

Book Review

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Book Title: Heritage Tourism

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Publisher: New York, USA: Routledge, 2014. Pp.xii+242

Year of publication: 2014

ISBN No: 978-0-415-59583-4(pbk), 978-1-315-88209-3 (ebk)

Heritage binds us with our history. It constantly leaves our footprints in the world. In this way, heritage belongs to both, our ancestors and us. In the face of fierce competition and the reduced geographical meaning of the globalized world in twenty first century; where neoliberal policies is popular everywhere, heritage provides an equal opportunity for both developing and developed countries to stimulate their economy. Nepal is no exception to that, as its cultural and natural richness is no secret to the world. The demographic and geographic heterogeneity in such a tiny land supports the fact that Nepal has glorious wealth of heritage. This wealth of heritage, if used well, could help bag economic as well as non-economic gains nationally and locally.

In the same light, Hyung Yu Park's book Heritage Tourism enlightens readers from diverse background on how to blend two contradictory ideas of heritage and tourism to boost the economic and intellectual wealth. Park's every stroke of idea helps readers to conceptualize heritage and its importance for both present and future generations. Through a balanced view on heritage and tourism, an idea of promoting heritage tourism for heritage's sake is reflected in her position that, 'This book hopes to contribute diversifying and enriching the critical understanding of the dialectic and discursive relationship between people and places within the context of heritage tourism.'(Pg. 1) She familiarizes readers to the idea of heritage and tourism, politicization of the concept, the management aspect of heritage tourism and relation of heritage with other issues in her well-structured twelve chapters. This is an attempt to present an understanding of Park's subtle idea on heritage tourism, which in a heritage rich country like Nepal, would be an effort to contextualize it. This review is sequenced in four themes: the concept of heritage tourism, politicization of heritage for tourism, management of tourism in context of contemporary technological advancement and contemporary issues in relation to heritage tourism.

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From chapter one to three, Park provides the fundamental concepts on heritage and tourism. People's constant search for their roots in the face of dissatisfaction borne out of industrialization and other transformation has employed heritage as one of the medium to keep in constant touch with their history. The heritage as tangible and intangible remnants of past is used to serve as commodity. Ephemeral in nature, heritage mostly reflects the biased presentation of history as it mostly portrays the elite's history and not of the commoners in a nation. Park cites the example of the era of Grand Tour, where only elites used to travel for the sake of knowledge and intellectual enrichment. However, the change to service oriented economy in post-Fordist contributed in the democratization of heritage by recognizing the diversity of culture and landscape.

The debate on use of heritage for the economic purpose is divided into two streams, where on one side, scholars argue that heritage for touristic purpose democratizes heritage and on the other side this would intensify commodification, marginalizing the intrinsic value of heritage. This debate magnifies an important fact that heritage and tourism has a contradictory relation. The relationship between heritage and tourism could be classified as conflict, coexistence and symbiosis, depending upon the context (Budwoski cited in Park, 2014). While heritage requires preservation and promotion, tourism implies development providing economic support for heritage conservation. There is a need of analysis on the need and expectation of heritage and tourists as the intense commodification of heritage could saturate its supply.

Heritage and tourism when incorporated together, provides distinct opportunity to experience, design and facilitate memorable experiences. The understanding of demographic and psychographic pattern of multifaceted and multidimensional tourists would help in strategizing the heritage tourism industry. It is important to understand the heritage tourists as the 'thoughtful consumers' who seek the value for their money.

The conservation of heritage need to be based on long term planning and efficient heritage management strategy. A balanced approach of government and private stakeholders would make the conservation more effective. She argues that heritage is a value added entity requiring recognition of the interrelation and interdependence of heritage and tourism to conserve heritage through economic focus of the tourism. Heritage interpretation is also an equally important but educational activity which helps to make heritage meaningful. Education and information helps in effective interpretation of the heritage, where education and enjoyment complement each other. The focus need to be shifted from the traditional method of factual information delivery to the visitors. The interpretation aspect of heritage tourism is equally important, where tourist and guides, who are not merely passive consumer and path finders but the way they deliver information has a critical role in constructing a discursive between the tourists and the sites. Similarly, the promotion materials like brochures, guidebooks, signage etc. also play equal critical role. While conceptualizing heritage and tourism, Park suggests that new management strategies for heritage

tourism like controlled number of visitors and encouraging the local participation through a bottom up approach need to be highlighted.

