

Understanding tourism and hospitality



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The 21st century was characterized by the emergence of the various service industry. Tourism, as one of the service industry, was a lucrative venture and it was earning stakeholders billion of foreign exchange. However, it was noticed that unlike other industries that required fuel in order to thrive, tourism industry did not. Apparently, tourism industry does not require factories as a way of facilitating production of goods to be exported. This follows that there are no manufacturing plants, chimney as well as the use of machinery in this production sector, hence, no smoke produced in the production process. It is this phenomenon that made tourism (and many other service industries) to be called smokeless industry. It was contended that tourism, as the smokeless industry had a lot of untapped opportunities which when utilized, could stimulate growth and development, in respective to its impact on the natural environment.

Modern tourism development has its roots in the early 1960s which were characterized by the introduction of the passenger jet craft (Higham & Luck, 2007). It had earlier been noted in Europe that that there was an escalating number of tourists visiting various destinations of their choices. As a way of catering for this mass tourism, there was the need of developing large-scale production as well as sales of organized package tours. The potential of stimulating the growth and development of any given economy made was depicted in this mass tourism. Such potential caught the attention of the United Nation which prompted it to start campaigning for tourism as one of the smokeless industry. United Nation opted to earmark tourism and hospitality industry as the key player when it comes to triggering economic development not only for developed nations but also for developing nations.

The huge growth witnessed in the tourism industry, coinciding with increasing campaigns on the need of conserving and protecting environment helped in acknowledging that there were looming environmental problems triggered by a large number of tourists (Sunlu, 2003). Many of the environmental bodies advocating for the protection of the natural habitat contended that a large number of tourists touring various places globally had a detrimental impact on the local and global climate. Apparently, there were various activities prompted by tourist, directly or indirectly that posed dangers on the state of the natural environment. From the concerns raised, it was insinuated that the world might have been enjoying the numerous benefits brought by booming tourism at an expense of the environment. These concerns are as the result of various negative impacts of the tourism on the environment.

Depletion of the natural resources was one of the concerns raised as the danger posed by escalating number of tourists flocking various regions globally. Myriad developments in the tourism industry led to mounting pressure on the natural resources. Water resources, which are part of the natural environment were prone to the increasing number of tourist related activities (Sunlu, 2003). Tourism industry requires water for the building of accommodation places, hotels and restaurants, places of recreations, swimming pools and other elements of tourism that are dependent on the water. The enormous growth and development of tourism industry were followed by increased rates of water consumption. The increase in water consumption rates had a profound effect on the water resources thus threatening to deplete natural sources of water.

Environmental bodies also noted with concern that tourism had put huge pressure on the local resources such as food, energy, timber and other raw materials that are supposed to be present in order facilitate the smooth running of tourist activities (Sunlu, 2003). Increased extraction, exploitation, and transportation of these local resources intensify the physical states of the physical environment from which they are extracted. The tourism industry is characterized by two seasons: Low season and peak season. High season is associated with high demand for these local resources. It, therefore, follows that there will be an increased exploitation of such resources in order to meet the expectations of the tourists who are visiting different destinations, in large numbers.

Land degradation is also one of the main issue associated with growing tourism industry. Some of the vital land resources constitute of minerals, fossils, forests, wetlands, fertile soil and wetlands (Thullen, 1996). However, the pressure from the growing number of tourists as well as the tourism industry, in general, has led to over-exploitation of these resources. Some of the lands have been cleared in order to build hotels, restaurants, guest houses to accommodate tourists and other forms of construction. Such activities have led to huge alterations on the natural environment leading to myriad changes in the ecosystem. Some investors in this industry also embarked on extracting raw materials such as building stones from other regions. The regions in which such materials are exploited can be left degraded and unsuitable for the habitation. Such scenarios indicate that United Nations might have advocated for tourism as smokeless industry but it has myriad impacts that are detrimental to the natural environment.

Another negative impact on the environment that is associated with tourism is deforestation. It can be acknowledged that tourism has been integral when it comes to opening up rural areas. In the 1970s, it was reported that a large number of the remote areas that were endowed with flora and fauna experienced numerous growth and development. Many enjoyed access to the electricity, well-furnished roads and other social amenities (Stewart, 2003). All these developments were prompted by growing tourism industry. However, all these achievements came at the price. There was a massive clearance of the forests as well as encroachment of the natural habitats in the pursuit of meeting the demands of the increasing number of the tourists. Some tourist facilities such as hotels and restaurants used huge amounts of firewood. This encouraged deforestation and general destruction of the trees, hence leading to deforestation.

Deforestation, which was perpetuated by the tourism has adverse effects on the natural environment. For instance, the removal of a large number of the trees in the environment increase the amounts of carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere (Higham & Luck, 2007). Trees play an integral role in reducing the levels of carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere since they use it in the process of the photosynthesis. The increase in the amount of this gas in the atmosphere destroys the ozone layer, leading to the global warming. This highlights how hazardous some of the tourism activities are when it comes to the natural environment. It can, therefore, be intimated that, despite the huge benefits that might have emanated from the onset of the tourism industry, especially in the 21st century, there have been equally numerous adverse impacts on the natural environment caused by tourism.

