



TOURISM AS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR PEACE AND DIALOGUE

Ms. Neepa Premodh,
Faculty, Department of Tourism(MTA),
KLE Society's S. Nijalingappa College, Bangalore-10

ABSTRACT

With the development of civilization people started sharing their contentment, sorrows, inventions and accomplishments. Human instinct for curiosity and search led to the birth of tourism which removed differences between cultures, ethnic groups, religious groups, values and lifestyles, and languages. Mahatma Gandhi described travel as 'The Language of Peace.' Gandhiji realized the importance of attaining freedom through non –violence and travelled all over India to develop a sense of personal touch among the populace and succeeded in achieving freedom through peace. The scene of promoting cultural understanding, mutual respect and peace via travel and tourism, gives an incredible opportunity to strengthen cross-border relations. Tourism as a peace tool intends to reduce root causes that create situations where violence has been perceived as inevitable. Most of the countries are in the process of promoting peace and establishing brotherhood with neighboring countries with the view of exchanging ideas and values. Tourism truly acts as a vehicle for mutual understanding through cultural exchange and promotes peace dialogue at national and international levels. Effort by stakeholders is required to reduce the negative impacts of tourism and use tourism as a tool, media, passport, channel for peace to avoid another terror attack in the country in future and promote volun-tourism, wedding tourism, black tourism and mourning tourism.

Keywords: Dialogue, Exchange, Culture, Relations, Understanding and Peace.

Introduction:

The world has become literally smaller in this age of greater interdependence and globalization. To widen personal and geographical horizon across the globe travelling has become an inevitable and gave an immense opportunities. Due to development and augmentation in transportation, communication; higher income, leisure and awareness; reduced travel formalities and other facilities, travel and tourism has become a niche and prominent activity of the people. The basic motivation and reason behind travel is to familiarise unknown lands, culture, people, beliefs, lifestyle etc. Traveling brings people closer and since tourism has an educational aspect, helps for foster understanding between people. Cultural issues are vital from the perspective of peace through tourism as it is often the denial of cultural identity that leads to

conflict. World Tourism Conference held at Manila in 1960 state that tourism as an essence for world peace since it brings both hosts and guests together to study about peace by understanding and appreciating cultural uniqueness. This helps to improve better relations between locals and visitors. The culture at origin point and culture at destination are different and interacts each other. In this process cultural exchange, promotion becomes a positive result. This leads to contribution of acceptance, respect and mutual understanding which are the essential building blocks for a more peaceful world.

Objectives of the study

Some of the main objectives of the study are the following:

- To bring out the significance of tourism for peace building
- To highlight the importance of tourism



for strengthening dialogue between regions.

- To promote tourism as a vehicle for international understanding
- To understand the role of tourism in fostering harmony and cultural exchange between nations
- To identify and analyze issues related to border countries and resolving them through tourism

Scope of the study: The scope of the study is wide-ranging and worthwhile. The paper highlights the importance of tourism in promoting peace, dialogue and international goodwill. It also emphasizes tourism's potential in resolving sensible issues like border issues and cross-cultural interaction among people of different nations.

Relevance of Peace in Tourism: Tourism is playing a prominent role in developing and promoting peace in the world. In 2012, 1 billion tourists are expected to travel the world; that number has been consistently growing over the years and is forecasted to still grow. For example travel and tourism has been instrumental in softening the relations between India and Pakistan leading to peace. This way tourism is a means of world peace and dialogue. Taken seriously tourism can play a vital role in bringing peace. Tourism promotes peace through cultural exchange. Most peace efforts take place after the conflict. The peace promoting aspirants focus on reconciliation. This reconciliation takes place usually between victim, perpetrators and hostile communities. It also involves reintegration of ex-combatants. Tourism also reconstructs the social, political and economic environment. Tourism can be seen as a link of commercial and cultural exchange between two countries. Now a days people want to know the world and find out a place in people's heart which becomes possible only through tourism.

Tourism helps in exploring the rich and varied cuisine, colorful dress, monuments and palaces, hospitality, diversity etc of various places.

