

Tourism issues in egypt



This essay outlines tourism in Egypt and identifies the key issues surrounding tourism in Egypt and the consequences of tourism in Egypt. The essay discusses the positive and negative effects of tourism in Egypt and will consider ways in which any problems that tourism presented in Egypt might be addressed.

Tourism in Egypt has a long history, thanks to the lure of tales of mummies and curses. People are still fascinated to see places such as the Valley of the Kings and the many and various temples and architecture that Egypt has to offer, in addition to the obligatory trip to the pyramids, down the Nile, and the visit to Cairo's many museums. In addition, in recent decades, tourism to Egyptian beach resorts has also become popular, as these offer great opportunities for such activities as snorkelling and wind-surfing.

These many opportunities for tourism in Egypt present many different problems to the ministry that is responsible for managing tourism within Egypt: a different approach to tourism management is required for the tombs in the Valley of the Kings than for the beach resorts, for example. Managing tourism within a country such as Egypt is also complicated by the fact that there are regular terrorist attacks on tourists in Egypt, as - in this post-9/11 world, when ordinary people are frightened of terrorism as never before - visitor numbers are down and are not likely to pick up until the international situation is resolved, meaning that the Government thus has less revenue to spend on managing tourism than previously.

Whilst tourism brings in a great deal of revenue to Egypt, due to the large amounts of money that are spent by foreign tourists travelling to Egypt each

year, tourism also presents many problems. The management of tourism is thus complex and many-faceted. For example, many hundreds of thousands of people visit the tombs at the Valley of the Kings each year. The tombs that are visited are archaeological relics, that are still being actively researched, and the presence of so many visitors to these tombs causes damage to these relics. The Egyptian Government does not want to stop visitors from visiting the tombs as this creates massive amounts of revenue for the country, and perhaps because of international pressure, as they are the patrimony of humankind, and thus a massive campaign underway to preserve the relics from the damage that is caused to them. This can be replicated for any of the archaeological sites that are popular for tourists: the presence of tourists causes problems for the preservation of the relics, and so preservation campaigns are underway to preserve, as best as possible, these relics of Egyptian history. These campaigns do not, often, work in practice, however: however many signs there are, requesting people not to walk up the pyramids, people will always wait for nightfall to do this, as the one or two guards that are posted as protection are not, generally, effective. The need to preserve such ancient relics is not unique to Egypt: Italy and Greece have similar problems.

In addition to the problems that tourism presents to Egypt's archaeological relics, tourism presents various environmental problems for Egypt. The recent craze for Egyptian beach holidays has presented problems for the environment in these resorts, and trips down the Nile cause a great deal of river pollution, for example. Increased tourism also increases the water demand, overall, which, in a land as dry as Egypt, presents many

infrastructure problems and is causing water shortages in many parts of Egypt.

Thus, whilst tourism has many positive effects for Egypt (mostly economic), the negative effects of tourism are many and varied and require many innovative solutions. In terms of the preservation of Egypt's archaeological history, the Egyptian Government spends a huge amount on this programme, which leads to the argument that this money would be better used for development, and that if tourists didn't travel to Egypt, the relics could be stored and/or fenced off, leading to a situation in which no money would need to be spent on preservation, and so could be spent on development. As, however, the archaeological history of Egypt is the patrimony of mankind, the Egyptian Government has a duty to care for this.

In terms of the environmental impact of tourism, in beach resorts or on the Nile for example, tourism needs to be managed sustainably in order to ensure not only the preservation of the environment, but also the permanence of the tourist trade itself. After all, no tourists would want to travel to a filthy beach with no coral to see when snorkelling, yet many of the beach resorts in Egypt are dirty and the coral is being damaged through human impact. In a few years, if the situation is not improved, not only will the environment be damaged beyond repair, but the tourist trade will be zero, as people will simply not want to travel to these resorts.

In addition to these negative effects, tourism can have negative effects on the culture of the country: when Westerners bring their Western ways to the country, this changes, almost imperceptibly, the attitudes of the local

people, which, repeated many times, brings sea changes in the way in which local people think and act. Coca-Cola is all over Egypt, and many Egyptian men are no longer surprised to see Western girls wandering around in bikinis: the Egyptian culture is becoming more Westernised, due to the influence of television, but also due to the contact Egyptian people have with tourists. Tourism thus brings not only problems for archaeological preservation and the environment but also for the culture and social situation of Egyptians.

What can be done to ward off such negative effects? An approach known as pro-poor tourism has been attempted in many countries, aiming to bring net benefits to developing countries, from tourism, whilst accepting the negative effects as part and parcel of the phenomena of tourism. The initiatives of pro-poor tourism movement (see Cattarinich, 2001) include economic initiatives, local sourcing, training, socio-cultural initiatives, including such things as cultural conservation projects and environmental and policy initiatives. Pro-poor tourism is usually implemented at the Government level, with the management of tourism being approached in such a way that whilst the net benefit is sought, the realisation is always present that tourism has negative effects that are unavoidable (i. e., as we have seen, the damage to archaeological sites and relics).

This essay has provided an outline of tourism in Egypt, in terms of outlining why tourists travel to Egypt, and has identified the key issues surrounding tourism in Egypt and the consequences of tourism in Egypt. The essay discussed the positive and negative effects of tourism in Egypt and considered ways in which any problems that tourism presented in Egypt

might be addressed, in terms of requiring Government-level coordination of tourism management, from a pro-poor tourist perspective.

In conclusion, Egypt has a long history of tourism. As the seat of so many archaeological treasures, Egypt has a responsibility to preserve these treasures but also to allow these treasures to be seen by all those who wish to see them. This presents many problems for the management of tourism in Egypt. The new environmental problems that have been presented by the opening of beach resorts, present further problems for tourism management in Egypt. The essay concludes that the pro-poor approach to tourism management could be a useful tool for the management of tourism in Egypt.

References

Cattarinich, X. (2001). Pro-poor tourism initiatives in developing countries: analysis of secondary case studies. PPT Working Paper No. 8.