Critically examine the need for tourism policy and planning essay sample

The tourism sector has become in the last century one of the most prolific industries in the whole world. Much of the success of this industry is partly because of the major improvements in transport, technology, quality of services and most important of all, the variety on offer. All these factors are part of the different Tourism Policy's and Planning implemented by different governments and countries that have contributed to the growth of this sector. In this essay I will analyse how these components are relevant towards policy and planning in the tourism sector and how this particular industry deals with the modernisation of society and its new trends. However an overview of how tourist destinations are negatively affected by planning and policy will also be given. Also examples will be used throughout the essay to emphasize the different impacts caused by tourism policy's and planning.

A clear distinction must be made between both tourism planning and policies. Both are extremely important for the development of tourism, however they are very different to each other and encompass a variety of different aspects. Tourism policy is referred as " A set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directives, and development/ promotion objectives and strategies that provide a framework within which the collective and individual decisions directly affecting tourism development and the daily activities within a destination are taken. (1) This definition underlines the Aspects that tourism policy is involved with. A Tourism policy is usually planned out between the government and maybe some general private company that wants to contribute towards a project. " In many developing countries, the state usually plays a central role in formulating and planning tourism development

policy (Jenkins, 1998)" (2) As stated by Jenkins the government is a key figure in the implementation of policy's. However they provide a regulation of control and so provide their expertise and knowledge to judge upon chosen policies.

Many tourist destinations are built around the idea of creating an attractive destination, even though they might lack attractions, this can be achieved if the correct policy is applied. The use of tourism policy is world wide spread, and almost every country in the 21st century devises its strategies, generally a policy starts with a government campaign, followed by setting up different committees in charge of a variety of aspects concerning tourism. Policies are a great strategy to lay down a basis for which then planning can be used on. The new Government Tourism Policy introduced in England is a clear example of how policies are very important for tourism to develop. " We want to take tourism in Britain to a whole new level and harness the huge potential this area holds to grow our economy" (3). The objective of this new campaign is to boost Britain's tourism economy and attract more tourists every year. By providing a background policy that will support this program, Britain benefits from a good advertising campaign that would not be possible without the building up of a policy to support it. This article then goes further to support the idea of a policy being essential for the future planning.

" The Minister has agreed that the Action Plans arising from Strategic Framework for Tourism in England will provide an effective channel for delivery of the Policy". (4) Here both planning and tourism are being joined together in order to create a policy; the effective use of both is very

important to determine a favourable outcome. It is not only the need to clarify aims and set up a whole structure, but the people (citizens) have a very important role in providing support towards the government to be successful. Policies provide countries with organization, clear aims and a good attraction for tourists. This can be seen as many of the top worlds tourist destinations, e. g Spain, have maintained a good balance of all these aspects.

" Planning is the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future, directed at achieving goals by preferable means." (Faludi, 1973) (5) The Tourism market is a very unreliable and unpredictable one, the main cause for this is that travelling can be affected by trends, economy, weather or even transport. This makes tourism almost impossible to predict. However the beauty of the tourism industry is that it has characterized itself for the offer in demand that it has and a place (such as Dubai) were careful planning has been taken into consideration has a lot to offer.

A clear example of the use of Tourism Planning would be Dubai. This city began its escalation as a destination back at the end of the 1990's; they first built the Mina (port). The creation of this port began a new era for Dubai, which was then followed by the building of the " the Jebel Ali Port was completed, the world's largest man-made harbors (6) Dubai didn't have anything to offer 20 years ago, (except for oil drilling) but by slowly planning an infrastructure, they created the bases for future development. A report published by the International Journal of Tourism Research, underlines the key plans used by Dubai that has consolidated them as an attractive

destination in the last 10 years. It must be mentioned that this example clearly shows how through an efficient use of planning strategies and in this case a big investment of money, success may be achieved. The last and most recent plan the Dubai government came up with was the " second phase of the Dubai Strategic Plan 2015". (7) This strategic plan aims to diversify away from oil revenue, focusing more on other aspects, such as education, transport (Metro project) and job creation, the report states: " Moves towards diversification, privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation of foreign investment rules have been beneficial to the tourism industry".

(8) This shift in Dubai's planning, due to the expectations of oil running out, is a clear example of how tourism planning needs careful attention and how it is essential that this planning is undertaken with a basis of knowledge, research and efficient infrastructure, that can be provided by a measure of policies before hand. As we can see there is a need for certain destinations to create their own strengths and Dubai through the use of planning has effectively managed to carry this out. In certain destinations planning and policy is essential for success because it creates a framework and a basis to build upon. The planning part focuses more on the actions taken towards building a destination.

Planning and policy making cannot always be anticipated. There are many examples of destinations that have been mismanaged and because of the lack of action schemes and planning and policies it has led them, to a detrimental deterioration of their beauty and natural resources. One very common factor that has lead to this outcome is mass-tourism. . A report

written by Dr. Konstantinos Andriotis (9), explains into detail the many problems that people are being faced with on the island of Crete. This example presents a comparison to the two others, how a lack of use of planning and policy of tourism can actually lead to the deterioriration of the environment and in particular Crete. Most of the problems are strongly related to managing seasonability, this refers to the seasons where the hotel has a high occupancy rate and when it has a lower one, " during the summer season there is an over-utilisation of resources while during the low season the resources are under- utilised" (10) Not only is the over reliance on tourism bad for the economy but also capacities of some areas have been exceeded. Another factor that has clearly affected Crete has been the immigration, where exceeding number of illegal workers are getting to the island. Hotels have been built in areas where the land erodes and the environment has been ruined.

Al these factors have been highlighted by the lack of action plans and policies, showing how for an effective management of a destination, there must be a framework to work within, instead of depending on season ability's. This example from Crete underlines once more the importance of planning and policy's because without it is very difficult to manage a destination effectively in a sustainable way.

I have now evaluated 2 different examples of destinations where policy and planning are vital to develop these areas. And 1 example of the need to encourage better policy and planning however, some tourist destinations don't benefit from the use of policy and planning, because they simply don't

take into consideration others point of view or situation. Planning and Policy are not always viable options for the development of a destination. Certain places in Africa, where ancient tribes still survive, such as the Masai, make money of letting people visit them and learn some of their culture. (11) " Masai villages have great numbers of tourists visiting to observe their lifestyle." Even though this tribe receive many visitors every year, they would prefer to have their lands back. The Masai still face problems due to government policies and planning of building National Parks, this has had a tremendous impact on their life's because they have to deal with the incoming tourists and restrictions to their land that has been termed as a national park. The Masai like many other minority tribes around the world suffer the impact of tourism, but no one takes them into account, " 70% of national parks and game reserves in East Africa are on pastoralist lands, particularly Masai land." (12)

As there land is being taken to build more national parks, the Masai people are left with nothing, being a minority tribe means that it will be difficult for them to actually win their case over the current policies and plans facing this area.(13) In order to survive, the Masai have to expose themselves to tourists or move even further inland to find food. The impacts of Planning and Policy are not always measured to their full extent meaning that locals/tribes are not taken into account. " Local and national governments in these countries took unfair advantage of the ignorance of the Masai"(14)

An overview of how policy and planning might and might not be effective has already been provided in this analysis. It must be added that even though

planning and policy can have a major negative impact over certain indigenous groups and tribes, it is still a powerful source to use to manage destinations and make them more profitable. However in order for Tourism to continue its development, examples like those of Dubai or the British campaign should be used more and more often to replicate their success. Tourism nowadays does depend a lot over planning and policy, most destinations are built around or based a certain plan or policy, and in a way this provides with organization and a good means of control of the environment and all other factors.

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