

The role of slum tourism in regional development

Kamran Yeganegi¹, Zahra Mohammadi²

Abstract

Today tourism is one of the most prevalent activities in cultural, economic, etc. sections. Tourism has many kinds. Slum tourism is of black tourisms that is popular in countries like India, Brazil, Kenya, etc. as a new kind of tourism that includes visiting slums and touching and feeling the conditions of poor people. This paper aims to determine the effects of tourism industry on the economy and culture, etc. on regional development by analyzing Slum tourism and the conversion of poverty and pollution in slums.

Keywords: Tourism Industry, Slum Tourism, Slum, Regional Development

Introduction

Generally, tourism can be perceived by different views due to its interdisciplinary nature which has caused the arrival of different definitions of it. Kultman³ defines tourism as a short term journey which starts in a place and eventually ends there and during the journey, based on a particular plan, different sights and places are visited and massive amounts of money are spent by visitors in the host country. Tourism can be called a white industry because unlike manufacturing industries, without polluting the environment, this industry paves the way of friendship and compromise between nations and brings about peace and joy for the people.

In general, tourism can be defined based on different factors and in its analysis these definitions can be used, but it should be noted about these definitions that tourism is not merely “a single dimension phenomena” that can be discussed on linear definitions, but it consists many dimensions in different areas like economy, society, culture and like. Tourism, is an industry which assumes a big part in economic activities and according to the calculations, has more than a third of total service trade in the world.

Tourism, in its today sense, has a history as long as of industrial revolution. The development of it until now, in the 21th century with the revolution of information, has created many discussions.

¹ Faculty member of Industrial Engineering department, Zanjan branch, Zanjan, Iran. Email: yeganegi@lauz.ac.ir

² Municipal Engineering department, Zanjan branch, Islamic Azad University, Zanjan, Iran

³.Lester Kultman, Radical interpretation religion 2002, The real Fidel Castro 2003, The Cambridge companion to feminist theology 2002

In all definitions provided in the field of tourism, tourism includes all processes like trip planning, traveling to desired destination, residing there, purchasing and interacting with the hosting society, return and reminiscing the memories of that trip after returning.

By considering these matter, we can develop the region. Slum tourism which is visiting slums and poor neighborhoods, is an experience for the tourist to feel the conditions of life and living place of these poor neighborhoods. In this tourism, social and economic communication of different spaces, has created new kinds of urban activities. The term slum, in developing countries is associated with poor neighborhoods that have been created around big cities and for various reasons, its residence have not been able to absorb the economic- social system of the city to use the facilities and services of the city.

1. Tourism

Tourism, generally is considered as a vacation. Although in recent years it includes any sort of travel in which a person will leave his/her area of work or life. A person who does tourism is called tourist. The term tourist appeared since the time middle-class people began to travel. UNWTO, considering all provided definitions before 1994, offered the final definition in 1995:” activities of a person or people who travel to a place other than their everyday living place for at least a night and at most a year for vacation. However, purposes like employment and business are not included”, so the people who these conditions are called tourists.

After the end of WWII in 1950, with the expansion of cities, there was a huge revolution in working hours, day by day development of roads, transportation channels, common culture improvement and amendments of law and rules, in a way that today tourism is considered as a phenomena and one of the symbols of the age of civilization.

So, tourism is a set of interactions that are made in the process of attraction and flight attendance, among tourists, travel agencies, origin governments, host governments and local people. Tourism can be analyzed in terms of systems. From this view, tourism like any other system consists of parts that are interacting with each other for a better goal. In fact in this industry, inputs are entered in the system and used in conversion process and after certain operations, come out of the system as outputs. Naturally the output, considering the kind of input and the operation used in the conversion process; can be different, good or bad. As a result, tourism system is under different changes that are due to the changes in society.

Among different definitions of tourism, the definition of Mill and Morrison might have more universality. In this definition, activities before or after the travel, like activities done at the destination, are considered important.

The term tourism first came out at 1811, in an English magazine called Sport Magazine, and at the time this term was used as travelling for the purpose of visiting historical artifacts and natural sceneries.

