

Chapter 1

Tourism in Asia: The Troubled History, Demanding Present and Prospective Future



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Introduction

Traditionally, Asia is known as the Suez Canal landmass lying in the east, the Ural Mountains and south of the Caucasus Mountains and the Black and Caspian Seas, and the Pacific Ocean Bering Strait border the east, and the Indian Ocean surrounds the south. The Arctic Ocean is in the north (Lew & Wong, 2005) The concept of Asia is regarded as the Western construct. The origin of the Word “Asia” dates back to Ancient Greece where the term was used to describe the region of Anatolia in present-day Turkey. In the Iliad, Homers refers to an ally of the Trojans named “Asios” that may be associated with a confederation of states in Western Anatolia according to (Hall & Page, 2016).

In recent years, the Asian region has always been the most preferred and gained the top position in tourism growth, accounting for almost 1/3rd of the global economy and over half of the world’s population. The largest subregions in terms of population are South-Asia (44%) and North-East Asia (39%), East Asia (23%) of worlds market share, Bui & Wilkins (2018) mostly owing to the massive inhabitants of India (1.3 billion) and China (1.4 billion), the world’s two most populous nations. China expanded around 9.6% a year in the period 1995–2013, accounting for 40% of the region’s total GDP. In 2013, Asia & Pacific reported some 249 million foreign arrivals, 23% of the world’s total foreign tourist arrivals, and was more than double, it was 110 million in 2000 (16% of the world’s share), representing strong growth in the region’s foreign tourism demand. Performance of international tourism was beyond hope in 2013, reaching a record 1.1 billion arrivals worldwide, up 5% over 2012, or the equivalent of an additional 52 million visitors traveling across international boundaries, facing a global economy in “low gear”. China is the major

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attraction center and attracts maximum travelers in the country, as a single market, and dominates intra-regional traveling. The market growth and development of China is exceptional. Around 97 million trips abroad were contributed in 2013 (16% in 2012), most of which were to North-East and South-East Asian countries, almost twice to that of 2009 count. With 35–40 million trips, Malaysia was ranked second on the outbound travel, and the data includes single-day land tours across the Malaysia-Singapore border. The local travel industry estimates that tourist (overnight) trips are about half of the total. While final statistics for 2013 are not yet available, unreliable facts indicate that in 2013 there was a generous decline. In sharp contrast, India was marked as fourth in the ranking and reported robust growth in 2013 to more than 16 million outbound trips, surpassing Korea (with approx. 14 million). Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand are other important tourism markets, Singh (1997). Centre of tourism attraction of South Asian countries is their rich and cultural diversity and ethnicity Wood (1984) which tempts travellers from various countries to make a visit. Thus tourism is considered the fastest-growing market in the world, not least in Asia. It can also play a vital role in improving relationships among people and helping them in breaking the trade barriers, and enhance trade among distinct states (WTO & GTERC, 2014).

Tourism is all about exploring culture, nature, heritage, landscape, monuments, and wonderful memories and tourist experiences. Tourism is an outcome of the globalization process (Macleod, 2004), which involves the exchange and flow of economic and intellectual products, knowledge, services as well as people. Asia is home to beautiful destinations and wonders that attracts diverse tourist from around the world. Asia attracts maximum tourists and is also considered to be the most rapid-growing continent in terms of tourism and is also a massive and diverse destination in the world. Asia owns the world's highest point, Mt. Everest, longest river Yangtze, largest lake Caspian Sea, and the list is endless. The top destination of Asia is China (56 million international arrivals in 2013), Thailand (27 million), Malaysia (26 million), according to the World Tourism Organization and Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (2014). In the most visited tourist nations, China and Thailand are both 4th and 10th respectively in the world. Asia tourism plays an important role in strengthening relations with countries and their people by breaking barriers and boosting trade between various countries. Tourism of Asia promotes growth in disposable income, improvement in trade, infrastructure, ensuring easy and convenient mobility of tourist. Asia is significantly growing in tourism due to the diversity and richness of the countries. Cross border rural connections are currently being facilitated to open the door for less explored destinations by road, rail routes. The cruise industry is also flourishing and emerging to provide a multi-country experience. Currently, Asian countries are focusing on intra-regional traveling as 76% of the traveler prefer short trips more often throughout the year. For the intra-regional movement, many countries of Asia provide free entry to travel within the region. Many countries have developed tourism markets, and the most popular markets are Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, etc. Many top brands have moved into these markets to gain a competitive advantage. Asia is driving international

