

Ethical Issues In Tourism: Humanistic and Social Concerns

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As John Urry notes "acting as a tourist is one of the defining characteristic of being modern" (1990:2,cited in Smith, 2009, p. 619), which means the tourism industry is currently trendy and being globalized. Altogether with the flexible mobility of transportation, tourists nowadays can possibly and easily get to whatever destinations they desire within a few days maximum. The convenience of travelling made the surge growth in the number of tourists even in remote areas and created opportunities for people from different places to interact. Mark Twain once said in his book, *Innocents Abroad*: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness...." Nevertheless, in reality, because of people from different cultural, social and religious background travelling around, it has been an essential issue regarding to ethical tourism occurred with humanistic and social concerns. In this sense, travel is not always fatal to prejudice, but sometimes it might come across ethic dilemmas and trigger prejudice in some extend.

Following the argument from Smith(2009, p.619), tourism is never just about enjoyment and thus, ethic issues still need to be considered. However, it is extremely difficult and complicated to seizing how ethic acts among tourists, host communities and different scales of tourism enterprises due to the complexity of the ever-changing matrix of commercial, institutional and social relations. Other than that, the variety of ethical related issues in tourism is also too board to discuss at the same time, such as ecological impacts, marketing ethic, sustainable development, ethic tourism education and Humanistic and social concerns. Therefore, in this essay, it will be exemplified the case in Dharavi with humanistic and social concerns regarding to ethical tourism. The potential solutions will be discussed later on.

Due to the reward of Oscar movie, *Slumdog Millionaire*, the slum, Dharavi, in India become the touristic attraction overnight. In this case, the ones who generate the humanistic and social wise ethical issues are not only tourists and locals, but also those tour agencies, medias, local authorities and so on. Therefore, when the discussion is open, it is important to figure out the target groups and address the issue regarding to them in order to simplify the issues. For instance, the movie for sure put Dharavi on a stage and provided it an opportunity to develop through "Slum Tourism", but it ends up in a vicious circle. as a consequence, people who live in the slum still remain poor living condition in order to stage the "authentic poor scene" to keep the slum tourism going on.

In this case, media acted as a trigger to open the window to the area. Then, some tour agencies

and the local authority seized the opportunity to develop slum tourism possibly making money out of it. Tourists plays an important role to keep the vicious circle going on and the poor locals, being exploited, displaying their real life just like the animals behind the bar in the zoo.

First of all, regarding to the role of tourists, the ethical issue might be it is immoral to set up your own pleasure on the miserable life of others regarding to those tourists who took a air-conditioned vehicles to visit the slum. The reason for the tourist to come to Dharavi might be seeking for the differences apart from daily life. And in general, "Tourists try hard to match their holidays and morality because during holidays they want to relax, to experience something, rather than be "polite and decent" as on every usual weekday"(Kazimierczak, 2011, p.197, cited in Buczkowska,K., &Malchrowicz-Moško,E.,2012,p. 80). In this sense, to address the issue, for tourists, it is probably a good idea to join some charity organization to reach this area as volunteers who are willing to spend time with locals and bring fresh air in the region, in reverse, gaining a new life experience and "these moments stay with and within us in ways that are far more profound then the souvenirs and snapshots we carry away"(Smith,2009,p.628).

Second of all, regarding to the role of tour agencies, the ethical issue might be using poor locals as a resources to exploit, making money out of them. To address this, "Tour operators are to ensure that incoming tourists have the opportunity to more deeply understand the local culture and society. They should care about the education of tourists, not only about own maximum profits"(Buczkowska,K., & Malchrowicz-Moško,E,2012,p.79). In addition, the agencies can also return parts of the profits back to locals and as the role of local authority, with the help of non-profit organization, introducing some local handicraft industry in the benefit of locals. If the economic situation turns better later on, having developed a local industry can also help the slum converted into a new type of post-slum touristic attraction in order to develop a sustainable way out.

In all, to tackle the ethical issues in tourism, it is important to view the issue from various perspectives and try to find the balance among different interest groups on the base of respecting locals' rights and the diversity of the cultures.

Reference:

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2. Buczkowska,K., & Malchrowicz-Moško,E. (2012). *Ethical Dilemmas of Cultural Tourism*. Nr.12/2012. University School of Physical Education (AWF) in Poznan.