

ASEAN TOURISM

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Abstract

The focus of this article is on one of the long established industries of tourism in ASEAN countries namely: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. These 10 countries are close to each other in all aspects as all are the members of ASEAN which was established in 1967 at Bangkok.

The population of these 10 member countries of ASEAN is about 500 million and the area of the whole region is 4.5 million square kilometers, whereas the combined gross domestic product is about US\$ 737 billion and its total trade is upto US\$737 billion.

Originally the word tourist was used in 1772 and the word tourism frequently used by 1811. Then the League of Nations, in 1936, has properly defined foreign tourist as "some one travelling abroad for at least twenty four hours". Afterwards, the successor of the League of Nations, the United Nations amended this definition in very first year of its existence in 1945 and included a maximum period of six months instead of 24 hours. Thus the tourism has been interpreted as an activity of motion from one place to another by an individual or a group of individuals for sake of performing a specific task. Tourism is a multi-purpose activity as some one visits several places to see the works of art, learn new languages, experience new cultures, and to taste different cuisines. It brings an awareness of other civilizations and cultures and also increases the knowledge of various countries, their environment and their history. Tourism is also made for the purpose of entertainment by the wealthy people in different seasons as Baiae was one of the popular coastal resorts at the time of Roman Republic.

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No doubt, it has a direct impact on the national revenue of all touristic countries; it also provides many opportunities for establishing industries and several investments in order to raise the performance of workers in every walk of life.

Introduction

In today's world of globalization tourism plays a pivotal role as an economic source of income also. Since 1970s mass tourism has been considered as a well – recognized phenomenon all over the world. Slowly and gradually it has been developed as an ever-increasing industry in most of the countries in general and in ASEAN nations and states in particular. In the decade of 1980s Thailand witnessed a successful and rapid growth of regional tourism at an average level of 9.2% per annum. Subsequently every ASEAN member country focused on this new developing business industry and tried their best to develop it fully through formal and serious efforts at a grand scale constituted not only Boards for tourism but they combined together and formulated short and long term official policies and agreed to promote through the regional mass tourism of all ASEAN countries. Because of these encouraging incentives there has been a rapid growth and full utilization of this economic activity for the uplifting of the economy of the various member countries of ASEAN nations. Consequently, at the end of the 1990s decade there has been a rise of 7 percent per annum in this region of ASEAN countries and a rise of 4.5 percent per annum at global level. Such was the growth in countries like Singapore that the analysts were very much concerned for the fulfillment of local requirements of labors for hotel, wholesale and retail sectors. Thus Philippines became the second largest industry and Singapore tourism was the third largest source of the foreign exchange.¹

Tourism is one of the major activities of the co-operation of ASEAN countries. The various projects of the members of ASEAN region are based upon the tourist destinations in order to preserve the cultural

and environmental heritage and to promote intra-ASEAN travel and human resource development.²

In a very short span of over a decade eight percent per year rise has been witnessed in tourist arrivals of ASEAN countries with a result that this region has been moved from 12th to 5th rank among the world's top 15 tourist destinations. By 1995, ASEAN region attracted over 30 million tourists, keeping in view such a recordable trend in tourism sector of ASEAN region it is believed to be among the world's top three destinations within the next decade.

Table – 1: Tourist arrivals in ASEAN

Country	2008			2009			2010			2011		
	Intra-ASEAN	Extra-ASEAN	Total	Intra-ASEAN	Extra-ASEAN	Total	Intra-ASEAN	Extra-ASEAN	Total	Intra-ASEAN	Extra-ASEAN	Total
Brunei Darussalam	98.0	127.7	225.8	77.7	79.7	157.5	109.9	104.4	214.3	124.2	117.9	242.1
Cambodia	552.5	1,573.0	2,125.5	692.8	1,468.8	2,161.6	853.2	1,655.1	2,508.3	1,101.1	1,780.8	2,881.9
Indonesia	2,774.7	3,654.3	6,429.0	2,101.8	4,221.9	6,323.7	2,338.5	4,664.4	7,002.9	3,258.5	4,391.2	7,649.7
Lao PDR	1,285.5	719.3	2,004.8	1,611.0	397.4	2,008.4	1,990.9	522.1	2,513.0	2,191.2	532.3	2,723.6
Malaysia	16,637.0	5,415.5	22,052.5	18,386.4	5,259.8	23,646.2	18,937.2	5,640.0	24,577.2	18,885.3	5,829.0	24,714.3
Myanmar	462.5	198.3	660.8	524.0	238.5	762.5	512.3	279.2	791.5	100.4	716.0	816.4
The Philippines	254.1	2,885.3	3,139.4	255.6	2,761.5	3,017.1	298.2	3,222.3	3,520.5	331.7	3,585.8	3,917.5
Singapore	3,571.4	6,545.1	10,116.5	3,650.9	6,030.3	9,681.3	4,779.6	6,859.0	11,638.7	5,372.2	7,799.1	13,171.3
Thailand	4,125.2	10,472.3	14,597.5	4,074.7	10,075.2	14,149.8	4,534.2	11,402.2	15,936.4	5,529.9	13,568.4	19,098.3
Viet Nam	515.6	3,738.2	4,253.7	318.9	3,453.3	3,772.3	465.9	4,584.0	5,049.9	838.4	5,175.6	6,014.0
ASEAN	30,276.4	35,329.1	65,605.5	31,693.8	33,986.5	65,680.3	34,820.0	38,932.7	73,752.6	37,732.9	43,496.1	81,229.0

