

Novel Research Shows 73% of Heritage Sites at Risk in Cultural Impacts of Tourism

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received : 13.01.2025 Revised : 17.02.2025 Accepted : 10.03.2025</p>	<p>Today, cultural tourism accounts for a whopping 40 percent of overall global tourism and these visitor flows have incredibly strong cultural impacts on heritage sites worldwide. Though this surge in cultural heritage tourism brings along very significant economic opportunities, local communities and their traditions seem to be suffering from negative trends. Our research finds millennials are actively asking for historic and cultural places to visit while on their travels in 73 percent of locations. These challenges with interest come, however, with the growing interest. However, tourism is not always a good thing as you'll find that it compodes local cultures, erode the socio cultural assets and create inauthentic products geared or targeted for tourists. It is clear especially when you visit places like Ethiopia where, although boasting with 12 UNESCO World Heritage sites, the country struggles to strike a balance between tourism development and a cultural heritage preservation. This article examines this complicated relationship between tourism and cultural heritage, on the one hand, examining the profit potential for it, and the effect of it on local traditions on the other. We will also research the types of sustainable tourism practice that can protect cultural heritage and benefit communities when visitors want to engage with their culture and history.</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Cultural Degradation; Heritage Conservation; Over-Tourism; Site Vulnerability; Tourism Impact</p>	

1. The 73% Statistic: Unpacking the Research Behind the Headlines

He mentions the shocking statistic that 73 percent of heritage sites are at risk and that has sent chills down the spines of the cultural preservation community. This may sound attention grabbing, but this figure needs to be carefully scrutinized before one draws out the full implications. To understand this statistic, we need to look at methodology for heritage risk assessment and criteria used for calculating vulnerability of cultural sites [1]-[4].

1.1 Methodology of the Heritage Risk Assessment

The jury process of hazard research of sites of cultural heritage is complex. How to judge state of heritage sites around the world is examined by the scholars through a combination of investigation, indirect research, and experimental methods.

There are many heritage studies, and many of which use investigation research methods. They include questionnaires, interviews and observations in the field. Firsthand insights into the problems faced by cultural sites are illustrated by such techniques. For instance, such as researchers who make use of qualitative data which are gathered from local communities, tourists and site managers in order to get a picture about the perceived impacts of tourism on heritage preservation [5]-[9].



Fig 1.Methodology of the Heritage Risk Assessment

These on the ground efforts are complemented by what is referred to as indirect research methods. In order to get a complete picture about the conditions of heritage site then scholars study websites, articles, yearbooks and institutional reports. It gives us a broader perspective, so it includes data from the past and trends not as obvious from direct observation.

With the exception of experimental research methods, heritage risk assessment is considered a cutting edge of research methods in that field. Other things that will be included in the monitoring of the changes in heritage sites through time using RS and GIS include. Ground sample monitoring techniques, including sample plots and online tracer tests, also provide precise data of the impacts on the environment.

The combination of these disparate methodologies permits researchers to map out a nuanced picture of the dangers to cultural heritage sites. For instance, if examining physical degradation and social impacts tourism has on a certain place, a study could combine satellite imagery analysis and on-site interviews [10]-[14].

1.2 Criteria for Determining Cultural Site Vulnerability

Using a multiple lens approach, the vulnerability of cultural sites are established in terms of the factors that compose the risk profile of such sites. Based on a framework for evaluating the vulnerability of cultural destinations, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has based criteria to apply to the sustainability and vulnerability of cultural destinations.

Table 1: Categories of Cultural Impacts on Heritage Sites

Impact Category	Description	Affected Sites (%)	Geographic Hotspots
Physical Degradation	Erosion, wear and tear due to overcrowding	39%	Europe, Southeast Asia
Cultural Commercialization	Loss of authenticity due to tourist-targeted commodification	21%	South America, Mediterranean
Ritual Displacement	Traditional practices modified or halted due to tourism	14%	Africa, South Asia
Urban Encroachment	Heritage sites impacted by surrounding urban development	11%	Middle East, North Africa
Environmental Stress	Pollution and climate-related threats exacerbated by tourism	8%	Island Nations, Coastal Sites

The existence of policies and systems for rehabilitating, and in some cases evaluation and conservation, supply one of the most important criteria. This entails maintaining the lists of the cultural assets and the indication of their vulnerability. In this way, sites with such comprehensive inventories and management plans are considered to be less susceptible to degradation.

