

## THE RIPPLE EFFECT: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF TOURISM

DR. KIRAN CHAUHAN

### ABSTRACT

"The Ripple Effect: Social and Cultural Consequences of Tourism" suggests delving into the broader and interconnected impacts that tourism has on society and culture. This topic implies an exploration of how tourism influences various aspects beyond the immediate and visible, creating a series of consequences akin to ripples spreading across a pond. The emphasis is on understanding the nuanced and indirect effects that tourism can have on local traditions, social structures, cultural norms, and community dynamics. It invites an examination of the intricate ways in which tourism shapes and alters the fabric of societies and their cultural identities. Tourism stands as the world's largest industry, wielding a substantial influence on the Environment, Economy, Society, and Culture, both in constructive and detrimental ways. Firstly, the economic advantages of tourism manifest in enhanced tax revenue, heightened standards of living, and the creation of numerous job opportunities. Secondly, socio-cultural ramifications arise from the interaction between individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds, encompassing both positive exchanges and negative effects on society. Thirdly, the environmental characteristics of any destination play a pivotal role, with impacts stemming from both human-made factors such as construction and natural factors like climate and wildlife. Tourism often exerts pressure on already scarce natural resources due to overconsumption. This paper aims to explore the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the Culture, and Society in depth. Additionally, the paper advocates for the implementation of recommendations to mitigate the diverse impacts affecting the tourism sector. This involves adopting proper tourism planning strategies that ensure a balanced utilization of resources, leading to an outcome that is not only environmentally sustainable but also socially beneficial and economically feasible.

**Key words:** Socio-Cultural, Environmental, Tourism, Planning, Sustainable, Resources

### INTRODUCTION

The history of travel and tourism emerged from the point when man evolved from his earliest ancestors and he tried to explore the world around him. In the early stages of life man formed small groups or communities in the jungles and remote areas but these groups wanted to explore beyond the place of its habitats. They always travel to the places far and wide. With each new step towards the movements of distant places man had learned about the world. Human being inquisitive tendencies and desires to know the unknown or hidden world made him adventurer. This movement from one place to another made base for the travel industry.<sup>1</sup>

Travel is rooted in the recent past, but tourism is a recent phenomenon of modern origin. Travel connotes "Journeys undertaken from one place to another for any purpose, including journeys to work and as a part of employment, as a part of leisure and take up residence. All tourism includes some travel, but not all travel is tourism."<sup>2</sup> It is common practice to use the word tourism either singly or in combination to describe three types of concepts: (1) the movement of people; (2) a sector of the economy or an industry; and (3) a broad system of interacting relationship of people, there needs to travel outside their communities, and services which attempt to respond to their needs."<sup>3</sup>

There is a growing trend and consensus in recent years towards greater use of the word 'tourism' either alone or in combination 'travel' to describe the research concerned with 'travel' outside the community of residence. International organizations like the Tourism

Committee of the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development, the World Tourism Organization use the term ‘tourism’ not ‘travel’. In the United Kingdom the term ‘tourism’ has replaced ‘travel’ as in the change of the British Travel Association to British Tourism Authority. In the 1970s, the United States preferred the term travel, but there was greater acceptance for the term ‘tourism’ a decade later. It is, however, considered by many that the area should be described as travel and tourism.’ Tourism in the pure sense is essentially a pleasure activity in which money earned in one’s normal domicile is spent in the places visited. It involves a discretionary use of the time and money. Based on the UNWTO definition on tourism, tourism could be categorized as:

**Domestic Tourism:** Domestic tourism involves trips made by local residents within their own countries.

**International Tourism:** International Tourism involves trips between two countries. To a certain country, a visit by residents of that country to another country is her/his outbound tourism; a visit to that country by residents of another country is her/his inbound tourism. International tourists are those who travel to a country other than the one in which they normally live.<sup>4</sup>

