Globalized Tourism Sector in Africa

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As Thomas P.Z. states in *the Assessment of the Impact of Tourism Globalization in Africa*, tourism is one of the areas that have been affected by globalization. This is particularly because of the geographical occupation of the tourism industry. The aspect of globalization has affected tourism in Africa both positively and negatively.

Globalization has been used to refer to the complex series of changes that include economic, technological, social, cultural, and political changes. The tourism sector has been influenced by the changes that globalization brought in all the above aspects. Geographic expansion of the connection between different places has led to the development of global tourism, because it has contributed to the spread of tourists in diverse parts of the world. Factors such as the international trade, technological advancements in transport and communication, country image, political and cultural interdependence, regionalization and the role played by transnational and multinational corporations have contributed to the globalization in the tourism sector (Mpofu, Sept. 2009).

The positive impacts of tourism globalization in Africa are several. First, it has increased the number of tourists, who come to Africa. For instance, Mpofu argues that, in 1998, 53 percent of tourists in Africa were from outside Africa, especially from Europe, North America, and East Asia. Secondly, the increase of tourist arrivals in Africa automatically means that a positive economic impact was felt and led to the increased government revenues. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the revenue increase from tourism was at an average of 18 percent between 1989 and 1999. Thirdly, the globalization in tourism brought about multiplier effects. Several multinational and transnational organizations have taken advantage of tourism globalization to find new opportunities and markets in Africa, to achieve global dominance. The globalization of
tourism has also created new markets for African products and increased funds for new infrastructures, for instance, roads and electricity. There have been positive social and cultural impacts. The cross-border travelling has brought new modes of interaction and communication between and among communities in Africa and those outside of Africa because of globalized tourism. This has helped in broadening the limits of knowledge that brings an improved African social and cultural understanding. Globalization of tourism has also brought about new experiences and modes of greater environmental conservation and protection. As such, Africa has been able to improve its image (Mpofu, Sept. 2009).

The globalization of tourism in Africa has also brought some negative changes. First, it has led to increased money leakages, for instance, to pay for imports and the move of foreign currency to mother countries of multinational corporations. The second negative impact of a globalized tourism sector has been the increase of commodity prices and land values. Thus, the availability of basic commodities has reduced in favor of international products. This has forced local communities to go far in search for basic commodities. Skyrocketing land rates have moved local businesses away from tourist attraction zones, because of the displacement effect. The globalized tourism has also brought about expatriate labor especially in high positions, a change in African cultural values and a destruction of the ambience that attracts tourists, because of an influx of tourists to attraction zones (Mpofu, Sept. 2009).

It is true that globalization of tourism has brought both positive and negative influences on Africa. However, the negative influences can be improved by striking deals between African countries and multinational corporations to reduce expatriate labor, through the control of international commodities in favor of local products and ensuring that governments regulate land prices to encourage local business’ development. African countries can also form regulations that
require multinational companies to retain not less than fifty percent of the profits they make to local countries, as opposed to repatriating most of it to their mother countries.
Reference


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