



A Review of Cultural Tourism

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Abstract: A fascinating web of history, art, and community, cultural tourism is a powerful trend that is changing the way people travel all around the globe. Through the prism of cultural discovery, this study delves into the life-altering potential of travel to forge a profound connection with the many cultures and histories that make up our planet. Immersive interactions abound in culturally rich destinations, from the lively alleys of old towns to the tranquil landscapes resonating with stories of the past. Cultural tourism invites visitors to become more than simply onlookers; they are invited to become active players in the stories of our collective history.

Keywords: Culture, Tourism, History, Discovery, Travel, Lifestyles

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of cultural tourism has been defined in a number of different ways by a number of scholars due to the fact that cultural attractions are a massive pull for tourists. One school of thought contends that this form of travel assists individuals in overcoming feelings of social isolation and in gaining an understanding of various cultures. According to the description provided, cultural tourism acts as a catalyst for the preservation of other cultures by exposing tourists to new ways of life and ways of thinking. "The absorption by tourists of features resembling the vanishing lifestyles of past societies observed through such phenomena as house styles, crafts, faring equipments, and dress," noted in his definition of cultural tourism. "This is the phenomenon that defines cultural tourism." cultural tourism is considered to be "an element in the attractiveness of tourism regions." [1]

The term "cultural tourism" refers to holidays that are taken by individuals who are not native to a particular location and who are interested in the artistic, historical, scientific, or lifestyle/heritage characteristics of that location. Cultural tourism encompasses a wide range of destinations, including artwork galleries, museums, and historic sites. "Cultural Tourism also includes visits to view contemporary paintings or sculpture or to attend the performing arts."

"Cultural Tourism means enrichment," said the report that was produced by the European Conference on Cultural Tourism and Regional Development in the year 1991. The culture, the resources, and the entire environment are all improved as a result, and it offers "reasons for reflection" to both the inhabitants and the visitors. The outcome is that the community that is hosting the guests as well as the visitors themselves gain from enhanced cultural exposure and enjoyment. The foundation of "Cultural Tourism" is comprised of the aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, and psychological components of new and significant cultural experiences.

Cultural tourism can be described as an enjoyable pastime for individuals who travel to different countries with an inquisitive mind and a desire to learn about and understand the locals' everyday and historical practices as they pertain to religious and secular artefacts, buildings, landmarks, and events. This is considered to be the case when taking into consideration the various explanations that have been offered up to this point. This kind of travel is referred to as cultural tourism, and it occurs when individuals travel with the purpose of gaining knowledge about and sharing the ideas, values, and traditions of other cultures.[2]

The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (ICOMOS) offered a description that was more explicit. It is possible to define cultural tourism as an activity that gives tourists the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the many cultures of the community that they are visiting. This gives students the opportunity to get an understanding of the architectural, historic, archaeological, and other cultural characteristics that date back to ancient times, as well as the customs, traditions, physical surroundings, and intellectual views of the community that is hosting them. Cultural tourism is distinguished from other types of holiday travel that are more superficial in nature because it places a significant emphasis on gaining an understanding of the local culture. Cultural tourism encompasses not only the man-made attractions but also the natural environment that surrounds them. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how culture is an integral part of people's daily lives and how it brings people together in groups through shared characteristics such as behaviour, language, and other similar aspects.

A consequence of this is that cultural tourism has the potential to assist in the promotion of unappreciated areas while simultaneously safeguarding the riches of such destinations for future generations. When it comes to tourism, this kind of tourism lays an emphasis on the distinctive culture of a location, which may include its history, arts, and way of life. A social movement that pushes individuals to learn about and accept the religious and social customs of people from diverse backgrounds is known as culture shock. On the other hand, culture shock is a social phenomenon. At the individual, group, and national levels, the word "cultural tourism" may also be used to refer to the things, the people, and the ways of life that are present in the host place. These are all factors that contribute to the formation of our own identities.[3]

According to the "Cultural Tourism Industry Group," the primary reasons people travel are to either completely immerse themselves in a foreign culture or to acquire information about the rich cultural history of a particular region.

