

Effects Of Environmental Change On Marine Ecotourism

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Introduction

In recent years, ecotourism has increased rapidly. The concept has just become famous, with most of the context becoming globally important within the last twenty years. Ecotourism is known as an area of tourism that has ecological benefits, especially for conservation efforts and observing wildlife species that have a controlled endangered environment, which has the least possible effect on the species and environment (Mieras et al., 2017). Ecotourism was first identified by Megan Epler Wood in 1990, who was the co-founder of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and other relevant books (Mieras et al., 2017). One of the ecological terms that is now famous is marine ecotourism. Marine ecotourism is the responsible use of natural resources for recreational activities. It includes whale and dolphin watching, scuba diving, eco-friendly boating, fishing and other forms of ecotourism. The establishment of marine ecotourism can be perceived as an opportunity to regenerate coastal areas that have low economic development, which might be from the traditional economic divisions like seaside tourism, ecotourism agriculture, and commercial fishing (Mieras et al., 2017). Now, ecotourism is visioned as one of the fastest-growing areas in the travel industry (5% annually) (Mieras et al., 2017). Apart from traditional tourism, UNWTO forecasted ecotourism as the fastest-growing industry in the next decade. Similar to the ecotourism industry, marine ecotourism has a clear link between the environment and the changes associated with it. Due to changes in the environment, marine ecotourism has a lot of positive and negative effects on it. These effects can range from the habitat's destruction, inappropriate areas of tourism, and instability in using ecological resources. The effects of the environment on marine ecotourism will be discussed in the positive and negative aspects, from which the knowledge about marine ecotourism will be clearly understood. The environment has a negative influence on marine life and ecotourism.

Body Of The Text

Marine ecotourism is an important division in the tourism industry, as the United Nations has examined that the industry contributed 25% of the world's revenue in 2012 (Masud et al., 2017). Ecotourism focuses on taking care of the natural environment and the involvement of local individuals in the tourist areas, which has both positive and negative effects.

Effects From the Natural Environment

In marine ecotourism or the wider context of ecotourism, money is generated from natural resources by attracting tourists to visit the area and paying for the fees, concessions, and licences (Masud et al., 2017). The stigma here is that the re-casting of the environment makes the local people look after themselves and encourages them to take care of the tourism area and the species in it. It is also believed that visits from ecotourists might degrade the natural environment, which can lead to pollution and heavily impact the environment in a lot of ways (Masud et al., 2017). A study from a Costa Rican park found that the monkeys in the area mostly ate food left over by tourists (Masud et al., 2017). Another study identified that marine ecotourists tend to throw seafood for aquatic life, which creates pollution in the environment.

Cultural Impacts

Marine ecotourism can also have a cultural effect on the local environment of tourism. Ecotourists are influenced by the chance that they want to visit the ecotourism area and experience the culture of the area. The cultural environment can be influenced by involving communities in decision-making and improving the safety of the habitants as well (Lu, Gursoy & Del Chiappa, 2016). By creating this link, it might become more effective that the crime rate and robberies in the tourism area can be reduced by a large number. Lu, Gursoy & Del Chiappa (2016) suggested a relationship between tourism and the preservation of the habitants, which is the most important aspect aiding the ecotourism environment. The environmental study aimed to provide knowledge about tourism's contribution to the development of outcomes. The awareness of ecotourism has also made a broader issue, which says that biodiversity or natural characteristics are becoming commodities and the other areas are going in the past. Recent talks say that ecotourism has not only taken over the interest of people but also aided in the preservation and development of the biodiversity of the habitants. These factors can be influenced by a bad cultural environment, which harms aquatic life by using poor land resources and not using the sea as a tourist activity (Lu, Gursoy & Del Chiappa, 2016).

Geographic Allocation

The geographic region of the ecosystems is an essential environmental factor, which is sometimes not considered important. Two of the primary factors are considered when looking for a geographical area and its mapping. Zoning is the element that governs the objective of the site being strictly protected, the tourism zone being free of danger, and the moderate zone of tourism (Lu, Gursoy & Del Chiappa, 2016). It means to allocate areas where marine life is not affected. Having an area where the people and marine life are not safe is not considered an effective zoning. Access to the ecosystems should be environment-friendly. The roads and the covers that cover the animals to protect them from danger are not safe for the inhabitants to harm the animals underwater and above sea level (Lu, Gursoy &

Del Chiappa, 2016). Noise reduction should be minimal. If some material is to be provided, hybrid or electric vehicles should be used to reduce air, water, and noise pollution. The major cause is the noise pollution caused by tourists (Lu, Gursoy & Del Chiappa, 2016). Tourists might use vehicles over the sea level, which can disturb aquatic life.

