



Religion and Tourism: Role of religion in mitigation of negative impacts of tourism

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Abstract

The Travel and Tourism industry is a vast industry made up of business and organizations that provide services and goods to meet the distinctive needs and wants of tourists. According to WTTC Travel and Tourism has contributed 3.1% to direct global GDP growth and has supported 6 millions further jobs in 2016, in spite of escalating and volatile terrorist attacks, political instability, natural disasters, and health pandemics that prevailed in the world. However, its speedy expansion also had damaging environmental, economical and socio cultural impact. In order to tackle with this problem, different researchers produce different views and tools. Religion can be used to overcome the negative impacts of tourism because religion has a impact on tourist behavior. The main endeavor of this paper will be to highlight the role played by the religion in minimize the negative impacts of tourism. The research is qualitative in nature and the data will be collected through secondary source by using online resources like Ugc infolibnet, Ebsco host and Google Scholar etc.

Keywords: tourism, travel and tourism, religious tourism

Introduction

Travel and Tourism is one of the fastest emergent industries in the world. It is an increasingly imperative source of income, employment to many countries especially to developing countries. Travel and Tourism has contributed 3.1% to direct global GDP growth and has supported 6 million jobs in 2016. Travel and tourism, in total has generated US\$7.6 trillion that accounts for 10.2% of global GDP and has provided 292 million jobs in the year 2016, equivalent to one job in ten jobs in global economy (i.e. Out of every 10 jobs one jobs is from tourism in the global economy). However, its speedy expansion also had damaging environmental, economical and socio cultural impact.

Tourism can be a major tool for economic development but, if not properly planned it can have destructive effects on biodiversity and pristine environments, and can result in the misuse of natural resources such as freshwater, forests and marine life. At a number of sites tourism development has resulted in serious water shortage affecting both local communities and industry, forests have been depleted and coral reefs have been damaged.

Socially tourism has a great influence on the host societies. Tourism can be both a source of international amity, peace and understanding and a destroyer. Tourism might cause a gradual change in a society's values, beliefs and cultural practices. Local residents feel this impact more heavily. By observing the tourists, local people might change their life style (dressing, eating, entertainment and recreational activities, and so forth). While this influence may be interpreted positively as an increase in the standard of living, it may also be considered negatively as an indication of acculturation (Brunt and Courtney, 1999)^[2].

In addition to its cultural impacts, tourism is perceived to contribute to changes in value systems, individual behaviour,

family relations, collective lifestyle, moral conduct and community organisations (Ap and Crompton, 1998)^[1]. It also modifies internal structure of the community by dividing it into those who have and have not a relationship with tourism or tourists (Brunt and Courtney, 1999)^[2]. Intense immigration from different cultures of people brings about social conflict in the area. Generally, impacts of tourism on women are perceived positively such as more freedom, more opportunities to work, increase self-worked and respect, better education, higher standards of living with higher family income. However, some argue that tourism distracts family structure and values, and also leads to increase in divorce rates and prostitution Tourism may lead to a decline in moral values; invokes use of alcohol and drugs; increases crime rates and tension in the community (Liu and Var, 1986; Milman and Pizam, 1988)^[9, 11]. Moreover, with the development of tourism, human relations are commercialised while the non-economic relations begin to lose their importance in the community (Dogan, 1989)^[5].

So with positives there are negative impacts as well which are associated with the tourism. The main attempt of the present paper is to have deep insight relating the religion and tourism industry. As religion over the years has vast impact and effect on travel and tourism. The paper will also present the different views of different religions against the negative impacts which we are facing because of the tourism

Literature Review

Ugur Sunlu (2003)^[14] concludes in his research that the quality of the environment, both natural and man-made is essential to tourism. However, the relationship of tourism with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general

infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses and marinas. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy environmental resources on which it depends. G.R. Cessford & P.R. Dingwall state (1998) ^[6] in their research that tourism industry absolutely affects the environment. Its negative impact is very dangerous for the environment and the future generation. For this reason planning and sustainable tourism industry is very essential for every country.

The impact of tourism on the host destination is an area that has been greatly researched by many tourism related authors. Tourism can have both positive and negative impact on the host destination's socio-cultural structure. The positive and negative impact of tourism on the host destination's socio-cultural structure has been an issue for a long time. In the words of Matheison and Wall (1982) ^[10], social impacts can be thought of 'as changes in the lives of people who live in destination communities, which are associated with tourist activity' in regard to moral conduct, creative expressions. Cultural impacts can be thought of as the changes in the arts, traditional ceremonies, customs and rituals and architecture of people that result from tourism activity. Witt (1991) ^[15] claims that the greater the difference between the host community and the tourists, the greater will be the affect of tourism on society. This presents a challenge to decision makers in regard to the type of tourism that a destination is trying to attract. Tourism stakeholder's must focus on minimizing these negative impacts, there are many ways to counter these negative impacts, religion can be used as a measure to do so. Religion or faith has a great impacts on the behavior of human beings.