Valene Smith, by introducing tourism as a kind of social activity, suggest that the phenomena of tourism takes place when 3 factors of 1- temporary leisure, 2- extra income, 3- travelling spirit come together.

The experts of regional economy, have introduced tourism as the only factor in the establishment of resources and the development of the under-developed regions. The place of tourism in world's economy and cultural, social fields, has made the attention to this part necessary and requires the transformation of management from traditional to modern and scientific. Tourism development must improve physical, material, cultural and individual dimensions to create maximum efficiency. Improving material and physical dimension of tourism development, is creating facilities that are provided for the tourist from their arrival till their departure. Tourism is a combination of activities, services and industries that include a travel experience: Transportation, amenities, drinking and eating facilities, shops and funs, other services and facilities that are accessible to people and groups who are travelling outside of their home location.

Regional development

Usually and mostly the concept of region is used in politics. Region can be defined on a wide scope of criteria, but common criteria are space or geographical variables. Regions can also be defined by cultural and social factors.

In terms of terminology, development has different meanings like social change, social growth, social evolution, modernization and advancement. Development in exact dictionary definition means expansion. Another meaning of it is coming out of the shell. In terms of renewal theory, shell is the traditional society and culture and related values that communities must pass this traditional phase in order to go forward. Regional Development is a popular expression, but can be viewed as a general effort to decrease regional inequalities by supporting (employment and productive wealth) economic activities in regions. In the past, regional Development policies intended to reach these goals by developing foundations on a large scale and attract domestic investment.

Regional development is defined by the committed association. As a comprehensive process in which different regional actors can have a role in defining, decision making and executing more easily for the current generation without affecting economic, social, environmental investment capacities in the stocks of companies of future generation. So, this approach towards regional development, is focused on the goals of a certain sections in the government. These sections are as follows:

A. Social (Decreasing poverty, general participation, building integrity, gender equality, diversity, education, health and food.)

- B. Cultural (Historical centers renewal, archeology, saving and maintaining regions, protecting local culture and improvement. Tradition and improvement of ancient knowledge.)
- C. Official (Social buildings, education, performance, re-engineering, competition and entity building.)
- D. Management (decision making, priority definition, negotiation, support and strategic collaboration)
- E. Political (Stability, conflict resolution, legal effect decrease, regional independence, national policies, participation definition, strategic thinking, intelligence, penetration and political collaborations.)
- F. Physical (foundation, equipment and services. Land management. Air conditioning and geographical information systems)
- G. Environment (protected buffer areas. Using stable natural resources, managing environment quality and solid waste.)

Regional development on a national level includes 5 year or several year development plans for an entire land and not as a sort of planning that only considers the issues and potentials of a village or a town or a city or a state without considering others, but as how we can have a plan for a region with some big cities and states so that we can get to the relative advantages on an international and national scale required by the official and politicians and use consistently the growth of that region. Regional development theories generally are stemmed from three scientific branches of regional science, regional economics and theoretical geography.

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Regional science was introduced as a new major in U.S at 1954 via the association of regional science and its magazine. The subject of this field was the relationship between human and physical environment. Although it had many overlaps with majors like economics, sociology and geography. Editors would add the space dimension to the economic theories and hence there is a lot of overlap between this major and regional economics. Theoretical geography, which was formed in U.S at 1950, attempted to introduce human geography as a science and emphasized on variables and space systems. This major, instead of studying the distribution of phenomena as an absolute, analyzed their distribution relatively (distance from cities for instance).

Practical patterns of lands, finding a good house with a good distance from work and etc. was considered in this major. Important and common aspect of Regional science, Regional economics and theoretical geography was attention to the concept of space. Two important angles of Regional development concept. In general two important aspects of regional development has increased its importance and attention to it.

1. Economic importance of regions (on a lower level than national scale); which includes making economic relationships and launching profitable processes in the region.
2. Protection and improvement of national culture against the arrival of globalized economic and social processes, via vitalizing domestic cultures of different regions. Racial and cultural diversity in different regions, especially in neighbor regions of the country, has improved the dignity of regional development with the aim of keeping dynamic and rich cultural traditions.