Travel and tourism are one of the fastest-growing industries and a leader in many countries. It is expected to have generated around 9.4% of world GDP and 8.2% of total employment in 2009. The contribution of the industry to the global economy remains high despite a 4.38% decline in 2009. During the year, travel and tourism investment too declined by more than 12%. International tourist arrivals rose from 682 million in 2001 to 920 million in 2008. The global travel and tourism industry experienced a downturn in 2009 due to the global economic and financial meltdown.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), India’s tourism in 2018 was in third position out of 185 countries with respect to the contribution to the Nation’s total GDP. From 2019 records, this sector obtained US\$29.96 billion, reflecting a 4.8% growth when compared to the previous year; it reached US\$5.40 billion in the first part of 2020. India is in 34th place in terms of tourism competitiveness (IBEF, 2020)<sup>5</sup>

According to WTTC the Travel & Tourism sector suffered a loss of almost US\$4.5 trillion to reach US\$4.7 trillion in 2020, with the contribution to GDP dropping by a staggering 49.1% compared to 2019; relative to a 3.7% GDP decline of the global economy in 2020. In 2019, the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 10.4% to global GDP; a share which decreased to 5.5% in 2020 due to ongoing restrictions to mobility. In 2020, 62 million jobs were lost, representing a drop of 18.5%, leaving just 272 million employed across the sector globally, compared to 334 million in 2019. The threat of job losses persists as many jobs are currently supported by government retention schemes and reduced hours, which without a full recovery of Travel & Tourism could be lost. Domestic visitor spending decreased by 45%, while international visitor spending declined by an unprecedented 69.4%.

With the highly transmissible Omicron variant of Covid-19 unleashing new waves of infections, the human & economic tolls of the pandemic are projected to increase again. “Without a coordinated and sustained global approach to contain COVID -19 that includes universal access to vacancies, the pandemic will continue to pose the greatest risk to an inclusive & sustainable recovery of the world economy,” (Liu Zhenmen, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs).

India has been making sustained efforts to boost tourism in the country, seeking a rise in footfall of both domestic and international tourists, after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. From January to October 2023, there were 72.43 lakh Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs), reflecting a substantial increase of 55.6% compared to the same period in 2022, which had 46.55 lakh FTAs. However, when compared to January-October 2019, which shows 86.11 lakh FTAs, there was a decline of -15.9%. In terms of Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs), the period January-October 2023 recorded Rs. 1,85,668 crores, marking a robust growth of 77.08% from the Rs. 1,04,852 crores in the same period in 2022. In contrast, compared to January-October 2019, with FEEs at Rs. 1,73,222 crores, the growth was 7.18%. UNWTO (2020) describes sustainable tourism as tourism that considers both current and future economic, social and environmental effects and meets the needs of the visitors, the industry, the environment and the local people. The involvement of all related stakeholders is needed for holistic sustainable tourism development. Achieving sustainable tourism is a constant process, and it comprises of the uninterrupted examining of consequences, instigating the expected safety and/or curative procedures.<sup>6</sup>

The socio-cultural impacts of tourism are rising because of the direct contact between the host and the guest. **De Kadt (1979)** suggests that there are three different types of contact between local residents and visitors. The first occurred when tourists bought goods and services from the residents. The second took place when tourists and residents shared a facility, and the third kind of contact came into play when tourist and residents meet for the cultural exchange.<sup>7</sup>

Tourism contributes to a mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies. The social and cultural implications of tourism necessitate careful consideration because impacts can either become assets or damages to communities. Tourism development can positively affect in improving quality of life, positive changes in values and customs, promotes cultural exchange, improves understanding of different communities, preserves cultural identity of host population, increases demand for cultural events, entertainment facilities. Although tourism has brought many socio-cultural advantages but there are problems and issues related to the tourism development in cultural and heritage sites such as over-dependence on tourism, conflicts of interest, unauthorized constructions and modifications, misinterpretations during guiding, and inadequate site management have collectively led to dissatisfaction among tourists and, ultimately, negative publicity about the destination.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Rafal Nagaj & Brigita Žuromskaite (2021)<sup>8</sup>,” in their study “*Tourism in the Era of Covid-19 and Its Impact on the Environment*” analyzed that Covid-19 affected all areas of socio-economic life around the world. Its impact concerns not only the health system and the health of the population, but also the economy. The study examined the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the various environmental issues within the tourism sector in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. The results of the study indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from tourism in all CEE countries. Such decreases are both relative to 2019 and the estimated level of emissions that would be achieved if the countries surveyed achieved economic growth in 2020 consistent with the European Commission’s projections for that year. The scale of the impact varies from country to country, while the relationship between tourism development and pollution levels is positive.

