

that had few of these behaviors owing to a strong religious or cultural taboo against them.

Finally, some cultures have balked at the effect tourism has had on their language. Because so many tourists and business travelers use English as a common communication means, the native tongue loses its value and is replaced by English owing to employment qualifications and the demonstration effect. The French seem especially sensitive to threats to the French language. One of the biggest fears concerning the development of Disneyland Paris was the effect that English usage in the park would have on the native language.

Many of these unintended consequences can be seen in the once isolated country of Nepal. Each year, more than 20,000 visitors arrive at the base of Mt. Everest in Nepal. The Sherpa, a native people of the region, have flourished from this influx of international travelers.

Strong, congenial, and adept at business, Sherpas play a role in the tourist trade rivaled by few indigenous peoples in the world. Sherpas own most of the 300-plus lodges and hotels and many of the companies that organize the treks. Tourism has made the Sherpas of Khumbu rich, or at least considerably richer than most of their neighbors (p. 54).⁴³

Sherpas involved in tourism earn incomes five times the average for Nepal as a whole. Recently, the Sherpas have begun “subcontracting.” The Sherpas organize and guide the mountain treks but now subcontract the “heavy lifting” (of gear and supplies) to less-well-paid members of other area natives.

This increased prosperity for the Sherpas has not been achieved without problems. This new dependence on tourism means that world events now affect the Sherpas’ lives. For example, the Sherpa community saw a reduction in the number of visitors when they staged a strike in 2014 which ended the climbing season and then an avalanche in 2015 closed the climbing activities for the whole season.

Owing to Maoist insurrections within greater Nepal and the armed security that is required, tourist numbers dropped nearly 40% by 2004. Interaction with peoples from around the globe has also led young Sherpas to leave their native mountain home for the outside world, primarily Kathmandu, for an easier life, better education, and a variety of jobs. And the Sherpas now are experiencing irritants from modern technology. In an area where telephone service was nonexistent, the cell phone has arrived and signal disruption is a new irritant that the Sherpas now share with the rest of us!^{25,32}

The examples just mentioned are only a few instances of the unintended consequences that tourism can have on a society and its culture. Most of tourism’s negative impacts on the physical environment are also unintended. The influx of thousands of visitors to a region is often too much for the environment and the host community to withstand without stress. Tourism to an area in large numbers is called *mass tourism*.

Summary

In addition to potentially positive economic benefits, the tourism industry can have negative impacts on the environment, cultures, and societies. When visitor numbers are planned for and capacities are managed, the revenues generated through taxes, memberships, and entrance fees can be used for marketing and educational efforts to create awareness and minimize the potentially negative impacts of visitor activities. By preserving and maintaining the attractiveness of an area or destination, economic vitality can also be maintained. Achieving this balance has been a proven success, as many of the world’s

precious historical and cultural sites have survived because of visitors willing to pay to view treasures of the past.

Carrying capacity is a key concept in determining the impact that tourists may have on an area. Both the physical and social carrying capacity of an area can be analyzed by considering factors such as number of visitors, type of use, and number of residents. The carrying capacity of an environment or host community will be increased or decreased by changes in the situation such as better planning or increased intensity of use by visitors. The increase in visitors to tourist destinations, whether natural or human-made, has heightened