In other words, it is a kind of creative expression that incorporates aspects of social and environmental history together with those of pleasure and education.

In light of the description that has been presented, it is evident that the management of a wide approach is a tough endeavour from the point of view of product creation and management. Cultural tourism embraces practically all forms of leisure travel since it gives visitors the opportunity to learn and acquire information via new experiences and observations. This is the reason why cultural tourism is so popular.

According to the tight definition provided by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), cultural tourism is primarily driven by high-end cultural programming, events, and sightseeing. The majority of the time, cultural tourism takes the form of the following activities: pilgrimages and study tours; visits to historical and religious places; festivals; museums; theatres; concerts; and festivals. [4]

Visitors are able to immerse themselves in the rich history, intriguing culture, and stunning landscapes of a specific region via the practice of "heritage tourism," which is an essential component of cultural tourism. "Heritage tourism" also serves to preserve and celebrate these distinctive assets. When people go to locations that have a long and illustrious past, they are engaging in legacy tourism. It represents the past, and by putting the past to work, we can increase tourism, which in turn may result in improved educational opportunities and the development of stronger communities. The term "heirloom" encompasses not just natural heritage but also cultural legacy as well. The term "cultural legacy" refers to the past, the works of our ancestors, various precincts, manifestations, and so forth. forth the other hand, "natural heritage" refers to phenomena that occur in nature, such as glaciers, rain, canyons, waterfalls, and so on.

Cultural heritage tourism is a special kind of holiday that lays an emphasis on the rich artistic, architectural, historical, monumental, museum, dramatic, religious, social, gastronomic, and way of life traditions of a nation or area. The name "cultural heritage tourism" refers to this type of vacation. Cultural legacy has a significant impact not just on economic revitalization but also on urban revitalization. A rising number of tourist locations are beginning to acknowledge the significance of cultural tourism as a method of attracting a greater number of tourists from other countries. Engaging local and regional communities in marketing, planning, and programming is beneficial because it allows for a better understanding of cultural and historical visitors and allows for better catering to their needs.

What comprises the cultural heritage of a group or civilization extends beyond the physical artefacts that have been carried down through the years. It also includes the traditions and practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. The two primary categories of cultural heritage are the artefacts that are tangible and the records that are intangible. The word "tangible cultural heritage" may be used to refer to a wide range of immovable sites, including but not limited to ancient ruins, artefacts, architecture, monuments, tombs, and sacred or historically significant landscapes. The designation of a landscape as a cultural heritage site occurs when the flora and fauna of the area exhibit characteristics that are cultural in nature. These kind of cultural monuments are often beneficial to the tourism industry of a country since they attract tourists from all over the world, including those within the country itself.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) use the phrase "the non-physical characteristics, practices, representations, expressions, as well as knowledge and skills that identify and define a group or civilization" to describe intangible cultural assets. There are many aspects that are included in this, including but not limited to the following: language and oral histories; beliefs and practices; ceremonies and rituals; customs and traditions; creative manifestations such as music, dance, and crafts; and so on.[5]

Putting it another way, heritage tourism is a legacy that was passed down from the generations who came before us. This inheritance is manifested in physical artefacts like as buildings and works of art, as well as in intangibles such as the language, culture, beliefs, values, and culinary traditions of a people. The artefacts that have been handed down from generation to generation are often one-of-a-kind and costless. This history, which is the source of strength for our culture since it is both conserved and handed on from one generation to the next, is passed down from one generation to the next.

It should come as no surprise that sustainable development plays a large part in this business, given that

cultural tourism is a key contributor to the long-term economic prosperity of the communities that host it. The preservation of built heritage (including monuments, museums, and other historically significant sites), living culture (including, but not limited to, traditional dance forms, fairs, and festivals), gastronomy, values, principles, morals, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, and contemporary arts are all things that can be accomplished through the practice of sustainability.[6]

CULTURAL TOURISM'S MOST NOTABLE EFFECTS

As a result of an increase in the number of individuals who have access to higher education, there has been a change in the demand for cultural tourism, which is excellent news for both communities and companies. Taking use of the expanding number of yearly events that host towns host, such as festivals, fairs, exhibits, and other similar events, is one technique that may be utilised to increase cultural tourism.