tourist growth with a 7% increase in 2012. It is expected to grow two times as quickly as in the case of developed countries, according to the World Tourism Organization and Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (2014). South Asia offers a new opportunity for middle-class tourists and strengthening their inbound and outbound travel throughout the region. Governments and other relevant stakeholders look forward to working together to exploit existing resources, networks, and skills. The customer fragment of millennial travelers is a growth and development driver and provides opportunities from a leisure point of view and business and corporate perspective. New technology and talent skill remained a challenge for Asian countries. Attracting and maintaining, and enhancing the high-quality skills at all levels of the tourism and travel industry remains a top challenge. The strength and likelihood of Asia as a journey is not limited to outbound tourism. The area is presently the second most visited in the world, with over 230 million foreign tourist arrivals. Asia travel market is inherently diverse, and travelers from distinct countries seek different experiences. Thus, there is a need to provide customized travel products and services to attract maximum tourists.

The **research objectives** of this study are: first, to analyze the past and the current state of tourism in Asia; and finally, to examine the key themes that will impact Asia's tourism growth and development.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The research approach is descriptive and conceptual. Descriptive research is a type of study that focuses on describing the features of the population or phenomena under investigation. This method focuses on the what of the research subject rather than the how of the research subject. Conceptual research is described as research that is used by intellectuals to create fresh concepts or reinterpret existing ones. No practical experiments are being carried out.

Type and Source of Data

Secondary data has been opted to complete the study. Secondary data has been collected from the various journal, articles, websites, E – libraries. Resources that have been accessed are IEEE Xplore, Procedia, Jstor, Springer link, Google scholar, etc. have been accessed to gain quality journals, articles. Tourism websites, UNWTO reports, and other related reports have been majorly sourced to gain an understanding of the trends of tourism in Asia.

Findings and Analysis

History of Tourism in Asia

Traveling in human life is as old as humanity is on the earth Shackley (2007). The humans wandered on the earth to fulfill their basic needs of food, shelter, safety, and live a better life, and such movement resulted in wanderlust. About 5000 years ago, drastic fluctuations in the climatic conditions, deteriorating living conditions, and aggressive raiders made several people abscond their homes to hunt for refuge elsewhere, just like the Aryans did in Central Asia due to the adverse climatic changes. Perhaps these needs and wants have resulted in the growth of trade & businesses and commercialization and industrialization. In the period of Hindu and Chinese civilization, people moved in search of religion, education, and culture, and thus from these civilizations, the movement for religious and cultural purposes began. Christian missionaries, Buddhist monks, and other travelers traveled for long distances to different states to pass on the message of their religions and practices and returned with amazing images and thoughts of alien people. For decades, because of the efficiency of transport and the assistance and protection that people could travel, people migrated to various places and continued to expand.

Life was favorable in the beginning, but as the seasons changed, people and animals migrated to places with favorable climatic conditions to survive. In the beginning, people traveled barefoot, and due to this reason, they could travel only for short distances and be confined to small geographical areas. Humans are the most curious creature on earth and want to experience beyond. These early explorers can be easily imagined while scaling a mountain or crossing a river to fulfill their sense of adventure and curiosity when searching for a glance of the unknown. History endows significant insights into the main purpose of traveling and the eventual tourism growth & development. Historical records state that many nations have moved to conquer and control wealth and trade routes with vast armies and navies. Ancient people developed tourism activities, and the glimpse of their tourism activity can be seen in history. Due to a sense of curiosity and exploration, the Phoenicians, like many travelers, were enthralled with travel and wanted to create trade routes. While written documents are scarce, people in ancient days certainly traveled with similar intention and purpose as the Phoenicians, such as the Shang Dynasty (Today, we know it by the name China). In the items they gathered on their journeys to distant places, traces of their travels can be found. Traveling became a necessity as people moved with a specific motive and not for entertainment.

Asia is connected to the Oceania region to form the Asia-Pacific region and thus divided into four sub-regions, South-East Asia, North-East Asia, South Asia, and Oceania. According to the international organization, the Asia-Pacific region recorded only 3% of international tourist arrivals in the world in 1970 (Dehoorne, 2004). Still, since the 1980s, they increased steadily at a pace of three times faster than the Middle East and Africa and seven times faster than South America (Cazes, 1989).