Tourism Promoting Peace and Dialogue:

Tourism involves cross-cultural interaction among people of different nations and hence helps in building better understanding and peaceful relations. Tourism strengthens dialogues between regions and neighboring countries through promoting cultural understanding, mutual respect and peace. Tourist understands and appreciates the culture, monuments, music, cuisine etc which greatly influence. He goes back after purchasing antiques and other items which led to the beginning of trade relationship between them. That naturally develop mutual understanding and friendship among nations and hence there exists dialogue between two nations. Thus tourism promotes dialogue, peace and goodwill and has been a major contributor to international goodwill and enriches friendship between nations.

Ikeda, president of Sōka Gakkai International (SGI) believed in peace philosophy and also alleged that effectiveness of dialogue is inspired by the tradition of nonviolent philosophers like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Ikeda's belief in dialogue is based on a deep faith in humanity. In the mid-1970s, Ikeda traveled to meet the leaders of the Eastern and Western federation to promote and encourage dialogue. Daisaku Ikeda started a number of institutions in different fields, with the vision of building foundation for peace in the twenty-first century. The Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research aims at promoting human security and global governance by bringing scholars and activists together to construct a system for peace and dialogue across the globe. The Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and



Dialogue was founded in 1993 and focused on dialogue around human rights, nonviolence, environmental ethics, women's leadership and economic justice. Routes2roots, a nongovernmental organization is planning to initiate 16 month long information exchange programs such as Oral history exchange in collaboration with Citizen Archives of Pakistan .It is an exchange program between Karachi-Bombay and Lahore-Delhi schools which involves 1200 secondary school children writing letters to each other. This helps children across borders to begin a dialogue and start realizing that there is little or no difference between their lives and lives of those across the border.

Vehicle for International Understanding

In recent years many organizations are have come forward to develop tourism to promote international understanding. One of the important means of promoting cultural exchange and international understanding is through sports. Sports being one of the most dominant areas of travel and tourism across the globe plays, a vital role in fuelling the economic development of host countries. Recently Sports Tourism is getting importance and getting a large number of participants and visitors. Sports tourism is considered as a valuable tool for peace as it helps in fostering social integration. Sports give a common platform for the people of different culture and social classes to be together, talk and share views. In case of basketball, without any formal introduction most Asian, American, and European men can watch the basketball game and discuss about it without delay. This is due to the fact that athletics are able to connect and bring together people of the same interest. Thus, country that specialized sports events as tourism should use this activity as a means to promote cultural exchange and international harmony. Special interest

tourism like MICE and other business travel also facilitates in strengthening international understanding since it involves participation of people all over the globe.

Removal of Social Evils:

Important global issues like illiteracy, poverty and terrorism etc are becoming source for violence. Few marginalized narrow minded groups are creating fear and they are threat to the world. One of the important ways to remove the narrowness from the minds of these people is through tourism and established peace by eliminating social evils. In order to counter social evils especially terrorism, tourism acts as a strategic tool by way of contributing to peace building in terms of residents' and tourists' perception. In 26/11 Mumbai attack, 168 people who lost their lives, 28 were international visitors. After the major incident many diplomats visited and travelled to the places attacked in supporting victim country and opposing terrorism. Today Kashmir is greatly victimized by the cross-border terrorism which has affected the growth of tourism to great extent. Tourism in Kashmir acts as a force for fostering peace and security between India and Pakistan. It facilitated and strengthened cross-border movement, interactions, and economic cooperation by smoothening LoC. The world yet to understand that tourism can be driving force for crafting peace building process by eliminating this social evil like terrorism. Moving forward government of India also interested in sending its delegates to other countries.

