

“Cultural Tourism”

The risk involved, possible conflicts and challenges in a multi-religious - multi cultural countries”

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ABSTRACT

International tourism growing and is the foremost vehicle for cultural exchange, providing a personal experience, not only of that which past cultural heritage, but also contemporary life and society of others. It is a positive force for natural and cultural conservation. Tourism can capture the economic characteristics of heritage and harness these for conservation by generating funding, educating the community and influencing policy. It is a tool for economy to grow and can be an important factor in development, if managed successfully.

Many of the world countries are multi-religious and multi-cultural, such as India, China, Indonesia and Africa and so on. Even though the cultural tourism is a boon to these countries, they are facing several challenges and posing significant risks to the cultural heritage, architectural sites and the socio cultural fabric of the society in their respective countries. The reaction between the tourism and conservation is dynamic and many countries where the respect for the indigenous traditions is lacking are leading to conflicts and severe challenges. In many places the cultural tourism is becoming threat to cultural heritage such as being experienced by the Mexico, Guatemala and other Native American traditional countries in Americas.

The challenge is posed due to inadequate integration of cultural heritage protection and management laws and practices into social, economic, political, legislative, and cultural and tourism development policies at national and regional level can diminish the protection and conservation of cultural heritage over time. The local Government are victims and lured towards the possible economic development due tourism but at what cost to the local people especially

the indigenous people. The dilemma is economic development and heritage losses, unless proper regulations are implemented we may lose many of the greatest cultural heritages down the road and may be cultural tourism may be blamed for the same. This paper will discuss various aspects of cultural tourism, risk involved, possible conflicts and challenges and how some of the world community is addressing these challenges.

Keywords: *Cultural tourism, risk involve and possible conflicts and challenges*

I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

For almost a decade, tourism has been known as one of the fastest growing economic sector in the world. Considering an annual growth of 3.9% tourists in 2106, represented by 1,235 million tourists travelling around the world which is 34 million tourists more compared to 2015, The World Tourism Organization has predicted that in 2030, the number of tourists will reach 1.8 million/year. With 1,235 million tourists in 2016, the tourism sector has contributed 9.8% of world's GDP worth of US\$ 7.2 trillion. Tourism consists of many tourism sectors with one of them is cultural tourism. (www.unwto.org)

The charter which was adopted by general assembly in 1999 in Mexico for ICOMOS (International Council for Monuments and Sites), known as International cultural tourism charter with a specific aim to improve the relationship between conservation practitioners and the tourism industry (1). The *Charter* recommends that one of the primary reasons for undertaking any conservation works is to make the significance of the place more accessible to visitors and members of the host community, in a well-managed way.

ICOMOS: (International Council for Monuments and Sites)

The work undertaken by ICOMOS in examining the wide-ranging risks faced by cultural heritage is an important international initiative and is commended by the International Cultural Tourism Committee. Given that tourism is one of the largest economic activities in the world, and accounts for the largest international and domestic movement of people, tourism can and does place considerable pressure on the world's heritage resources. In the company of armed

conflict, economic development and environmental pollution, tourism can be regarded as one of the major factors that places heritage at risk (1).

The Charter defines Heritage as a broad concept that includes the natural as well as the cultural environment.

- It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as biodiversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences.
- It records and expresses the long processes of historic development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life.
- It is a dynamic reference point and positive instrument for growth and change.
- The particular, the heritage and collective memory of each locality or community is irreplaceable and an important foundation for development, both now and into the future.

Cultural Tourism: Cultural tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organization (Report WTO, 2012) as "trips, whose main or concomitant goal is visiting the sites and events whose cultural and historical value has turned them being a part of the cultural heritage of a community" (2). An important feature of cultural tourism according to this definition is the assumption that visiting cultural and historical sites and events, related to cultural heritage is not necessarily the main motive for the trip. In this context cultural-historical tourism is rarely implemented in a "clean" look and most often is combined with other traditional and specialized types of tourism. This substantial feature reveals opportunities to improve the effectiveness of national and regional tourism through the development of cultural-historical tourism - through absorption and integration of cultural-historical resources in the regional tourism product and development on this basis of a regional tourism brand (3). Featuring the culture that varies worldwide, cultural tourism is one of the most interesting niche tourism sectors in the world which has successfully been attracting millions of inbound visitors, but is also the controversial one.

