

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN THE TOURISM BUSINESS IS BEING RECOGNISED

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ABSTRACT

Transportation and travel can be discussed without taking tourism into consideration, but tourism cannot thrive without travel. Transportation is an integral part of the tourism industry. It is largely due to the improvement of transportation that tourism has expanded. The impacts on the ecology, degradation of destination sites, tourist experience, and economy has called for a better management of resources. In biodiversity-rich areas, opening of sensitive and fragile areas through improved infrastructure and service may prove detrimental to the ecology of the place. In the light of such issues, it is important to re-think the role of transportation in areas such as these. Though careful planning of the components of the destination is done to ensure sustainability, transportation is seldom considered in the process and due to this a number of biodiversity-rich areas have been destroyed due to the easy access.

Key Words: sustainable transportation, tourism, sensitive areas

I. Introduction

The state of natural attractions and tourism management has been the focus of much research over the years. Tourism affects all aspects of the natural environment. There is a need to study the “environmental inter-relationships...especially in ecologically sensitive areas such as small islands, reefs, desert oases, and tropical habitats” as these areas most often offer the “greatest tourism potential”. Degrees of impact vary according to the number of tourists, the resilience of the ecosystem to the pressure wrought by tourism, time, the changing fashions in tourism, and the transformational nature of tourism itself. Transportation links the various destinations and ferries people, goods, and services. Tourism is all about travel; and the role of transportation in its operation is vital. It is largely due to the improvement of transportation that tourism has expanded. The advent of flight has shrunk the world, and the motor vehicle has made travel to anywhere possible. This reality coupled with changing work patterns and innovative marketing has driven international mass tourism through the years. Calderwood, L. U., & Soshkin, 2019 identified transportation modes and management as the “important ingredients of the international tourism system,” acknowledging that linkage by air, sea and land modes is essential for the operations as well as the availability of support services such as fuel stations, auto repair, motels and rest facilities for land travel.

Advances in transportation have widely eased travel. It is attributed to the ease and accessibility of modern transport that has spurred the widespread growth of nature tourism within the United States and overseas. The increase in the number of visitors to what were once remote areas has resulted in degradation and damage of the

resources prompting the need to re-evaluate the role of transportation in the exercise. Impacts of tourism development include soil erosion or compaction, clearance of vegetation to give way to roads and tourism facilities, recreation use of off-road vehicles, trail bikes, snowmobiles, horses, and even the trampling of pedestrians. The careful planning of sensitive areas which includes the utilization of zoning to determine areas for facilities and tourist activities and to protect natural areas and discourage development, and the planning of roads, hiking and riding trails should be integrated into the natural environment.

II. Transportation in tourism

Phun, Kato, & Chalermpong, 2019 was exhaustive in his criticism of what he called “the spectre of tourism” which he sees as slowly ruining erstwhile pristine landscapes, quaint communities, as well as polluting the air and water, trivializing cultures, and degrading life on this planet. He puts the blame on poor or lack of visitor management and the level of accessibility of the destination area. Accessibility and tourism activities have broken barriers and opened formerly off-the-beaten-track areas to visitors through aggressive marketing of some far-off paradise with the availability of transport. Transportation in tourism is most often seen as just part of the tourism system which is in charge of bringing the tourists to the destinations, a means of getting around the place and leaving it once the duration of the trip is over. Shamshiripour, *et al.* 2020 contend that the transportation system of a tourist destination has an impact on the tourism experience which explains how people travel and why they choose different forms of holiday, destination, and transport. The improvement in transportation modes plus low fares has increased the accessibility of areas once considered off-the-beaten-path. Access to tourism sites vary according to the nature of the site, the state of infrastructure, and the efficiency of the public transport system. The OECD came out with a table outlining the major impacts of transportation on the environment. For land transportation, the rail and roads impact wildlife and habitat when these pass through natural areas, creating divisions in an otherwise contiguous plain. Emissions from road and air transport are the common sources of greenhouse gases and industrialization has not helped much in curtailing the sources. “The transport sector is responsible for over a quarter of the world’s primary energy use, and for about 54 percent of all world oil consumption”. Air and noise pollution accounts for the engine noise from planes, motor vehicles, construction, overhead cable cars, as well as human voices and footfalls.

