

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF TOURISM  
ON THE LIFE STYLE**

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A B S T R A C T

The activities of tourism, whether being domestic or international, have their impact on the life style in the country.

This paper presents these activities with special reference to the Egyptian case. Tourism, as being based essentially on human movements with its impact in creating international understanding, is discussed. The positive, as well as the negative aspects of Tourism are reviewed.

The present paper gives a review of the impact of tourism on the life style, as well as its effect in changing the behaviour of individuals, the cultural, and the socio-economic patterns of the country.

Reference is made to the Egyptian case and to the aspects of development and social patterns that were introduced in the country during the last decade.

Tourism has its impact on the different aspects of life, especially in countries receiving intensive and active tourism. Such impact depends on the socio-cultural pattern and the economic status, as well as on <sup>the</sup> typology of tourism.

Tourism depends essentially, in its dynamic habit, on the variation of the natural environmental aspects between countries, those receiving and those exporting tourism. Also, diversified characteristics with one country, would lead to activities in domestic tourism through the movement of its

nationals within their country for the sake of tourism. Some others, prefer to travel outside their home to know much more about other people and their style of life.

The movement of tourism outside a country is essentially based on some factors, the most important of which is a fair economic standard of living, availability of leisure time, the motive to travel and the educational and cultural attitude that qualifies tourists to gain much more through tourism. This is the case for the developed countries, where tourism is considered as a basic need for their people. On the other hand, developing countries, consider tourism as an operation to receive and host tourists rather than to export as such.

This means that, on the world scale, countries, whether exporting or receiving tourism, are now concerned and involved in the activation of tourism, as a socio-economic function, that has its deep impact on their life style. This also applies to domestic tourism, within one country.

During the last decades, progress has been achieved in the activation of tourism as a result of the effective policy and plans adopted by different governments. In developed countries, we could identify regulations to encourage people and render them facilities to travel for tourism, as for example, a full-paid annual vacation, the right to have an annual leave not to be postponed or to be accumulated. This is beside, the existence of areas and regions for recreation, as well as resorts, the diversification of means of residence, construction of roads, availability of communication and transport facilities, as well as public utilities.

Most countries are now adopting effective policies based on well established plans to study the trends of tourism, world-wise, the international market and its demands, so as to achieve the goals set up for the success of such plans.

To review the impact of tourism on the people life style, we can easily identify different aspects. In general, tourism, has a direct impact on the style of life of the individual tourist, though the degree of such impact varies according to the socio-economic environment and conditions, as well as according to the cultural pattern of the people within the whole community and within its different social classes.

We shall spotlight the positive as well as some of the negative impacts of tourism on life style from different aspects, whether economic or socio-cultural, with a record of the possible changes to be expected.

In general, tourism causes an activation of efforts for the development of touristic regions with an improvement of the levels of public services, as roads, transportation and so on. Hence, tourism could result in an appreciable change in the features of a touristic region, in all its aspects, especially in its infrastructure.

Also tourism leads to the activation of trade within and between the touristic regions and sets up new chances for labour in the relevant fields as in hotels, restaurants, recreation sites, touristic guidance. It activates other economic units related directly or indirectly to the activities, as provision supplies, maintenance workshops, artisans, furniture makers, craftsmen, merchants and others who could work for the daily requirements of tourists.

Tourism could also create chances in labour for tourists,

as the case with the Egyptian nationals when visiting the neighbour Arab States, or the Mediterranean countries as Turkey and Greece, where they go primarily for tourism (or to perform Omrah in Saudi Arabia), meanwhile they search for any opportunity to join any job. The same case also applies to visitors to Egypt from neighbouring countries as Sudan, where their nationals come to Egypt to stay for a certain period to sell some of their specialized agricultural products so as <sup>to</sup> cover their expenses.

All such activities initiate the chances for more work, as well as promote the local economy in these areas, which all could contribute an appreciable rise in the national as well as in the local income of these areas, or in other words, tourism stimulates the specific forms of involvement in different aspects of life.

Tourism can play another important role in the life style of people by giving them chances to share effectively in some activities specific to tourism, as in areas of recreation and resorts. The people in such areas could also feel and enjoy a sort of recreation in their life, when such gatherings are held as festivals, exhibitions, art-shows, conferences, theater-shows, etc. Reference could be made here to the show and performance of the famous Opera of Aiyda at Luxur and in the vicinity of the Giza Pyramids. The performance of such activities in areas that were previously non-active in this respect, creates new local, touristic centres, as the case is now with the tourist conferences centres in Luxur, Hurghada, Ismailia, beside the other main cities as Cairo & Alexandria.

All this, besides the economic revenue causes a sort of

social and cultural revival for the citizens of these areas.

