

A Study on Ethical Tourism and Sustainable Environment Strategies

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Abstract: Ethical tourism has been concerned, with increasing potential negative impacts to tourism destination instead of benefits from mass tourism. With using the secondary methodology, this paper analyses the negative effects of mass tourism and explains ethical tourism and its benefits. And then discusses how to efficiently manage tourism so as to benefit local communities by a variety of case studies for green hotels from international chain hotels. Finally, puts forward to some strategies in development of ethical tourism promoting a sustainable environment, such as promoting ethical consumption, stimulating tour operators to consider the interest of host destinations and conducting tourists green consumption and so on.

1. Introduction

In recent years, people have become aware that mass tourism has negative effects to local communities. On the one hand, mass tourism has resulted in enormous impact on local environment. Environmental deterioration is worse and non-renewable resources have become more and more exhausted. Tourism brings great pressure on local resources, such as energy, food, and some raw materials, which may have been in short supply. Malviya points that tourism results in water shortages and degradation of water supplies, as well as producing water waste [1]. Moreover, due to trade and hunting, a lot of wildlife habitats are disrupted. Some of the world's most ecologically fragile areas, including parks and natural world heritage sites are damaged. Furthermore, pollution has become a serious problem for local communities, such as emissions, noise, solid waste and littering. The air pollution from transportation, especially carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, will contribute to severe local environment pollution. Malviya argues that the quality of the environment is necessary to tourism, whether it is natural and man-made [1]. Many activities that can have adverse environmental effects and it includes the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses and marinas. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually damage the environmental resources. It also has an impact on local archaeological and historical places.

Natural environment should be protected by participants of tourism because of a sustainable development of destination and social responsibility. For tourism development less waste should be created. Furthermore, tourist visits' limit is given for less stress on the natural environment of tourism destinations. Build tourism infrastructure itself in a manner in order to protect the natural and cultural heritage of tourist destinations [2].

In the other hand, mass tourism also can lead to social, economic and culture problems to local communities. Local communities are facing the rise of consumerism and the commodification of local cultures and environmental damages, which contributes to climate change and structural inequalities [3]. Novelli states that local tourism industries can also be disruptive by raising prices in an area, and by forcing local businesses to compete with multi-nationals[4]. Moreover, tourism has caused major changes in the structure, values and traditions of societies. Due to cultural conflict, tourism can lead to loss or change in indigenous identity and value in local communities [1]. A decline in moral and religious values may increase crime levels. In many countries, tourists are not aware of local customs, traditions and standards, so offence is given without intent. What we

should pay attention to is the scale or volume of tourism. Tourism carrying capacity is determined by locations and the availability of infrastructure. It is possible to product overcrowding and cause destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment to host cities and an unacceptable decrease in the extent of visitors' satisfaction if the numbers of tourists beyond the local tourism carrying capacity [5].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Ethical Tourism

Ethical tourism come from the movement of European tourists who realized that tourism expenditure does not benefit local communities. It has grown quickly especially in Europe. As one of the main driving forces in tourism industry success, ethical tourists felt that they have responsibility to influence industry behaviour [6]. It is an attempt to manage tourism so as to benefit all stakeholders. Sustainable, community, green, responsible are various forms of ethical tourism. Environmentally ethical tourism includes nature tourism and green tourism.

The international ecotourism society promotes the ethical testimonial of green holidays. Society claims that eco-tourism and ethical tourism offer different ways to recover the negative effects of mass tourism, such as helping to replenish ecosystems, supporting ancient species and keeping their living places safe, preserving local culture and developing sustainable local economies [7]. The United Nations World Tourism Organization's 'Global Code of ethics for Tourism' was carried out in July, 2001. It points out that tourism should be implemented the following so as to become more ethical:

Contribute to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies; Operate as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfillment; Be a key factor in sustainable development; Contribute to the enhancement of the cultural heritage of humankind; Be a beneficial activity for host countries and communities; Take account of the obligations of stakeholders in tourism development; Work towards tourism as a human right; Protect the liberty of tourist movements; Protect the rights of the worker and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry; Implement the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism [3].

2.2 Benefits of Ethical Tourism

In theory, tourism can bring benefits for local community, such as money for the local economy, new jobs and new business opportunities. It is a positive tool to raise public awareness of the significance of heritage conservation. "Tourism favors the creation of jobs, the development of infrastructure, the promotion of culture, and the safeguarding of natural areas, thus representing an important opportunity to combat poverty." [8]

2.3 Ethical Consumer Issues

In the UK, it is an increasing trend that consumers actively look for ethical products. More than one in four consumers strongly supports ethical consumption. 27% tourists argued that a travel operator's ethical policies are a significant aspect for them when choosing which one they will be with [4]. The ethical nature of tourism's interactions, especially between host and guest, and social responsibility in tourism, are the centre of ethical tourism. Due to ethical concern, the local people should be educated to learn local culture, speaking the local language and respect local tradition [9]. Malviya points out that tourists' consumer behaviours can affect local communities in an ethical way. They can also make a positive contribution to local development by using local services and staying in locally-run guesthouse, respecting local people, learning local culture and caring about environment on their holiday [1]. With local government support, halting multinational control of tourism and choosing locally produced products and services will contribute to local community's economy [9]. Ethical tourism attaches importance to the way of protecting and increase local economies and communities. You can insist on living in a locally owned hotel or going shopping in a store where they employ local people and sells local goods [10].