The presence of laws of how historical archeological artifacts are to be sold, traded, displayed or gifted are another good factor. Laws enforcing these and providing for public communications on their enforcement are vital in protecting cultural heritage from looting and illegal trafficking.

The vulnerability is also being assessed in terms of the protection of intangible heritage. Local traditions, arts, music, language, and gastronomy are all included. They are at a higher risk of disappearance if supported sites do not celebrate or preserve these intangible elements.

This also ranks a big one in another important criterion, which is the access of the communities to cultural sites. Less vulnerable destinations are deemed to monitor, protect and if needed rehabilitate local community access to natural and cultural sites. This approach is used in order not to separate the heritage from the living culture but leave it as part of the heritage [15]-[19].

Vulnerability assessments also depend on intellectual property rights. Systems that protect and preserve the intellectual property rights of communities and individuals of destinations are better able to retain the authenticity of its cultural heritage.

When applied, these criteria expose the fact that vulnerability is much more than simply physical preservation, but is also social, legal, and economic. For example, an ancient temple which has been well preserved might still be deemed vulnerable if the management of that temple excludes the remainder of the community, or if the local artisans' traditional crafts remain unprotected to mass produced copies.

These multifaceted criteria have been incorporated in risk assessment methodologies. For instance, the fuzzy decision-making trial and evaluation laboratory (FDEMATEL) method has been used to derive 14 criteria to assess tourism risks coming from social, cultural and security, environmental and financial views.

The approach is so comprehensive that some startling findings are to be found. The safety and security risks have been researched to have the maximum influence on heritage site vulnerability followed by the sociocultural, financial and environmental risks. This raises the need for a

broader holistic conservation of heritage which is not limited to mere physical preservation.

These assessments have further increased in complexity as cultural heritage is a dynamic component. Being heritage sites, they are constantly evolving, internal changes within culture, or external pressures, such as tourism and globalization. Thus, vulnerability requires ongoing monitoring and reevaluating of vulnerability criteria.

Additionally, the emergence of a digital age has brought about new ways of heritage risk assessment. While these technologies provide opportunities to preserve and present cultural heritage in innovative ways, they also carry doubts about authenticity and the possibility of commodified culture.

The 73% statistic, presented here as a final wake up call to the cultural heritage sector, concludes that. The need for integrated, fine grained, ongoing risk assessment which takes into account the range of factors relevant to heritage site's integrity is underscored. Awareness of methodologies and criteria used to assess such assessments can help stakeholders consider putting in place more effective strategies to conserve our global cultural heritage in view of mounting pressures from tourism, development and natural change [20]-[28].

2. Cultural Heritage: The Soul of Human Civilization

Cultural heritage is the unique testimony of the human creative potential to resist and to diversify for more than millennia. This includes both the physical objects that define our history and the immaterial aspects that establish what we consider as a people. Entering the heart of the cultural heritage we begin to uncover its importance for us as a species and as humanity and find aspects that we are not doing all we can to preserve it for future generations.

2.1 Defining Cultural Heritage in Modern Context

Today cultural heritage is far beyond its original boundaries as the world is changing very fast. This is what the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines as cultural heritage: the 'legacy of physical artifacts and the intangible heritage of a group or society inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and offered for the benefit of the future generations'. The expression of both the material and the immaterial legacy of our cultural heritage is encompassed in this definition.

Physical manifestations of tangible cultural heritage include monuments, buildings, archeological sites, works of art, artifacts, etc.

These concrete expressions of human creativity provide windows into our past that let us see what skills, technologies and esthetic sensibilities our ancestors possessed. For example, the carved details of old temple or the fine brush strokes of the Renaissance paintings not only demonstrate artistic expertise, but also depict the concerns and beliefs of the respective times.

On the other hand, intangible cultural heritage consists of non physical aspects of culture which are inherited through the generations. Oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and skills concerning traditional craftsmanship are part of this. In the last decades, the value of the heritage which cannot be materialized has been recognised, since culture is not irrevocably determined but it is a living and developing process. There are numerous such intangible heritage that continues to influence contemporary cultural identities, including the Azerbaijani carpet weaving tradition, Chinese shadow puppetry, and the Mediterranean diet [29]-[33].