Promoting Cultural Exchange and Dialogue:

Culture refers to 'ways of life' and everyday practice as well as its manifestation in the form of buildings, sites and monuments. Millions of people with an exotic culture travelling across the world



and have been exposed to so many different cultures. The interaction between the traveler and the host result in respect and mutual understanding, the essential pillars for peaceful world. Tourism brings people of different places closer; this cross-cultural intimation helps to understand each other cultures, aspirations, offerings, requirements which pave way for dialogues and treaties among cultures, countries and classes. Iran and India also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on tourism and started a cultural exchange program to improve people contacts between the two nations. MoU on tourism and cultural exchange program between India and Iran stresses the need to increase people to people contact between the two countries through the cultural program that give people an opportunity to understand each other's culture well. There are many Non profit and non-governmental organization that cater at promoting peace through cultural exchange such as Routes2roots which focuses at building peace between South Asian countries through art, music and cultural exchange. Some of the countries associated with Routes2roots include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, South Asian and Afghanistan. Routes2roots brings cultures, values and ideas of people among South Asian Countries particularly India and Pakistan and assist in promoting greater harmony, understanding and friendship among nations. This organization helps the countries to participate in various events organized by it, to showcase their talents and culture. It assists in identifying and promoting known and upcoming artists and performers from South Asia. Artists can perform free at the events conducted by this organization. Routes2roots in collaboration with ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) organized a musical tour with Shafqat Amanat Ali Khan who is one of the eminent classical pop vocalists. His tour to

India was popular and created a huge crowd. They also showcased Indian cinema in China and Russia and bring in visitors to Indian movies.

Music speaks directly to the heart. This response, this echo within the heart, is proof that human hearts can transcend the barriers of time and space and nationality. Exchanges in the field of culture can play an important role in enabling people to overcome mistrust and prejudice and build peace.” These are the words of Daisaku Ikeda, president of SGI(Soka Gakkai One of the innovative advances towards bringing peace is the Min-On Concert Association by Ikeda , which was established in 1964, to promote peace through international exchanges of the performing arts. Min-On stressed the importance of culture and the arts in fostering mutual understanding among peoples and societies. Hundreds of musicians and performing artists from 100 countries have visited Japan since its inception. Now Min-On is one of the major and most lively cultural associations in the world promoting international cultural exchange.

Resolve Border Issues:

Now day's leaders of the countries are finding difficult to sort out border issues. These issues cannot be left out and has to be solved efficiently. The bitterness between India and Pakistan can only be removed by free travel of peoples of the two countries. From time to time our leaders have taken initiative like the Lahore journey and Musharraf's visit to India with his wife. India and Pakistan have taken many steps in Kashmir by creating bus service and expansion of trade across LoC. For example, there are families in Leh town with family connections on the other side, Cross-LoC tourism helps in building relations between them. One of the important confidence building initiative



taken by India is Cross-LoC tourism which allows members of broader civil society of Kashmir to visit and interact with each other. . Cross-LoC tourism helps in increasing the scope of interactions between the two sides and include everyone in Kashmir. It helps to create constituencies of peace apart from the selected group of divided families and businessmen who already benefit from the cross-LoC bus services and truck traffic. India and Pakistan also developed a “package tourism” program that served selected destinations on both sides of the LoC.

Fostering Religious Harmony:

Swami Vivekananda has said **“Of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race none, certainly, is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call religion”**. Religions are distinct from one another at the level of rituals and mythology but they share the common ideals, principles and desires of the human mind and society. Incarnations, Saints, Prophets and Sages have travelled to distant parts of the world from time to time in order to teach men how to lead a harmonious life. Ultimately all religions intend to spread love, peace, happiness and religious scholars emphasized on traveling to find out the real essence of the religions. The best way to bring harmony among the world’s religions is by the growth of tourism. Tourism serves as a catalyst in removing conflict by facilitating peace and brotherhood. 200 million tourists travel all over the globe every year which gives them a great opportunity to meet different religions of the world and hence it promotes inter-religious understanding and harmony. The Baba Budan hills in Chikmagalur Taluk is a very old and important institution appreciated by Hindus and Mohammadans equally and draws large numbers of Pilgrims from all parts of India. Being a pilgrimage spot for Hindus as well as

Muslims, the site has been named after Hindu God Guru Dattatreya and Muslim Saint Baba Budan. Similarly Rajgir in Bihar is a famous tourist destination as well as a sacred place for many religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The city, bordered by seven hills, is abode to many pagodas, monasteries and temples. It is an important religious tourist centre attracting pilgrims from all over world that facilitates the absorption of each other’s culture and religion. Shirdi is the place, where Sai Baba lived, and taught lessons of love, helping others, forgiveness, donations, happiness, harmony, and dedication to God. People from all castes, creeds and religions flock to Shirdi to take the blessings of the great saint. Presently Shirdi is a religious tourist spot where, devotees all over the world come and worship the shrine of Sai Baba. The shrine of Sai Baba is the hub of religious activity by bringing people from all religions together and spreading the message of harmony. Tourism establishes religious harmony by bringing people of different religions into close contacts.

