Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism on Culture: A Critical Review of Examples from the Contemporary Literature

Md Shahzalal

Department of Marketing, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, 5404, Bangladesh

Abstract

Now-a-days it is a common debate that whether the negative impacts of tourism on culture outweighs its positive benefits. Some people say, it is really hard to measure that how much culture is being damaged by the tourism or how much culture is being protected due to the involvement of many socio-cultural and socio-economic variables together in tourism. From the extensive literature survey it is found that the tourists, tourism enterprises and hosts are jointly responsible not solely for damaging or keeping a culture (Spanou, 2007). This research suggests that for managing culture responsibly, a democratic management group in a destination management needed to be developed, the local community should be empowered, priority should be given to the process of the development not the product, and finally a structural link between the formal and informal sectors in the tourism industry should be lead by the government to develop a code of conducts and cultural research centres for cultural education, training, workshops, exhibitions, and performance.

Keywords: Culture, Tourism, Tourists, Community, Responsible tourism plan, Tourism enterprises, Cultural tourism

1.   Introduction

This paper first aimed at defining the relationships between tourists, tourism, community, anthropology and culture within the domain of anthropology of tourism. Second, the paper tried to demonstrate the negative impacts of tourism on culture by defining the acculturation, hybridisation of culture, the demonstration effect, the commodification of culture, and the invasion of backspace along with critical analysis. Then it aimed at to identify some positive change in culture due to the intervention of tourism. Finally, some recommendations are presented with justifications from theory and practice to manage the impacts of tourism on culture responsibly.

1.1. Anthropology of tourism

Tourism involves a temporary and voluntary visit to a place away from home; it is a leisure activity (Przeclawski 1993; Smith 1989). During this visit a tourist has to interact with different people, who facilitate in different means in the tourism process (Reisinger, 1994). These facilitating people are the host community, who share a common culture with others in the same geography or network (Aref, 2010). Probably, culture is the most narrated word in the anthropology of tourism. It is related to arts and artistic activities, specific way of living, and process and development (Williams, 1983). It is something that people create and transmit or learn and follow enthusiastically as well as express through their smile, language, dress, conduct, belief, and postures & gestures (Longhurst et al., 2008).

Anthropologists like to study the origin of tourism and its impacts on culture, including the interaction and intervention pattern of people of different cultural backgrounds; cultural production, rituals, and cultural identity and expression (Stronza, 2001). For example, Burns (1999) included 'social change/ cultural damage in the four pillars of anthropology of tourism; Crick (1989) included 'social and cultural change' in the three strands of inquiry; and Nash (1996) included 'acculturation' in his three main theoretical perspectives of anthropology of tourism.

Considering an entertainment, tourists easily interfere into the host culture (McKercher, 1993). As a result, differences are easily noticed in the usual behaviour, attitude, dress, foods, arts, songs and even social relationships of hosts. Ultimately, some traditional cultures and societies are really facing challenges to dilute or even destroy (Sharpley, 1994). However, culture can be affected by many other things like the powerful global homogenization, the reluctant attitude of the community people and weak association among the community people and their socio-economic needs as well as the intention towards modernity (Burns, 1999).

2.   The negative impacts of tourism on culture as noted in the contemporary literature with critical reviews

2.1 Acculturation effects

Acculturation is a process of adaptation and adjustment (Ebin et al., 2001). When local people entertain tourists, they adapt tourists' needs, attitudes and values and ultimately start following them (Nash, 1996). This often happens in a less sophisticated society where, stronger culture dominates the weaker (Burns, 1999). But, the diffusion of innovation of cultural components in a social framework depends on compatibility, advantage, and complexity of the cultural objects (Lew, in press). Particularly, the youth are vulnerable to this impact and

women are ahead of their male counterpart in this regard (Ghuman, 1997). By following tourists' lifestyle young people bring changes in the material goods they use and in their gestures and postures, which is defined as demonstration effects by Burns (1999).

In the Pokhara-Ghandruk community in Nepal the traditional fashion, behaviour, and lifestyle of young Gurungs have been severely affected by tourism (Pandy et al. 1995). For example, young people are wearing western modern dress instead of traditional Nepali cloths and caps. Now they prefer western hairstyles, disobey their elders' Kinship title, involve in love-marriage instead of arrange-marriage, drink with friends or organise a dinner party outside home, and ride bicycles instead of the carts. The elders are totally against and worry about this cultural change. However, by carefully analysing the case, it is found that not only tourism, there are some other factors like easy access to Indian movies, dress, and communication vehicles also cause this impact. Tourism should be acclaimed here because tourists gave idea, education, and modern facilities, which brought youngsters, out of superstition to freedom in work and men and women relationships. Moreover, the Ministry of Tourism reorganised and funded 'The Festival of Colours' and other two ceremonies of the 'Tharu community of Chitwan'.

