

## The effects of COVID-19 on the Beach and Adventure tourism

Chime Cletus Odili

Department of Hospitality National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism

---

### ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors in the world with market strength derived through leisure and recreational travels, including beach and coastal tourism. Beaches are beautiful destination with natural attractiveness, favorable climate, landscape, traditional and customary managements. Adventure tourism is a growing niche market in tourism nowadays when people are more independent, adventurous and want to get out of their comfort zone. But with the advent of corona virus pandemic beach and adventure tourism are adversely affected. The economic boom from this kind of tourism has nose-dived and as a result people that are working in beach and adventure tourists centers are now experiencing extremely poverty.

Keywords: Tourism, beach and adventure, corona virus.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an essential tool for growth in the country if not the whole humankind. In spite of some of its unenthusiastic effects on the environment, it is still the devil people cannot do without [1]. Tourism in a broad-spectrum and as a product is complex and it is impossible to explain it in only one way [2]. In general the term 'tourism' has many different definitions and it has many smaller categories but the most well-known definition has been made by World Tourism Organization in 1991: "The activities of a person travelling outside his or her usual environment for less than a specified period of time and whose main purpose of travel is other than [the] exercise of an activity remunerated from the place visited" [3]. Tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industry employing hundreds of millions of people worldwide which explains the reasons why study of tourism and tourism research have become so important in not only the academic field but also for the economy on the whole [4]. Basically, it can be said that tourism is about visiting places outside of the person's usual environment more than 24 hours but less than one year [5].

Beach tourism is one of the earliest modern forms of tourism and a staple of the tourism industry. This kind of

tourism at coastal resorts is often considered to result from an inevitable attraction to the beach, but the relationship is one in which tourism and leisure are an inherent part of the formation of the desirability of beaches [6]. As a resort-styled destination, the beach is almost synonymous with the makings of modern tourism. This is partly because the beach as a desirable pleasure space did not become notable until the 19th century, following the defeat of sentiments of danger and strangeness through its gradual reinvention as a coastal resort and playground for pleasure [7]. Beginning with the cool beaches of the north and spreading to the warmer beaches beyond, first the wealthy requiring a cure, then the mass day-trippers on trains and families on holidays, and now international tourists of various types make up the market of one of the most successful forms of tourism. Today's mature beach tourism sector, where high-amenity lifestyles describe the pleasure of sun, sea, surf, and sex, is a recent, if highly popular, invention.

Beaches are beautiful destination with natural attractiveness, favorable climate, landscape, traditional and customary managements. According to the literature, beach attractiveness or a quality beach, is based on destination attributes; climate, landscape, culture,

people, activities and facilities [8]. Beach tourism also known as coastal tourism and recreation are important parts of the largest and most rapidly growing activity in the world.

Adventure tourism is a growing niche market in tourism nowadays when people are more independent, adventurous and want to get out of their comfort zone [9]. A stereotypical adventure tourist could be described as an adventurous, adrenaline and thrill-seeking person who feels that a traditional beach holiday is not enough for him/her. People have started to demand more activities and more exotic destinations during last decade when travelling has become easier and cheaper. Therefore it is important that tourism companies offer many types of activities for different kind of needs [10].

Early tourists favoured seaside locations and made journeys to fashionable resorts to bathe in sea water to take advantage of its alleged curative powers. This was a major departure in the eighteenth century from a time when the sea and coast were revered as places and even feared. For them, "the beach historically speaking is a recent phenomenon. In fact, it took hundreds of years for the seashore to be colonized as the preeminent site for human recreation and the coast continues to be one of the most important environments for tourism in contemporary times building on its established heritage".

A new coronavirus disease, now known as COVID-19, was initially identified in Wuhan, People's Republic of China (PRC), in early January 2020. It was discovered that virus belongs to the same family of coronaviruses that caused the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak in 2012.

COVID-19 pandemic has developed into a global problem [11]. Many experts predict that this pandemic will cause global economic decline this year, or lead to worldwide economic downturn. All efforts conducted by many countries around globe to prevent its increase such as social distancing, self-isolation, and similar actions to lockdown may have a major impact on tourism demand

Odili

in many countries [3]. The beach tourism industry was affected as the travel opportunities for tourists, who regularly use billion yearly, were sternly curtailed. There were increased trip cancellations, cancelled hotel bookings and cancelled local and international events.