The historical development of global tourism and its link to voyages of discovery, conquest, sequestration, and subjugation as part of European Colonisation and mercantilism are evidenced. Asia was no exception to this, and despite the post-war decolonization of Asia, the history of conflict trade and resource exploitation epitomize the history of travel and tourism in Asia before the boom in international arrivals in the 1980s and 1990s. Initial travel to the region by sea, steamships, and more latterly on cruise ships gives the picture of the changing impact of technology on travel. The development of hospitality and hospitality gave colonialism a new dimension and was the root of the modern-day tourism and hospitality industry. Colonialization, with road and rail construction, created opportunities for mobility that pre-date modern-day tourism patterns, according to Hall and Page (2016).

Till 1949 tourism was meant for trade purposes or for foreign affairs where people moved and traveled to exchanges goods and services. Later on, after 2–3 decades, tourism became a real industry where people traveled for entertainment to spend quality time with friends and families, explored adventurous destinations. Tourism in Asia has undergone dramatic growth and significant change since its recognition by governments as an economic development mechanism from 1970 onwards, according to Hall & Page (2000). In China, until 1978 tourism industry did not exist for entertainment or vacation. In China tourism industry slowly and steadily flourished after 1978. Prior tourism was closely related to a global economic, socio, and political outlook where people traveled mainly for trade and exchange, of very few traveled for leisure.

Exactly there is no one fixed date to mention about the emergence of tourism, as there were no brochures or selfies or technology to look back., but people traveled for some specific reason, and this is how tourism evolved. Everyone is aware that different nations in ancient times moved with their armed forces to conquer the area and to control trades and business, services, and other resources. This created the foundation of tourism. As time moved on, people started traveling for education, commercial, medical, government, and spiritual purposes. Developing trade routes and infrastructure industries gave rise to the tourism industry, and technology was also one of the important ingredients to make traveling and tourism more effective and fruitful.

Asian tourism seems to have evolved and sustained in the absence of heavy investments and commercialization (Singh, 2009). Geographically Asia is not only the largest continent but is also endowed with the highest peaks, coldest deserts, broadest mountain ranges, and very extensive coastline, and more vital is its exuberance of Asia's historical and cultural diversity, socio-political and economic heterogeneity. The region's colonial history is a noteworthy benchmark in its tourism history, especially the hill stations of the British Raj, the seaside beach, and the resorts of Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, and China. Asia enjoys a dissimilar reputation with cultural and religious tradition mainly originating from Hindu and Chinese mythologies, which convey deep-seated philosophical tradition well. A major proportion of traveling constitutes due to faith in religion. Asian regions are the birthplace of many religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Confucianism, and many more. Eastern countries of Asia, namely Japan, China, India, have pious

attachment and sensitive attachment to location, landscapes, and people. So it can be concluded that in the past people traveled if they felt it necessary and for business or trade.

The Current State of Tourism in Asia

Transportation in the early years never been easy for travelers as compared to that's of today they had to walk miles on bare feet to cover short distances and use camels and horses to cover long distances. Traveling was a challenging task for travelers. Awareness about destinations was very less as they did not have sources of information about the existence of different wonderful destinations. With advanced technologies, people came with innovative transportation facilities like cars, trains, air crafts, and many more. Asia has recorded growth of the highest tourism arrival in 2017 with 324 million tourist arrivals. Asian countries have high safety & securities and health conditions, facilities according to world standards, and majorly adopts ICT for advancement and information. East Asia and South Asia countries like Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia offer reasonable prices and take advantage of their natural resources. South – Asia countries are the fastest growing regions in terms of tourist arrivals popular destination like ba grok, Singapore Kuala Lumpur Tokyo, Seoul, Mumbai is the most visited and preferred destinations. The domestic tourism market in Asia has also observed a glimpse of incredible growth over recent years. Vietnam recorded the strongest domestic tourism growth between 2013–2016. China is one of the leading countries in terms of domestic/local tourism, recording 4.44 billion trips in 2016. Travelers within national borders are gaining popularity like China, Malaysia Vietnam.

The traditional approach cannot be applied in the tourism industry. Countries need to provide customized and personalized travel products and services that can save their purpose of traveling, and travelers are now explorers and adventurous. They need new and novel experiences and share-worthy destinations. Speedy economic growth in the region has led to a rise in domestic and international travel in Asia, coupled with enhanced openness to the market, easy connectivity by air, and fascinating travel experience. Today technological advancement advances the tourism industry and also makes travel very convenient and easy. Consumer support for tourism is now high both locally and globally. According to one perspective, one of the major societal developments in the post-World War II period was the expansion of leisure into travel (Anwar & Hamilton, 2005).