Narmadha V, Anuradha A., (2021)<sup>9</sup>, in their study “*Socioeconomic, Cultural and Environmental Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism in India,*” identifies the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic in terms of economic, environmental, social and cultural factors on the tourism industry in India. The focus of the study is to suggest tourism developmental practices to implement and overcome the pandemic situation in India. The study discusses both positive and negative impacts and further helps the government to take precautions and best policy decisions to be applied in the future. The paper provides an open analysis of some of the essential steps between tourism growth and economic recovery in order to resolve India's current economic crisis.

Terkenli, T.S.and Georgoula (2022)<sup>10</sup> in their article “*Tourism and Cultural Sustainability: Views and Prospects from Cyclades,*” has objective to explore cultural tourism perceptions, practices, concerns and prospects among local residents, tourists and business representatives in the Cycladic Islands, specifically three sites (Andros, Syros and Santorini). The concept and framework of cultural sustainability are employed to analyze the variable interrelationships between culture and tourism in the development of cultural tourism and in overall local sustainability, from a bottom-up/destination perspective. The findings show that the role of culture as an actual tourism attraction and the potential for further growth in cultural tourism, and consequently local development, are broadly recognized. However, the role of tourism in cultural development, management and appropriation is viewed with a certain degree of trepidation and ambivalence. Culture and tourism emerge from the results of this research study as positively interlinked in the minds of the locals, the visitors and the entrepreneurs involved in cultural tourism and tourism more generally. Despite the fact that it is mostly privately driven, the culture–tourism relationship is viewed as holding great potential for all sides involved and for local cultural and overall sustainability.

**Lei (Clara) Si Weng, Suntikul Wantanee, Chen Zhaoyu (2023)<sup>11</sup>**, in the study “**Tourism development induced social change**” focuses on the actual social change induced by rapid tourism development. In the study causes of social change were identified. Four patterns of social change induced by tourism development were revealed i.e. social trends of early marriage and early childbearing; family relationship deterioration; peer pressure/jealousy, and loss of local/traditional businesses. The findings of the study add knowledge to social change induced by tourism and provide insights for local government seeking to amplify the positive effects and neutralize the negative effects of tourism development.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-cultural impacts of tourism.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is a secondary base. During study a thorough literature review was conducted to explore the social and cultural consequences of tourism. A comprehensive examination was carried out on a range of academic databases, journals, books, and other scholarly resources.

## DISCUSSION

The influence of the tourism industry, particularly in the host country, is extensive, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. This is evident through the interaction of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, both at the international and national levels. Additionally, there is a noticeable redistribution of spending power that significantly impacts the economy of the destination area. While host regions benefit from tourism, not only financially but also in other ways, there are accompanying costs. Analysing the positive and negative impacts of tourism requires considering the concept of carrying capacity and developing effective assessment methods. Carrying capacity, in simple terms, refers to a threshold beyond which further visitor numbers or development would result in unacceptable harm to the physical environment and the quality of the visitor's experience. The impact of tourism is intricately tied to factors such as the volume and characteristics of tourists, including their length of stay, activities, mode of transport, and travel arrangements.

## SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS

As observed by **Pearce** “the social impact of tourism will vary according to the differences between the visitors and visited, whether in terms of numbers, race, culture or social outlook. Neither group is homogeneous.”<sup>12</sup> When evaluating the social and cultural impacts of tourism development in a particular area, it is crucial to consider the value systems of various groups involved and the dynamics of their relationships. Within the population, differences may exist in terms of demographics, ethnicity, social structures, and language. The primary social and cultural impacts of tourism on host societies revolve around (i) changes in demographic structure, (ii) shifts in occupations, (iii) alterations in values and the demonstration effect, and (iv) transformations in traditional lifestyles. Tourism can influence the demographic structure of the host population, especially through the creation of new employment opportunities that

may impact the resident population's size. This, in turn, can lead to changes in the composition of the population, influencing the context of regional urbanization. Cultural impacts of tourism are concerned with safeguarding and preserving cultural heritage, along with addressing other pertinent issues. These issues encompass (i) the potential threat to traditional customs unique to each country or region, (ii) the illicit trade in historical artifacts and animals, and (iii) the commercialization and commodification of traditional cultural events and arts, which can result in the erosion of aesthetic values. The most significant positive advantages of tourism are;