Basic foundations of regional development

Basic foundations of regional development are natural resources and the basic related activities. Also it should be noted that regional development must increase in a place that helps the region and the country; and must stop where it's harmful for humans and nature. Regional policy making is all intentional and informed efforts of government to create a change in space distribution of social and economic phenomena like population, income and production of different goods and services and other social foundations and even political power. These policies mostly have to goals:

- Changing the pattern of population growth and distributing economic activities in space
- Decentralizing or relinquishing power and authority of planning, decision making or management of central government to dependent brokers to local officials. Public semi-independent companies and etc.

In the late 20's, regional development had couple of majors added in its approach: political science, general politics and sociology became important majors beside economics. In the new theory of regional development regarding human and social capitals, they focus on this concept that how a region can form a wide scope of factors and no just economic factors of regional development idea.

2. Slum tourism

This concept was introduced at 1884, after visiting slums of London and after that, NY. In 1980's, tours called suburban tours were created for the local governor to visit the life of African American people and later had international aspects and in the 1990's international tours were created for visiting slums in developing countries. For example, Cape Town city in South Africa has more than 300000 tourist per year for slum tourism and Mumbai, even before Slum dog millionaire, was of the most important slum destinations. Now this concept has become more important in media and academics, up to a point that the first conference was held in Bristol, England at 2010 about it.

In the mid 1980's, when companies like Favela designed tours for walking and visiting slums face to face in Rio De Janeiro and Soweto in South Africa, 20 years later these founders suggested that they have led more than 1 million people to Soweto.

Poverty rampage. Helping to the undersupplied regions

“Slum tourism” is of the black tourism. Most people like to visit rich countries that have nice facilities for fun and leisure; but there are also some tourist who want to get to know people who live in poverty. Slums and undersupplied regions are the favorite spot of black tourism fans. Some experts believe that arranging international tours in not-developed countries and deprived regions, not only is an innovation in tourism industry, but also can help the poor people of this region, because wherever tourists go, naturally pay for their own trips. Countries like Somali, Ethiopia in Africa and some parts of India are regions that have the potential to attract black tourism.

Mostly poor regions are visited in urban areas of developing countries. Slum tourism also exists in rich countries as tours to visit slums. Slum tourism in poor regions to fight or destroy these regions and create jobs and to reach a more original culture and to show humanity, culture evolution and innovative job making. Nowadays, slum tourism is also noted by scientific and medical researchers. Slum tourism is rapidly changing worldwide and is seen in countries like India, Kenya, Brazil, Mexico, etc. Most recent tourism researches in slum tourism or key studies arriving in geography, commerce, job making, and moral issues of focused tours are conducted in India, Brazil and South Africa.

Promoting slum tourism, a way of helping undersupplied regions

Slum tourism is a way of visiting urban areas which are in poverty, pollution and violence. Regarding the current growth, slum tourism is a phenomenon, not an invention. The term slum in developing countries, is associated with poor areas that have been created around the city and its residents have not been able to absorb the economic-social system of the city to use its facilities and amenities.

Slum tourism by using the lack of familiarity, is to reach adventure and enjoy a developing region in the world that happens in different regions of suburbs. This kind of tourism by the goal of setting low budget tours, mostly uses the help of residents in the trip by job makers in creating economic development and revolution in the region.

Recently, slum tourism takes place in regions like Kabira in the form of walking and seeing the life and place of residents for a short term. Other trips of slum tourism are long term, the plan of this tourism is “transforming”. In tourism ads, it is said that by residing at the homes of people of Haiti and obtaining more knowledge about organizing your life, making life better by increasing faith, happiness, fight the problems.

Tourism in urban areas which are relatively poor has been discussed as kind of fun in the world. Despite conflicts in this matter, this kind of fun is increasing on an international level. With more cities being added to the list and also political interference like merging slum tourism with city renovation and tourism strategies, it seems that slum tourism has entered a new stage which causes development in the area and increase in employment and income.