As disposable wealth has increased and new means of earning a livelihood have emerged, the "cultural agenda" of cultural tourists has shifted in response to these economic shifts. The community that is hosting the event will be motivated to improve their quality of life by interacting with new people via cultural tourism, which has the potential to result in a positive acculturation effect. Stunning natural landscape, historical sites, and cultural attractions make Murshidabad an ideal destination for travellers. Murshidabad is a beautiful location for tourists. The number of individuals participating in cultural tourism is growing, which is beneficial to the economy of the area as well as the people who live there.[7]

Through the promotion of cultural tourism in Murshidabad, a new source of revenue will be generated. The rise of cultural tourism would bring about a number of changes in the communities that host it. These changes would include an increase in the awareness of various cultures, an exchange of ideas, and the prospect of integrated development.

METHODS OF CULTURAL TRAVEL

By the middle of the twentieth century, the concept of "culture" had been developed and was being used often. Despite the fact that this concept has just lately emerged as a kind of "special interest" or "alternative" tourism, it is important to point out that the practice of visiting cultural sites or heritage areas that are significant from a historical or cultural perspective is not completely new. Although ancient Greeks, Romans, Indians, and Chinese were not acquainted with cultural tourism, resources, or other aspects of tourism, they were quite used to visiting objects such as monasteries, mosques, cathedrals, and temples. This was the case despite the fact that they were not familiar with tourism. In bygone ages, when big tours were arranged and people went purely for religious or spiritual reasons, the act of travelling on a pilgrimage was often associated with tremendous spiritual inspiration.

standard that prevailed throughout the ancient period. It was during the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Renaissance movement was beginning to take hold in England and Italy, that the idea of the grand tour was originally presented. A variety of cultural institutions, as well as their histories and traditions, were intended to be presented to tourists as part of this programme. Additionally, teachers often go to these areas in order to have a firsthand understanding of them and for the purpose of using them as a teaching tool in the classroom. The journeys of the Indian philosopher Sankaracharya were profoundly influenced by

the cultural and spiritual elevation that he experienced. He travelled across India, where he interacted with saints and ordinary people and established institutions in a number of different regions.[8]

One of the numerous instances is travelling for cultural or religious purposes. There are many more examples. The Chariot festivals in Puri, the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, the Vaishnadevi Jatra, the Kashi Jatra, the Gangasagar mala, and the Chard Dham Jatra (which includes Dwarka, Puri, Rameswaram, and Badrinath) were all well-known destinations for tourists on cultural tours in the past. These locations were largely visited by Hindus in order to fulfil their spiritual requirements, whilst Muslims journeyed to Mecca and Ajmer Sharif to fulfil their religious obligations. In addition, Christians go to Vatican City in order to worship there. Before Thomas Cook coined the phrase "organised tour" in the 19th century, there were already a great deal of different kinds of travel that were readily apparent.

Despite the fact that cultural tourism has developed over the years and that people's reasons for engaging in it have changed, the term "cultural tourism" continues to refer to journeys to historical sites and other cultural monuments with the ultimate objective of obtaining a knowledge of other cultures and ways of life. The principal objective of cultural sustainability is to guarantee that cultural resources will be preserved for the benefit of future generations while also catering to the need of the present. Acculturation is another issue that concerns people. Acculturation is the process by which the beliefs and practices of one culture become too embedded in another society, which results in a loss of authenticity. This is particularly true for the people who live in the area where a destination is located.[9]

Indians, as a nation, put a great importance on going to places of worship, and the rich cultural legacy of this large subcontinent is a big pull for visitors to come to India. In this manner, cultural assets are offering a product to tourist locations, which in turn helps to improve the reputations of such areas.