Technologies are playing a dynamic role in changing travel experiences. The tourism industry is a dynamic industry and the most sensitive industry that very quickly responds to the external environment. Technology intervention in the industry has changed the unprecedented pace of tourism.

Networking Sites

Social networking sites influence the hospitality industry deeply. Reviews and feedback of social media monitoring continue to be important for hotels to help them to administrate their online creditability. Trip Advisor and similar review websites benefit from tourists' emerging communities by exploiting their user-generated contributions commercially (Munar & Jacobsen, 2013). TripAdvisor and other review websites profit on the emergence of tourist communities by commercialising user-generated content (Bui & Wilkins, 2018).

Artificial Intelligence

AI has become a daily tool that is integrated and useful. Many hotels use AI technologies to provide the best and fast services to their valuable clients. Chatbots allow easier contact with travelers and are spreading to various media: social networks, voice assistants, and more. Hotels are therefore expected to be up-to-date and to incorporate modern tools and technology in more meaningful ways that bind them with their guests.

Voice – Recognition

Digital assistants like Siri and Google Assistant shortly will obey your every command, be it from searching hotels for accommodations at affordable prices or the status of the flights, plan your travel-related schedules from booking tickets to ordering food from the known restaurant. Travel services providers and businesses need to line up themselves with the increasing adoption of this technology by travelers to ensure that when it becomes commonplace, they are well prepared for the demands of the travelers with great efficiency. In terms of technology developments in the travel industry, smartphones, speakers and google assistants, and similar other AI-based technologies have all helped in increasing the importance of voice search. Voice search is predominantly used by many travelers from booking online tickets to the accommodation at affordable prices.

Realities (Augmented & Virtual)

Adopting VR technologies host country will enhance and boost tourist arrivals and the quality of experience. Augmented Reality plays a positive role in attracting different travelers to popular destinations by enhancing visitors' understanding and enjoyment. By employing virtual reality tours, travelers and tourists may enhance their experience with anything from virtual hotels, excursions, and restaurants to monuments, national parks, and even specific events. Interactivity and immersion

will also help you get a competitive advantage over competitors who aren't taking use of these technological developments yet.

Messaging Systems

With extended functions such as information, booking, payment, networking, and content-sharing, messaging systems are becoming more sophisticated. WeChat is the most significant example. To remain competitive, service & product providers are expected to incorporate these new systems and their functionality into their operations.

Digital Payment

Digital payment methods are the best ways to accept and make the payment without contacting any humans. This allows travel companies and other service providers to process payments easily without any hassle and is more convenient to travelers or customers who do not have cash or access to cash, credit cards, or debit card. It also enhances the customer experience, as it is convenient and easily accessible. In the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, the ease of accessibility and easy usability of digital payments began as a convenience and emerged as a core part of travel marketing. Many are reluctant to handle currency, with travelers worried about the spread of the virus. It can also protect the workers by using digital payments as much as possible as it does not involve human touch.

Technological advancement and up gradation have made travel inexpensive, convenient, and easily accessible for numerous travelers across the world in the current scenario, and technology can completely change what is considered tourism in the future. For instance, as the AI-based technologies go forward and progress, it is conceivable that virtual & augmented tourism could either harmonize or reinstate physical trips for certain travelers. In comparison, the prospect of un-plug and have comparable natural experiences while on trips might well become a favored option to digital experiences as people live increasingly in the digital worlds and linked lives. Given these kinds of paradigm-shifting in technologies, it is not yet clear how people's habits will adjust, but technology presents policymakers with both significant opportunities and obstacles to make sure that the nationwide and local economies are better equipped to compete in the tourism climate by 2040 and beyond.

Tourism and Pandemic Hit

According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 has infected over 10 million people globally and caused over 500,000 deaths by June 2020. The pandemic shows are globally distributed, and spread shows no sign of diminishing. Daily

cases are decreasing in the Western Pacific and Europe, but America, Southeast Asia, and Africa are still facing the rapid spread of COVID-19. The majority of the countries in the world have restricted entries and sealed their borders in response to the pandemic hit for tourists and travelers. The epidemic could not have arrived at a worse moment for Nepal's tourism sector, which has been virtually shut down since the onset. Tourism is both an important and fragile sector of the global economy. The Nepalese government launched the Visit Nepal Year campaign in 2020, declaring a nationwide effort with a goal of 2 million visitor arrivals each year. Because the country's borders are blocked to adventure-seeking climbing masses, direct tourism value chain actors are limited (trekking companies, tour operators, mountain guides, and Sherpas). Tourism is one of the most important sectors, providing money and jobs to both developing and poor countries. The pandemic hit was very bad and devastating for some Asian countries as many developing countries are highly dependent on tourism. In certain countries, such as several small island developing states, tourism contributes for more than half of their GDP (SIDS). The new coronavirus, along with the global health and economic crises, has, directly and indirectly impacted many lives on earth, according to the study of Zarrilli and Aydiner-Avsar (2020).

