Tourism Security In South Asia

Tourism remains the largest industry in the world and is powerful tool of development. It represents 10% of GDP and provide 10% of jobs globally. The industry is linked with other sectors of Economy. Tourism security is an important part of both security management and tourism. Private security professionals and police departments in tourism cities, as well as hotels, major attractions, and theme parks, have all come to realize that tourism security and safety issues (often called tourism surety) are essential for industry survival and success.

South Asia

South Asia is the region of Asia which is bounded on the north by the Himalaya mountain ranges, on the west by the Arabian Sea, and on the east by the Bay of Bengal. This region consists of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

The South Asian culture is a vibrant mixture influencing societies, nationalities, ethnic traditions and cultural heritages. The one thing these cultures have in common is their emphasis on celebrations and festivals. Dance is common to all the culture components as a form of announcing harvest, spring and the onset of winter. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Islam are the major world religions founded in South Asia. South Asia is home to a variety of languages. However, English is a common language understood by the people.

The value for International tourism, number of arrivals in South Asia was 22,845,100 as of 2017. Over the past 22 years this indicator reached a maximum Value in 2017. International tourism, expenditures (% of total imports) in South Asia was 4.10 as of 2017.

However, the potential of tourism has remained largely unrealized for several reasons. Recently, several organizations, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), have focused on promoting intra-regional tourism by utilizing common resources, shared culture and common physical infrastructures.

Despite several initiatives, tourism's contribution to regional national economies, in terms of employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and national revenue, has remained minimal. Complicated travel procedures, inadequate infrastructure and transport facilities and the poor quality of management and service, together with a negative image arising from safety and security concerns, have constrained intra-regional tourism.

Tourism Security

Security and safety has become a complex multidimensional notion with a wide range of components belonging to it: political security, public safety, health and sanitation, personal data safety, legal protection of tourists, consumer protection, safety in communication, disaster protection, environmental security, getting authentic information, quality assurance of services etc. Security has undergone a significant change: from a more or less passive factor it is now an active element of tourism, an imperative to act in order to protect tourists and their belongings as well as all the achievements of the industry.

Challenges to Tourism

Safety and security have always been indispensable condition for travel and tourism. But it is an incontestable fact that safety and security issues gained a much bigger importance in the last two decades in tourism. Changes in the World during the last two decades were enormous. Due to terrorist acts, local wars, natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics, that we were witnesses to, security has significantly decreased. Global patterns of tourism have been greatly disrupted by the impact of the triple shocks of September 11, the SARS outbreak in Asia, the war in Iraq and most recently by Covid-19 pandemic. Inadequate political commitment and bureaucratic meandering are the primary obstacles in promoting tourism and economic integration in South Asia.

Covid-19 Pandemic and Tourism

COVID-19 has had a greater impact on tourism and travel behavior than any disease outbreak in living memory. Outside the public health sphere tourism has become one of the main public faces of COVID-19 in the international media. The nature of the tourism system means that tourism has both contributed to the spread of the disease and experienced the repercussions of the disease along all parts of the tourism value and supply chains. The disease's global reach and the application of classic disease controls in the form of quarantine, reduced mobility and isolation have had a dramatic effect on international and domestic tourism alike along with a range of sector specific impacts, including transport, travel and booking agencies, hospitality, restaurants, conventions and events, and attractions.

Conclusion

South Asia possesses many valuable tourist resources and attractions, which could be important vehicles for reducing the widespread persistent poverty in South Asia.