There was also the negative implication of tourism on the soil erosion. During peak seasons, there are large numbers of tourists who flock various destinations such as wildlife parks, sanctuaries, and beaches. During such moments, they embark on walking on various paths or engage themselves in activities such as mountain climbing or swimming. As they move from one place to another, they trample the vegetation as well as soil along those respective paths (UNEP, 2004). Unless their movement is controlled through the construction of the paths and pavements, continued trampling by tourists on particular surfaces can lead to the damaging as well as the loss of diversity. Such damages can be enormous when the visitors use such unmarked trails over and over again.

The tourism industry is dependent on traveling. It follows that sustainability strategy in tourism can be achieved through sustainable mobility (Higham & Luck, 2007). Dependence of the tourism industry on mobility meant that there will be the emergence of environmental issues. The point of concern was that the use of the fuels when it comes to transportation of the tourists to their point of destination was contributing to the environmental pollution which indirectly had an effect on the natural environment in the ecosystem. Some of the tourists are environmental unconscionable. Due to this attribute, it is common to find non-biodegradable pollutants such as plastic bags thrown all over in the places they have visited. Such behaviors are harmful to the natural environment since such objects are amongst the leading pollutants when it comes to environmental pollution.

In order to utilize the opportunities that the tourism industry is endowed with, there is the need of moving towards sustainable tourism. This strategy

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involves encouraging tourists to visit their destinations but at the same time ensuring that they have a positive impact on the natural environment. It is apparent that tourism can be constituted primary transportation of various destinations of the tourists such as places of recreation, accommodations, nourishment as well as shopping. All these aspects insinuate that there is the need of having a sustainable tourism as a way of having opportunities in this industry on a long-term basis. It is through such insights that United Nations started advocating for much focus and resources to be allocated to the tourism industry.

Having a sustainable tourism is the best alternative of curbing many environmental concerns and problems that have originated from tourism. Through sustainable tourism, it will be possible to enjoy the benefits of escalating growth in the tourism industry at the same time having environmental conscious industry. This implies as that the tourism industry should be forefront when it comes to the matters conserving the environment and natural ecosystem in general (Williams, 2005). In the environmental sustainability, there are two types of the environments involved. This includes natural environment (beaches, forests, and waterways) and man-made environment (for instance historic buildings). Sustainable tourism is should, therefore, concerned with ensuring there is stability in the existence of the natural resources in the natural environment. This can be achieved through preservation and protection of the natural habitats, with the objective of enjoying their services for the long-term.

It is through sustainable tourism that tourism can be associated some positive impacts on the natural environment. Tourism has played an integral

role when the preservation and protection of both natural and artificial environments are concerned (Davies & Cahill, 2000). Thanks be to tourism, some of the sensitive ecosystems such as Everglades National Park that are found in Florida; and other notable regions have been conserved and preserved for the future use.

Another benefit of the tourism towards the environment is that it has led to improvement in management and planning of the environment. There has been the emergence of sustainable management of tourism facilities, such as hotels that have increased the valuation of the natural resources. Some of the tourism organizations are involved in analyzing environmental factors, challenges and possible solutions that are meant to improve the state of the environment (Davies & Cahill, 2000). Through proper planning and management in the tourism industry, various environmental damages such as land degradation, deforestation or soil erosion can be avoided. For instance, some of the tourism and hospitality companies have been major stakeholders in the preservation of the environment. Some of the strategic operations applied by these bodies include the creation of awareness amongst tourists on the need of preserving the environment. There is also the creation of the pavements in the preserved places in order to avoid cases of soil erosion as well as trampling of vegetation by visitors, hence helping in the protection of the biodiversity.

Financial contribution is also one of the positive impact of tourism on the natural environment. The government has been bestowed with responsibilities of protecting the environment. For instance, the wildlife and other conserved regions ought to be protected either by wildlife guards or <https://assignbuster.com/understanding-tourism-and-hospitality/>

through the state surveillance. All these aspects require monetary resources which are solely provided by the government. Tourism is among the sources of revenues for the government. When visitors tour these conserved areas, they are charged user fees. In addition, there are other revenues which can be obtained from various tourism facilities in the form of income taxes or taxes on the sales as well as levies put on the recreational facilities by the government. All these revenues collected from tourism are used to protect the natural environment. This implies that funds collected from tourism activities are integral in the conservation of the environment.

By terming tourism a Smokeless industry, it was purported that unlike manufacturing, tourism was not involved in the emission of fumes that were likely to pollute the environment. This prompted United Nations to campaign for it since it was providing a huge contribution to both local and global economy, without causing a lot of environmental concerns. However, in the long run, this initial perception and claim by United Nation became disputed since there were numerous negative implications of the tourism to the natural environment. As a way of trying to find the balance between the benefits of tourism and natural environment, there was the need of adopting sustainable tourism which was not only concerned with economic development but also environmentally conscious.

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