

Effects of climate change on tourism tourism essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Tourism is an industry that contributes to the world economy. In fact, some countries' economies derive most of their revenues from tourism. The increase in individual income and the promotion of different countries of their attractions have caused the industry to grow. Its growth is also fueled by the ease of transportation as more and more hard-to-reach destinations have constructed airports for easier access. With airports, tourists find it possible to reach far-flung areas and enjoy the beauty of the local places. Those who come from cold places would seek warmer locations in the same or different continent. The Northern Europeans, for instance, would go to the nations in the south, like Spain and Italy, to take advantage of the warmer climate. Others would even go so far as Southeast Asia or the Caribbean for their beaches or coral reefs (Bigano et al. 2005, p. 1).

In the past several years, there has been a growing concern over the effect of global warming on the climate. All around the world, climate changes are becoming more evident, causing flooding and extreme temperatures in different nations. Weather patterns have become unpredictable, which means that summer periods could be extended or winter may be longer than usual. These disturbances in the weather and their impact on the environment are significant to the tourism industry. The tourism industry is dependent on the predictability of the season in order to attract travelers who want to experience different activities related to the season. Those who love skiing would visit ski lodges while the water enthusiasts are going to beaches during summer. But with climate changes, the tourism industry is affected in various ways. Climate changes can directly or indirectly affect the

local destinations, which need to retain their appeal to foreign visitors in order for the industry to flourish.

A. Impacts of Climate Change on Tourism

Each tourist destination worldwide has its own appeal. This can come from the activities it can provide to visitors, like skiing or golf, or it can come from their natural beauty or what nature has to offer. It is important that each destination should retain its charms in order to keep the tourist industry booming. Another important factor to keep tourism alive is that of accessibility. Areas that become damaged or inaccessible lose their charm, causing tourists to seek other unspoilt or reachable destinations. With climate change, the beauty of the local destinations is threatened while accessibility too can become a problem especially when airports, roads and bridges are destroyed during extreme weather disturbances. The different impact of climate changes on the tourism industry will be discussed in the succeeding sections.

(i) Coral Bleaching: Affects Scuba Diving Tourists

Scuba diving is one of the most popular activities that encourages the growth of tourism. Areas with extensive and diverse coral reefs would attract visitors from different countries to explore the wonders of the underwater world. However, climate changes in recent years have caused damage to the oceans and the reefs. In the Philippines, a country that is blessed with various diving sites, the warming of the sea especially from the El Nino phenomenon resulted to what is known as coral bleaching. Coral bleaching results to the death of about 49% of live coral. Moreover, the higher amount <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-climate-change-on-tourism-tourism-essay/>

of dissolved CO₂ means that corals, mollusks and shells are also destroyed in the process (Ocean Heritage Philippines 2009). Without these organisms and creatures underwater, the diving industry in this nation will suffer. The diving crowd does not have any reason to visit the Philippines if its corals and sea life will continue to experience devastation.

Maldives is another country that would be severely affected by climate changes. Like the Philippines, it also has rich coral reefs that are in danger of being destroyed because of coral bleaching. Divers who visit Maldives specifically for its coral would lose a reason for visiting the island. The same is true for all the other diving spots worldwide. They would all suffer the lessening of the number of visitors to their places. Tourists who are into diving may opt to stay in their places of origin or pursue other alternatives if there are not enough corals in the world left that are worth their time (Viner and Agnew 1999, p. 16).

(ii) Coastal Flooding and Erosion

A more pressing concern of climate changes is the rising of the sea level. Maldives' elevation is low, which means that the higher the sea level rises, the more likely will the island be overwashed with storm surges. It is estimated that Maldives could be removed from the map in the next 30 years if the sea level continues to rise unabated. Not only will the country's tourism become affected but the entire island would disappear (Viner and Agnew 1999, p. 17).

The Bahamas is another popular destination among tourists because of its temperate climate and its pristine beaches. But the warming brought on by <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-climate-change-on-tourism-tourism-essay/>

climate changes is going to negatively impact the island. Like the Maldives, the Bahamas is also vulnerable to storm surges, which can get worse with the rising of the sea level. Its freshwater bodies are also turning brackish because of the encroachment of the seawater. Flooding and coastal erosion will severely impact the tourism industry of the Bahamas because tourism is dependent on the relative beauty of the coastal areas. Resorts and hotels could be severely damaged if there are strong storm surges. This island, along with others in the Caribbean, must adapt to climate changes so that their vulnerabilities are lessened (Smith 2008).

(iii) Threat to Winter Activities: Reduction of Snow Cover

While rising sea levels and coral bleaching threaten tropical islands, those that are located in colder regions are faced with a different kind of threat brought on by climate changes. The tourism industry in colder regions are dependent on winter sports, like skiing. The general trend in the weather conditions is that of warming, which means that the summer months could be extended and the snow cover would be lower. Without enough snow, traditional ski resorts will not be able to offer their usual winter activities. Without those activities, tourism will become slow since their visitors would not want to be stuck in ski resorts with nothing to do for the duration of their vacation (Viner and Agnew 1999, p. 19).

In the Prairie Provinces of Canada, which includes Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, it is expected that the grassland ecozone will be shifting North, and the wildlife will also move with the ecozone. Some wildlife will not be able to adapt to rapid changes, which can result to their extinction.
<https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-climate-change-on-tourism-tourism-essay/>

Wildlife enthusiasts will also follow the game and would not visit the usual places where tourism normally is. A longer summer is also foreseen, which will threaten the livelihood of ski resort operators, restaurants, and hotels (International Institute for Sustainable Development 1997, p. 9).