Although in Nigeria and other African countries have not been taking advantage of the huge potentials in the beach and adventure tourism over the years. This area can contribute to the country's GDP and growth. By June 2020, COVID-19 infected over 10 million people and caused the deaths of over 500,000 worldwide (WHO1). Globally, the spread shows no sign of abating. Although daily cases in Europe and Western Pacific are declining, they are increasing in the Americas, South East Asia and Africa [12]. In reaction, most countries have blocked their borders to visitors and tourists. The UN World Tourism Organization reported during the second quarter of 2020 for the first time ever that 100 per cent of global destinations introduced travel restrictions. As a result, international beach tourism has been almost completely suspended, and adventure tourism curtailed by lockdown conditions imposed in many countries. Even though some destinations have started slowly to open up, many are afraid of international travel or cannot afford it due to the economic crisis due to Covid-19 [13].

#### **Beach and Adventure Tourists satisfaction**

Many people choose to take a holiday at a beach destination because they want to relax, escape and participate in beachfront recreation. Increases in travel and beach tourism, however, have led to increased pressure on primary tourism assets, including beaches, threatening the associated economic, recreational, natural and aesthetic resources [8]. These tendencies have important consequences for beach management, which is now primarily concerned with satisfying user expectations. As beaches are complex systems, there is a need to apply more proactive and comprehensive beach management practices that take into account the physical, environmental,

social, and economic attributes associated with beach destinations [12]. Moreover, beach managers should work to maintain the delicate balance between preserving the natural environment and providing attractions for tourists, especially as sustainability of natural beach systems are often limiting factors for economic activities. Since beaches are natural coastal features, successful beach destinations must consider both the quality of the environment and the quality of the tourist experience. This is particularly challenging as beach tourism is partly responsible for beach degradation that subsequently lowers tourists' satisfaction with a beach destination [3].

#### **Coronavirus and Beach water**

Many researchers have monitored the decline in water and air pollution in response to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. However, the impact on rivers and seas are still unclear. "The connection between atmosphere and surface water quality is very tight," said Dennis Hallema, hydrology expert from North Carolina State University and author of a study recently published in *Ecological Processes*. "The global map shows a substantial reduction in [atmospheric] nitrogen dioxide concentrations in excess of 30 to 40 percent during the first two weeks of spring compared to the same period last year over large cities such as Paris, London and New York," continued Hallema. Since air quality affects water quality, the researchers expect to see improvements in water quality [8].

However, water systems are complex and potential water improvements depend on the level of urbanization of an area, and on the physical characteristics of the soil that filters most of the pollution and where pollutants can be stored for months before pouring into the waterways. A flood or heavy rain can facilitate the sudden release of these substances. For this reason, many scientists believe that water improvements associated with COVID-19 will be localized and short-lived [9].

This is in accordance with the results recently published in the journal *Science of the Total*

Odili

Environment, where the authors show, via satellite data, that the concentration of pollutants in Vembanad Lake, the longest lake in India, decreased by an average of 16 percent compared to the values of the previous year. Similarly, water pollution in San Francisco Bay, California has reduced significantly due to the reduction in traffic, according to experts. The toxic particles emitted by cars, in fact, fall into the surrounding waters, inlets and on the coast for miles. The impact on atmospheric deposition nitrogen and the resulting changes in coastal aquatic ecology during the pandemic remain unknown," said Maria Tzortziou, professor at the City College of New York who heads the NASA project. In general, an overabundance of nitrogen and other chemicals and nutrients in the water can cause excessive algae growth. Algae decomposition consumes oxygen, leaving water without oxygen to support life. "This project will help fill a gap in our fundamental understanding of the air-water exchange of nutrients and pollutants and how this affects and is influenced by environmental regulations, socioeconomic policy responses and decision making," said Tzortziou.

#### **Devastating effects of COVID-19 on the beach**

On a global scale, corona virus has been shown to have negative influence on tourism especially adventure and beach tourism. This is concerning as the African continent and the world at large has been hit very hard by corona virus and as a result of this, has contributed negatively on beach and adventure tourism. Tourism contributes a large proportion of the GDP and to world and anything that affects it significantly impinge on the livelihood of many people as some depend on beach tourism to sustain and maintain their bills [9].

Because of some government policies on corona virus like lockdown, social distancing, inter countries flight ban and curfew have made alot of intending beach and adventure tourists to cancel the idea for the year [9]. These impacts might seem rather negative for short-term beach and adventure tourism development in world.

