



## DOOM TOURISM AND DARK TOURISM

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### ABSTRACT

Growing number of tourists with motivation to witness most endangered sites has attracted studies related to doom tourism. Extensive literature survey supported the fact that absence of relationship between doom tourism and dark tourism has affected the concept understanding adversely. Present study tries to investigate the background of doom tourism and establish relationship between doom tourism and dark tourism.

**Keywords:** Doom tourism, dark tourism, relationship, relevance, future.

### INTRODUCTION

Travel trade is motivated to offer vanishing attractions and destinations for tourists (Agnew & Viner, (2001); Amos, (2001); Becken & Hay, (2007); Hall & Higham, (2005); Uyarra et al., (2005)). Tourists are also attracted towards those destinations which are witnessing rapid changes in their ecosystems. Hume (2009) discussed tourists' attraction towards the area where existence of polar bears was in danger and these areas were presented as exhibits for viewing pleasure of tourists. Buhasz, (2007), Salkin, (2007) and Brock, (2008) reported a travel trend for disappearing tourism, dark tourism, last chance tourism and climate tourism. Other researchers (Addison, (2008); Burns & Bibbins, (2009); Hughes, (2008); Jones, Phillips, & Jenkins, (2010); Lisagor & Hansen, (2008)) also found a trend towards these vanishing destinations. 'Imperilled destinations and try to experience their grandeur before they vanish'(Shapiro cited in Ruiz, 2008) is found common among a significant number of tourists visiting these sites. But doom tourism, an emerging trend of industry has not investigated thoroughly till date. In literature, a few studies (i.e.Lemelin and Johnston (2008), Dawson, Lemelin, and Stewart (2009), and Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, and Scott (2010)) have tried to discuss and examine this type of tourism. Present study has used word 'doom tourism' with a meaning similar to that of used in studies conducted by Lemelin and Johnston (2008) and Dawson, Lemelin et al. (2009), in which tourists seek to visit disappearing man-made and natural attractions. This study also observed that doom tourism was observed empirically by only a very few researchers (i.e Dawson,Lemelin et al., 2009) who investigated vanishing sites of Arctic.

In literature only five books (i.e. Last-chance to see (Adams & Carwardine, 1992), The disappearing world: 101 of the earth's most extraordinary and endangered places (Addison, 2008), Frommer's 500 places to visit before they disappear (Hughes, 2008), Disappearing destinations: 37 places in peril and what can be done to help save them (Lisagor & Hansen, 2008), and Disappearing destinations (Jones et al., 2010)) were found quiet useful. Article (The end of tourism? Climate change and society change (Burns & Bibbins, 2009)) also discussed doom tourism in details. All studies tried to elaborate growing number of tourists visiting to sites of last-chance tourism.

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Tourism products with core attraction of disaster and human death were first time investigated by Lennon & Foley, (2000); Sharpley & Stone, (2009); Seaton, (1996); Seaton & Lennon, (2004); Stone & Sharpley, (2008). Black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993) and morbid tourism (Blom, 2007) nomenclatures are also popular in literature. Seaton, (1996) concluded that dark tourism and doom tourism are generalized in term of motivation which includes actual or symbolic death. Other researchers like Miles, (2002), “sites of massacres” Preece & Price, (2005), and “battlefields, such as Waterloo” Seaton, (1996) also discussed this phenomenon in depth. Ryan, (2005) and Sharpley, (2005) clearly indicated that central theme of dark tourism is doubts and/or anxiety of visitors in association with their own ideas related to technology, progress and rationality. But in words of Smith & Croy (2005), this description of concept is half and other half which is left, is related to disaster created by non-human-induced factors. Furthermore, this definition seems to include only the disappearance and destruction of heritage sites (socio-cultural) and human beings. This excludes the studies of natural calamities like Te Wairoa by Mount Tarawera in 1886 in New Zealand (see Ryan & Kohli, 2006; Smith & Croy, 2005); and ‘Katrina Tours’ in New Orleans (Pelluzo, 2009). Other researchers found that tourists’ motivations are not static in nature and can be witnessed by oppressiveness (Miller, (2008), Lippard (1999), MacCannell (1999), and Pelluzo (2009)). Equipped with death appeal, some areas which are at verge of disappearance like coral reefs, polar north etc. are found either natural (i.e. disappearing ecosystem) or cultural (i.e. custom and tradition of indigenous peoples). The above definition is also exclusive from death of ecosystem and/or other species including both flora and fauna. The definition of dark tourism should include both death of natural heritage and endanger native species (Burns & Bibbins, 2009).

Above discussion clearly indicates that doom tourism is one of the dimensions of dark tourism which is associated with disappearance of natural resources and/or heritage because of rapid changes in global environment. Critics of doom tourism also point out that increased visits of tourists in the area decreases the life span of sites. Generally, considered as eco-sensitive tourists are basically have very little to do with sustainability of sites associated with doom tourism. Lemelin & Smale, (2007; Wheeler, (1993, 1994), and Burns & Bibbins, (2009). Meletis & Campbell, (2007) have indicated that these tourists promote ego-tourism and/or hyper consumption. Sharpley, (2005, p. 222) indicated that these tourists ““are increasingly seeking forms of travel and tourism that in some way or another, are status symbol””. Conclusively, it can be stated that more visits to these areas can degrade environment and very basic resource of doom tourism. Above description indicates following similarities between doom tourism and dark tourism:

- # Predication on vanishing heritage of socio-cultural values and landscapes.
- # A desire to witness mass fatalities and vanishing wildlife.
- # Motivation (secondary) to visit burial sites and graveyard
- # Philosophy about globalization, political ideology, technical advancement and rationality.

## CONCLUSION

Doom tourism promotion is justified by its economic contribution for indigenous communities. It is also found that carbon credits and foot-printing also help to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of doom tourism. Doom tourism helps to create ambassadors of climate change who provides a unique opportunity to aware general public and 'are the potential saviours of nature, not, inevitably its enemy' (Franklin, 2003, p. 220, 30). Furthermore doom tourism can be helpful for development of responsible tourism and very appropriate alternate to sustain the very base of its resources.

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