As a result of the fact that experiencing new cultures during vacations is restricted to visiting monuments or museums, heritage sites, or handicraft shops, cultural tourism is still considered to be a subset of mainstream tourism. This is due to the fact that the cultural resources in question attract the greatest number of tourists. As a result, the vast majority of travel companies and tour operators had an incorrect understanding of the significance and breadth of cultural tourism. In light of this, many people believed, for a considerable amount of time, that India's cultural tourism resources were restricted to indigenous cultures and the resources they had, in addition to a few cultural sites that were created by humans. The development potential in this industry is greatly constrained by the restricted viewpoint that is given here. Despite the gloomy forecast for cultural tourism in India and the subcontinent, efforts to create one-of-a-kind cultural excursions, such as "textile tours," continue to be undertaken. It is possible that "Orissa tribal tours," "Monastic Buddhist culture tour," trains to Kolkata, or masks from the eastern area are the "light at the end of the tunnel" for India's cultural tourism tunne.[10]

When compared to India, the bulk of individuals who are active in advertising tourism destinations throughout the world—tour operators, ground operators, travel agencies, and entrepreneurs—either do not comprehend or have a distorted perspective of the many aspects that comprise the distinctive personality of a culture. On the other hand, contemporary tourist practices are seldom interactive since they do not place a priority on experimenting. As a consequence, tourists who visit a host culture often restrict their cultural tourism experiences to the viewing of historical sites and pseudo-art. As a consequence of this, cultural

tourism cannot be promoted to the extent that it may possible be. The issue that arises as a result of this is, "What kinds of cultural experiences can tourists anticipate having during their trips?" It is common for tourists to arrive to a location with an open mind and a desire to gain knowledge about different cultures. However, the commercialization of the tourism industry has made it hard to fully enjoy cultural tourism and has failed to live up to the expectations of tourists. When travelling, it is not uncommon to see travel firms and tour operators putting in a lot of effort to find out what cultural tourists should anticipate and how to best package and explore local customs for their customers. When it comes to arranging their excursions, travel experts often fail to take into account the day-to-day activities of the host community. This is despite the fact that it is essential for cultural tourists to have an understanding of the way of life in the host community. The restoration of cultural tourism services that are based on pre-arranged packages has therefore become a standard practice among operators of tourist destinations.

The marketing strategy that travel experts use is often the starting point for reconstruction. It is common practice for tour operators to produce visually attractive brochures, CDs or DVDs in order to attract visitors to a cultural place that they are marketing. To be sure,

either fails to effectively describe the facts or minimises its significance (Mason, 1994). The result is that visitors are dissatisfied because they are forced to experience cultural circumstances that are fabricated and clichéd, and these events do not measure up to the expectations that they have. Because of the influence of commercialization, the culture of the host country has been completely destroyed, and it is now difficult for visitors to experience the culture of the host country in all of its authentic splendour. As a result of being exposed to pseudo-culture for the purpose of tourism, tourists are significantly robbed of the opportunity to have an authentic experience.

PRESENT STATUS OF CULTURAL TOURISM

One of the most important aspects of cultural tourism is going to sites that are notable because of their art, architecture, history, customs, and local practices. In contrast to conventional tourism, which places more of a focus on prominent tourist destinations or recreational pursuits, cultural tourism places a greater emphasis on completely immersing oneself in the heart of a location. Learning about a people, gaining an understanding of their history, and appreciating the stories that are woven into the fabric of their culture are all important aspects of this.

There is a significant aspect of the contemporary cultural tourism landscape that is characterised by the growing significance of authentic experiences. Vacationers are increasingly interested in true cultural immersion possibilities, and they choose experiences that go beyond the conventional tourist traps. This trend is expected to continue. As a consequence of the growing tendency towards cultural tourism, tourists are becoming more aware than they have ever been of the need of preserving and exhibiting the rich cultural past of their destinations.[11]

In this era of unparalleled global connectedness, cultural tourism has hopped on the digital bandwagon in order to give travellers with an experience that is even more enjoyable. Virtual tours, augmented reality applications, and immersive multimedia experiences have made it possible for tourists to explore cultural heritage sites without ever having to leave the comfort of their own homes. This has the potential to be

used for a wide range of purposes, including but not limited to education, geographical exploration, and cultural interaction.