Inbound and outbound tourism are the two economic sectors most affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts "losses of 850 million to 1.1 billion international tourist arrivals, export revenues of 910 million to 1.1 trillion and 100–120 million jobs, depending on whether the borders are opened in July, September or December in April and May 2020" as most destinations are closed, and some are opening gradually in some regions in the summer. The UNWTO's estimates show substantial uncertainty about the pandemic's duration and the government's reaction to sustain economic activity. As per the reports presented by UNWTO, 100% of destinations worldwide have travel restrictions aligned with COVID-19 in effect as of May 2020. The pandemic hit was so severe that it was mandatory to impose international travel restrictions. Every minor and major sector of the tourism industry was severely affected by the pandemic hit like airlines and other modes of transportations, cruise industries, hotels and resorts, restaurants, and all popular parks, gardens, museums, travel planners & operators, and online travel companies Mitra (2020). Around 80% of the tourist sector, which includes the vast informal tourism sector, is made up of medium and small-sized companies and micro-enterprises, and many of them may not survive the crisis without considerable help. This would have a cascading impact, affecting the livelihoods of agriculture, fishing, creative industries, and other tourism-related institutions. Employment losses from tourism have a disproportionate effect on women, young people, and indigenous inhabitants. Tourism companies managed and operated by women are mostly smaller and have less financial resources to survive the crisis. Thus, respective governments and relevant stakeholders need to develop policies and strategies supporting women and other small vendors to overcome the COVID-19 crisis.

It is important to provide consistent and accurate communication messages during a crisis to build and sustain customer trust. Many countries proactively responded

to the global crisis and launched COVID-19 protocols and advisories on their respective sites as India launched it on Incredible Website and Maldives provided global information on COVID-19 With prospective travelers under lockdown situation. Social media and virtual tourism have a captive audience. The Nepal Tourism Board and the private sector initiated the” Dream Now, Travel Later” campaign to attract and pull maximum tourists and travelers, and the campaign will include 3-D videos of the Annapurna Trek. Companies such as ‘And Beyond’ are offering live virtual safaris with the slogan, “We’re bringing the wilderness to you.” Small tourism companies may be given technical assistance to develop online materials showing consumer-at-home content such as virtual tours of cultural sites, audio-guides of destinations, restaurant- or hotel-branded cooking recipes, such as Sri Lankan cuisine and yoga classes from now-empty historical attractions. The development and implementation of COVID-19 cleanliness, certification programs, hotels, cabs, restaurants, and attraction protocols are vital in keeping travelers and employees safe and building travelers’ trust. Many countries rapidly implemented health protocols as an immediate response to the pandemic hit. Countries like Singapore initiated Singapore’s Clean Mark campaign and Portugal’s Clean and Safe standard, and India went for a Massive lockdown applied to the whole country restricting inbound and outbound traveling. To protect passengers and staff, destinations will also need to comply with new international requirements set by airlines and outbound border control authorities. They can include health screening, temperature controls, disinfection procedures, antibody/immunity monitoring, and compulsory social distancing facilities. This will mean new training, especially for front-line employees, many of whom are women, to safely use cleaning products and protective equipment.

Asia gives cut-throat competition to the other continents in the global tourism industry amid this crisis. Asian countries are rich in culture and heritage, and these natural and cultural assets, coupled with stout domestic and intra-regional demand for pre-COVID travel, identify future development. This moment of calm is now an opportunity to imagine and create a more sustainable, flexible tourism that tackles poverty & gender inequalities effectively and is focused on strengthening provincial cooperation and dialogue.