3. Methodology

To explain ethical tourism and strategies in development of ethical tourism promoting a sustainable environment, a secondary research was adopted. A number of case studies were cited to explain different approaches and regulations of stimulating the development of green hotels from international chain hotels.

4. Findings

4.1 Travel Operators and Travelers Aspect

Well-organised tourism can favour contacts between holidaymakers and the local communities, encourage cultural exchange, lead to friendly and responsible enjoyment and consider the environmental conservation. Ivanovic argues that tour operators are called upon to prove they will not damage the natural resources of host destinations for their benefits[6]. More and more famous tour operators and travel agencies are trying their best to consider the interest of host destinations.

In less than a decade, ethical awareness has turned into obligatory strategies, policies which manage and conduct tourism industry to benefit local communities and people.

Discovery Initiatives is one of specialist operators. They sell quality, tailor-made holidays and their directors attach importance to trading ethically and wildlife conservation. Discovery Initiatives plan their trips following the objectives in mind[4].

To gain the full backing and cooperation of the host nation's authorities where necessary, and to obtain permission for our work and to undertake (by DI or their agents) full and proper reconnaissance of each area of operation.

To use local accommodation, food and services in planning the programme

To plan their ventures so that both the local people and the traveler participants achieve the maximum benefit in terms of cultural interaction, awareness and understanding

To ensure that participants see the full picture, are made aware of the issues and concerns facing the tribal communities DI visit and the conservation of wildlife and resources in each area.

To ensure that all participants have been fully briefed about country, its customers, cultures and its sensitivities and sensibilities, through pre-departure gatherings, tour leader briefings and /or tour dossiers

To teach participants wherever necessary to act correctly and with due reverence and respect to cultures and customers, and encourage the learning of Keywords of the local language to facilitate this

To involve the local community in planning and decision-making at all times, employing them wherever necessary at acceptable rates of pay

Continually to assess the environmental, social and economic impact of their visit, so as to avoid over dependency

To avoid any activity that results in cruel treatment of animals, or interference in their natural way of life

To undertake each venture, wherever possible, with the maximizing benefits accruing to the host communities

Discovery Initiatives work with local communities and conservation organizations, such as Conservation Worldwide, the Worldwide Fund for Nature, The Wilderness Trust and the Endangered Wildlife Trust, which can help them fund important projects and improve the awareness of conserve environment. In the same time, the company spent money on various global conservation initiatives so as to provide local communities with the economic, ethical and environmental motives to protect their environment and culture. It is not only offers special experience for travelers, but also actively benefits local well-being [4].

4.2 Green Hotels Aspect

Green peace movement commenced in 1971 and now they have 120 million members. Without government funding, green peace movement had grown rapidly, because of members who are

passionate and strongly committed to the cause of 'greening'. It was reported that an increasing number of tourists may refuse travel to a destination repeatedly because green issues are ignored in this area [11]. With increasing customer's demands in green issues, it emphasizes on running a businesses by pollution-free, green environment and environmentally sensitive ways. Tourism has the potential to produce positive effects on the environment by protecting and conserve environment. It offers a chance to raise awareness of environmental values and it can finance protection of natural places as a tool and increase their local economy[4].

In different countries, green legislation can be found in their national laws, regulations and rules, as well as states, local and industry standards which stimulate the development of green hotels.

In China, March 2006, the National Tourism Administration of the PRC promulgated the first hospitality industry standards for green hotels. In September 2007, the PRC published the first state standards on green hotels. The local government provided quasi "symbolic" financial incentives for green hotels. At the end of 2007, nearly 200 four or five stars were awarded to green hotels. In 2008 the National Tourism Administration of the PRC suggested tourism corporations and hotels in China use various measures to save energy. The specific measures included energy-saving measures, boiler oil-saving measures, air-conditioner electricity-saving measures, lighting electricity-saving measures, water saving measures and building energy conservation measures[12].

XU Lingling stated that URBN Hotels, Shanghai opened in 2008 brought the concept of environmental protection. The interior design of the hotel is as far as possible recycling and reuse. The floor and wall are decorated with old bricks. The chairs in guests' rooms are made from paper, with handmade sofa cushions. Especially the clothes poles are old bamboos, which makes elder guests recall the situation of hanging out clothes at home. It not only embodies the idea of advocating environmental protection, but also exudes a strong smell of old Shanghai[13]. Govert Deketh, Chairman of the Environment Committee, Marriott London Business Council pointed out their focus on environment sustainability, their "spirit to preserve". They added an environmentally-sensitive approach to all of their business functions. In the aspect of food and beverage, they encouraged the usage of organic products through working with locals and local restaurants so as to satisfy the needs of the customers requesting green foods. As for the facilities of hotels, they support the linen re-use programs, recycling areas and enhanced efficiency of the laundry service [14].