### **Social-economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Beach and Adventure Tourism**

The aviation sector is extremely affected worldwide by COVID-19 pandemic. Majority of the international airlines have postponed their flights. Transportation means like road, rail and water are also troubled in this COVID-19 crisis [13]. The travel ban forced millions of dollar losses in aviation and beach tourism in many countries. This also created shortage of medicines, agriculture products, food supply, and other commodities in affected countries [2]. As a result, the people working in beach and adventure tourism are suffering tremendous poverties [1]. Beach tourism activities are hampered in this circumstances due to maintenance of social distancing by people nobody wants to go to the beach [12].

COVID-19 is a major cause of infection and death of many people in the affected countries. Due to panic various social, cultural, political and sport events has been cancelled and consequently reduce the number of beach and adventure tourists. COVID-19 brought social and cultural changes in the world such as social distancing and decline in tourism. This resulted to avoidance of mass gathering like sports events, business meetings, fashion shows, and most importantly beach tourism, which have great social impact on tourism and economy of any nation [12].

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, with the advent of corona virus pandemic beach and adventure tourism are adversely affected. The economic boom from this kind of

Odili

The environmental problems like pollution, global warming, climate change and change in ecosystem and biodiversity are improving in this period due to less human pressure on environment [7]. The pollution in natural tourism attractions such as forests, beaches, hill areas and water bodies decreased significantly in this pandemic. Beaches are one of the significant natural assets of tourism, recreational activities and survival of livelihood of coastal communities [3]. But, these beaches have caused pollution problems because of its usage by tourists [2]. The beaches around the world have decreased tourists due to maintenance of social distancing. As a result, there was reduction of waste generation and beach cleanup in this pandemic period [7]. Moreover, less waste generation also created positive impact on environmental bodies like water, soil, forest and air [3]. Noise pollution is one of the main sources for environmental degradation and cause health problems for some people and disturbs the natural coherence of ecosystem [4]. The restrictions in tourism due to corona virus contributed positively in reduction of noise [7]. Basically, this pandemic has created positive impacts on environment due to maintenance of social distancing and lock down thereby producing less pollution and limited use of natural resources.

tourism has nose-dived and as a result people that are working in beach and adventure tourists centers are now experiencing extremely poverty.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Botero, C., Anfuso, G., Williams, A. T., Zielinski, S., Carlos P da Silva, Cervantes, O., & Cabrera, J. A. (2020). Reasons for beach choice: European and Caribbean perspectives. *Journal of Coastal Research*, 1(65), 880.
2. Brau, R., Scorcu, A. E., & Vici, L. (2019). Assessing visitor satisfaction with tourism rejuvenation policies: The case of Rimini, Italy. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 52(1), 25-42.
3. Chan ESW. 2019. Green marketing: hotel customers' perspective. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 31(8): 915-936.
4. Dodds, R., & Holmes, M. R. (2017). Lake watershed tourists: who they are and how to attract them. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(6).
5. James, R., and Coauthors, 2018: Evaluating climate models with an African lens. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, 99, 313-336,

6. Jenkins, I., 2018: Climate change and tourism sustainability. *Global Climate Change and Coastal Tourism: Recognizing Problems Managing Solutions and Future Expectations*, A. L. Jones and M. R. Phillips, Eds., CABI, 34-47.
7. Jury, M. R., 2019: South Africa's future climate: Trends and projections. *The Geography of South Africa*, J. Knight and C. M. Rogerson, Eds., Springer International Publishing, 305-312.
8. Corbin, A. (2014). *The lure of the sea: The discovery of the seaside in the Western world*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
9. Demars, S. (2019). British contributions to American seaside resorts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(3), 285-293.
10. Franklin, A., Picken, F., & Osbaldiston, N. (2013). The changing nature of the Australian beach tourism in a low carbon society. *International Journal of Climate Change: Impacts and Responses*, 5(1), 1-10.
11. Hunstman, L. (2011). *Sand in our souls*. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press.
12. Laderman, S. (2014). *Empire in waves: A political history of surfing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
13. Coke Hamilton, P (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on tourism in small island developing states.
14. Chinazzi, M., Davis, J. T., Ajelli, M., Gioannini, C., Litvinova, M., Merler, S., & Viboud, C. (2020). The effect of travel restrictions on the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. *Science*.