Prospective Future of Tourism in Asia

Five key factors are likely to impact the global tourism industry in the future: human, geopolitical, economic, technological, and environmental factors as aforementioned by Anwar and Hamilton (2005). Travelers demand activity-oriented tourism destinations, and Asian countries have a lot more to offer in this regard. The upcoming years will be challenging and promising as Asia accounts for the unique cultural, religious, health, spiritual, and nature-based tourism World Tourism Organization and Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (2019) immensely gaining traction. The number of international tourist arrivals worldwide is projected to increase by an average of 3.3% per year over the period from 2010 to 2030, according to Tourism

Towards 2030. The growth rate would slowly and steadily fall over time, from 3.8% in 2012 to 2.9% in 2030, but on top of rising base numbers. International tourist arrivals will increase by some 43 million per year in absolute numbers, compared to an average increase of 28 million per year between 1995 and 2010. International tourist arrivals worldwide are anticipated to hit 1.4 billion by 2020 and 1.8 billion by 2030 at the estimated rate of development. This number will reach 535 million by 2030, as per the UNWTO Tourism Towards 2030 report, a very realistic estimate due to current growth. For many destinations, particularly within the region, China is the major contributor to the growth and development of Asia tourism and in gaining the primary source market position. In Asia, roughly 80% of international tourism is intra-regional. As a consequence, arrivals are projected to surpass those in advanced economies before 2020 in developing economies. 57% of foreign arrivals are likely to develop market destinations in 2030 compared to 30% in 1980) and 43% in advanced economy destinations compared to 70% in 1980) (Fig. 1.1). Thus it is believed that tourism will be one of the most important aspect of globalisation in the near future, as global tourism revolves around the developed countries, least developed countries and developing countries (Aramberri, 2009).

The number of tourists to Northeast Asia is expected to rise exponentially to 290 million arrivals in 2030 over the next 20 years; South – East Asia is likely to face an increasing number of arrivals that 210 million in 2030. There will be risks and challenges in both business and politics, including the risk of escalating trade tensions. Asia's dynamic economies are powered by world-class infrastructure, rich culture, heritage, and exotic destinations strengthening inbound and outbound tourism. Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Singapore, and other countries are making positive attempts and trying their best to attract maximum tourists by their unique markets and cultures and contribute positively to tourism growth in Asia. However, in the future, Asia tourism requires a tailored approach to capitalize on its unique opportunities. Social interaction among travellers will open way for prospective travellers as they will help in increasing the confidence and transfer knowledge to the prospective travellers Bui & Wilkins (2018), thus motivating and pushing the hesitant travellers to make decisions for their tours. The increasing millennial population and middle-class travelers will increase opportunities for Asia in the upcoming years. With 63 million international arrivals in 2018, China is the best province, followed by Thailand (2nd) with 38 million and Japan (3rd) with 31 million. China and Thailand are ranked fourth and ninth, respectively, in the world's top 10 standings. Hong Kong (China), Malaysia, Macao (China), and India are the next most popular Asian destinations. Asia tourism will face the demand from millennials whose expenses on international travels will be 1.6 times the US \$ 340 billion by the end of 2020. The key growth factor behind Asia tourism is the increasing population of the middle –class and their disposable income, and their interest in traveling and exploring countries with their families and friends at low cost.

As the socio-economic prosperity is accelerating, business & service providers find it difficult in fulfilling the demands of travelers efficiently and sustainably. To discover their immediate area and the world beyond, Asia will consistently deliver a bevy of un-tapped or under-tapped travelers. Asia needs to focus on un-tapped or

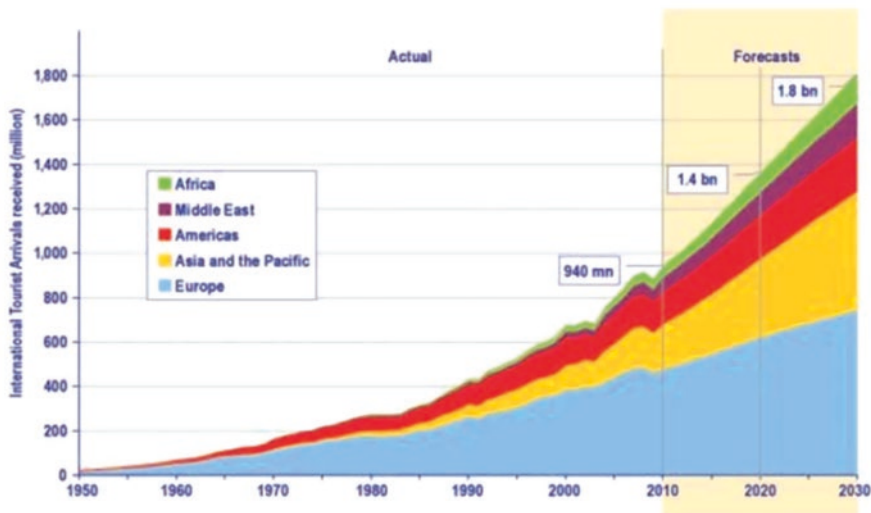


Fig. 1.1 Annual report on Asia Tourism Trends. (Source: UNWTO/GERC, 2019)