Bridging the Gap Between Rural and Urban Culture:

Many remote indigenous cultures are not accepting the intervention of urban culture. They develop a sense of inferiority, uneasiness and insecurity. Tourism stands in front by identifying the potential of rural tourism resources. The power of rural tourism depends on the villages. There has been a considerably high level of involvement among foreign tourists in whatever they do in case of rural tourism as they would like to participate in cultural affairs, traditional lifestyle, etc. The cooperatives not only accustom the foreign tourists with rich culture of the region, but they also understand their curiosity to participate in and imbibe the local culture closely. The cooperatives play a vital role in the growth by strengthening international



bonds of cultural heritage. This makes the travelers feel that they belong to cooperative culture which is constructed on peace. Tourism cooperatives that are formed for guiding, escorting, maintain local handicrafts, etc., can create job opportunities and alleviate their poverty. In India the primary agriculture cooperatives are the backbone of the cooperative system in the rural areas.

Improving Intergovernmental Relations:

Today, political and economic issues transcend international boundaries. This means that the international agenda covers scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian concerns as well as more conventional areas of diplomatic activity. Several bilateral and multilateral agreements have been signed among different nations to facilitate peace through tourism which therefore improves intergovernmental relations. China follows an independent and diplomatic foreign policy directed towards peace by encouraging tourism. This helps in establishing friendly and cooperative relations between China and its neighbouring countries. She solved disputes concerning borders, territory and territorial waters left over by history through dialogues and talks. Iran and Egypt signed a deal to promote tourism cooperation and based on the contract the two countries agreed to send tourists through private sector. In this way tourists can get to know the age old civilization of both countries. Tourism in this way expanded mutual cooperation between the two countries. Hence tie ups with nations improves intergovernmental relations.

Conclusion:

Peace gives way for the development and prosperity of nations. The biggest and unending dispute is whether tourism is promoting peace or not. Despite of the dark side of the tourism countries are looking

forward and making efforts to reduce the negative impact of tourism and increase the positive fruits of tourism. Especially people oppose tourism for increasing terrorism and cultural extinct. It is because tourism is not properly directed and regulated towards improving peace and dialogue in the world. Kashmir is said to be the “Paradise on Earth”, but during the last two decades there had been a major setback as the valley has been badly affected by terrorism. This face of tourism can be avoided if government is taking more initiatives. To conclude this double side sharpened knife smeared peace and violence and to be used cautiously to achieve Tourism as a Tool for Peace.

References

- [1] Chand, K. K. (2002). *Basics of Tourism*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.
- [2] Seth, P. (2004). *Successful Tourism Management*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- [3] (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://destinet.ew.eea.europa.eu/topics/peace-through-tourism>.
- [4] http://kolom.pacific.net.id/ind/setyanto_p._santosa/artikel_setyanto_p._santosa/building_a_culture_of_peace_through_tourism.html. (n.d.).
- [5] http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/tourism/White_Paper.htm. (n.d.).
- [6] <http://www.centre.upeace.org/index.php/courses/111-Ecotourism>. (n.d.).
- [7] <http://www.context.org/iclib/ic20/gilmanpp>. (n.d.).
- [8] <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/03/peace-through-tourism>. (n.d.).
- [9] <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/03/peace-through-tourism/>. (n.d.).



- [10] <http://www.eturbonews.com/22121/tourism-bridges-cooperation-between...> (n.d.).
- [11] <http://www.eturbonews.com/27985/croatia-and-iipt-sign-memorandum-un...> (n.d.).
- [12] <http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/group/tourismandpeace/forum.> (n.d.).
- [13] <http://www.peacerevolution.net/docs/en/peace-revolution-fellowship.> (n.d.).
- [14] http://www.respect.at/content.php?m_id=99&id=113&newsdetail... (n.d.).