Dynamic interaction between the Indigenous traditions, Indigenous cultures and tourism

and conservation: One of the major challenges posed due to cultural tourism is for the indigenous traditions and cultures around the world. Almost every country had some or other groups which were indigenous to the land and later were termed as nations such as United States was part of the 500 nations of Native Americans, African continent consisted of over 1000 African traditions and religions, Australian Aboriginals were in Australia long before the westerners visited the Australian continent and colonized it, similar indigenous groups existed in Europe known as pagans, the Tengger tribe living in very famous tourism object of Bromo mountain in East Java Indonesia and so on. Most of these cultures had their own practices, sacraments, cultures and living ways of life. During the last few centuries due to invasion from the invaders they lost almost everything and their sacred sites were destroyed and they lost ownership of their own countries. Today whatever is left for them is being threatened by the visitors in the name of cultural tourism.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism often creates conflict and resentment with local peoples, particularly once the realities of its impact become clear. Examples of the negative impacts of tourism upon indigenous peoples are numerous throughout history and continue largely unabated today (4)

Some of the examples included:

- 1) Beach hotels have displaced the fishing communities that once lined the coasts of Penang, Malaysia and Phuket, Thailand.
- 2) A Mohawk uprising in Canada was triggered by plans to extend a golf course on to Mohawk burial grounds.
- 3) Indigenous burial sites have been desecrated by resorts in Hawai'i and Bali. In the tropical jungles of the Amazon insensitive tourism operators have disrupted religious ceremonies, and even brought diseases like tuberculosis into indigenous communities.
- 4) In the Black Hills, the native Sioux work as low-wage laborers in a white-owned tourism industry that promotes their culture and lands.
- 5) In Thailand, Hill Tracts people are viewed much like human zoo specimens by drug and adventure-seeking trekkers.(4)

- 6) Around the world there is a plundering of archaeological sites and illegal trade in wildlife and cultural artifacts.
- 7) Cultural tourism produced foreign domination and dependency, polarization, environmental destruction, cultural alienation, and the loss of social control and identity among host communities. (5)
- 8) Cultural tourism weakens the Tenggerese culture as the priority shift to nature-based tourism in Bromo Mountain, Indonesia.

Several such examples can be given to demonstrate the risk involved, possible conflicts and challenges in a multi-religious - multi cultural countries” Most of the countries mentioned above are all multi religious and multicultural in nature. Due to globalization and with the advent of many different fast modes of transportation, majority of the countries are gradually becoming multi-cultural and multi religious. (6)

III. DISCUSSION

Tourism is an increasingly complex process, with different dimensions such as political, economic, social, cultural, educational, biophysical, ecological and aesthetic. The achievement of a beneficial interaction between the potentially conflicting expectations and aspirations of visitors and host or local communities presents many challenges and also many opportunities too.

Natural and cultural heritage, diversities and living cultures are major tourism attractions especially representing indigenous traditions and cultures of these countries.. Excessive or poorly managed tourism and tourism-related development can threaten their physical nature, integrity and significant characteristics. The ecological setting, culture and lifestyles of host communities may also be degraded, along with the visitor’s experience of the place.

Some of the risks and challenges due to Cultural Tourism: (7)

- 1. Social impact on local community:** changes in the lives of people living in destination communities.
- 2. Cultural impact:** Cultural impacts of tourism refers to changes in the arts, artifacts, customs, rituals, and architecture of a people, when there is large contrast between the culture of the receiving society and the origin culture, then it is likely that impacts will be greatest.
- 3. Tourism and local identity:** can cause change / loss of local identity and values by:
 - a. Commodification;
 - b. Standardization;
 - c. Loss of authenticity/staged authenticity and unnecessary adaption to tourist demands.
- 4. Religious compromise:** In many Muslim countries, strict standards exist regarding the appearance and behavior of Muslim women, who must carefully cover themselves in public.
 - a. Tourists in these countries often disregard or are unaware of these standards, ignoring the prevalent dress code, appearing half-dressed (by local standards) in revealing shorts, skirts or even bikinis, sunbathing topless at the beach or consuming large quantities of alcohol openly;
 - b. Besides creating ill-will, this kind of behavior can be an incentive for locals not to respect their own traditions and religion anymore, leading to tensions within the local community. Very applicable in Indonesia here, like in Bali, the local community actually respects polite dress manner but it cannot be applied when welcoming foreign tourists.
- 5. Job level friction:** majority of the blue collar jobs are offered to the local community and the highly paid white collar jobs are offered to outsiders who lead to friction between the cultural tourism and the local community.
- 6. Some other social problems include:**
 - a. Child labor;
 - b. Prostitution and sex tourism in the name of cultural experiences;

- c. Changes in cultural products and festivals at the demand of the tourists (carnivals);
- d. Significant acculturation over generations and many more to mention.

Cultural clashes and risk and challenges involved: Cultural clashes can be due to many reasons some of which can be classified as (8)

1. Economic inequality
2. Irritation due to Tourist behavior
3. Physical and economic disparity causing social stress
4. Crime generation especially influence of drug dealers in the name of cultural tourism
5. Development of stereotype identities such native American, Africans many a times these are far from the realities on the ground.