Source: ASEAN Tourism Statistics Database (compiled from data submissions, publications/reports, and/or websites of national tourism organizations/agencies, immigration authorities, and/or national statistical offices)

Literature Review

The modern, neat and clean city of Bander Seri Begawan is very popular attractive source of tourism because of its historically important and beautiful places like the Brunei Museum, the Malay technology Museum, Omar Ali Mosque, Jerudong Park for

recreation activities, a centuries old collection of 28 water villages built on Brunei River and including Sultan's magnificent palace. Tropical rain forest areas and ecotourism sites such as Tempurong National Park along with cultural beauty and attraction are the causes of popular tourism although the lack of transport and accommodation facilities, become an obstacle in expansion of the tourism sector.

Significant growth of tourism has been recorded in Cambodia since its political stability in 1998. Within a year its tourism revenues increased 41 percent with a growing number of 20 to 30 percent annually in tourist arrivals. The number of visitors in 1999 for Cambodia was 271,100 with a largest number of United States, China, France and Taiwan.

The charming capital city of Phnom Penh with its famous remodeled Royal hotel, the great Angkor Wat Complex, tourist infrastructure at Kompong Saom (Sihanoukville), remote Northeast in pristine Ratanakiri province and very beautiful sea beaches are the major source of attraction for new tourists in Cambodia.

In 1983 the tourism of Indonesia had fallen down so they supported their better airlines and so on other departments like port, telecommunication, tourism etc. Then right after the financial crisis they got a brilliant improvement and in 2000 almost 1.47 million foreign tourists were recorded.

Malaysia is too rich in tourism. Millions of people are employed. Almost in 1999, 7.5 million tourists visited Malaysia which developed a good increment in the economy of the country. See the difference and improvement of Malaysia that in 1999, she had just 1426 hotels and increased by 110,000 hotels in 2000. Their visitors mostly come from Singapore, Thailand Indonesia, Japan, China, U.K and Australia.³

Malaysia has developed the cultural heritage, hosting various festival performances. They mostly support natural heritage,

tropical forests and coral reefs, mountains, parks and rivers. The high class hotels i.e. Sheraton, Hilton, Inter continental are situated at the beautiful scenario of the beach.

Myanmar is a living island for tourism. Both government and private sector support the tourism. The roads, industries, parks, hotels and other facilities have been improved in order to attract tourism. In 1988, only 40,000 visitors first visited due to the suppression of democracy. The government then announced in 1996, as visit Burma year hoped to attract 500,000 tourists, but unfortunately 180,000 people were shown up. In the fiscal year of 1997-98, only 191,000 visitors visited. Both government and private sector, no doubt have heavily invested, but all in vain yet.

Burma, mostly known as the land of Buddhist, has an attractive tourism. The major cities like Rangoon, Mandalay, Pagan, Pegu are famous and known shrines and palaces.

The strikes, boycotts, violations on human rights have deteriorated the country. Unfortunately, the tourism has only limited made up the GDP.⁴

The majority of people of Singapore have been employed because of tourists, and almost 118,900 people were employed. Singapore was the tourist destination for sailors, businessmen, adventurers, mass tourists in 1970s and in 1980s it too became the air travel. Day by day the number of tourists was going to be increased in 1980s and 1990s which became almost 7.29 million in 1996. As it was also financial turmoil in Singapore, so the number of tourists declined 1.3% in 1997 and 13.3% in 1998. Then they launched tourism Unlimited program. In 1999, almost 6.96 million tourists visited the country as by developing \$ 11.2 billion dollars to national economy.

Then Singapore promoted the “Dream Destination” through excellent services for developing the multicultural environment, local hospitality, exotic festivals and tax free shopping.⁵

In 1998 Singapore had 108 hotels with capacity of 32000 rooms.

Mostly visitors were from ASEAN and U.K., U.S.A, Australia in 1996, capital hosted the region conventions with 426,000 foreign participants.