The first paper about slum tourism was published in NY Times at March 2008 and more than 200 news agencies covered this topic from all over the world. There are two controversies here. First: most slum tours are conducted by firms who mostly have no financial help or capital return to the slum areas. Second: Slum residents say that their life being shown to Western tourists is humiliating. As a result, mostly slum tours are called exploitative, voyeuristic, and imperialistic. While the operators of slum tours disagree with this opinion, they try to educate the tourists to understand the realities of poverty and help remove negative clichés. Some operators used the proceedings of the tours to build schools and social centers in slum areas.

Slum tourism in all over the world

Members of slum tours which mostly happen in poor cities, are operators who provide services in support of the poor, services like: providing food, providing services from the artists, conference organizers, etc. are, most measures of these associations, to encourage the visitors in a way that they stay longer in the area. In these tours, tourists are encouraged to get bus tickets and visit people and experience their culture.

Slum tour is offered by professional firms in the cities of South Africa like Johannesburg, Cape Town, the big cities of India like Calcutta, Mumbai, New Delhi and also Rio Janeiro of Brazil, etc. in relatively large scales and in an organized manner. The biggest tourism slum in Asia is in Dahavari. In tour of Dahavari, approximately the annual turnover is 700 million dollars which helps millions of people via activities like creating artifacts, other arts like clothes and etc. of other slum tourism spots in South America is Rochinha which is the biggest slum of SA that has about 200000 residents. Many poor neighborhoods don't have water, electricity and sewage or garbage disposal system.

2.1 The effect of slum tourism on regional development

One kind of tourism is slum tourism in which tourists who want to meet the people and their life in poverty, prefer to choose poor and undersupplied regions as their destination. Some experts believe that tourism tours in some underdeveloped countries and deprived regions, is an innovation in tourism that can help the people of the region. Regional development an expression for general effort to decrease region inequalities by supporting economic activities in the region.

By the arrival of tourists to poor neighborhoods, their visit from these regions can significantly help the evolution and development of the region. Tourists can increase the living quality of local society and help improve living standards by creating jobs and decreasing poverty. Creating income for local budgets especially comes from income taxes of job makers. This matter can be used to improve social services, foundations and services.

Slum tourism is a chance for expanding business and creating jobs, socio-cultural interaction and also as a drive for investment and supporting local services, encouragement for keeping traditional arts and artifacts, traditional sciences and methods that will lead to stable use of biodiversity. The expenses of tourists can directly be used to protect the environment of the region and support the local society, health care services, educational and cultural centers, etc. in a way that with the arrival of tourists the first influenced issue will be the economy and creating jobs in the region. Also the arrival of people from different countries and cultures has a significant impact on social culture. Considering the potential spots in slum regions, job opportunities will increase with the arrival of tourists which will lead to economic development in the region and also decrease poverty, increase general and social participation of residents to raise the level of education, health, and food, noting the history of regions, renovating historical centers, guarding the original culture and archeology science, increasing the security level in the region and etc.

Diagram 1: Context diagram



The effects of slum tourism on the region are different and complicated due to visiting poor regions, also some of the most important effects are social, cultural, economic, political interactions which will lead to the growth of economy, creating different job opportunities, increasing the security level of the region due to the commute of visitors, health and education level improvement due to financial and spiritual aids of tourist and tours, also increase in social participation and unity of residents. Also due to the arrival of people from different countries, the level of communication and information will improve and also knowing about the background of region will be interesting for the tourists and will lead to residents paying more attention to the history and culture. With all these factors and the effects that they have on each other, slum tourism will lead to regional development.

Conclusion

Today tourism, in all different levels and formats, is recognized by all and of the latest formats, is black tourism which is visiting hardships, poverty and mishaps. Slum tourism is a kind of black tourism and has been considered by many of tours and tourists. Initially, slum tourism was only with the purpose of visiting poor regions and their way of life, but today it's conducted with the support of tours and tourists for these regions in destroying poverty and creating growth and development in the region by creating opportunities to increase awareness and local participation and improving economic, social and cultural circumstances.

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