course of time, various private medical centers might emerge that would specially be catering to tourists taking advantage of the full range of incentives, which was traditionally related to tourism development. This in turn will result in disregard and neglect of the public health care systems of the host country.

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