2.2. Hybrid culture
In Pefkochori in Greece, the western and native culture together has created a new culture, which is called the hybrid culture. The examples include borrowing artificial elements and adding them to traditional dance, music, events and activities; serving hybrid cuisine instead of traditional salads and three course meals instead of appetisers in the evening show; and opening bar and disco (Wickens, 1994). Despite their cultural loss, local people are feeling happy due to their best life and wealth. They feel tourists provide them benefits not the local people so they have to satisfy tourists (Herrero et al., 2011).

2.3. Cultural commodification
Cultural commodification results in the transformation of value-from sacred to profane and from real to the unauthentic (Shepherd, 2002). Probably one of the best examples of commodification is found in a case study of Greenwood (1989) in Spain, who exemplifies commodification as a ritual that is sold for money in an exhibition by altering or even destroying original meaning to outsiders. In this regard, Cole (2007) summarises that tourism collect various cultural components and then sometimes add something artificial to make it eye catching then package and sell it to tourists. Shepherd (2002), by visiting Beijing and American Suburb said that Chinese food in a Chinese restaurant in Beijing with red walls, hanging lanterns, Chinese scrolls, if served by Chinese waiters easily guarantee authenticity. But, this food when is served at a restaurant in the American suburb shopping mall with mirrored walls and chandeliers that is cooked by a Salvadoran immigrant, never guarantee authenticity. This loss of authenticity is hard to refute (Clifford, 1986).

Menon (1993) found that in Jaisalmer in India the local arts and crafts are not completely produced in a local village with local stone instead, potters use materials of another territory to make goods glossy to attract tourists. He added that the colourful photography of women's body of the decent monuments in advertising materials, attracts erotic sculpture to tourists, not the religious value. But at the end, he said communication development, poor economic conditions, job opportunity, cost efficiency focus of the craftsmen, and the economic multiplier effect' in the policy maker's mind also contribute to this damage. Since, it is really hard to distinguish between the primary and secondary influences in a destination, where multiple effects present (Shephered, 2002), so, better to say tourism alone can't change or keep culture.

3.   The positive impacts of tourism on culture with critical reviews
Tourism also has some positive impacts on culture. Lantfant (1995) said that tourism as a last resort, keep the un-nurtured or even closed cultural activities through identifying, developing, rediscovering, and linking them to the international market.

3.1.   Cultural preservation
Tourism provides funding to preserve and conserve cultural heritage, gives back cultural pride, revitalise customs & traditions as well as opens door for cultural sharing and learning (Smith, 2009). Most of the common positive impacts of tourism on culture include increasing cross cultural interaction; understanding, maintaining and keeping local culture, arts, crafts and traditions; empowering host communities; and strengthening cultural values.

In Indonesia, Cole (2007) found that villagers feel proud of tourism because it strengthens their cultural values. Here, to attract distant tourists, children nurture local customs to create a strong and authentic base of cultural components without disrupting ancestors' values. Tourism has opened the door to establish the cultural identities like houses, clothes, and megaliths dress as their group identity and recognition of political power through photographing and marketing these identities in promotional materials at provincial level. People believe

tourism has facilitated them in manipulating economic and political capital to gain power of church and position in state administration. On the other hand, due to the social recognition and power, conflict and crime might be increased in the major tourist destinations (Tsoudis, 2001).

3.2. Building institutional infrastructure

Tourism certainly increases awareness among local people those are not involved in their traditional arts & crafts business. By building some institutional infrastructure, tourism keeps these cultural components alive (Witt, 1991). The Renaissance in Indian arts due to tourism is familiar to many scholars from the case study of Deitch (1989; cited in Page and Getz, 1997). Here another example is presented. Counterpart International, a non-profit organisation through 'Community Tourism Alliance' project during 2006-2012 has protected the powerful hundred year's Maya culture by co-managing and co-conserving approach. It has empowered women through entrepreneurship development in various folk art and carvings and pottering goods. Later **it has developed modern** advertising materials and broadcasted around the world, and organised trade fair to attract tourists. Now the community is saying, they feel proud of their culture as it is found around the world on their crafts (Snyder, 2012). But during this intervention due to the very business of women, family conflict and divorce rate were also increased there (Nzama, 2008).

3.3. Derived demand

Another good example of maintenance of local host traditions is found in John M. Knox & Associates, Inc.'s (2004) conducted a case study in Hawaii, where formal tourism sector derived the demand of native Hawaiian culture in hotels. After a meeting, public and private sectors together decided that restoring and maintaining native Hawaiian cultural themes would benefit the industry more than importing and developing new components. Consequently, demand for native Hawaiian as entrepreneurs for story telling by using original terms with honour and pride increased. Now native Hawaiian say that tourism opens space for them to show something valuable to the world that can contribute to human wellbeing. But entrepreneurship led money, power, and desire to earn more, which contributed to change in local habits, increased crime, gambling, and alcoholism and inspired commercialisation of culture (Rátz, 2000).