Tourism and its allied practices interrelate with religious life and the religious institutes almost across the globe. Religion is still among the most regular motivating factor for travel and tourism. Religion is considered as one of the most primitive forms of tourism. The idea of religious pilgrimage begins almost with the outset of humanity. Almost since the very outset of history, human beings have traveled to religious sites. By the Biblical period important religious centers had become not only a part of the cultural landscape, but they also had become major players in local marketing and important parts of the economy of those cities that hosted religious centers. In the western world, cities such as Jerusalem, Rome and Mecca continue to attract millions of visitors on a yearly basis. Religious-oriented travel then has occurred since the first pilgrimages. In recent years, however, religious travel and tourism has developed into a much larger and more segmented market. Today's religious travel includes multiple sub-niches that range from the luxury pilgrimage market to backpacking and from religious institutional travel to volunteer-oriented experiences meant to help those in some form of need. 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. Religious tourism is one of the earliest forms of tourism. The idea of the religious pilgrimage begins almost with the dawn of humanity. By the 2nd century CE, archaeology shows that people were traveling long distances to Rome and Jerusalem for religious purposes. Travelling to

destinations to experience other cultures and to visit sites of historical and religious importance has been a popular reason to travel for centuries, with many making religious pilgrimages to Mecca or to see the Vatican. Therefore, we can say that travel and tourism has been long rooted associated with the religions.

Religion plays an influential role in positive development of behaviors of individuals towards the environment. Religion offers a wealth of universal values, which lends itself to interpretation and practice by individual seekers and practitioners, both religious and secular, to inform their sustainability practice. Govert Buijs (2004) identifies the Christian notion of *caritas* as one vital way for religion to fill development's 'blind spot' and calls for the restoration of the notion as a 'non-utopian source of inspiration for the alleviation of human suffering'. In a similar way, the understanding and practice of the Hindu *dharma* or notion of 'duty' or 'ethics' or the 'right means' as the potential for the most profitable connections between Hindu religion and sustainable development to be made. The notion of dharmic sustainability that would be based on the complementary strengths of science and religion. Seen this way, if *dharma* is the value, then sustainability becomes the strategy by which to live and realize the value. The Islamic preaching's are also in favor of the environment protection, and against the social evils.

There are important resources within religious traditions that can help define morally informed and yet practical economic growth for sustainable development. The Hindu notion of the *purusharthas* reconceptualizes sustainable consumption by acknowledging the human tendency to want and directing ways for material and sensuous consumption to be in accordance with the rules of *dharma* or duty (Narayanan, 2010) ^[12]. The stage of *dharma* may be where the most productive partnerships between Hindu religion and sustainable development may be realized. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka, founded by A. T. Ariyaratne in 1958, draws its principles from the lessons of the Buddha (Chowdhry, 2005) ^[4]. The movement foregrounds one of Buddhism's primary lessons, that service is an important economic resource for the development of all sections of the society, and cannot be treated as a commodity. Central to the movement's ethics is the principle of sharing, where the participants share themselves with the needy and the deprived. Shramadana means 'giving of one's time and labour as a gift' (Chowdhry, 2005, p. 231) ^[4].

Research Objectives

- a) To study existing literature on tourism and religion.
- b) To study the role of religion in mitigation of negative impacts of tourism.

Research Methodology

The paper is qualitative in nature and secondary data has been used during the study. Content analysis was undertaken to review and analyze existing literature involving tourism & religion and the role played by religion in mitigation of negative impacts of tourism.

The procedure of content analysis includes categorizing articles into six main components: (a) unitizing, (b) sampling,

(c) recording/coding, (d) reducing, (e) inferring, and (f) narrating. (Krippendorff 2004)^[8], the first four components constitute the process of “data making,” and the last two use the information generated from the previous four components (Krippendorff, 2004)^[8].

A number of research papers and articles were reviewed in order to conduct the Content analysis. 98 full research papers and articles were selected and the other various abstracts and thesis were consulted out of total 170, which highlighted tourism and religion and role played by religion in mitigation of negative impacts of tourism.

Discussion

Tourism being one of the largest and fastest growing industry in the world. It has been the major source of income to many countries, especially the developing countries. There are the number of countries where tourism is the main source of GDP. But, with the pros there are certain cons which are associated with the tourism. Aside with the positives, there are various negative impacts of tourism for the particular destination, which include negative impacts on environment and Socio-Cultural impacts. The religion has a power to minimize those impacts because Religion has a positive impact on behavior of humans. So with the help of religious figures and religious books those negative impacts can be minimized. As all the major religions are against negative environmental and social impacts that are because of the tourist activities. Every tourist before being a tourist is the human being following certain religion. And, if we are able to highlight the preaching of their religion which are in favour of the environment and society, he certainly will try to follow that. In that way we can minimize those negative impacts with the help of religion.

Religion and Environment

Environmental impact refers to the impact on the nature and surrounding areas.

Any kind of development requires some interference with the nature. Overdevelopment comes at the cost of nature. There may be damage to the natural flora and fauna. Local people are displaced for want of coastal area development. With more people in the area, more natural resources are required which leads to depletion of natural resources. Waste disposal problems crop up and without proper measures to handle this problem it may worsen the situation. Due to more footfall, more transport, more noise, improper waste disposal, pollution increases in the area and disturbs the ecological balance of the region. Tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce as a result pollution to Water resources, Land degradation & Solid waste and littering occurs.

