Tourism and integrated development: A geographic perspective

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Abstract

The growth of tourism as an income generating industry has been universally acknowledged and it appears that the tourism sector is making substantial contributions to the economic development of countries that have developed their tourism potentials. Many empirical studies have demonstrated the functional relationship between tourism demand and other variables such as transportation and spatial behaviour of tourists. Nevertheless, due to the infancy of tourism as a development strategy in developing countries, more studies are still needed to address the theoretical underpinnings of tourism and integrated development within a geographic framework. This article discusses the influence of tourism on integrated development from spatial and temporal points of view. The stress is on the relevance and importance of spatial integration as an integral part of tourism growth and economic development. Arguments in this paper are marshalled on three levels: the geographers’ view of integrated development; tourism and economic development; and the geographic question in tourism and integrated development. It is believed that with the integrated development of tourism at all geographic scales spatial inequity would be drastically reduced.

Keywords: economic growth, geographic question, integrated development, spatial disparities, spatial integration, tourism