

Tourism's effect on young people may have a detrimental effect on the culture of an area. The youth of a region are the most likely to seek the jobs created by the tourism industry, which are often higher-paying than the traditional work available, for example, farming. It is common for a young man or woman in a developing nation to be able to earn much more than his or her elders and to flaunt this disparity through the purchase of material goods. This apparent casting away of the society's traditional ways can cause rifts in families. The younger generation is also the most likely to copy behaviors of the tourists that may be considered improper in the region's culture.

The advent of a substantial [tourism] industry in an area tends to diminish the traditional ways and inject the styles, tastes and behaviors of the tourists into the local people. Tourism tends to increase the standard of living of those involved in it but also transforms the very fiber of the community, frequently separating a formerly homogeneous group into classes and divergent generations (p. 143).²²

Developing countries can experience a subtle change in their class system from tourism. It is common for ownership of the tourism businesses to rest with foreigners, who also frequently bring **expatriate** managers to fill the higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs created. In these instances, tourism can be viewed as a modern form of colonialism, in which the host country is “exploited” for its natural beauty but does not participate in the most lucrative return from the industry. This foreign ownership resentment can also occur in industrialized countries as investments are made by those considered to be outsiders.

The world of the Sherpas of Nepal, about whom we will learn more later, has been forever changed as tourists became a part of their lives. When Nepal opened up to tourism in 1964, the handful of visitors who ventured into the pristine countryside could be counted in the hundreds. By the 1980s, the numbers had exploded to well over 200,000 and then to over 700,000 by the 2000s with nearly 100,000 of these visitors planning on trekking during their visit. Drawn by magnificent scenery and a unique culture, these visitors needed lodging along very concentrated trekking routes on their quests to see Mount Everest. As more lodges were built, more trees were cut for firewood; more shops were opened to offer supplies; and more “comforts of home” appeared. Tourism thus became the economic focus of the Sherpa who operate the lodges and restaurants, sell the goods, and serve as guides. As the Sherpa focus on tourists, the old ways of agricultural subsistence farming are slowly fading away.³⁴

A Dark Side to Tourism's Promise of Economic Benefits

It has been said that prostitution is the oldest form of business, and the advent of **sex tourism**, once called prostitution tourism, probably wasn't far behind. The problems and misery of this shadowy and often invisible side of tourism have often been overlooked or ignored. In poor countries, especially those with low standards of living, where just getting enough to eat can be a real and recurring problem, sex tourism has tended to flourish. Because it can be a lucrative cash business, just like the drug trade, it flourishes where it is not controlled. The lure of easy cash and the desire to escape poverty can create situations where locals are attracted to sex tourism. The money generated from sex tourism then creates envy usually aggravated by the demonstration effect resulting in pressure for locals to set aside or ignore traditional societal norms to cater to deviant tourist behaviors.

Sex tourism can cause deep resentment, split both families and communities, and in the extreme, irreparably damage lives. As noted by Karsseboom,³⁵ while sex tourism

brings shame to husbands, fathers, and brothers, it is often a substantial part of many families' incomes . . . as men leave their families in search of work and better lives . . . women are left with the burden of providing for themselves and their families in a society that pushes them into a way of life that it shuns (p. 32).