And now, as what concerns the visitor, tourism increases the circle of his knowledge through the direct presence and their direct contact with people. The knowledge to be gained is then more valuable and has a deeper impression than that to be gained through readings or through documentary or ordinary movies. Travel in tourism is a pleasure for the tourist as it enables him to get in direct contact, and to be introduced to new aspects of knowledge, or to perform some specific sports, and also to enjoy the national arts, the folklore and the national food of the touristic areas. Impressions and information as thus, will form an unforgettable stock of knowledge in the memory of the visitors that will stay with them life time.

Tourism strengthens the ties of friendship and mutual understanding between people, especially if the visited people could speak the languages of the different tourists and could treat them friendly and not to let them feel that they are strangers. In fact, this is the case with the Egyptians, who always behave friendly with tourists, normally speak their languages, and exchange souvenirs and addresses with them.

This reaction and direct contact between the tourists and the nationals of the receiving country initiates, considerably, a change in the life style that mostly causes an improvement of the habits to a much better and more lovely characteristics. The nationals of the host countries will be thus open on the world of others and will be acquainted with their good habits.

Tourism activities also lead to get the different touristic regions connected with each other, and the large cities

to be also well connected with their satellite villages that could have a special interest for tourists. This is the case in Egypt, which we can easily notice from the first look to the maps for the distribution of urban centres. New satellite towns and cities have been constructed, as well as some touristic centres.

We shall here review some examples on the case of Egypt during the last decade :

1- The road from Cairo - Giza - Sakkara to Dahshoor, has changed in all its aspects that it could be considered now as an extension of the Greater Cairo. All along this road, numerous restaurants, rest-houses and touristic centres exist between the existing villages, with centres for artisans and artifacts, especially for the manufacture of hand-woven rugs and pottery articles. This caused this area to have its community enjoying an advanced economic and social levels. Examples of such centres is Harraniya village, and the surroundings of Sakkara. This road is now crowded with the tourists traffic to visit the monuments of this area, and to enjoy the pleasant country side.

Also another example, is the village of Nazlet-El-Samman in the vicinity of Sphenx which is now a rich and luxurious suburb of Giza and their inhabitants are now doing their best to serve the tourists.

11- The Cairo - Alexandria desert road : This road which has been previously known as the "desert road", is no longer deserted, as it is now considered as a new extension of the Nile Valley populated area. This change in the features of this road is due to two main factors.

The first factor :- is the construction of new urban communities in this desert region, that are now considered as new industrial centres, beside the reclamation of extensive

land areas all along its sides. This was accompanied with a considerable change in the social-economic pattern in an extensive area. The construction of new housing centres, new industrial units, and the introducing of new and modern means of agriculture, all contributed to this prospective change.

An example of this is the 6th October city, a satellite to Cairo, at a distance of 40 kms due south west. This city is a good model for a modern new community, as it has its own housing area, numerous up-to-date industrial centres, schools at all levels, educational and training centres, a high institute for Hotels and Tourism, a recreation centre to serve the people of Cairo (crassy water), and in brief this desert area is now crowded with people and life.

Another new model is the Sadat City, half way between Cairo & Alexandria, which is a similar case. Other examples are New Ameriya & Nubariya, at the approaches of Alexandria. All these new communities resulted on the increase of land reclaimed areas, introduced new agricultural techniques, and are mostly making use of the ground water sources. Thanks to the scientific research institutes either local or international who all, applied their modern techniques. It has to be noted that the inhabitants of these new community centres have their majority of university graduates and technical institutes. They mostly practise touristic activities, as they usually go by summer time to the sea side and to the summer resorts found all along the mediterranean coast.

The second factor :- is due to the existence and construction of rest-houses and touristic motels all along the

Cairo - Alexandria - desert road. There was only one or may be two rest houses ten years ago. But this large number of rest-houses was the result of the active movement of tourists towards the North-Western coast and to Alexandria as well, especially during the summer.

Most of these rest-houses are annexed with services for tourists, as gas-stations, car-maintenance workshops, coffee-houses, restaurants and selling centres especially for the agricultural products of the region.

These establishment of these new communities have also helped in the aggregation of some groups involved in touristic activities, which in turn initiated and encouraged the settlers of these areas not to immigrate outside, and thus limited the flow of inhabitants from rural to urban sites. This is the case with the north western coast of Egypt, at Matruh Governorate. There the inhabitants have changed their nomadic life to agriculture, and are now sharing in the touristic activities and services. Also, the majority of the labour at Matruh City, especially during summer, are new comers from the surroundings, who bring with them their agricultural products to fulfil the requirements of the visitors. The pattern and style of life in these areas has thus changed from a pure nomadic "Bedouin" to an urban settlement. Basic elements of infrastructure are now well developed, as schools, hospitals, public utilities. No doubt, all these facilities, had raised the standard of living in these previously called remote areas.