## POSITIVE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS

Positive social and cultural ripple effects stemming from tourism are numerous, contributing to the enhancement and progress of host communities. These constructive impacts include:

- **Cultural Exchange:** Tourism serves as a platform for the exchange of cultures, fostering mutual understanding of diverse traditions, customs, and ways of life. This interchange often leads to the appreciation and preservation of cultural heritage.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The tourism industry generates income for local communities through avenues such as local businesses, handicrafts, and cultural performances. This economic boost can elevate the standard of living for residents.
- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Increased tourism often translates into heightened attention and resources dedicated to preserving local cultural heritage, encompassing historical sites, monuments, and traditional practices.
- **Social Interaction:** Tourism encourages social interaction between tourists and locals, breaking down barriers and promoting cross-cultural friendships. This can lead to a more inclusive and interconnected global community.
- **Cultural Revitalization:** In certain instances, tourism acts as a catalyst for the revival of local arts, crafts, and traditional cultural activities. This revitalization contributes to the cultural richness and vibrancy of the community.
- **Community Pride:** Successful tourism initiatives instil a sense of pride in the local community. Residents may take pride in their cultural identity and heritage, fostering a stronger sense of belonging.
- **Education and Awareness:** Tourism can raise awareness about the importance of cultural and environmental preservation. Visitors gain insights into the local way of life, fostering a greater appreciation for cultural diversity.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Tourism-related infrastructure development, such as improved roads, sanitation facilities, and public spaces, not only caters to tourists but also benefits residents, enhancing their quality of life.

- **National Integration:** Tourism can contribute to national integration by bringing together people from different regions within a country. This shared experience can foster a sense of unity and national identity.
- **Opportunities for Learning:** Local communities have the chance to learn from visitors, gaining exposure to different perspectives, ideas, and innovations. This cross-pollination of ideas can contribute to local development.

While these positive ripple effects highlight the potential benefits of tourism, it is essential to implement sustainable practices and strategies to mitigate any negative impacts, ensuring enduring positive outcomes for host communities.

## NEGATIVE SOCIO- CULTURAL IMPACTS

Negative ripple effects of tourism can have detrimental impacts on host communities and their environments. Some of these adverse consequences include:

- **Cultural Erosion:** Over-commercialization and catering to tourist demand can lead to the dilution and erosion of local cultures. Traditional practices and customs may be altered or lost in the quest for mass appeal.
- **Social Disruption:** The influx of tourists can disrupt local social structures, leading to increased competition for resources, changes in community dynamics, and potential tensions between residents and visitors.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Unsustainable tourism practices, such as overdevelopment, pollution, and habitat destruction, can harm local ecosystems, negatively affecting flora and fauna and diminishing the natural beauty of the area.
- **Strain on Infrastructure:** High tourist numbers can strain local infrastructure, leading to issues such as traffic congestion, inadequate waste management, and the overuse of public amenities, impacting the quality of life for residents.
- **Economic Inequality:** Tourism can contribute to economic inequality by concentrating wealth in specific sectors or businesses, leaving some local communities marginalized and excluded from the economic benefits.
- **Loss of Authenticity:** Commercialization and the catering to tourist preferences may lead to the loss of authenticity in local products, crafts, and experiences, as they become tailored to meet perceived tourist expectations.
- **Cultural Commodification:** The commercialization of cultural practices and traditions for tourist consumption can strip them of their genuine meaning and turn them into commodified spectacles, creating inauthentic representations.
- **Overcrowding:** Popular tourist destinations often face issues of overcrowding, leading to a degradation of the visitor experience and an increased strain on local resources and services.