Furthermore, cultural heritage has developed under the modern concept to natural landscapes and biodiversity. It seeks to defeat in their basics the comprehensive relationship between human cultures and their natural environments. Examples

of this intermixture between nature and culture are cultural landscapes, like the terraced rice fields in South East Asia or the pastoral landscapes of Europe.

In the present times of digital age, cultural heritage assumed new dimensions. A new era of digital technologies has brought new ways of preserving, presenting and experiencing cultural heritage. Revolutionizing our engagement with the cultural past are virtual realities reconstructions of ancient sites, digital archives of historical documents, and online platforms for sharing traditional knowledge. At the same time, this digital transformation questions implicitly about the authenticity, accessibility, and roles of technology in the preservation of heritage.

2.2 Why Cultural Preservation Matters for Humanity

The keeping of cultural heritage is not just an academic exercise nor a nostalgic act. It is important for shaping our individual and the collective identity, social cohesion and sustainable development. The importance for humanity of conserving cultural heritage cannot be underestimated unless one understands the multifaceted role that cultural heritage plays in our daily life.

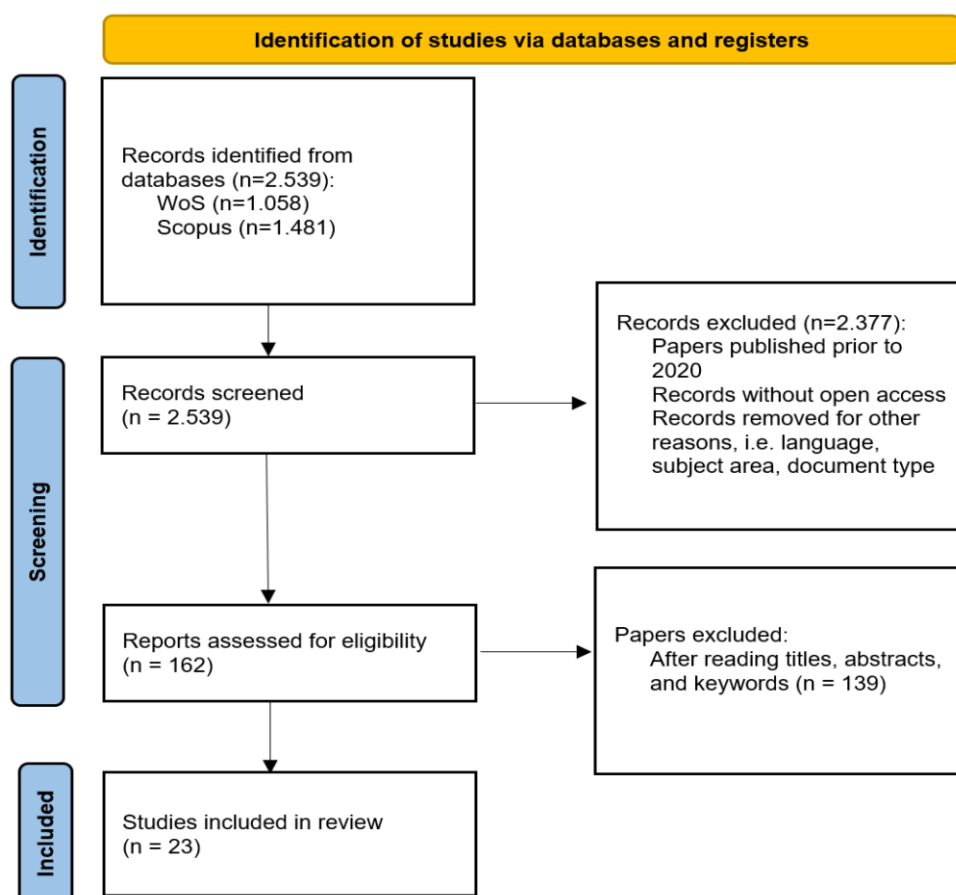


Fig 2. Cultural Preservation Matters for Humanity

Cultural heritage is first of all an effective means of identity formation and social cohesion. It gives a sense of continuity and feeling with our roots, that individual and community maybe can understand with the historical continuum where they stand. About the Blue Shield organization, they highlight that “our physical and non-physical heritage is an important part of who we are and how we identify ourselves, individually and as communities”. It is based on this shared cultural memory that leads to the foundation of social bonds and collective identity and a sense of belonging and mutual understanding among societies united by diversity. Moreover, cultural heritage has an important role in promoting peace and peace building. Heritage can be used in this way as a bridge between different communities and nations by promoting respect for cultural diversity and intercultural dialog. As written in the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, 'if preserved and celebrated, it can be a tool for diversity and respect.' In the ever globalizing day and age of cultural homogenization, such preservation of the diversity of cultural expressions becomes even more crucial in continuing the rich fabric of human civilization. Conservation of cultural heritage also has to take into account economic consideration. The most widely used form of tourism, cultural tourism, has been able to drive local economies by improving living standards of communities throughout the world. Although the sustainable management of cultural heritage sites can bring employment opportunities, stimulate local crafts and industries,