A visit to the inside of the settlement of any of the inhabitants there, shows a serious change in his life style. He is now living in a stone-house, that is equipped with



modern house-wares, a radio, a T.V. set, and all other electric machinery. His habits and traditional behaviour have changed from the closed house to the open sitting room where, he and his family members, could receive guests; a style that was not existed before. He can also go with his family to pass his leisure time at the sea side and enjoy what the other tourists are practicing.

If we go to the East of Cairo, along the Ismailia desert road, another new satellite city, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, has been established. This is a modern industrial centre, enclosing many modern factories, with an integrated system of housing and infrastructure, that had attracted a new community to settle there.

Also the cities of the Canal zone, have been developed & receive touristic activities and are now considered as areas of dense population. Visitors from other governorates, can pass a nice time in the recreational centres found at different sites along the Suez Canal.

The nice scenery and the mild weather all the year round, the safe sea shores (especially along the lakes), the proximity of the area to Cairo, are all factors that encourage recreational tourism.

The city of Port-Said is also another unique example, for shopping tourism, as being a free-zone, besides its recreational function.

One of the most recent and important touristic regions of Egypt, is the Red Sea Region. Its new recreational and sportive centres at Hurghada, and all along the coast, are now considered as stations for practising different marine sports,

besides the fascinating beautiful scenery and fair weather.

These touristic centres have attracted a large number of youth, especially the graduates of the institutes of Hotels, Tourism and Catering to join the work in the new hotels and hostels and touristic villages that are widely spread in these regions.

Sinai Peninsula, has also been changed, from being previously considered as a remote, no-man's-land, to a flourishing country, from different aspects.

The agricultural development, especially in north Sinai, and the touristic development in both north and south Sinai, besides the mining activities at different sites, and the presence of centres offer religious tourism as at Mountains of Musa and Saint Catherine, are all effective elements that initiated the development of Sinai as a whole to be considered now as a tourist region of attraction. Thanks to the efficient network of modern asphaltic roads that cross all parts of Sinai, and to the projects for ensuring sufficient sources of water supply, beside the housing projects.

In general, the wide spread of touristic areas, caused an improvement of the standard of living of their inhabitants, and this resulted in the change of a large number of small villages to be well developed gradually towards being now as new modern civilized communities.

Now, after this review and discussion on the positive impacts of tourism on life-style, we have to make reference to the negative sides of this impact. We shall tackle the most important negative aspects in brief, especially those which might affect the life-style in Egypt as being a conservative eastern community that has its own characteristic values and traditions.

-- The frequent and direct contact of foreign tourists with the Egyptian nationals, <sup>may</sup> may cause some of the Egyptians to obtain new styles of behaviour, and to imitate the tourists in this respect, which may seriously affect our values and traditions, especially when the degree of awareness of some people is rather low.

-- The concentration of the domestic touristic activity during the summer season, along sea shores, especially in July and August, causes these areas to be heavily crowded, and makes an overburden on the elements of infrastructure, especially the units of public utility. This also causes the food supplies and provisions to be just adequate or may run short in some places, with a rise in the prices as a natural response. Activities in public services may not be so efficient so as to cope with this increase, and this may be a normal case during summer in some summer resorts, as in Alexandria.

-- The seasonal habit of the touristic activities in some regions may cause the economic status to become stagnant away from this season.

-- One of the most negative impacts of tourism on life-style, is the possibility of introducing wrong political views as well as wrong moral values by the foreign tourists that may cause the local life content to be polluted.

-- Another serious negative impact may take place due to the misuse of foreign tourists and their mis-evaluation of some of our touristic elements, as when they destroy our natural wealth of the flora and fauna, as the coral reefs in the Red Sea and the Gulf area, and as the wild life in the Egyptian deserts.

— Finally, one of the negative impacts of tourism, which we feel that we, as Egyptians, are fully responsible for, is the misuse of our great River Nile, as we destroy its beauty, pollute its water, build these casinos and these clubs all along its bank, especially in Cairo, with no control and with no evaluation of its value.

#### CONCLUSION

Tourism has its impact on the life style of people. Such impact has its positive and negative sides as well. Countries, with potential touristic prospects, have to be fully aware of the importance of tourism. Egypt, as a developing country, can utilize tourism as a tool for the development of different regions and different aspects. Egypt, as we all know, has a wide-spread touristic attractions, nearly in all its regions, and where each region has its own characteristics. Our people are always looking forward to achieve a much better standard of life styles. No doubt, tourism and the direct contacts with tourists, could affect considerably our life style, either through adopting the best, or the abandonment of the worst of his habits. This would affect the socio-economic patterns and the economic standards as well.

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