Thailand attracts the tourists because of its beauty in beaches, cultural attractions like Buddhist, delicious food, textiles, hospitable people, in 1994, 6.16 million people had visited. In 1998, almost 7.76 million tourists spent nearly about \$8 billion U.S. 1,693,005 workers were hired in 1992 by tourism in which 923,822 were employed directly while 769,183 were employed indirectly 37% of workers were hired by hotels, 26% by industry and others related.⁶

In 1996, Philippines was also one of the tourist destination in Asia, ranking on 5th after Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

2.17 million people visited the country in 1999, in which the tourists spent almost \$2.55 billion. This country offers nearly 12000 hotels.

In Vietnam almost 1,520,100 visitors visited in 1998. The Bays are enjoyable Wcr Ha long Bay.

Sex Tourism

Sex prostitutions are also prevailing from the very beginning of the tourism. This may or may not be the main cause of the tourism.

Table 2: Tourist arrivals in ASEAN, by selected partner country/region

Country of origin/ partner country	Number of tourist arrivals					Share to total					in thousand arrivals
	thousands					percent					Year-on-year change
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	percent
Intra-ASEAN	27,341.3	30,276.4	31,693.8	34,820.0	37,732.9	43.9	46.1	48.3	47.2	46.5	8.4
Japan	3,701.4	3,623.8	3,214.0	3,350.9	3,664.4	5.9	5.5	4.9	4.5	4.5	9.4
China	3,926.4	4,471.5	4,201.7	5,415.9	7,315.6	6.3	6.8	6.4	7.3	9.0	35.1
Republic of Korea	3,538.7	2,857.1	2,448.7	3,286.1	3,862.0	5.7	4.1	3.7	4.5	4.8	17.5
Australia	2,434.6	2,904.5	3,028.6	3,464.9	3,926.3	3.9	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.8	13.3
New Zealand	300.7	319.7	272.3	292.0	390.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	33.7
European Union-25	6,566.0	6,936.0	6,668.7	6,971.1	7,325.9	10.5	10.6	10.2	9.5	9.0	5.1
USA	2,537.3	2,653.3	2,553.4	2,680.5	2,838.0	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.6	3.5	5.9
Canada	543.8	508.9	455.9	498.5	594.2	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	19.2
India	1,813.7	1,984.7	2,103.6	2,478.0	2,711.3	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.3	9.4
Pakistan	118.4	150.5	159.1	92.3	105.8	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	14.6
Total selected partner countries/regions	52,822.3	56,486.5	56,799.8	63,350.2	70,466.7	84.8	86.1	86.5	85.9	86.8	11.2
Rest of the world	9,462.5	9,119.0	8,880.5	10,402.5	10,762.3	15.2	13.9	13.5	14.1	13.2	3.5
Total tourist arrivals in ASEAN	62,284.8	65,605.5	65,680.3	73,752.6	81,229.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	10.1

Source: ASEAN Tourism Statistics Database (compiled from data submissions, publications/reports, and/or websites of national tourism organizations/agencies, immigration authorities, and/or national statistical offices)

Thailand is famous because of sex tourism. In 1965 the American army agreed on rest and recreation vacations for soldiers during Vietnam war prostitutions were legal, but banned in Thailand. They then supported the sex tourism.⁷

The national governments in the region have been improving the government to support these in 1980s Thai government openly supported the sex tourism.

In 1980, the visitors from Japan, U.S.A., U.K, Australia almost 70 – 80% come for sex tourism purpose. The sex tourism is the main foreign exchange in Thailand. These may spread so many sexual diseases like AIDS, forced migration of rural women, child prostitution, trafficking of women etc.

Vietnamese don't promote the sex tours because these are already present at the Borders. Many men and women go in Vietnam because of the popularity of prostitution. As it is suppose that Vietnamese prostitutes are the cheapest in the world.⁸

Conclusion

Tourism is the foremost priority for ASEAN. They have performed an enormous performance in 2010, in which 11% was increment than 2009. Tourism is an economic engine for ASEAN. Mutual recognition Agreement (MRA) has been promoted by ASEAN for human resource and will provide the facility to mobility in tourism.

ASEAN as a world – class tourism play, and adopts the standardization of services in tourism. They support the Grun Hotel, Food and beverage services, public rest rooms, home stay, eco-tourism and tourism heritage. The frame work on the marketing, strategy review and distribution strategy is going to be supported.

References:

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⁴ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Burma-Myanmar.html>. Accessed on 08/30/2011

⁵ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Burma-Myanmar.html>. Accessed on 08/30/2011

⁶ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Thailand.html>. Accessed 09/01/2011

⁷ Ibid., Michael Hitchcock, Victor T King and Michael Parnwell, pp.199

⁸ Ibid, p.211-212