Alternatively, cool destinations become more attractive not because of the winter sports but as a respite from the warming of the already warm regions. People would seek colder places, like North America and Australia. The British and German tourists, who are considered to be the largest in the number of overall international tourists, may prefer to stay home because their weather would not be too cold anymore (Lynas 2003, p. 97). The result of this would be a decline in international tourism revenues.

(iv) Uncomfortably High Temperatures Causes Shift in Destinations

While ski resorts are experiencing lower revenues because of shorter seasons, those that are located in warmer climates are also finding it a problem when temperatures rise to an uncomfortable level. Northern Europeans mostly like to go vacationing during winter in other parts of the world where the weather is usually sunny for most of the year. They would stay outdoors to sunbathe for several hours. However, summer temperatures are likely to rise above 40 degrees Celsius. This level is already very high for human to still feel comfortable. This can already lead to heat stress and may even cause fatalities due to stroke.

Tourists are not likely to visit the summer places to avoid the soaring temperatures. They could instead go to places that are still cold but not as cold as their own regions. Alternatively, the holidaymakers may opt to <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-climate-change-on-tourism-tourism-essay/>

postpone their vacations to a later time of the year or take it earlier while the heat is not that intense yet (Viner and Agnew 1999, p. 21).

Bigano et al. (2005, p. 8) stated that it is possible for the movement of tourists to shift and for international tourism revenues to become lower. Some regions are going to benefit from the shift since tourists would be heading to temperate regions; others will suffer from the movement because of the loss of revenues.

(v) Spread of Diseases

There are many diseases that thrive on warmer climates. Many of them become spread or carried to other countries that did not have them in the past because of the movement of people and goods. The dengue-carrying mosquito and the malaria-carrying mosquito do not thrive in cold climates. They are found in tropical countries in Africa and in Southeast Asia. But with the warming of the globe, suitable environments can be created for them in other nations.

This can affect tourism because holidaymakers will shun a tourist destination that becomes a source of a fatal illness. In Spain, for example, the nation is seen as a no-risk destination. Meaning, tourists do not need to get immunized for malaria or the yellow fever. People can go to Spain and have their fun without worrying about exotic diseases. However, malaria has resurfaced in Spain because the climate changes in the region is becoming ideal for the breeding of the type of mosquitoes that carry the disease (Viner and Agnew 1999, p. 23).

(vi) Loss of Income for Tourist Destinations

Since climate changes cause temperatures to rise, the result of that would be the melting of snowcaps and the inundation of coastal areas. The melting of snowcaps is going to hurt the ski operators in Japan, Australia, North America, and the European Alps. When snow melts, that would cause the water level to rise, which in turn will flood coastal areas that are very attractive to those who like to experience the sea. All of these would deal a huge blow on industries that directly or indirectly depend on tourism. The ski resorts are going to lose customers without enough snow for their usual activities. The beach resorts are going to be damaged because of flooding and the natural attractiveness of the beaches could get damaged after flooding. People working on resorts are going to lose their jobs. Those that are indirectly affected by a decline in tourism are the tour guides, the hotels, and the people who derive their income from selling to tourists or for offering their services.

Of the \$735 billion revenues generated from international tourism, about one third of that income went to developing countries that boasts of beautiful beaches and extensive coral reefs. A worsening of climate change means that developing countries are going to lose a rich source of income (Balboa 2009).

B. Implication for Tourism Management Policies

Although tourism is a big source of income, it can also become the source of pollution that affects the environment and contributes to climate change. Air travel, ground activities, and ground transport all increase the emissions of <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-climate-change-on-tourism-tourism-essay/>

carbon dioxide, which causes the climate to become erratic. This means that the local governments should implement policy changes so that tourism does not become a problem. Toward this end, several tourist destinations worldwide

are already taking measures to avoid worsening the environmental degradation, as well as, preserve natural attractions.

The Boracay Island in the Philippines is one of the famous destinations for people who enjoy long, shorelines with white and powdery beaches. The local government, along with various environmental groups like Green Peace Solar Generation Youth, has implemented climate-friendly solutions that tourists and resort operators should follow. These include responsible tourism, energy efficiency, and zero waste. Energy efficiency measures include the use of solar panels for powering laptops and the use of batteries to operate cars and motorbikes (Temblador 2009). The Phuket island of Thailand promotes ecotourism since the government is also aware that businesses and individuals have to radically change how they deal with the environment in order to lower greenhouse emissions. The Carbon Neutral Concept is already in effect so that those who are in the island become environmental stewards who protect and conserve the natural resources for the future. The program also calls for businesses and individuals to measure and limit their carbon footprints. If possible, they should target net zero emissions (Hot Phuket Villas, n. d.).

These two examples are just among the local changes initiated by the governments of

areas that are known to be popular tourist destinations. However, these efforts are localised and only aimed at protecting local attractions. There is a need to coordinate efforts among the global tourism industry so that long-term solutions are reached. Those that are in the business should also work with various governments and interest groups so that more countries adapt to the changes that the environment needs.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that the world is experiencing weather disturbances due to climate changes. Experts believe that environmental damage is one of the reasons why this is happening. Tourism is found to be a contributing factor to climate changes because the movement of people and their activities while on vacation increase the level of carbon emissions. The different effects of climate changes include snowcaps melting, coral bleaching, flooding, and rising sea levels, which are all causing changes to the tourism industry. The more obvious effects include the lowering of the number of tourists in popular destinations where the natural resources, like coral reefs and beaches, have been destroyed due to climate changes. It is also predicted that there is going to be a shift in the movement of people away from overly warm climates to temperate ones, which creates new jobs in new places while making the old destinations suffer economically due to job losses.

The impact of climate changes on tourism calls for reforms in the existing policies that relate to the environment. There is a need for local and international cooperation so that the businesses and individuals in the sector will be able to adapt to these changes. The tourism industry has to adopt

measures so that natural resources are protected. These measures should also contribute to the protection of the global environment.