The theme of heritage politicization flow from chapter four to six. The use of heritage in tourism requires its constant recreation. Already ephemeral, the real value of heritage is not what presented rather, is the one enveloped within the hidden aspects. The overemphasis on the supply side marginalizes the recognition of demand of authenticity of the heritage, making it a socially constructed phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, interpretation of tourists along with the sites and motivation of tourists also play an effective role in understanding the authenticity of the heritage. However, commodification creates both conflict and opportunity in maintaining the intrinsic value of heritage. Transferring the heritage sites into consumable goods has helped to recreate the past enhancing tourists' experience, which is also criticized for playing part in it replacing its original value with the commercial one.

Heritage is found to be criticized for being biased and presenting only one sided story by chronicling elites' experience and history. In this sense, heritage used to be highly politicalized and exclusionary. In the similar ways, heritage tourism is also influenced by the power structure representing only one section of society. Many a times, it is even purposefully employed to discard some elements of history like that of slavery heritage, local indigenous heritage etc. Case of Nepal itself is evident to contextualize the fact where, despite the heterogeneity of ethnicity, not everyone's heritage is as popularized and represented like that of Shahs, Ranas, Brahmans, Chhetris etc. However, slowly there is a cry for recognition of the diverse heritages. It is nonetheless not that simple to present the diverse heritage history, along the diversity, it does bring out some complicated issues which need a sensitive focus from heritage marketers and managers. The equal role is played by the tourists who need to be an active rather than passive consumer.

Heritage is embed in the identity of a person. As a material and immaterial remnant of the past, heritage manifests the shared symbolic meaning. However, Park cautions that memory based identity needs sensitive attention as it is biased unlike material heritages. Cultural identity is as ephemeral and dynamic as heritage itself. System of cultural representation is produced as a political entity of a nation based on people's ethnic and identity attribute. Heritage plays an active role in crystalizing the memory. Promoting national heritage in tourism context is a value added work, yet vulnerable to representation and interpretation. Heritage tourism also helps in group cohesion contributing in controlled rapid social change. Individualized interpretation of heritage help in creating the intimate sense of national belonging. Heritage Tourism helps in promoting the national identity by reviving the past history through the ways by meeting the market need. Nationalism is something people experience in everyday life. While nationally heritage tourism helps in creating solidarity, heritage tourism offers diaspora an opportunity to connect to their roots as homeland for which they have special symbolic meaning to them.

The management and marketing of heritage tourism is one of the important themes of the book with extensive discussion from chapter seven to nine. Park writes about the globalization and its impact on heritage tourism. Globalization has brought both opportunity and challenge for heritage tourism. On the one hand, it has facilitated the flow of commodity and on the other authenticity and sustainability of heritage is vulnerable because of the trend of homogenized commodity. The Western and European centric management of heritage is criticized for not fully considering the local context and excessive tourism development has jeopardizing the intrinsic value of heritage. Park cites the example of old town of Vietnam, which after being publicized by Lonely Planet as World Heritage Site, faced the acceleration in the flow of tourist which slowly impeded the authenticity, turning its historic houses into tourism center. World Heritage theory fails to consider the dynamic nature of heritage partially recognizing it as static and unified. The top down approach of enlisting WHS undermines the diverse as well as intangible feature of the heritage. Privatization could fund the expensive restoration and conservation of heritage; however excessive commodification could jeopardize the authenticity and cultural integrity. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and glocalization offers a helping hand to maintain balance between the economic exploitation and non-economic fortification of heritage through heritage tourism.

Burrowing the concepts from management for the marketing of heritage tourism Park highlights the importance of person and process in modern marketing. The fierce competition of the modern markets requires a focus in the destination marketing and branding as an important strategy. Branding is one of the ways to promote by highlighting one the uniqueness of each country. Park also sheds the light on the importance of this process to be inclusive and representative promoting coordination between stakeholders. In terms of branding of intangible heritage a careful approach is needed because of the sensitivity of the issue of indigenous community. Market segmentation approach and heritage marketing approach to identify target market and choose appropriate strategy and develop planning. Emotional branding helps to keep alive the symbolic meaning and values inherent in the tangible as well as intangible heritage. As focused earlier, the controlled flow of visitors is necessary to preserve the sites which could also be done via de-marketing. Despite the threat of losing the intrinsic values of heritage, commodification helps to create synergy between the meaning, perception, consumption and brand loyalty and valuing money of tourist. The modern technology and e-marketing could also stir the market of heritage tourism. Nonetheless, draws the importance of sustainable marketing approach in-order to balance the preservation and tourism development.