3.4. Motivating collectivism

Through social contact people sometimes come out of self centric position to collectivism. The city people of Jaipur were really self-centred, but due to the intervention of tourism social contact between people was increased in order to show a good image to tourists. As a result, they learnt about other nations and came out of misconceptions about the colonialist nations in India. This social contact helped to show morality, honesty and hospitality to strangers. This case study is done by Singla (2014). It is true that understanding between hosts and guests reduce misconceptions and distance (Hunziker 1961). Social contact also helps to build friendships between hosts and guests, who use positive word of mouth about hosts after returning home (Boissevain, 1979).

Since the positive and negative outcomes of tourism depend on human factors, including the attitude and behaviour of tourists and hosts during the interactions, so tourists, tourism and hosts are jointly responsible not solely (Spanou, 2007). Therefore, finding out ways to manage the impacts of tourism could be a good job instead of involving in the debate. The important management areas are overall socio-cultural impact management and the host-guest encounter points like: goods and service purchasing, face to face interaction for sharing ideas and information, side by side at activities.

4.   Managing the impacts of tourism on culture
4.1. Democratic management

A democratic management group in the destinations is important to empower community people and manage their socio-cultural issues. In Ngadha village in Indonesia, such a group is formed by the members of every clan for raising voice against corruption, collecting and distributing funds and deciding on cultural performances, which is now protecting the culture and harvesting benefits of tourism (Cole, 2007). For product development a specific team with experience people those are unconnected directly to the market process and purpose is required, who will design the place and time of performances (Shephered, 2002). Moreover, traditional products should be targeted to both the travellers who buy as souvenirs and people in the region.

4.2. Managing the process

Priority should be given to the process, not only the product. The Blue Yonder (2012) ran a project in India from 2004 to 2012, where it added story telling for every performance took place and background history telling at pottery selling points that increased the intentions of the tourists to buy. Moreover, patronising interpreter is better than guiding, for example, according to this tour operator, by the interpretation jobs the local people were connected with the tourism process that created authenticity for tourists. On the other hand it increased

awareness in locals of preserving arts, folklore and other cultural heritage. It is also important to remove over-dependency on tourism. Blue Yonder established tourism as an alternative source of income through-co-creation, co-management and training. For example, a day plumber became an oracle for folklore expressions or a day mason became a folk artist in the evening and was earning good money besides preserving culture.

4.3. Strengthening the local cultural value

Strengthening local cultural value is a vital point. In Indonesia local people agreed to stage dance and music, but disagreed to stage rituals because they didn't want to commodify their core value (Cole, 2007). A structured link between formal and informal sectors in the tourism industry is valuable to reduce tourists' hassle and conflict between stakeholders. The Travel Foundation's project in Sri Lanka in 2010 -2013 included training for beach boys, small shops, vendors, and taxi drivers in addition to guiding in conflict resolution and capacity building. After these initiatives the beach boys became beach operators, hassle was reduced as well conflict and local peoples was earning more due to the repeat visits of the tourists (The Travel Foundation, 2013). Such other important initiatives are also found in McCombes's (2008) case study in Gambia.

4.4. Considering the health impact

Tour operators, hotels, and even local community need to analyse health impacts and to work with international health organisations. Wall and Matheison (2006) think workers, community people, and guests everybody has direct and indirect health impacts on others. To reduce the HIV impacts, the International HIV/Aids Alliance is successfully promoting guidelines for leaders, guides, community people and tourists on sex related issues in Caribbean destinations through toolkits (HIV/Aids Alliance, n.d). To manage the negative impact of gambling like a casino, the development should not take place at the introductory level of the tourist destination life cycle (Butler, 1980). For example, from the case study in Macao and UK McCartney (2005) suggested that this sort of tourism attraction should be developed at growth or maturity stage not at the beginning.

5. Conclusions

Some people may think that as the tourism sector is developing rapidly in developing countries, there must be a western influence. Still others think all societies and cultures are changing due to their incapability of avoiding outside influence. Therefore, it could be a safe side to think tourism contributes but not only the one that impacts the culture (Sharpley, 1994). However, it is important to have a responsible tourism policy to maximise the positive impact and minimise. This sort of policy is currently being followed in South Africa by many tour operators that include monitoring impacts, joint planning and decision making, meeting local poverty needs, providing advice, communicating and partnering with locals at different stages of tourism (Spenceley, 2007). Cultural tourism is better to sell culturally sensitive people and controlling the number of tourists when the situation is vulnerable could be a good strategy. Finally, government initiatives in developing a code of conduct and conserving material and non material heritage as well as the formation of the cultural research centre for cultural education, training, workshops, exhibitions, and performance could help managing the impacts of tourism on culture responsibly.

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