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Topic of Research: Implications and management of overtourism at tourist destination of India

FINDINGS

Although the term overtourism came into use only a few years ago, the challenge of managing tourism sustainably for locals, tourists and day visitors has been recognized for more than two decades.

“Overtourism can be described as destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably. It is the opposite of Responsible Tourism which is about using tourism to make better places to live in and better places to visit. Often both visitors and guests experience the deterioration concurrently”. (Goodwin, 2019) .

As per analysis of the responses, it is observed that tourists visit Delhi and Agra during winters. The destinations have been observed to be overcrowded during the month of October to March of next year. This period is considered as peak tourist season. The remaining period has been observed as lean season and fewer tourists visited that period. The average temperature during winter ranges from 8 to 14°C. This is a great time to move around the city, during the winter.

The analysis of this study concludes that overcrowding at tourist destination has impact on the daily life of local residents such as, traffic jam and problem of encroachment by the local shopkeeper and vendors. It takes more time to go around the monument due to long queue at the ticket counter and at the entrance of monument.

At the same time, the study also finds that the dirt and dust generated due to large number of tourists visiting at a time, have been observed to be harmful for the surface of the monument. Also, there will be air pollution due to visit of tourists which is detrimental effect to the monuments. Tourists also like to touch and feel the surface of the monuments despite all the warnings to this effect. It is harmful for the monuments. Some tourist put graffiti on the surface or write their names or of the loved one's. This is very bad habit and damages the surface permanently.

It was also observed in the analysis that overtourism creates large impact on environment of the tourist destination. The air pollution is the major issue that is cause of concern at these destinations. The high number of visitors also attributes to depletion of natural resources such as water. There has been the instance of water scarcity at the tourist destination which is

facing the issue of overtourism. The hotels when running in full occupancy utilise large quantity of water. This leads to water scarcity at the tourist destination. Also, the vehicles used by tourist cause air pollution and noise pollution.

The study also analysed that tourism experience of tourist is diminished when the tourist destination is overcrowded. Normally the tourist tends to avoid the destinations which are overcrowded by tourists. Overtourism leads to a decline in the quality of life of local residents and also reduces the experiences of tourists. Visiting a tourist destination when it is overcrowded, not only reduces the enjoyment of the tourist but it can become a safety and security issue also. The tourist need to be careful about their belongings when there is much crowd at the monument.

The impact was noticed as positive for business and economy for most of the stakeholder. For hotelier, it was good opportunity to earn higher revenue because of high influx of tourist. Visiting large number of tourist at a time creates good business for tour operators also. Since tour operator does not get regular business all the time it becomes a good opportunity for them to generate revenue. Overcrowded tourist destination is a boon for local souvenir shop owners and other shopkeeper in the tourist area to earn maximum profit.

One of the major factor which leads to overcrowding is the popularity of the destination. While, Delhi is having many famous monuments such as India Gate, Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Lotus Temple, etc. these attract a large number of foreign tourists as well as domestic tourist. Beside this it is also the Capital City of India which is very important factor in attracting domestic tourists as well as for business travellers. The other factor came up during the discussions that now many airlines are providing economical air tickets which make it easier to travel especially for domestic tourists.

Seasonability of tourist visit is another factor that is the cause of overtourism. Most of the domestic and international tourists visit Delhi and Agra during October to March due to suitable weather conditions here. During this period the temperature remains moderate which provides the tourists to comfortable conditions to visit.

There can be various ways to regulate the entry of visitors such as limiting the maximum number of visitors per day. Even it can be further minutely regulated by limiting the entry of visitors per hour. The other measure suggested during the study to avoid overtourism is by increasing the entry fee of the monument during peak seasons. This can help in reducing the crowd at a time. At the same time suggestion emerged as the entry fee should be reduced during lean period to attract more tourists during this period.

People should be encouraged to visit less visited tourist destinations so that the popular destinations do not get crowded. There are many destinations nearby Delhi and Agra which are very important and have historical significance. At the same time, it was suggested during the study that increasing the facilities at the monuments can reduce the overcrowding at the destination.


(Rajendra Kumar Suman)