Case study: Australian Aboriginals:

The Djabugay people live near Cairns, a tourist destination in North Queensland, Australia, on land to which they “belong” and which traditionally “belongs” to them. Their community is an equity partner in the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park that features Djabugay culture. Some community members work as employees in the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. The benefits of tourism identified by this study included revival of Djabugay culture; employment opportunities; working together with other Djabugay community members; increased cross-cultural understanding; and improved material welfare. However, disadvantages such as degradation of Djabugay culture; exploitation of the Djabugay community; minimal tourist/Djabugay interaction; and limited material improvement for the Djabugay were also revealed.

Although the Djabugay people experienced various outcomes from participation in the tourist industry, the community did not appear to experience substantial economic or socio-cultural benefits. As such, the legacy of disadvantage from colonialism is not necessarily reversed by this engagement with tourism. Recommendations arising from this study include stricter adherence to terms and conditions of formal agreements by all parties; increased and more effective communication between managers and indigenous personnel and communities; development of

detailed strategies for empowerment of indigenous; and consideration of cross-cultural interaction.(9)

Case study: Reshaping of the African ethnicity:

The thesis of this paper is that *ethnicity* is produced by group-level interactions and ethnic forms evolve as a result of changing structural relations between groups and rhetorical explanations and accounts of inter-group similarities and differences. The evidence for this argument is composed mainly of statements made by leaders and representatives of one group about other groups, and responses to such statements. These statements and associated behaviors are analyzed semiotically in that no distinction is made between the words of movement leaders and such matters as the wearing of an Afro hair style: they are both read as statements about group structure and the history of inter-group relations, although one may be in a more accessible idiom than the other. The paper concludes that the institutions associated with modern mass tourism also function as powerful shapers of ethnic identity. (10)

Case Study: Native Americans Stereotyping through the Movies:

The stereotypic conceptions one group has of another play an integral role in the process of “ethnic” tourism. Interviews and observations of upper-middle-class US tourists at museums of Native American culture and pueblo ceremonials in New Mexico provide the pretext for an analysis of tourists' behavior toward their Native American “hosts,” and the degree to which their perceptions of Native American culture reveal more about their own worldviews and cultural stereotypes than what they supposedly learn from their travels. Most of the stereotypes have originated from the Movies depiction of the Native Americans over the period of time. Rather than travel encouraging cultural understanding, brief encounters appear to reinforce ethnocentrism and convince tourists of the correctness of their own worldviews (11)

Case Study: Kasodo, tourism, and local people perspectives for Tengger Highland Conservation

In Bromo mountain-Tengger Caldera (BTC), East Java Indonesia tourism object, as shown by the Tengger Tribe (Tenggerese) attitude to the BTC, local people and nature is closely related

especially because nature is respected as site of religious-traditional values. The BTC and its surroundings are home and territory of the Deity, which should not be disrupted by human beings. One way to show the Deity, nature and local people relationship in the BTC Bromo is *Kasodo* ceremony where the ceremony represents the way of Tenggerese to show their gratitude which surely must be preserved to sustain the Tenggerese culture. For tourists, the ceremony is fascinating as it offers culture-based tourism.

However, as the BTC is now becoming very popular tourist destination and demanding economic profits, people tend to deny culture-based tourism (i.e. *Kasodo* ceremony) but concentrate more on improving nature-based tourism by developing more attractive BTC performance as an aesthetics factor of destination. The reality shows that improving nature-based tourism produces some contradiction including the weakening of *Kasodo* ceremony, ecosystem disturbance of Edelweiss plant that now tends to be extinct because many plants species that were harvested are not “in line” with BTC nature. The paper suggests that both culture-based and nature-based tourism should be concurrent to preserve ecosystem, religious culture and economic demand.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

International tourism is growing and is the foremost vehicle for cultural exchange, providing a personal experience, not only of that which past cultural heritage, but also contemporary life and society of others. It is a positive force for natural and cultural conservation. Tourism can capture the economic characteristics of heritage and harness these for conservation by generating funding, educating the community and influencing policy. It is a tool for economy to grow and can be an important factor in development, if managed successfully. But people are paying a significant price in terms of losing their culture and also their younger generations are succumbed to the external visiting forces in the form of tourist. The ancient culture which had been intact for many millenniums is also at cross roads and losing its luster and heritage.

Based on the case study it is observed that the cultural tourism is leading to conflicts and creating challenges for the local indigenous communities. The communities are paying a significant price for this type of tourism and the societies will have to weigh the pros and cons and cost benefits

for their societies and will have to come up with solutions to resolve such conflicts and devise ways to be part of such cultural tourism revolution but without losing their own identities.

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