The importance of cultural tourism lies in the fact that it enables individuals from diverse backgrounds to get an understanding of and appreciation for the traditions and practices of one another. It is possible for visitors to look beyond their preconceived views and have a deeper respect for the interconnectedness of all people if they immerse themselves in the cultures of the location they are visiting. This feature is more vital than it has ever been before for the purpose of promoting love, compassion, and understanding in today's world, which is more linked than ever before.[12]

Additionally, cultural tourism has a significant positive impact on the economic well-being of cities and districts. The advantages of an influx of visitors are often enjoyed by local artists, cultural performers, and small businesses. Tourism and community development typically go hand in hand with one another. There is the potential for the revitalization of local economies, the preservation of traditional crafts, and the generation of cash via the presentation of cultural goods.

The cultural tourism industry is also in a perilous situation as a result of significant global health problems, the most notable of which being the COVID-19 pandemic. Cultural tourism has shown great persistence and adaptability, especially in the face of occasional setbacks brought about by travel restrictions and safety concerns. Through the implementation of safety procedures and the use of virtual platforms, destinations have rethought their services in order to maintain their connection with their customers during lockdowns.

In order to address the issues that have arisen as a result of the pandemic, several cultural institutions and tourism boards have come up with creative solutions. Stories told via digital platforms, cultural celebrations held online, and virtual museum tours are all examples of ways in which the sector is able to develop and adapt in order to maintain audience engagement.

In the contemporary cultural tourism landscape, sustainability is another issue that is of great importance. As tourists become more conscious of the social and environmental implications of their trips, there is a growing desire for tourism that is both responsible and sustainable because of this awareness. The number of popular locations that are adopting environmentally friendly practices, emphasising the relevance of cultural heritage preservation, and fostering community-based tourism is on the increase. Green tourism is among the most popular types of tourism.[13]

Although there are advantages to cultural tourism, there are also difficulties associated with it. There is still reason to be concerned about the possibility of cultural commodification, which refers to the commercialization of cultural activities and heritage without the appropriate understanding of its significance. Destinations that are interested in using cultural tourism must perform the difficult balancing act of achieving economic benefits while maintaining their inherent uniqueness.

It is the efforts and laws of the government that have a significant impact on cultural tourism. It is possible to create cultural tourism on a national and regional scale in a sustainable manner via the use of strategic planning, investments in cultural infrastructure, and the formulation of policies that provide support. It is necessary for governmental agencies, communities, and businesses to work together in order to create an

environment that is welcoming to cultural tourists while also conserving local customs.[14]

Case studies that have been successful demonstrate the positive benefits that cultural tourism may have when it is used in a thorough manner. Kyoto, Japan, and Barcelona, Spain, are only two instances of major tourist destinations that have achieved success by displaying their cultural past to the world while simultaneously taking efforts to regulate the flood of visitors, safeguard their historic buildings, and integrate the locals. Both of these locations are located in Europe. The value of a holistic approach that takes into consideration the cultural, social, and economic components of tourism is shown by the aforementioned cases.

It seems that cultural tourism has a bright future ahead of it, with more potential than ever before for development. There is little doubt that technological improvements, together with an increasing concern for responsible tourism and the preservation of the environment, will have an impact on the future of cultural tourism. Because more and more people are travelling in search of real experiences and meaningful connections, cultural tourism is poised to become an increasingly dynamic and ever-evolving component of the travel industry all over the globe.[15]

CONCLUSION

Perusing these chapters has been more than just a scholarly exercise; it has been a voyage across many cultures, eras, and the Yamuna's pulse. The basin is more than simply a place to visit for culture vultures; it's a call to explore the living heart of a place whose cultural legacy is a monument to the perseverance of humankind. The cultural narrative of the Yamuna River Basin encourages subsequent generations to go on the journey along its historic rivers and culturally significant terrain.

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