it can also help in the development of the local area. Whilst this tourism potential is viable, it must be balanced with the need to preserve heritage sites from over exploitation and that local communities benefit most from tourism revenue. Cultural heritage from an educational point of view is a precious source of knowledge about history, physical science, art knowledge and technology. For, it gives us tangible links to the past, which we can use to understand the evolutionary progression of man’s knowledge and skill. This educational process involves museums, historical sites, as well as cultural institutions, which provide experiential learning opportunities and encourage critical thinking about our shared history. This also promotes environmental sustainability in the preservation of cultural heritage. Sustainable solutions to contemporary challenges are provided through many traditional practices and knowledge systems embedded in the cultural heritage. For instance, traditional water management techniques or sustainable agricultural practices can be used to learn about solutions to modern day environmental problems. In fact, the more it continues, the more threats it faces to its cultural heritage preservation. Risks to both tangible and intangible heritage are posed by natural disasters, armed conflicts, urbanization and neglect, for example. The acts of destruction of cultural sites before them during conflicts of recent years underline the necessity to have solid protection mechanisms as well as international cooperation to safeguard our joint heritage.

Table 2: Strategies to Mitigate Cultural Impacts on At-Risk Heritage Sites

Strategy	Implementation Rate (%)	Success Indicators	Examples
Community-Based Tourism Programs	47	Local engagement, improved cultural respect	Bhutan's controlled visitor model
Visitor Capacity Management	52	Reduced wear, stabilized visitor flow	Machu Picchu entry caps
Educational Campaigns	39	Increased visitor awareness	UNESCO “Travel, Enjoy, Respect” campaign
Digital Heritage Documentation	22	Preservation of cultural data	3D scans of Palmyra ruins
Regulatory Heritage Protection Laws	63	Enforcement of preservation protocols	EU Cultural Heritage Preservation Laws

To address these challenges international organizations and local communities are adopting new ways of heritage preservation. According to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention adopted in 1972, the cultural and natural heritage sites of "outstanding universal value" can be identified and protected. As a part of this effort, each and every cultural heritage site's loss impoverishes the heritage of all nations. In addition, the responsibility for heritage management has increasingly fallen upon

community based approaches. 'Because communities are so often the best guardians of their cultural heritage, they are beginning to be empowered as active participants in efforts to preserve what they have.' In this approach, the sustainability aspect of preservation efforts is sustained and the living elements of cultural heritage are maintained. In this age of the 21st century, paper of cultural heritage emerges as a vital necessity for humanity. However, protecting artifacts or traditions is not

the full scope of what is being protected: it's a question of human creativity, diversity, and resilience itself. When we value and protect our cultural heritage, we are recognizing our past, fostering our present, and facilitating a more diverse and sustainable future.

3. The Rise of Cultural Tourism as a Global Phenomenon

Cultural tourism began in the 17th century from the point of a concept that revolutionized the ways in which people travel around as well as enjoy other cultures. At first reserved for the early Europeans courts and nobility, these cultural journeys have become a global phenomenon and are influencing economies and societies across this planet.

3.1 From Grand Tours to Mass Cultural Tourism

Between 1660 and the 1840s, the Grand Tour founded modern cultural tourism with its flourishing. It was an opportunity for young European aristocrats, mainly British nobles and wealthy gentry to embark on extended journeys throughout Europe, mainly Italy. Educational pilgrimages, generally spending a number of months to years, exposed travelers to classical antiquity and Renaissance masterpieces while purifying travelers' social graces in continental society.

The usual route started from Dover which crossed to Ostend, Calais or Le Havre. These young nobles would accompany tutors and servants to Paris and thence to Switzerland and finally to Italy. Important stops included Turin, Florence, Venice and Rome; where travelers studied ancient ruined, paintings, sculptures and architecture from Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods.

