

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES OF ECOTOURISM

Problems of ecotourism

Ecotourism is barely regulated and a lot of industries actually harm the environment by introducing too many people to sensitive areas e.g. coral reef.

- Ecotourism programs are easily mishandled. Environmental conservation and restoration is a nuanced science that is very difficult to replicate and explain in laymen's terms. In the wrong hands, people and not-for-profits can actually do a lot of social and environmental harm.

- Touching on the last topic again, ecotourism can only be successful if programs are carefully designed to both a) be sensitive to the natural environment and b) provide a direct economic benefit to native locals rather than multinational tourism companies (which provide very little financial independence for families of workers). [1, p.2]

People and ecotourism

The important issue is, whether the nature can withstand outside visitors. There are far too many examples of the over-exploitation of wildlife by people who call themselves ecotourists. Erosion of the ground easily destroys the values, by which the tourists have chosen the destination. This happens in habitats, where the number of visitors exceeds the natural carrying capacity of soils or vegetation, and also where reckless visitors pollute the nature with waste. The hiking trails can be strengthened to sustain masses of visitors – although some of the “pristine virginity” of the wilderness is lost. Similarly, many tour organizers believe – or at least they are trying to convince the customers – that the fauna and flora can also be “hardened” to withstand the ever-increasing number of people viewing and photographing them.

To reach and maintain sustainability in tourism destinations, appropriate behavior of the visitors is a vital prerequisite. National parks and other protected areas are often considered as habitats established to wildlife conservation. These sites are, however, also destinations for masses, and several intentions and expectations have to be considered. Visitors' preferences and wishes largely determine, whether or not the destination fulfils pre-established expectations. Knowing the hopes and motives of visitors is thus vital in managing both the sites' infrastructure and the subject matter of organized nature tours/excursions. [2. p.3]

Possible solutions?

Obey the regulations of the ecotourism organization exactly.

Research the local wildlife in order to know all possible sustainability threats to reduce the negative impacts of your excursions.

Refrain from overeating or wasting water whenever possible. Take what you need.

Travel impacts on the environment: In order to visit some of these exotic places, you have to travel long distances. Planes generate a huge amount of global pollution which can indirectly affect the local ecosystems of your travel destination. Cars and boats used for local transportation will have more direct negative effects, which can also lead to environmental degradation.

Possible solutions?

Consider taking a nonstop flight. Although this might be more expensive, it uses less fuel than regular flight plans.

Walk or take public transportation while traveling in a country. Try renting non-motorized boats or vehicles if the need arises.

In some places, guided tours are offered via horses, camels, elephants, or other native animals rather than by Jeep or bus. Not only is this an incredible experience to witness amazing wildlife, it reduces the impact of your carbon footprint, literally!

Integrity of ecotourism organization: Ecotourism has grown in global demand by about 25% each year. Many organizations are jumping on this trend, claiming their parks and programs are “ecotouristic” despite their negligence to adhere to eco-friendly policies. Unfortunately, ecotourism has turned into a marketing ploy to entice tourists to spend their money on the organization's service

Pros of ecotourism

Valuable biological Information: Ecotourism provides the opportunity for not only environmentalists, but also tourists to learn more about the ecosystems, biology, and geology of a specific location. Knowing the components of an ecosystem can lead to a better understanding of how to conserve different species and natural formations. Ecotourism provides an impactful firsthand experience about sustainable living and eco-friendly practices.

Local economic improvement: In some cases, ecotourism provides sustainable economic growth for countries. Places like Ecuador, Nepal, Madagascar, and Costa Rica rely on tourists to build their economies. Regular travel and tourism usually returns only about 20% of revenue back to local communities while ecotourism can return as much as 95%. Ecotourism isn't only about conserving environments; it's also about sustaining communities. [3, p.2]

For example, Madagascar's government has started promoting its tourism as an economic strategy to shrink its 81% poverty rate. Although it's still in the idea phase, it's possible that ecotourism could be the answer to their unemployment crisis.

Positive impact on community culture: Not only does ecotourism create jobs for locals, it also promotes and preserves traditional practices. Locally grown food and crafted goods creates a direct economic and cultural connection between the tourist and citizen. Ecotourism promotes these cultural traditions rather than altering native customs to fit specific international norms. Some consider ecotourism to be a means to end cultural ignorance, stereotyping, and fear in the world through its ability to educate travelers.

Increased environmental awareness: Most ecotourism programs include educational components about environment preservation. The tourists can help spread environmental awareness by taking the information they've learned and apply it to their daily lives.

Financial benefits toward conservation: When people spend money on ecotourism, some of it goes toward conservation efforts like reforestation and endangered species repopulation projects. Essentially, the more money spent on ecotourism, the easier it will be to finance conservation projects.

In conclusion, I suggest a perspective through a last example, in France. The "Oysters road in Charente" seeks to reconcile tourism, environment and human activity. The particularity of this tourism offer is that it is not just a consumer product. This is the

result of a project approach, involving public authorities and private economic actors to share and live their territory. And it works well! Through this example, we can finally ask if ecotourism is the goal. Is it not rather the result of a contractual approach around a project area? Is not the real issue in the search for shared governance? The future is open.

REFERENCES

1. “What are the benefits and problems of Ecotourism!” - Quora/2016. –pp.1-2.
2. “Ecotourism, concept and reality. What are perspectives?” Stephane Villepontoux / 2004 –pp. 2-3
3. “[Ecotourism, concept and reality. What are perspectives?](#)” L. MAROUDAS - 2001 –pp. 1-3.