

Review of Literature -Dark Tourism

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Abstract

Dark tourism is popular and wide spread only from the 20th century. This type of tourism is often selected by people who have special interest and curiosity to know what had happened in the past. The concept of dark tourism was introduced by J J Lennon and M Foley. They described it as “the attraction of visitors to tourism sites associated with recent & historic incidents of death & disaster”

It is well known that nature cannot be created, but still people are curious to experience holocaust tourism, cold war and iron curtain tourism, ivky tourism, black spot tourism, memorial tourism and many more. This paper is an attempt to highlight some of the different types of dark tourist destinations of the past in various parts of the world. Tourists should be courageous to plan this type of tourism activity.

Keywords: Dark tourism, disaster, destination.

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Introduction

The disaster tourism or Dark tourism, though it is considered as not legal and ethical in terms of business prospects is attracting the attention of both tourists and academic practitioners as well as the Tourist operates for various reasons. Travel to and experience of places associated with death is not a new phenomenon. Dark tourism also known as ‘Thanatourism’ especially in the academic arena, is the tourism activities mainly in the heritage or historical sites with controversies and other attractions and exhibitions of death, disaster, memorial sites or the seemingly macabre that were shadowed in the past.

It is a concept, started in mid 1990s/2000s, actually transforming war or disaster zones into tourism or travel destinations. Such sites and attractions are gaining popularity and attentions of number of visitors, more than half a million per year in recent decades. For example: Auschwitz museum in Oswiecim, Poland; Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima. Japan; Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Peace park Jeju Island, S. Korea etc.

“The term dark tourism was coined by Foley and Lennon (1996) to describe the attraction of visitors to tourism sites associated with death, disaster, and depravity. Other notable definitions of dark tourism include the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre (Stone, 2006), and as visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives (Tarlow, 2005). Scholars have further developed and applied alternative terminology in dealing with such travel and visitation, including thanatourism (Seaton, 1996), black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993), atrocity heritage tourism (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), and morbid tourism (Blom, 2000). In a context similar to ‘dark tourism’, terms like ‘macabre tourism’, ‘tourism of mourning’ and ‘dark heritage tourism’ are also in use. Among these terms, dark tourism remains the most widely applied in academic research (Sharpley, 2009)”

“Dark tourism is a special type of tourism, which involves visits to tourist attractions and destinations that are associated with death, suffering, disasters and tragedies venues. Visiting dark tourist destinations in the world is the phenomenon of the twenty-first century, but also has a very long heritage. Number of visitors of war areas, scenes of accidents, tragedies, disasters, places

connected with ghosts, paranormal activities, witches and witch-hunt trials, cursed places, is rising steeply”.

Objectives

1. To study the concept of dark tourism.
2. To study the qualities of dark tourism.
3. To study the problems of dark tourism.
4. To find out which of the places have suffered death, terror, natural disaster etc.

Need for the study: In the context of increasing awareness and media impact on the society, the curiosity of the tourists is increased. The latest disaster events like natural calamities, Terrorist attacks etc. have caused maximum losses of life and the property. Hence the need to study the conceptual understanding and the causal effects of Dark/ Disaster tourism is emerged. The present study attempts to address the gap interns of understanding the literature and the concept of Dark/ Disaster tourism.

In relation to the reasons for visiting dark tourism sites, Kuznik came up with seven main motivations for why we as humans seek out such experiences (i.e., **curiosity, education, survivor guilt, remembrance, nostalgia, empathy, and horror**) that are outlined below.

- **Curiosity:** “Many tourists are interested in the unusual and the unique, whether this be a natural phenomenon (e.g. Niagara Falls), an artistic or historical structure (e.g. the pyramids in Egypt), or spectacular events (e.g. a royal wedding). Importantly, the reasons why tourists are attracted to dark tourism sites derive, at least in part, from the same curiosity which motivates a visit to Niagara Falls. Visiting dark tourism sites is an out of the ordinary experience, and thus attractive for its uniqueness and as a means of satisfying human curiosity. So the main reason is the experience of the unusual”.
- **Empathy:** “One of the reasons for visiting dark tourism sites may be empathy, which is an acceptable way of expressing a fascination with horror...In many respects, the interpretation of dark tourism sites can be difficult and sensitive, given the message of the site as forwarded by exhibition curators can at times conflict with the understandings of visitors”.

- **Horror:** “Horror is regarded as one of the key reasons for visiting dark tourism sites, and in particular, sites of atrocity...Relating atrocity as heritage at a site is thus as entertaining as any media depiction of a story, and for precisely the same reasons and with the same moral overtones. Such tourism products or examples are: Ghost Walks around sites of execution or murder (Ghost Tour of Prague), Murder Trails found in many cities like Jack the Ripper in London”.
- **Education:** “In much tourism literature it has been claimed that one of the main motivations for travel is the gaining of knowledge, and the quest for authentic experiences. One of the core missions of cultural and heritage tourism in particular is to provide educational opportunities to visitors through guided tours and interpretation. Similarly, individual visits to dark tourism sites to gain knowledge, understanding, and educational opportunities, continue to have intrinsic educational value...many dark tourism attractions or sites are considered important destinations for school educational field trips, achieving education through experiential learning”.
- **Nostalgia:** “Nostalgia can be broadly described as yearning for the past...or as a wistful mood that an object, a scene, a smell or a strain of music evokes...In this respect Smith (1996) examined war tourism sites and concluded that old soldiers do go back to the battlefields, to revisit and remember the days of their youth”.
- **Remembrance:** “Remembrance is a vital human activity connecting us to our past...Remembrance helps people formulate an identity, allowing them to learn from past mistakes, and to go forward with a clear vision of the future. In the context of dark tourism, remembrance and memory are considered key elements in the importance of sites”.
- **Survivor’s guilt:** “One of the distinctive characteristics of dark tourism is the type of visitors such sites attract, which include survivors and victim’s families returning to the scene of death or disaster. These types of visitors are particularly prevalent at sites associated with Second World War and the holocaust. For many survivors returning to the scene of death and atrocity can achieve a therapeutic effect by resolving grief, and can build understanding of how terrible things came to have happened. This can be very emotional experience”