The emergence of rail transport in the 1840's brought a democratic tone to the exclusivity of cultural tourism. Contrary to tourism that has primarily been the pursuit of the middle and upper middle classes, the birth of mass tourism was first heralded through Thomas Cook's 'Cook's Tour' of the 1870s, allowing cultural experiences to be enjoyed by the masses. The American Gilded age was subsequently involved in the adoption of modified Grand Tour by nouveau riche who sought to export it on the other side of the Atlantic.

3.2 Current Market Size and Economic Significance

Today, cultural tourism is becoming one of the most important parts of the world travel industry, with 40 percent of the tourism (worldwide). The cultural tourism sector is a big economic impact player, with USD 6.97 billion forecasted world cultural tourism market in 2024. Therefore, projections show how the market is going to grow, since it will be worth USD 20.39 billion by 2033 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14.4%.

In 2023, cultural tourism along with the broader travel and tourism sector (9.1% of global GDP) was one of several key industries that contributed to global economy. A major 23.2 per cent increase from 2022, it almost matched pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, 27 million jobs were added, representing an increase of 9.1 percent compared to the previous year.

Strong economic impact is shown by cultural heritage travelers. Cultural tourists research shows that 49 percent of culture tourists are willing to pay premium rates for accommodation featuring cultural or heritage component. Seeking authentic experiences has created an appetite to keep these local cultural assets alive and within the view, whether to protect or present.

Take a look forward to 2024 and the tourism should break records. The sector is expected to contribute 10% of the world's GDP (\$11.10 trillion) with a forecast of population to reach 92,170. The employment prospects are also very bright as the sector is forecast to have over 348 million jobs, surpassing its 2019 peak by 13.6 million positions.

Particularly inciting cultural tourism has been the rise of millennial travelers. According to studies a whopping 73% of millennials have an avid interest in cultural and historic places. With the onset of this demographic shift, destinations adapted by including such interesting technologies as AR and VR into the cultural experiences and bringing young visitors in numbers.

3.3 Local Communities: The True Guardians of Cultural Heritage

Local communities, whose people deeply believe in cultural sites and who have had roots in them generation after generation, are the most authentic guardians of heritage preservation. Research confirms that indigenous peoples and local residents' knowledge is critical for cultural heritage integrity to maintain dignity of self.

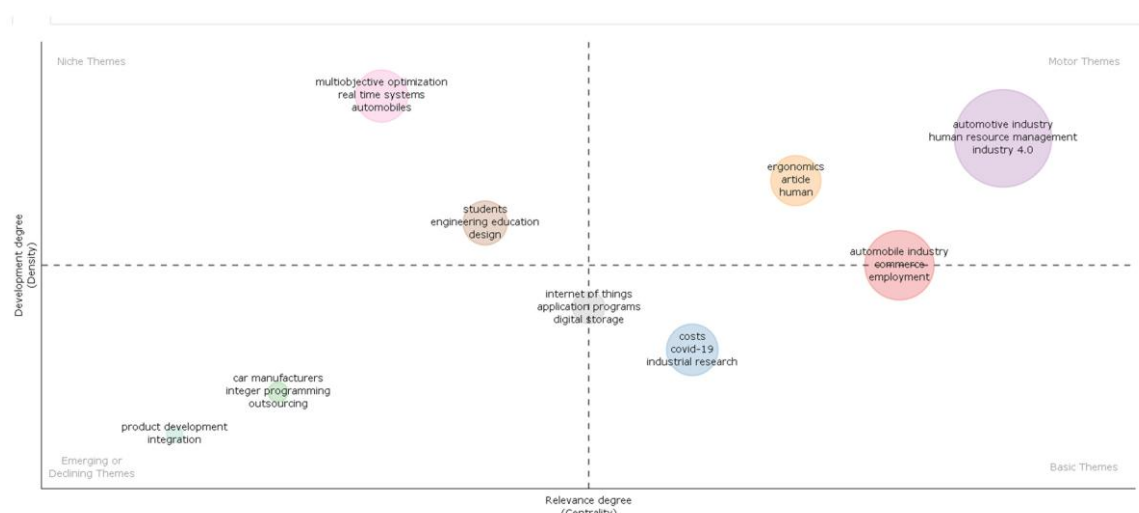


Fig 3. Traditional Stewardship Models Before Tourism

Indigenous communities before mass tourism had sophisticated stewardship approaches based on thousands of years of knowledge and practices. Holistic perspectives of heritage sites were included in traditional models where physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual connections had been the focal point. Cultural heritage celebrated was participants' indigenous autonomy: communities possessed the power, by and large, over their cultural heritage making decisions, based on how they wanted to approach and when they would do so.