Global Change

Most of the drivers in global change are not influenced by one factor, and most of the authors have aimed at multiple drivers and their combined effects on tourism. Studying the impacts of global change on species and regions of tourism may include climate change, usage of land and biological conquests (Picard, 2015). Regional changes in the protection of living organisms and preserving biodiversity influence the need to analyze the relationship between the two aspects. An inadequacy of climate change is basically the focus on the elements of complex climate effects, causing the risk of minimising climate change and mitigating its effects (Picard, 2015). Studies from the past two decades have verified that diverse biological ecosystems are more productive in nature. There have been concerns about the high rate of extinctions caused by habitat loss, human-caused environmental errors, and overharvesting, which can lead to a reduced nature's power to provide the best marine ecotourism and improve its climate (Picard, 2015). Obviously, when there are no marine species to be found in marine life, less ecotourism culture will be observed. It might be caused by the improper care of the species and unstable climate. Global change also impacts the life of the species underwater, which is influenced by the increase in global climate. Chances of death in aquatic life are increased due to the hot and cold weather variations and other environmental changes in different regions. One of the global effects is ecotourism fishing. Fishing has heavily affected the marine ecotourism environment, where tourists might go for a boat ride and be entertained by fishing (Picard, 2015). Most of the fish species have been extinct because of it. The major concern lies in the decrease of this issue, which has led to a lower percentage of marine tourists.

Local Effects

One of the most important and vital environmental effects is the lack of support from the local community for marine ecotourism. Due to the danger involved in ecotourism, local residents might leave the area where marine ecotourism is being started or is already in progress (Hunt et al., 2015). This is the result of a lack of interest in the people, as ecotourism is not the favourite of every individual. The environment is directly affected by it, which might reduce the economy of the region as the people are leaving the place. In most cases, people take legal action against it because their personal life is being affected by it.

Marine Life Disturbance

In the marine life system, it is essential not to disturb a species/creature due to the tourist activities kept in mind. It is still a big focus that ecotourism can have a negative impact on the marine environment. A disturbance can be of any kind, which involves the wildlife being disturbed and getting in a bad situation (Liu et al., 2014). According to studies, tourists should maintain a minimum of 43km distance from the wildlife creatures to ensure the safety of both sides. Other recreational activities like marine ecotourism have made diversities due to the context of tourism (Hultman, Kazeminia & Ghasemi, 2015). The factor involved in marine ecotourism is the disturbance created by the tourists, like camping on the shores, standing boats with supports down to the sea bed, and putting up souvenirs leading to wildlife disturbance. Globally, it is impacting the environment of marine ecotourism and having bad influences on the ecosystem due to the lack of knowledge in the marine ecotourism sector.

Degradation Of Ecosystems

People who tend to have an interest in ecotourism also make it their hobby to go for tourism often. It mostly consumes the time of the individuals. Leaving traditional lifestyles and jobs and moving to become a tourist is quite changing rapidly (Schofield et al., 2015). It is good for the ecosystem but not for the people of the community. Tending to move into a lifestyle that is purely on the basis of tourism and having low income at times has a negative effect on the culture and environment.

Environment Degradation

The fact that the tourism industry is developing also helps to maintain a healthy environment for the community and society. As a result of ecotourism, there are negative results, which range from littering in the tourism area to the destruction of the ecosystem's infrastructure. Having a bad infrastructure in the ecosystem affects both marine life and tourists (Blumstein et al., 2017). Humans have made massive quantities of artificial infrastructures, which has finished the natural environment of marine tourism. Pollution in the natural and artificial areas of tourism has drastically affected marine life, where a plastic bag might go down to the sea bed and be eaten by any creature, resulting in death. According to research, 42% of the litter in the marine ecosystem is wasted in the sea bed (Blumstein et al., 2017). Most tourists fail to realize the means of non-renewable energy being wasted due to the increase in tourist activities. A person might be using 100 litres of gas to go 1000 km, which is great for the economy but not for the environment.

Conclusion

Based on the study discussed above, the conclusion on marine life ecotourism can be made that marine ecotourism has drastically changed in terms of the environment, which has negative effects on it. A comparison of the findings in the study and those of previous research has raised a lot of implications. New aspects of changes in the environment have arisen, which is considered as a separate category and is of enormous attention. This does not weaken the study, as it is different from the viable livelihood of being interdependent. The study aims to examine the negative influences caused by the environment and how they affect the culture of marine ecotourism. Previous studies have also talked about the environmental changes [aspects of marine ecotourism](#), which have had an influence on community-based tourism and its development.

The degree to which people and communities tend to show interest in ecotourism has made this study indicate the importance of changes in the ecosystem and consistent tourism development. It is essential because of the external factors involved. Ecotourism should not be seen as a commodity that decreases with time; instead, it should reflect a moderate and vast vision of the possibilities of development in ecological areas. It is often linked with the lack of interpretation, appropriate work, and lack of direction, which is shown in this case.

The environmental changes in the ecosystem and the marine life being affected by it should be considered as an essential part, and these issues need to be resolved with time and strategies. The fact that there are global changes in the tourism industry and changes in the environment of marine ecotourism has diverse effects on the species of marine life, and it should be changed from negative to positive. Remarkably, species plasticity and adaptability still remain unclear in the global context, and external environmental factors play a more concerned role in the theme of the study. On the contrary, the notion of ecosystem flexibility should be made a benchmark for the future as a part of visioning system dynamics. Most importantly, ecologists should focus on the part played by humans to effect environmental change and overuse of resources. Measuring the environmental changes and preventing them from affecting the marine ecosystem will always be a challenge for the concerned people, but the contributions shown in the study will help identify the situation that needs to be controlled for improvement.

Work Cited

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