Dr. Kuznik also developed a new typology of “dark places in nature”. The typologies comprised 17 types of dark places and are briefly outlined below.

- **Disaster area tourism:** Visiting places of natural disaster after hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanic destructions, etc.
- **Grave tourism:** Visiting famous cemeteries, or graves and mausoleums of famous individuals.
- **War or battlefield tourism:** Visiting places where wars and battles took place.
- **Holocaust tourism:** Visiting Nazi concentration camps, memorial sites, memorial museums, etc.
- **Genocide tourism:** Visiting places where genocide took place such as the killing fields in Cambodia.
- **Prison tourism:** Visiting former prisons such as Andaman Prisons etc.
- **Communism tourism:** Visiting places like North Korea.
- **Cold war and iron curtain tourism:** Visiting places and remains associated with the cold war such as the Berlin Wall, Remains of **gas chambers** of Hitler's regime.
- **Nuclear tourism:** Visiting sites where nuclear disasters took place (e.g. Chernobyl in the Ukraine) or where nuclear bombs were exploded (e.g., Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan).
- **Murderers and murderous places tourism:** Visiting sites where killers and serial killers murdered their victims ('Jack the Ripper' walks in London, where Lee Harvey Oswald killed J.F. Kennedy in Dallas)
- **Slum tourism:** Visiting impoverished and slum areas in countries such as India and Brazil, Kenya, Africa and Somalia.
- **Terrorist tourism:** Visiting places such Ground Zero (where the Twin Towers used to be) in New York City
- **Paranormal tourism:** Visiting crop circle sites, places where UFO sightings took place, haunted houses
- **Witched tourism:** Visiting towns or cities where witches'/ Witch crafts congregated (e.g. As Kerala and other parts of North eastern states in India are well known for the acts of Witch crafts)
- **Accident tourism:** Visiting places where infamous accidents took place (e.g. the Paris tunnel where Princess Diana died in a car accident).
- **Icky medical tourism:** Visiting medical museums and body exhibitions.

- **Dark amusement tourism:** Visiting themed walks and amusement parks that are based on ghosts and horror figures (e.g., Dracula).
- **Memorial Tourism:** A memorial is an object that serves as a focus for memory of a particular event or person. They are typically landmark objects, but sometimes take the form of fountains, statues, or even entire parks and even war memorials Visiting memorials is one of the safer and therefore most popular, forms of dark tourism. (Ex: Jalianwalabagh war memorial)

Qualities and Problems of Dark tourism

Qualities of Dark Tourism	Problems of Dark Tourism
Drawing attention of large mass of tourists as zones of war/disasters as into tourism destinations	Change or affect the image of some of the destinations, which previously promoted as different type of tourisms (Eg. Education tourism)
Attracting global communication media and academicians, researchers	Knowledge and experiences of visitors and tourists on dark tourism and sites are both
The research has shown that tourists mainly elderly, locals, persons connected to the incidents, or having higher levels of education.	Visitors/tourists understood it different form of tourism either education in museum or recreation in park or garden or others
Possibility to combine it with other tourism activities such as education tourism, tourism,	Whereas, young, non-locals, tourists with lower levels of educations are not interested in it.
Through dark tourism, the war/disaster zones can be revived and recovered	Whereas very few, limited research since it's a new field
Through dark tourism, the war/disaster zones can be revived and recovered	Tourism product itself is not clear and services need to defined as it sometimes conflicts with others
It can generate interest of the tourists and public especially youths, on the destination - memorial sites and disaster/war zone if executed respectfully will	New and different form of tourism, need more time to generate common understanding

generate revenue/benefits to victims and local people and also provide awareness and education of the incidents and disasters.	
Tourism is always exploring new products, it can be in the form of volunteerism as well.	There is very little chances of victims or local people getting benefits directly. In order to promote this sort of tourism huge investment or attention of government is needed.

Conclusion

Nothing on earth is mortal. Mankind has experienced many unexpected events, climatic imbalances and natural disasters. It is not possible for people visiting such places to have positive feelings. Man is a emotional being. It is very hard for emotionally weak people to face such situations. Dark tourism should be carried by one who is courageous and ready to take up challenges.

Tour should not remain as an act of leisure or pleasure. It should not be only for wellness, yoga or adventure. There are many studies done on the concept of dark tourism in foreign countries. It is still in the infancy stage in India. Studies are to be carried out to know the past dark layers which our own ancestors had faced.

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