Traditional stewardship relied on cyclical management according to the 'seasons', determined and oriented to the changing needs of the community rather than specifically to a 'standalone' purpose overall. And this worked in a very effective way, for communities learned to understand their environment and culture in an intimate fashion. The preservation of authenticity was ensured by the fact that indigenous peoples maintained direct control over archeological sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies and traditional knowledge.

Forms of traditional stewardship practice included co-stewardship between tribal nations and landowners, cultural conservation easements, and complete land transfers. Such arrangements ensured open access towards lands for undertaking traditional practices to enable the preservation of the cultural heritage. At times, tribes even held ownership rights jointly with others, and these partnerships ensured the wins of all stakeholders.

3.4 Changing Roles in the Tourism Economy

With growing cultural tourism, the local communities were heading to unprecedented challenges to support their traditional stewardship roles. The research shows that once communities

do develop rapidly, tourism can have a severe impact on the rural heritage settlements, changing the demographics and causing overcrowding, and contributing to biodiversity loss. They have really changed how communities interact and relate with their cultural heritage.

However, there are examples of successful community adaptation of that regime. The case of Behramkale, a rural vernacular village in Türkiye, is an example of how its residents developed innovative resilience strategies towards transforming a place that was subject to tourism-led change. This infrastructure for old settlements to accommodate new settlement means depended for rural economies upon the traditional; and prevented local displacement.

Besides its economic dimension cultural tourism offers opportunities and challenges to local communities. It has been found that heritage tourism can help reduce poverty, but only along with host communities taking part in governance and decision making processes. With rising property values and changes in the neighborhood character, communities around the world struggle to keep from displacing the original residents.

To confront these challenges, there has been a few innovative approaches. George Town, Malaysia, is where the Special Area Plan of which is being carried out in ways that uphold inclusive strategic policies and guidelines of conservation, local owners are assisted in restoring their houses and small businesses are able to adapt historic buildings for modern use. In AlUla, Saudi Arabia, the Path To Prosperity master plan is setting up new economic opportunities and vital infrastructure on affordable terms.

The role of communities in matters of heritage preservation goes beyond the economic. The assumption of the research is that when communities are connected to their culture, two

major benefits arise — better preservation outcomes and the ability to create revenue through tourism. Importance of community engagement in heritage management is evident in this case in which this dual benefit is described.

More and more modern stewardship models acknowledge the value of traditional knowledge. The Hammayah program trains thousands to function as guardians of natural heritage and culture, while the Community Based Tourism in Myanmar facilitates introduction of vulnerable communities as hosts for travelers. These programmes show how traditional stewardship roles of communities can be sustained in the changing business of tourism.

Heritage stewardship is presently used as a means to foster stabilization and enhance community resilience. The emergence of digital media has enabled new ways for local communities to record and disseminate their heritage, improving the interdependence between locals and the legacy of their heritage. The technological integration enables communities to continue as guardians while finalizing with modern preservation challenges.

4. Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives on Tourism Development

During recent decades, a major change has taken place in the relationship not only between Indigenous communities and tourism, but in how different ways cultural preservation and economic development interact. As an important part of the indigenous lives, the sector grabs much importance with a projection of indigenous tourism market is expected to expand at 4.10% per annum from 2024 to 2034 to reach USD 67.05 billion by 2034 from USD 44.86 billion in 2024.

4.1 Colonialism Echoes in Modern Tourism

Colonial patterns of tourism are a reflection of many contemporary tourism practices, rather, they perpetuate historical power imbalances. What research finds is land expropriation from Indigenous people, violence towards Indigenous women, including rape by tourists, and forced labour. Indigenous women and girls remain discriminated against on the basis of gender, indigenous identity and socioeconomic status.

Indigenous Peoples in Africa do not benefit from limited, poorly paid employment in biodiversity conservation and safari projects. Forced displacement and sexual abuse of women and children is a consequence of leisure tourism's over-development for Southeast Asian communities. North American Indigenous Peoples report damage to sacred places from careless tourists.

