

# CGG30 Unit 3: Culture and Tourism

## Activity 5: Changing Lifestyles

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### Overview

Tourism is constantly evolving and changing to meet its consumers' constantly changing lifestyles. Changes in laws and technologies and a growing acceptance of different lifestyles are changing the tourism industry. Specialty tourism is a growing sector. However, specialized tourism can lead to exploitation in destination spots. In a journal entry, you will take on the role of exploited worker from a developing country and relate the hardships you will endure.

### Lesson

Tourism destinations are constantly changing and so are the choices tourists make based on their ever changing lifestyles. Tourism used to be only for the rich; then it was for the masses and now it caters to specific lifestyle choices.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, tourism was only for the educated wealthy. Many of Europe's elite went on the Grand Tour—its purpose was to finish off their education by visiting and learning about Europe's key cultural sites. This tour could take several months or even years to complete. Destinations which were considered centers of culture ranged from France's Notre Dame Cathedral to Rome's art museums to Greece's ancient ruins.

The face of tourists changed at the beginning of the 20th century because of a series of major changes. The Industrial Revolution brought about many transportation changes. The railroad changed tourism—it was cheap and accessible and went to many destinations that used to take too much time to travel to. New labour laws regarding the number of hours worked in a week and guaranteed paid vacation time allowed the middle class the time, money, and chance to travel.

The 1920's and 1930's saw the automobile become the main focus for travel and allowed for the infamous road trip. The 1960s and 1970s brought vacation packages where all the details were looked after (flights, meals, and accommodations). As well, the 1960's saw many young North Americans embark on their own version of the Grand Tour of Europe by backpacking their way across the continent.

Today, tourism is changing yet again to meet the unique characteristics of tourists.

### Lifestyle Changes and Tourism

The newest lifestyle changes see tourism changing to meet that need. Tour operators are now creating packages for singles, older couples, families, alternative lifestyles, and so on. Themed packages are gaining in popularity. For example, **Agro-tourism** is a specialized tourism that allows tourists to experience life on a farm, from milking cows to bringing in the hay. It provides an opportunity that you would normally not experience in an all inclusive resort. Tourism targeted at families is also changing; major theme parks now compete alongside specialized resorts and cruises that are geared to families

with young children. Alternative lifestyles are also benefiting from increased awareness of their tourist dollars with cruises, resorts, and packaged tours. Single women, who want to travel to foreign destinations but have fears about doing so, are also being served by specialized tour operators.

### **Downside to Tourism**

In 2001, tourists spent over \$500 billion at their destinations. In order to serve this huge economic market, it is estimated that there are close to 800 million people worldwide who work in tourist related jobs. One job in the direct tourism industry (hotel workers, theme park employee) creates one and a half jobs indirectly (fast-food restaurant that is built on the way to a theme park or an airline job that is created because of increased tourism to an area) ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)).

Globally, tourism also creates exploitation of workers and children and has an impact on the physical environment.

### **Workers**

With tourists projected to reach 1.6 billion in the next 20 years, under-aged children in developing countries often are targeted for work. It is estimated that between 13 and 19 million under the age of 18 are currently in some type of tourist job. There is also the risk of "Dollarization of trade" which means that workers in the tourism industry such as cab drivers or dancers in entertainment shows make more money than professionals such as doctors or teachers. In many developing countries, workers do not make minimum wage and are forced to work long hours with no legal protection. Many workers are so desperate for a job that they are willing to work under these horrible conditions.

In Mexico, many workers cannot live near the luxury resorts where they work because it is simply too expensive. Many travel at least an hour one way, six days a week to go to their minimum wage job of roughly \$4 dollars a day. The average one or two room in the resort town is \$150 a day, therefore forcing the long commute. The areas where many of the resort workers live are without services like hydro, water, or sanitation. Workers cannot even go to many of the Mexican beaches because they have been privatized for the resorts ([www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)).

### **Environment**

To meet the demands of tourists, the physical landscape can also change even though it will cause suffering for the local population who live there year round. In Jerba, Tunisia, with 800,000 tourists per year, hotel construction has occurred on valuable agricultural land. This affects the locals in a great way, since the land before development only produced ten per cent of their food needs ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)). The residents must now pay higher food prices to import what they need. In other examples, access to valuable fresh water is diverted to the hotels for pools, hygiene, and golf courses! Other valuable land is often lost to garbage dumps where the large amount of refuse from hotels and other tourist attractions is dumped. In extreme cases, indigenous people are expelled from their ancestral lands in order for the tourist dollar to be made. In Tanzania, the Masai tribe was forcibly moved in order to create a safari area for international tourists.

### **Exploitation of Children**

Unfortunately, because there is such competition for tourist dollars in many undeveloped countries, a seedy side to tourism is gaining attention –child sex tourism in Asia and the Caribbean. The United Nations has defined child sex tourism as "tourism organized with the primary purpose of facilitating the

effecting of a commercial sexual relationship with a child". Tourists who engage in this behaviour have a sense that when away from their home country, they are free from legal and moral restraints, and thus exploit the situation. Why doesn't the government of the country do something about this exploitation? These countries tend to be extremely poor and in need of foreign dollars; therefore, they do not enforce the laws that protect children.

The exploited children are the victims of poverty that has forced them into this situation. Often times, children leave their families with the prospect of jobs and places to live, only to be forced into prostitution when they arrive in the urban areas. The group "End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism" (ECPAT) estimates the following numbers of children involved in prostitution:

Brazil 500,000

India 400,000

Nepal 200,000

Taiwan 100,000

Thailand 200,000 to 850,000

This is just a snapshot of five countries! Countries like Canada are talking legal action against predators who purposely take holidays to engage in these criminal acts. Charges can be laid against predators when they return home from these trips. Education is also a tool being used. Tourism workers in hotels, airlines, and travel agencies are being educated on what to look for in a child predator and what steps need to be taken to protect children.

## Assignment

1. In the role of poor worker from a developing country like Mexico, Egypt, Taiwan or India, write a journal entry that explains how you are being exploited and what your hopes and dreams are for the future.