**CHAPTER FIVE**

**HERITAGE TOURISM IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

As tourism develops in destination communities, it brings with it recognizable ecological, social and economic impacts.

* 1. **Environmental Impact and Its Controlling Measures.**

The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex - many activities can have adverse environmental effects.

* + 1. **Negative impacts**

The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends. Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change.

Serious damage can occur to historic site environment as a result of excessive visitor pressure, particularly at peak times. Sadly, the behavior of heritage visitors and their sheer numbers are slowly destroying the very things that attracted them in the first place; although it is actually unclear to what degree damage is caused by tourist and how much is caused by local residents. The most important aspect of physical damage at historic properties and natural heritages are:

* 1. **Wear and tear**

The wear and tear experienced by a site can range from very minor to very significant. Many visitors may have waited all of their lives to visit some of heritage sites and are eager not only to see but also to touch and photograph.

A similar concern is the moisture and condensation created by breathing, sweating and touching, which can affect delicate surface and paintings. In museum and other places, where delicate/slight objects are preserved in side environments are planned and controlled.

The light, heat, air and humidity are closely monitored and set at levels suitable for the objects on display to prevent death, decay, and fading. This is where visitors are become part of the problem as they bring with them dirt and damp from an uncontrolled, polluted atmosphere in to purified space of museum. The heat generated by their bodies and the breath that visitor expel add to the trace of impurity which will have to be eradicated after they have left the building.

* **2. Litter /Solid waste pollution**

Tourism can cause the same forms of pollution as any other industry: Air emissions, Noise, Solid waste and littering, Releases of sewage, Oil and chemicals, even architectural/visual pollution. In areas with high concentrations of tourist activities and appealing natural attractions, waste disposal is a serious problem and improper disposal can be a major despoiler of the natural environment - rivers, scenic areas, and roadsides.

For example, cruise ships in the Caribbean are estimated to produce more than 70,000 tons of waste each year. Solid waste and littering can degrade the physical appearance of the water and shoreline and cause the death of marine animals. In mountain areas, trekking tourists generate a great deal of waste. Tourists on expedition leave behind their garbage, oxygen cylinders and even camping equipment.

Such practices degrade the environment with all the detritus typical of the developed world, in remote areas that have few garbage collection or disposal facilities.

Litter is another negative effect of tourism at heritage sites. Fast-food containers, cigarettes butts, broken bottle and soda pop cans cannot only ruin the ambience of an attraction, but also are expensive to clean up.

In the interiors of certain buildings, ice cream, sweet and chewing gum often causes a sticky muddle/mess which, if not cleaned up immediately, can leave permanent stains on some delicate surfaces. Such remnants damage delicate surface and show disrespect on the part of visitors towards historic sites, and they are often difficult and expensive to clean it up. Litter has become the major concern for natural heritage environments.

E.g. Trekking trails on foothills of Bale National Park when there is reflection of the amount of rubbish that tourist leave behind at designed camps or along the routs it self.

* **2.1 Air and noise pollution**

Transport by air, road, and rail is continuously increasing in response to the rising number of tourists and their greater mobility. Tourism now accounts for more than 60% of air travel. One study estimated that a single transatlantic return flight emits almost half the CO2 emissions produced by all other sources (lighting, heating, car use, etc.) consumed by an average person yearly. Air pollution from tourist transportation has impacts on the global level, especially from CO2 emissions related to transportation energy use. And it can contribute to severe local air pollution. Noise pollution from airplanes, cars, buses, (snow mobiles and jet skis)

In addition to causing annoyance, stress, and even hearing loss for humans, it causes distress to wildlife and can cause animals to alter their natural activity patterns.

***Exercise: Visit one of heritage site in Axum, based on the above notes, try to assess the adverse impacts on the heritage sites and come up with remedy to minimize the problem by referring the concept of the course Sustainable Tourism Development.***

**3. Vandalism**

The third major impact of heritage tourism, vandalism, is another problem at most locations when there is a condition of deliberate damage of heritage site by careless fun-seekers in which the originality of the site is deteriorated.

A similar problem faced by many site managers is souvenir hunting. Gathering artifacts and historic properties from the sites, either loose ones or by means of breaking and chipping/cutting, this may cause irreversible damage, and can make the process of restoration much more difficult and costly.