In generations past, the standard tourism approach has sidelined Indigenous voices, according to the developers of the guide, citing that tourism corporations' and tourists' rights have overridden Indigenous communities' interests. Although some progress in recognizing the rights of Indigenous peoples has occurred, this systematic marginalization continues through development activities that objectify them.

4.2 Self-Determination in Cultural Presentation

Indigenous led tourism is a form of student that empowers communities to increase their rights to self determination, lands, territories, resources and social economic power. If implemented appropriately, tourism initiatives have the potential to contribute to the development of Indigenous Peoples according to their own projects, strengthen Indigenous institutions, create revenues, counter negative effects on Indigenous Peoples of pushing migrants to (military) service, encourage entrepreneurship among Indigenous women.

Because of this, FPIC becomes a central mechanism for achieving non-domination and operationalizing self-determination. FPIC allows Indigenous communities to exercise how decisions about it's life and territories affect it. For instance, the 2009 Constitution of Bolivia ainsienceintl'article sur la prise d'une gestion partagée des aires protégées vis-à-vis des Autres Communautés et Gouvernements.

Progressive policies supporting Indigenous autonomy have been implemented by some nations. Guided by its "Tourism by Harmony with Life" policy, Colombia seeks to ensure that Indigenous territories, their resources and knowledge are respected. Since 2019, Malaysia's Indigenous Functional Literacy Program and career outreach initiatives have improved Indigenous employment in the private sector by 57.47%.

Yet challenges persist. Encouraging outcomes related to exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from tourism project management include abandonment of agricultural practice, increased drug and alcohol addiction, breaking down of cultural practice and environmental pollution. Despite occupying less than 5% of the world's population, who constitute only 5% of the global population, indigenous communities protect over 80% of the world's biodiversity in their territories, and, in fact, their cultural sovereignty is continually under threat.

Further down the track, developing successful Indigenous tourism will be contingent on keeping community desires and capacity foremost. Where tourism is concerned, indigenous communities are

currently under threat of having their image and voice usurped by the tourism development industry, and control must be maintained over the product, marketing and every other aspect of

development. Community based tourism (CBT) models present local providers with opportunity to deliver genuine experiences while retaining cultural integrity.

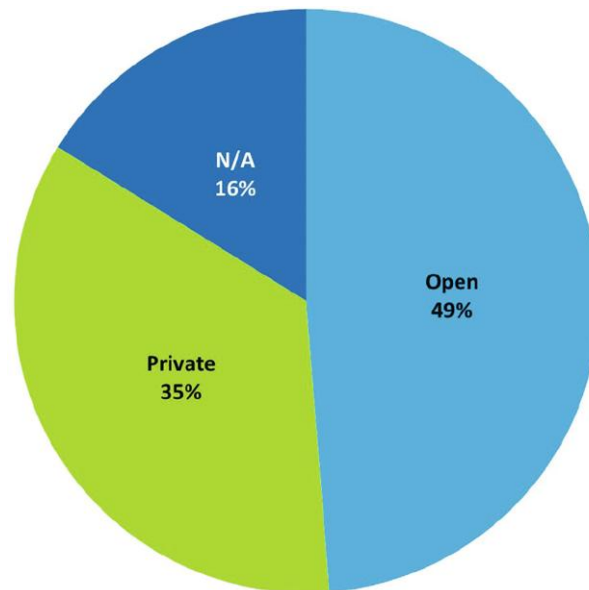


Fig 4. Voices from the Ground: Community Testimonials on Tourism Impact

In the end, there are vast cultural impacts of tourism on communities all around the globe and these resonates through local identities and way of life. According to recent studies, around 50% of travelers are very determined that history and culture are very strong factors when deciding where to spend a break. There has been a growing interest in cultural experiences, and these 'cultural experiences' present both opportunities and challenges to heritage sites and their stewards.

4.3 Success Stories of Cultural Revitalization

Problems with overtourism have led to cultural tourism being harnessed as a catalyst for revitalization by many communities. The Special Area Plan has been found as a beacon of inclusive development in George Town, Malaysia. Such a comprehensive strategy combines economic growth while responding to conservation efforts through measures of affordability which help local homeowners return their properties to full reuse. George Town has been able to save its cultural fabric by having enabled adaptive reuse for small businesses and at the same time protected some share of historic buildings from tourism-induced redevelopment. Like AlUla in Saudi Arabia, cultural tourism could also be used as an anti-poverty generator for the local community. The Path to Prosperity masterplan secures new housing spaces, brings economic prospects, builds critical community facilities, and continue affordability as a principle. This allows benefits from tourism to also extend beyond visitor experiences to

positively improve the quality of life for local residents.

