CGG3O Unit 2: Tourism and the Economy

Activity 3: The Effects of Government Policies on Travel and Tourism

Overview

In this Activity, you will look at the government policies of Bhutan, Myanmar, Vietnam and China. You will discover the interdependence and diversity within government policies and how they affect the tourism industry.

Lesson

Have you ever heard of the countries Bhutan and Myanmar? Surely, you have heard of Vietnam and China! Well these 4 countries are all located in Asia. That is about all that they have in common. They all have very different governments and therefore, very different policies on travel and tourism. As a result, their tourism rates and economies are very different as well.

Bhutan

Bhutan’s government is a monarchy with a special treaty relationship with India. This means they have a King that governs the kingdom but have very close ties with India. They became independent from India in 1949.

Bhutan’s economy and therefore tourism sector have strict policies. Each economic program takes into account the government's desire to protect the country's environment and cultural traditions. For example, the government, in its cautious expansion of the tourist sector, encourages visits by upscale, environmentally conscientious tourists. They only allow a certain number of tourists in to visit their country per year.

Myanmar

Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) is run by a military junta or dictatorship which means soldiers and the military take control of everything - even tourist money. They had an election back in 1990 where the democracy party was elected but the military never let them take over. The country remains at the hands of the military thus people do not have a lot of the same freedoms that we have. Tourist coming into Myanmar must use the ‘tourist money’ that is provided in exchange for American dollars. This means that the military can control all of the proceeds and profits that tourist use in tourist money. The strict military control in Myanmar deters many people from traveling to this country.

Vietnam

Vietnam is a communist state that has had its share of economic disparities. Back in the 1960s, the United States supported Southern Vietnam in its attempt to overthrow the communist Northern Vietnam. In 1973, the US ended the fighting and had a cease-fire. The whole country was then taken over by the Northern Vietnamese and today remains communist. After the war, the country had a terrible economy because of damage and debt. In 1986, they opened up the country to foreign investment and thus tourism grew and grew. Since then, the country has seen a growth in their tourism numbers. In 1999, almost 2 million people visited Vietnam - a country once closed off to the rest of the world.

China

China is also a communist state like Vietnam. For years, the government closed off tourism to the rest of the world. After World War II, the Communists imposed strict controls over the everyday lives of its citizens. Tens of millions of people lost their lives because of this. After 1978, Deng Xiaoping and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and by 2000 output had quadrupled. For much of the population, living standards have improved dramatically and the room for personal choice has expanded, yet political controls remain tight. Tourism levels have skyrocketed with China now being the 4th most popular tourist destination with 50.9 million tourists in 2009.

Assignment

1. Which of the following countries is a military dictatorship?
2. Which of the following countries would have citizens with the most freedoms? Explain your choice.
3. Which country had a terrible economy at one time because of a long costly war with the United States?
4. Which of the above countries had 50.9 million visitors in 2009?
5. Which of the above countries would you choose to visit and why?