**5.1.2 Positive impact**

Though fewer in number than negative effects, a few positive impacts of heritage tourism can be noted. The need to offer historic attractions to visitors has led to the maintenance and protection of monuments, building and other artifacts. Landscaping the ground around historic structures, environmental changes to become more ‘green’ to meet the need and concern for visitor, can add enjoyment to tourist visit as along as it is done in appropriate manner. On the other hand, tourism has the potential to create beneficial effects on the environment by contributing to environmental protection and conservation.

It is a way to raise awareness of environmental values and it can serve as a tool to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance. If the experience of tourist is positive one, they will probably be more amenable /willing to preserve the site rather contributing its degradation.

*Exercise: How can you maximize the positive impact of heritage tourism to the environment and minimize the negative impacts? Discuss.*

**5.2 Socio-cultural Impact and Its Controlling Measures**

**5.2.1 Negative impacts**

**1. Change of local Identity and value**

In addition to environmental effect, heritage tourism has also impacts on socio-cultural dimension of the destination people. These Shows the effect of tourism on host communities directly or indirectly with tourists and interaction with tourism industry. For variety of reasons, host communities are often weaker part in interaction with their guests and service providers. The impacts arises when tourism brings **about changes** in value **system and behavior** and there by threatening indigenous identity. Furthermore, *changes often occur in community structures, family relation ships, collective traditional life style, ceremonies and morality. These leads to Change of Local Identity and Values resulted fro*m ***commercialization of local culture like when religious traditions, local customs, and festivals are reduced to conform to tourist expectation and resulting in what has been called ‘reconstructed ethnicity’.***

* 1. **Adaptation to Tourists Demand**

Tourists want souvenirs, art, crafts, and cultural manifestations. In many tourist destinations craft men have responded to growing demand and have made changes in the design of their products to make them more in line with new customer test. The interest shown by tourist can contribute to the sense of self worthy of the artist and help to conserve cultural traditions. Cultural erosion may occur in the process of commercializing cultural goods.

* 1. **Conflict between Government and Local Residents**

One social effect of tourism that prevails in the less developed world is the conflict that so often ensues/ arises between government agencies, tourism industries and local communities pertaining to the development of historic sites into objects of tourism.

These actions on the part of development agencies often disturb the live of local residents who have established their home and some times their entire communities with in the historic site or natural parks it self or immediately adjacent to it. Conflict often occurred between resident and government bodies involved in restoration and conservation of such sites. Great negotiation or discussion is needs to be taken between the both parties to solve the grievance and create harmonized environment for sustainable heritage tourism development in the destination.

***Exercise: What will happen if governments make its own decision of relocation/ displace the society living surrounding Axum Stelea or Bale National Park for conservation and further archeological finding purpose with out confirming them on what is going to be done and give them adequate compensation? Discuss.***

* 1. **Cultural Clash**

Most of the time cultural clash takes place as a result of difference in culture, ethnic and religious groups, values, lifestyles, languages and level of prosperity. The attitude of local residents towards tourism development may unfold/disclosed through the stage of:

* Euphoria: - where visitors are very welcome tourist and developments in the destination,
* Apathy: -where irritation and potentially antagonism /enmity are created in the mind of local communities when tourist attitude began to grow among local people.

Similarly, the development of tourism industry that utilizes religious sites of the past may cause further friction between local people and tourists visiting the relics when they disturb the worshippers. Masses of tourists in historic communities and at heritage places create anxiety/worry/tension and discord among local residents these can lead to blatant animosity/enmity between the tourist and the locals which leads to the creation of bad image of the destination in which tourist will never come to the site since there is love-hate relationship between them and host communities.

*Exercise: Tsion Mariam Church of Axum has significant religious value for both Orthodox Christians of Ethiopia and tourists visiting the town. During religious event of November 21st large number of pilgrims and tourists come to the church with different aim. Assume that you are Tourism Expert of the town. What remedial action you will take or recommend the municipality to avoid the conflict? If not what will happen? Discuss.*

**5.2.2 Positive Impact**

With respect to build heritage, as the people in the developing region realize the monitory value of ancient monuments and historic areas as attraction for affluent tourists, they have become more enthusiastic about preserving them. There is often limited appreciation among a developing country’s native population for its natural beauty and historic features until tourism rouses such an appreciation. The local people economic benefit from restoration of historic sites can increase their interest in supporting conservation activities because they would feel the sense of co-ownership and become its steward and guardians.