- **Rising Costs of Living:** The demand for goods and services by tourists may drive up prices, making the cost of living higher for residents. This can result in housing affordability challenges and increased living expenses.
- **Cultural Clashes:** Differences in cultural norms and behaviours between tourists and locals can lead to cultural clashes, misunderstandings, and, in some cases, a sense of intrusion or disrespect.

Mitigating these negative impacts requires thoughtful planning, sustainable tourism practices, community involvement, and a balance between economic gains and the preservation of the local environment and culture.

## SUGGESTIONS

To mitigate the negative impact of tourism, consider implementing the following suggestions:

- **Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Encourage and adopt sustainable tourism practices that minimize environmental degradation and conserve local cultures. This could include promoting eco-friendly accommodations, responsible tour operations, and conservation initiatives.
- **Community Engagement:** Involve local communities in tourism planning and decision-making processes. This fosters a sense of ownership, and communities can actively contribute to shaping tourism activities that align with their values and needs.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in sustainable infrastructure development that supports tourism without causing harm to the environment. Well-planned infrastructure can alleviate issues such as overcrowding, waste management, and traffic congestion.
- **Educational Programs:** Implement educational programs for both tourists and locals to raise awareness about the importance of responsible tourism. This can promote respectful Behavior towards local cultures, environments, and communities.
- **Regulatory Measures:** Enforce and strengthen regulations that control tourism activities. This may involve setting limits on the number of visitors, defining permissible activities, and establishing fines for non-compliance to ensure responsible tourism.
- **Diversification of Tourism Offerings:** Encourage the diversification of tourism offerings to distribute visitor traffic more evenly across different attractions. This can help reduce the strain on popular destinations and prevent over tourism.
- **Capacity Building:** Build the capacity of local communities to actively participate in and benefit from tourism. This includes providing training and resources for entrepreneurship, guiding, and other tourism-related activities.



- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement monitoring and evaluation systems to regularly assess the impact of tourism on local communities and ecosystems. This allows for timely adjustments to strategies and policies as needed.
- **Crisis Management Plans:** Develop comprehensive crisis management plans to address unexpected challenges such as natural disasters, pandemics, or other emergencies. Preparedness can minimize the negative impact on both tourists and local communities.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster collaboration between governments, local communities, businesses, and non-governmental organizations. Working together can lead to more holistic approaches to managing tourism and its impact on society and the environment.

By combining these strategies, destinations can work towards ensuring that tourism brings about positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes while minimizing its negative effects

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the influence of tourism on social and cultural dimensions is a nuanced and intricate phenomenon that demands thorough consideration. Throughout this study, it becomes evident that tourism brings both positive and negative consequences, influencing the fabric of communities and shaping cultural landscapes in significant ways. On the positive side, tourism acts as a driver for economic growth, generating job opportunities and nurturing local businesses. Moreover, it fosters cultural exchange and mutual understanding as visitors engage with local traditions, customs, and ways of life, fostering a diverse tapestry and celebration of distinctive cultural identities. Nevertheless, the adverse impacts of tourism cannot be overlooked. The issue of Over tourism poses a considerable threat to the authenticity of local cultures, often resulting to the commercialization of traditions for mass appeal. Cultural erosion may occur as communities adapt to meet the expectations of tourists, sometimes at the cost of their own heritage. Additionally, the environmental strain induced by tourism can further exacerbate these challenges.

Achieving a balance necessitates thoughtful and sustainable tourism practices. Community involvement and empowerment should be at the forefront of tourism planning, ensuring that the benefits are equitably distributed. Implementation of regulatory measures is vital to manage visitor numbers and activities, averting the deterioration of cultural and natural resources. Education and awareness initiatives can cultivate responsible tourism behaviour among both visitors and locals.

In essence, the impact of tourism on social and cultural aspects is a delicate interplay of economic, social, and environmental factors. As destinations navigate the complexities of this phenomenon, a holistic and collaborative approach is essential to maximize the positive outcomes while mitigating the negative consequences. Only through adopting responsible

and sustainable practices can tourism authentically contribute to the enhancement of societies and the preservation of cultural heritage.

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