under-tapped travelers searching for exploring the country and the universe. The future of tourism will accommodate and furnish to more customized and accessible travel. With a rising competition with western countries, there is a need to offer lower-priced travel, hassle-free visa formalities, and provide hygiene and safe traveling. The whole new generation of digital inhabitants must accept the travel & tourism industry. The majority of the new customers and new workers in the industry grew up using numerous displays and computers. This allows the industry to innovate on 2 fronts: the foremost is channel-marketing & customer experience, and the other is on different interfaces and activities for employees.

The Asian travel and tourism industry's modern landscape is full of opportunities. This new environment is already being generated by Virtual Reality (VR) and AR, Big data, machine learning, smartphone technologies, transforming how travelers communicate with companies in the industry. New travel patterns are powered by pervasive technology in Asia. It transforms infrastructure, empowering competition in industries such as cruise lines, airlines, and low-cost carriers. The way customers fly, too, is evolving. "The Constantly Connected Traveler," Report presented at Travel Rave 2013, more than 4/5th of travelers use the Internet to schedule their accommodation and utilize technologies to book and plan their dream travel and socialize their unique experiences during their travel. New technological advancements such as the "sharing" economy are able to transform the sector significantly. In terms of visitor arrivals and receipts, the future of tourism for Asia and the Pacific as a whole is bright; however, within the region the differences are rather stark with more rapidly developing countries of East and Southeast Asia, Tolkach, Chon, & Xiao (2016). The next generation travelers completely rely on the latest

technologies and gadgets when they plan their trips, be it hotel stay or booking cab, or ordering food everything is just a click away.

The travel & tourism industry in Asia is speeding up at an unparalleled pace, one that has not reached its supply. The major challenge posed by tourism sector is attracting and retaining talent, Tolkach, Chon, & Xiao (2016). The development and growth will be at halt if tourism industry does not attract and retain human resources. The shortage will be most felt at the managerial level, as the hotel managers' stocks are forecast to reach less than half of the expected industry demand in 2021. Executives & Managers would nevertheless play a vital and significant part in achieving the development and growth of the destinations. Their responsibility and duties are likely to increase with the rising travel and tourism industry's demands and diverse consumer needs. Therefore, businesses need to prioritize talent as a corporate goal, stimulating the new age group of leaders who will promote future business opportunities and growth.

Besides the huge magnitude opportunities for tourism expansion and development, Asian Countries will face new challenges and continue to materialize and bear the extra burden on the natural ecosystem. As a result of Asian tourism, more Asian-centric accounts of place and history are required Winter (2009). There is a need to conserve and protect Asian Centric sites. Thus, it is complicated for tourism leaders to maximize the socio-economic advantage and minimize the depressing effect on tourism. The countries have to put extra effort to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on their tourism and try to search for opportunities and travel alternatives to fulfill the tourist's demands. The concept of sustainability must be adhered to in order to achieve competitive advantage and maintain the destination's natural beauty. It must consider current and future economic, addressing the needs of all stakeholders, social and environmental impacts, visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.

Tourism and Post- COVID -19 Trends

The Solo Traveler: In the coming years, solo traveling is expected to boom, social distancing and COVID -19 related protocols have been implemented, and travel privacy will be a more significant and foremost tourist priority. Shortly people will prefer traveling alone, and the trend of a solo trip is emerging among youth, especially popular among female travelers. They rely on their smartphones to explore their world. Asian countries can develop unique marketing strategies that will attract maximum solo traveler segment and design products and services according to their requirement. The solo traveler segment will be on the rise in the near and focusing on this segment will provide a competitive edge to the tourism industry.

Sustainable Voyage

Nature began to breathe when humans were locked in their homes, ponds and lakes became crystal clear, animals started enjoying their life without human interventions, and skies became looked clearer. The dramatic impact of no human being present, one thing is obvious, has been a blessing to nature. Travel developments can no longer be pushed to the sidelines concerning sustainability, health, and community-based travel. It is possible that witnessing these phenomena would have an optimistic impact on the mindset of travelers. It enables them to be more vigilant and aware of their environment and the impact they ecologically have on local and confined communities. Health, spiritual, religious, and activity-oriented tourism will be peaked and preferred by millennial and middle-class tourists. Travel and health-related insurance will be at the peak. Thus Asian countries can focus on activity tourism, including spiritual tourism, medical and health tourism, sports tourism, religious tourism, and lots more.