Hoteliers of large-scale hotels, such as Hilton Hotels, InterContinental Hotels and Ramada Hotels, have made various regulations and environment-friendly designs to help build green hotels and reduce the negative impact on the local environment.

Simon Vincent, Area President, Europe, Hilton Hotels Corporation stated they had noticed that hotels were high consumers of utilities, especially energy and water, and also generated a high volume of waste across the operation. It is important to reduce impact and leave a positive long-lasting effect on the local environment.

In 2008 there was a global sustainability program across all Hilton Hotels. Doggrell, K. points out by 2014 this initiative aims to[14]:

- Reduce energy consumption from direct operations by 20%

- Reduce CO2 emissions by 20%

- Reduce output of waste by 20%

- Reduce waste consumption by 10%

Ramada has energy-conservation strategies throughout their group. In the Caribbean, they applied solar energy to power lighting and ceiling fans. In tropical areas, sliding doors and windows are fitted with connectors. Timers are also used to shut off power to lights and equipment when not in use. In the UK, Ramada hotels preserve energy through the installation of low-energy lighting products.

David Jerome, Senior Vice President, Corporate Responsibility, InterContinental Hotels Group stated that they gathered the knowledge and expertise to help their hotels manage their energy consumption more effectively and they developed Green Engage, their own standard specific for hotels. The system gives hotels good guidance on how to improve their programs, which includes

operations and process, water, electrical and mechanical[14].

4.3 The Impacts of Green Hotels

There are some benefits from the development of green hotels. Firstly, the hotel owners and local cities can benefit from reduced operating expenses. It has been found that some accommodations adopt energy efficiency, water conservation and waste management systems that reduce the costs of hotel operation and local resource wastage[15]. In turn, these reduced costs could be used in improving or expanding hotel facilities and local communities' infrastructures. Secondly, in this respect, it can help hotels and local community to win a higher level of repeat business because guests can benefit because the efficiently controlled hotels satisfy their needs at a lower cost. Thirdly, local workers benefit through increased job satisfaction, lower rates of absenteeism and lower workers turnover. Last but not least, there are significant benefits to the environment. In the UK & Ireland, action that focuses on energy management over the past three years has led to a total elimination of over 45,000 tons of CO₂. In continental Europe, this program led to savings of more than 15% and cut water consumption by 8%, the equivalent of 280 Olympic sized swimming pools [14]. It is proved that effectively managing and carrying out green hotel initiatives can have a positive effect in the environment of local communities.

In addition, this increases consumers' environmental awareness. XU Lingling points out that In order to implement the management of the green business philosophy and achieve the goal of the greening hotel, hotels have to form a specific regulations system, which make employees gradually establish and strengthen the concept of green. At the same time, hotels should carry out the full training on employees for green consciousness, so as to establish the green marketing concept and green service awareness such as Hongkong ISL hotel's establishment of a Green Committee, in which was set up a full-time environmental management Personnel, EMS manager and ISO14001 supervisor[13]. Through repeated staff training, it strengthened the significance of the hotel green plan and awareness of green management and operation. On the other hand, it did a good job of green propaganda, promoted green consumption concept for the public. Similarly, many hotels in Australia offer discounts on guests' rooms to guests who support environmental protection.

Travelers increasingly notice how their travel decisions impact on local environment. The situation continues to focus on reducing carbon around the world as a hotel company's approach to sustainability will increasingly become an important factor of customers' choice of quality accommodation. A new hotel development which doesn't connect closely with the natural environment may not attract tourists, who may choose accommodation that respects environmental principles, especially increasing concern for the environment shown by tourists throughout the world.

5. Conclusion

Mass tourism has negative influence in local communities from the aspects of environment, society and economy and culture. With the awareness of mass tourism's negative effects over positive effects, ethical tourism derives from Europe and has developed rapidly. The attempt to carefully manage tourism will benefit local communities. First, promoting ethical consumption, such as using local service, local products, learning local traditional culture, is a key to local communities' development. Second, for tour operators, stimulating them to consider the interest of host destinations and make obligatory strategies, policies which manage and conduct tourism industry will benefit local communities and people. Third, with increasing environmental awareness of consumers, Green hotels have become an important part of customers' choice in local hotel accommodation. Increasing numbers of green hotels help hotels and host communities obtain the optimum benefit to the environment whilst trying not to threaten the financial benefit of the hotels. These strategies come from environmentally-friendly design, green legislation and energy management, which can provide financial as well as environmental benefits.

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