Another great example of cultural revitalization is the UN Habitat ParyaSampada project in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley. This initiative was based upon a holistic approach towards rebuilding heritage infrastructure following earthquake damage; not just rebuilding of heritage infrastructure but also assisting in the business of women and youth's tourism enterprises. Between the two, it has breathed new life into affected communities, focusing on physical restoration as well as economic empowerment. Largely as a result of recent crises in their city, Beirut, Lebanon, has seen innovative approaches to cultural preservation. Focusing on traditional building techniques and reactivating cultural markets, the Beirut Housing Rehabilitation and Cultural and Creative Industries project led by UN-Habitat and UNESCO has been the way of creating hundreds of jobs. How cultural heritage is being used as a base for regeneration and social resilience in this initiative. Community based tourism (CBT) initiatives have further increased local voices in their undertakings on cultural preservation. Myanmar has a nationwide CBT to empower vulnerable communities to give authentic experiences to global travelers. This model also helps generate income and reinforces cultural pride and the process of transmitting traditional knowledge.

5. Narratives of Cultural Loss and Adaptation

Although there are these success stories, there is also the dark side of cultural tourism in many communities. The commodification of culture is still an issue for research as, in the case of tourism, it tends to erode local communities' socio-cultural assets and produce inauthentic products so as to respond to tourist needs. And it is particularly so in Ethiopia, whose 12 UNESCO World Heritage sites are complemented by cultural heritage preservation in the country that is far behind the tourism development. This influx of tourists has forced many local residents from some regions, permanently changing the identity of neighborhoods. Property values that are on the rise, although good for the economy, can displace long term residents, and break apart social fabrics. This is a phenomenon which highlights the importance of planning and regulation in order to ensure that tourism benefits are equitably spread within local communities.

Another challenge comes from the pressure on local infrastructure and services. As tourism growth, congestion and rising costs of living are often brought along, specific investments and policy interventions are needed. Some destinations have countered creatively. For instance, such as the Balearic Island of Mallorca that has brought in a sustainable tourism tax for conservation initiatives. Kyoto, meanwhile in Japan has restricted visitor numbers to its most popular sites and written codes of conduct for tourists. Cultural appropriation and the loss of symbolic value pose significant threats to community identity. The danger though is that tourism will commodify local traditions, rendering them much less significant as deeper cultural features. Indigenous communities are particularly affected by cultural exploitation and this is something of a concern. In North America, reports come of damage to sacred places done by careless tourists, as communities in Southeast Asia are left vulnerable to abuse by overdevelopment, leading to their displacement. But many communities are working to adapt to these challenges and marry them with an ability to negotiate on their own terms with tourism's residents. In Turkey, in Behramkale, residents of the old village are establishing new settlement areas as infrastructure for the old village that promote traditional forms of rural economy and allow for the local population to be minimally displaced. This strategy shows how communities respond to tourism pressure while retaining cultural integrity.

6. CONCLUSION

However, the rise of digital technologies has opened new windows of opportunity to communities to document and share the history they have. Through these tools, residents at the

local level can enable them to take a much more active role in shaping their culture narrative and in conversing with visitors in a much more meaningful way. This technological integration allows communities to continue to fulfill their role as a guardian while dealing with contemporary preservation challenges. In this complex space of cultural tourism it is evident that the voice of the community needs to be a leading something. Then, the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) comes up as a fundamental means by which indigenous and local communities can be assured of having their voice in decisions that bear on their lives and territories. If we can begin to embrace this principle, and build real partnerships between communities and between these communities, government and the tourism industry, we have a chance of building a more equitable and more sustainable model of cultural tourism. The two ways in which tourism has affected heritage sites is manifested in cultural revitalization and in cultural loss. Despite these challenges, the ways in which communities around the world have approached cultural tourism create hope for a time when such tourism can genuinely benefit all stakeholders. With this in mind, we must stay watchful, evaluating and changing our approaches to cultural tourism to positively impact the maintenance and guidance of the rich and diverse history by which human cultures worldwide embody their pasts and advance their future.

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