III. The Stakeholders

The sustainability issue between tourism and transportation is perceived differently by the local government, the operators, and the various organizations. It is important and essential to the success of a plan that a tourism strategy takes into consideration the various roles of the stakeholders in making the practice more sustainable. Brohman (1996) believes that the state and the market should establish the parameters wherein tourism development will serve both the interests of the state and the public. The importance of the role of non-government organizations (NGOs), community groups, and the local government in the planning of the destination areas is stressed. In a survey done of two hundred and twenty-one ecotour operators showed that their concern regarding overdevelopment, loss of pristine environments, and traditional cultures are not as keen as those of the academics’; but they recognize the increase in environmental awareness and the need to introduce more sustainable development values in the products and practices of the industry. Kaffash, *et al.* 2021 acknowledges that tour operators are keen on the travelling aspect of ecotourism, it is important that travel

is undertaken. As for operators, this group is concerned with bringing tourists to the destinations: issues on accessibility, modes, accommodation, and group size to spectacular but remote areas are taken into consideration. National park rangers, on the other hand, would be looking at the viable number of people that the site can accommodate at any one time. The number that the resources can support and the influence of the visitors on the habits of the animals are weighed. Tourists are more concerned with the value for their money, the quality of the attractions, and the depth of the experience.

IV. Visitor Management

The deterioration of trails due to the onslaught of visitor numbers has led to different strategies to limit, reduce or prohibit the opening of areas to tourism. The role of transportation in managing visitors and resources is analysed in the light of reducing impacts to the destination area. The effective management of resources requires a good measuring tool to quantify the resources of a site. Suggests that to come up with a basis for tourism planning a “thorough and systematic environmental analysis” should be done which includes a site’s carrying capacity. This way visitor access to environmentally critical areas may be controlled, appropriate sites for tourist facilities may be mapped out, and vulnerable areas will be safeguarded. Another thing pointed out is the importance in defining carrying capacity based on tourist acceptability and one that is anchored on the environment. Jjj relates that the number of visitors and their behaviour is considered a “major management issue for many conservation reserves worldwide.”

V. Access and Modes

Tourism and accessibility may be linked to the level of degradation of the destination. Issues arising from this include the concept of carrying capacity, impacts per capita, and visitor management. How these issues are managed is reflective of the type of tourism being advocated by the operator, the community as well as the government. Accessibility can make or break a destination. There are two streams of argument here: one involves the number of visitors and the other involves number of visitors per capita. The first contend that too much access brings in a bigger number of people that can increase the level of degradation, decrease the experience, and impact the natural state of the resources. The second argument takes into consideration the ratio of visitors to the host population and the level and type of impacts created.

VI. Rethinking the role of transportation

Tourism as a client-pleaser industry is in danger of destroying the very environment it promotes. Tourism whose emphasis is on fragile and sensitive areas needs to undergo thorough evaluation to allow for the appropriate level of development, type of activities, and access. Economics play a big role in the whole process. For the biodiversity-rich areas of the Third World, economic issues revolve around their dependence on these resources. The growth of tourism and the search for alternative destinations have created a new market for nature reserves. Nature tourism is considered by governments as an economic and conservation strategy rolled into one. This strategy is both worthwhile and at the same time dangerous since sometimes it is the same government who sign the development plans that exploit the environment. The need for regulation to ensure proper care and development is advocated to protect the very environment people are coming to see. Tourism as an economically driven industry that draws much of its income from the state of the environment will benefit much when it is run in a sustainable manner.

VII. Conclusion

The role governments, NGOs and operators play in the industry is crucial for the appropriate utilization of resources. The importance of including tourism in formulating the national development plan is that resources can be managed in consonance with the policies of the rest of the government agencies. It is hoped that a balanced plan may be created given the knowledge and background of a destination. Trade-offs between economics and the environment will remain an issue as it will be dependent on variables such as the vision of the community involved, the existing policies, and the common practice. Environmental issues look different to various peoples. What may be exploitation for one is merely the process of survival for the other. There is a need to look at the problem in context and the role governments' play. The stand of the government on the environment as cited is reflective of their values. The problem of striking a balance between ecology and economics would be the central issue. With the increasing popularity of nature tourism fears of it falling into the same mould as mass tourism is worthy of consideration, as the advancement in transportation and the availability of modes may well be one of the main reasons for its eventual downfall. As of the present, a link can be drawn between the accessibility of a destination and the state of the environment. Heritage sites, national parks, and the countryside have fallen into disrepair due to the onslaught of tourists and vehicles. Alternative visitor management schemes are being considered to help reduce impacts and save the very environment people are coming from all over to see. What is a pity is the fact that transportation options open to tourists are not necessarily the most sustainable ones. What makes it more challenging is that these destinations are fragile and sensitive and careful planning has to be done to achieve its goal of conservation.

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