Sustainability is mostly understood in relation to the natural and cultural conservation. The concept of sustainability has a complicated application in the field of heritage tourism. The concept of conserving heritage started earlier than the concept of sustainable development. A holistic approach with balanced focus on economic gains and non-economic benefits, mind-full visitors and the participation of local

communities is important to instill the concept of sustainability on heritage tourism. Park states, 'the sustainable cultural heritage management is the management that ensures the present use of the cultural assets without compromising the ability of the future generation to use and benefit from those assets.' (Pg.no) The analysis of multiple stakeholders involved in heritage tourism management is important. It also helps to analyze the multiple actors involved in the management process. However, the diversity of motivation could impede the collaboration. For example of Lumbini is an economic opportunity for locals while a matter of national pride for Nepal. The consensus among the stakeholders is important. As sustainable development is a contextual subject, it is important to overlook the western principle of conservation and aim on the balance between conservation and economic stimulation in the developing nations. Encouraging the local participation through an ideal people centered approach to development is vital for sustainable development of heritage tourism.

The final theme of the book is absorbed in the last three chapters, where Park stresses on the issues related with heritage tourism. Culture, Parke argues, is the foundation on which urban areas could employ their last resort to recover from sluggish economy. Post Fordism led commodification, globalization led homogenization, the western centric top down approach led exclusion of locals in the decision making process and the cultural exploitation in culture cluster has created threat to the aesthetic value of the culture eroding its symbolic meaning. Park cites the example of Shanghai style redevelopment in Liverpool where the intensive focus on commercialization has affected the aesthetic beauty and value of culture center. The newly built skyscraper create imbalance between the original aesthetic value of asset and heavily commercialized construction. This shifts the attention on the balanced consideration to the human and economic dimensions of heritage tourism. The inclusion of the locals increasing their understanding of the local architecture is very necessary. Park argues that use of heritage tourism for urban development could also lead to commercial exploitation and gentrification. Burgeoning of the festivals and special events would also help to portray the positive image of the city.

The evolution of museum from the elite initiated curatorial activities to inclusive hub for all reflects how history becomes a marketable product in tourism. Museums serve both educational and cultural purpose and are complimented by tourism through the increase in tourists from around the globe. Unlike traditional, modern museums are competitive requiring advancement in the management and marketing strategy. Moving beyond the glass display of the museum items, technology could stimulate the marketing and managing strategies with appropriate consideration the aesthetic value of the museum experience.

Park discusses further on the relation between heritage tourism and contemporary issues like intangible heritage, citizenship, virtual heritage, social media, heritage accommodation and climate change. Heritage has become a symbol of cultural

citizenship. With the increase in the human mobility which has created a fluid sense of identity preserving the integrity and authenticity of different and distinctive groups as well as enhancing relationship as a whole. The technology if used well could prove to be advantageous. Similarly, social media like Facebook twitter etc. has facilitated and enhanced the participation of diverse groups. The renovated and the reconstructed houses for accommodation has become favorite accommodation for tourists. However on the grimmer side, climate change has adverse effect on heritage sites as these sites have a long history as such that they are not build with the capacity to resist modern environmental changes, making them vulnerable to damages.

Park is able to provide a succinct understanding of heritage tourism to diverse readers. The well sequenced chapters loaded with questions and extra reference materials put the book at the service of student, marketers as well as scholars alike. A thorough peekaboo in the introduction itself proves it a book worth of our time. However, Park failed to grasp the attention of the reader here and there by citing too much of information and providing her analysis only in the concluding part, confusing them of her original ideas from referenced ones. Nonetheless examples and case studies presented in every chapter helped me to relate with the ideas she discussed. The book proves useful beyond a knowledge seeking person like me to the private and public tourism promoters. In her successful attempt to blend the contradictory concept of heritage and tourism through her scholarly as well as management lens, Park puts forward some striking questions to be answered by the tourism promoters and manager, who are interested to employ heritage at their service. Her careful analysis on tangible and intangible aspect of heritage, commodification and the price attached with it, western and European centric notion of conservation, local participation and the advantage of technology help to weigh the pros and cons of each element in heritage. Very contextual for a country like Nepal, the students and tourism professionals alike are encouraged to invest some time to go through the ideas of Park.

In this review, an understanding on Hyungyu Park's book *Heritage Tourism* is presented. Contained in twelve chapters, this review divided her book into four themes. The first theme that ran in first three chapters conceptualized heritage tourism. The second theme of the next three chapters reflected on how heritage and heritage tourism is a subject to politicization. The next three chapters on the theme of management of tourism elaborated the context of contemporary technological advancement relating it with heritage tourism. Then finally the last theme highlighted on the contemporary issues in relation to heritage tourism. With a short analysis, this review encourages students, scholars and tourism professional alike to invest a little time in this book.