Environment protection is an important aspect of every religion. Being stewards of the Earth, it is the responsibility of every individual to care for the environment in a proactive manner. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encouraged the planting of trees and the cultivation of agriculture which are considered as good acts. This is illustrated in the following traditions: Narrated by Anas bin Malik (RA) that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: “*The Muslims who plant a tree or sow seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats and gets*

benefits from it, is regarded as a charitable gift for him.” (Bukhari).

As far as Hinduism is concerned it has also laid stress on the environmental protection that can be revealed by the following perching “*Do not cut trees, because they remove pollution.*” (Rig Veda, 6:48:17) and “*Do not disturb the sky and do not pollute the atmosphere.*” (Yajur Veda, 5:43). Destruction of forests is taken as destruction of the state, and reforestation an act of rebuilding the state and advancing its welfare. Protection of animals is considered a sacred duty. (Charak Sanhita).

The United Nations has chosen the Year of 2017 as “*International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*”. The religions across the globe have also laid the stress on sustainability which is considered as the need of the hour to tackle with the negative impacts of tourism. The Holy Quran says: “*It is He who has appointed you viceroys in the earth ... that He may try you in what He has given you.*” (Surah 6:165). Also it is mentioned in Quran “*O children of Adam! ... eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasteful.*” (Surah 7:31)

Buddhism is replete with perspectives on the long-term future. It stresses at every stage the fleeting nature of the present and the transitory nature of present acquisitions. *The noble eight fold path consists of right vision, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right efforts, right mindfulness and right concentration.* Treatises could be written on the relevance of each of these to the human future. Environmental awareness and protection of natural resource is an integral part of religious beliefs. As viceroys of Allah on this earth, we have to utilize natural resources in a sustainable manner in order to ensure that Allah's Bounties continue. The principle of conservation is beautifully illustrated by the rule which says that while making ablutions (wudu) we should be moderate in the use of water even if we have a river at our disposal. As humans, we are keepers of all creation, including soil, air, water, animals and trees. A major objective of Islamic teachings and Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) traditions is to build and maintain a healthy and clean environment which is devoid of any source of pollution and misuse.

Religion and Socio-Culture

The social impact of tourism development refers to changes in the quality of life of residents of tourist destination. Social impacts not only benefit for the development of tourism but also interaction between residents and visitors and promote social transformation. The speed and concentration and the magnitude and direction of social impacts must be taken into account when attempting to attribute the cause of social impacts. The social and cultural impacts of tourism are the way in which tourism is contributing to change in value system, individual behavior, family relationship, life style, safety level, moral conduct, religion, language, interpersonal relationship at the destination. These social impacts affect on the local people of host communities of their direct and indirect association with tourists. Tourism has two facets towards the socio-culture of the particular destination, with the positives it has various negative impacts as well on the socio-cultural structure of the particular place. As it results in the

Culture clashes, Ethical issues, Crime generation, Child labour and Women exploitation.

Religious practice appears to have enormous potential for addressing today's social problems, which can be resulted from the tourism practices. Strong and repeated evidence indicates that the regular practice of religion has beneficial effects in nearly every aspect of social concern and policy. Every religion has prohibits its follower towards the social evils In Islam *"God commands justice, righteousness, and spending on ones relatives, and prohibits licentiousness, wrongdoing, and injustice..." (Quran 16:90)*. Also it has been mentioned in Quran *"O You who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. Avoid (such abominations) that you may prosper. (Quran 5:90)"*

Sikhism has perching towards their followers as Gurbani states in the Guru Granth Sahib that *"Those who do not use intoxicants are true; they dwell in the Court of the Lord*. Other major social evil Prostitution is also condemned almost in every religion. Prostitution is condemned and forbidden in Islam, *"And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way."* [Surat Al-'Isrā' 17:32]. In Hinduism *"O son of Kunti, the pleasures that are born out of sensory contacts are sources of pain. They certainly are transient, having a beginning and an end. The intelligent man is wise enough not to indulge in them. (Bhagavad gita 5.22)*.

Conclusion

Religions across the globe engage millions of people at local, regional, and global levels and can have a major influence on political, economic, and social policy development. In some countries, religious systems are more powerful than political systems. Religions of the world are a great driving force in imparting guidance and inspiration to human beings in general. The essence of all religions is the attainment of self-happiness. When the essence of all religions in the world is strung together in understanding and mutual acceptance, then it will create a pleasing world of human well-being and peace. The philosophy of all religions offers a clear and stable foundation for the harmonious existence of men, nations and civilizations. The importance of religion in determining the nature of human lives – in both constructive and destructive ways – and the need therefore for minimizing the negative impacts because of tourism is to engage with religion, has been the focus of this paper. Tourism and religion can also impact on tourist behavior; for instance, religion influences the choice of destination, tourist product preferences, and the offering of religion related opportunities and facilities to tourists. Hence, Religion has a big role to play in mitigating both environmental and social negative impacts of tourism.

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