Local/Domestic Travel

The largest improvement will be seen in untapped and under-tapped destinations. The bans on international travel will last no longer. The forecast suggests that a big boom will be seen in domestic and local travel. Destinations with heritage richness and museums will be preferred and crowded, and social distancing protocol can be followed by limiting the number of entries and through prior bookings. Road Trips will be most preferred, and tourists will explore domestic and local areas. Leisure events and festival tourism like cultural tourism are great source of attraction and is also significant for travellers of 21st Century Novelli (2018) and also have positive effect on tourism industry. For instance, visiting India during a Navratra or on Holi celebration, renting costumes for Garba, tasting the exotic cuisine of India, and participating in games and cultural activities will provide tourists the real experience of the local and domestic destinations. Another could be a long stay in the destination country with a host family to learn more about the local culture. Domestic travel is also in trend and growing tremendously Eagles et al (2001) as many middle class travellers prefer domestic destinations as they dont hurt their budget. Therefore, local and domestic travel can be a boon for Asian countries. They need to strengthen their road connectivity and low-cost carriers to enhance the tourist experience to untapped destinations.

Sluggish Tourism

Millennial tourists are likely to increase in the future, and they would prefer to explore unexplored destinations, unique rural areas, and unexplored communities. Lodges, cottages, and reinforced hotels would be preferred instead of being holed up in crowded traveler hostels. Mass tourism will certainly end up, and slow tourism

will emerge where people will prefer the least crowded destinations. Asian culture and nature has the potential to attract tourist to their countries and will be able to provide them the experiences of unexplored destinations. Shortly Asia will witness great slow tourism.

Virtual Reality

Hotels will soon accept robots to carry your luggage to your room as servers and automated baggage carts. In the future, providing electronic check-ins at hotels and airports through facial recognition systems does not seem to be too far off. VR is another exciting trend that will encourage vacationers to visit museums, attend street festivals, and dive from the comfort of their couch into the deep ocean.

Robotics and Chatbots

Connie, the Hilton Hotel chain's robot doorman, is one of the most eye-catching examples of these peculiar tourism patterns. Many hotels have joined the robot-staff trend, building interacting robots to perform various greeting jobs or even serving food and drink to visitors. Many clients now book their travel and lodging using chatbots on the Internet, particularly tailored AI that can answer questions and provide valuable information when human operators are unavailable. The world's first hotel with robots debuted in Japan in 2015, and the firm behind it plans to construct 100 more by 2021.

Conclusion

The chapter attempted to provide insight into the history of tourism in Asia and tried to bring the challenges and threats in the current scenario and tried to evaluate the opportunities hidden for the future. In addition to this potential, however, in optimizing the socio-economic advantages of tourism while mitigating the depressive impacts, the industry still faces challenges. In other words, the principles of sustainability must guide all types of tourism growth. A diverse collection of industries, including lodging, food and beverage facilities, leisure and entertainment, transport, and travel services, is considered tourism. For industry, leisure, or other purposes, it includes domestic, inbound, and outbound travel. And tourism creation needs participation from all walks of life, including private companies, government departments, educational institutions, societies, and residents, because of the broad reach and scope. The Asian economic boom is closely linked to a paradigm shift from a post-industrial age to a new technological era, has led to the emergence and rapid expansion in countries across the region of a wealthy middle class, with new segments of the population having enough disposable incomes to fly. This is followed

in the last two decades by a socio-cultural change in the number of holidays available to the general public in Asia. The duration of 'paid holidays' has been eased up by numerous countries in the region, thereby increasing employees' leisure time, which has benefited tourism greatly. It is necessary to acknowledge the diverse nature of the sector and the significant contributions made by tourism to the economic and social importance of Asian countries. The biggest growth test for the Asian tourism sector is the challenges and opportunities in creating human resources, creative travel products and services, and technological updates. Significant improvements in the industry have been triggered by new destinations, new technology, and means of transport. It's important to embrace new trends early on. Internet of things, virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence, including face recognition, chatbots, and robots, to boost tourism's competitive edge and meet rising worldwide consumer demand for active vacations. Sports, health, event, and festival tourism are more significant than ever for both locations and passengers, thanks to today's tourists' desire to experience a destination in an authentic way and the rising popularity of active tourism.

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