



# AN OVERVIEW OF TOURISM DISASTERS - STRATEGIES TO RESTORE FADING OUT DESTINATIONS

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## Abstract

*Tourism can be vulnerable to disasters and, being fragmented its response is often difficult to initiate and coordinate. In an era of considerable disasters and uncertainty, many destinations have been made alarmingly aware of the fickle nature of tourism. Peak industry bodies, academicians and professionals advocate the introduction of risk/crisis management strategies as a means to prepare against adverse and operational capacity of any destination. The healthy operation of tourism would relate to develop a knowledge management system for disasters in a tourist destination in terms of a knowledge framework for tourism disaster management at various levels.*

*This paper examines the coverage of textual analysis to examine the framing of tourist risk in the account to these disasters and therefore contends that the strategies on disasters need to employ more precise and careful monitoring of disasters in major generating markets. Such activities may be invaluable in providing assistance to tourism managers*

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*regarding decisions on better strategies and marketing activity aimed at repairing damage and returning to normality in an affected country or region.*

*Knowledge is a powerful resource to help governments, organizations and communities prevent, mitigate, plan for and recover from disasters and crises. Destinations need knowledge in the three stages of disaster management – pre disaster prevention and planning, disaster situation management and post disaster phases of resolution and return to normality. The paper creates awareness for tourism destination managers to make preventative planning and management of disasters, knowledge framework for disaster management in an upcoming destination.*

## Introduction

Tourism disasters highlight the vulnerability of the tourist trade to unforeseen events thereby emphasize towards a study to undertake and analyze the different crises and also diagnose the approaches taken by tourism managers. A disaster may be nature-driven or a creation of human-being. Disaster management is a well-drawn preparation for resisting a disaster, instant reaction to disaster and a detailed plan for bringing the situation back to normalcy. The extent of the effects of a disaster depends on the following factors:

The impact of an incidence occurring suddenly, its intensity and its characteristics are some factors which determine the extent of the effect; Greater the impact and intensity, greater is the extent of effects. A combined thinking of the danger and the potential loss decides the way in which they affect the people, the environment and the systems providing various essential services.

Advanced intimation of disasters, rapid and effective shifting schemes and a high level of awareness among the people – have reduced the potential losses. Needless to say, greater awareness and rapid action are the pivotal factors in reducing the intensity of uncertainties. The existing systems are not capable enough to handle the disasters. Therefore, preparedness, adequate disaster management / plans are the saner options.

# Principles of Disaster Management

## Absorbing the schemes in general development plans

Protection from disasters and preparedness to meet them should not be regarded as very different from / independent of general economic development. Infact, they should be treated as an integral part of wider economic development process. As the impact of any disaster is generally grave and unfavourable on any project meant for raising the development level, it would be irrational to segregate the anticipated disaster from that of development.

## Social involvement

Disaster Management should not be considered as the responsibility of the government alone. Along with the government, the society – i.e. the people – should also join hands. Disaster Management should be the joint responsibility of government and people. It is, therefore, necessary that various social segments have adequate knowledge about disaster management and its need. And hence there is a requirement to ascertain ideal strategies to determine how to pro-actively deal with the potential for future crisis related to tourism. It is the need of the hour to refresh **a tourism crisis management** philosophy.

The strategies to deal with crisis, relates to:

- Highlighting the importance of crisis management and specify a guide for tourism operators and offices
- Analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches of tourism managers to deal with disasters.
- The study covers crises caused by: terrorism, natural disaster, disease, crime and even war

## Destinations in crisis

The marketability of individual destinations and global tourism is vulnerable to sudden changes in market perceptions. Acts of man or nature can transform the reputation, desirability and marketability of the most popular tourism destinations overnight.

## **Managing the recovery and restoration of destinations in crisis**

The crises caused by external factors massively affect the appeal and marketability of the destinations concerned. Certain crisis would be under the direct managerial control of destination authorities such as —war, terrorism, political/social unrest, crime waves, epidemics and natural disasters. These examples represent the plurality of factors, which impact negatively on the marketability of a destination. The management of a destination in crisis is greatly influenced by its duration which can be dealt by involving a thorough consolidation.

## **Promotion of tourism during an ongoing crisis**

Countries which are popular for its potentials should emphasize on a qualified plan, to transform them as some of the world's most popular international tourist destinations. With a tremendous variety of scenery, terrain and climate, ranging from snow-capped mountains to barren deserts, destinations can be marketed well with its site potential. There can be many unexpected crises beyond the human control, which can be taken into account with an effective strategic sketch for better preparedness.

## **Marketing during a long-term crisis**

During a long-term crisis any destination's tourism segment can show every indication of great triumphs of crisis marketing and hence would bring into highlight the prospects for a healthy and promising recovery with rising numbers of overseas visitors.

## **Post-crisis tourism recovery**

The impact of crises on a national economy can be severe and it is essential that recovery is rapid and complete. Tourism may be an ideal focus for the recovery effort, as it is resilient and has many links into other sectors. It can be ascertained that on balance, tourism is worthy of special consideration as a vehicle for post-crisis recovery.

## **Natural disaster**

The climatic conditions and unstable landforms, coupled with high population density, are prone to be vulnerable. Developing countries suffer very often from various natural disasters namely drought, flood, cyclone, earthquake, landslide, forest fire, hail storm, locust, volcanic eruption, etc. which strike a devastating

impact on human life, economy and environment. Though it is almost impossible to fully recoup the damage caused by the disasters, it is possible to

- (i) Minimize the potential risks by developing early warning strategies.
- (ii) Prepare and implement developmental plans to provide resilience to such disasters.
- (iii) Mobilize resources including communication and tele-medical services, and
- (iv) To help in rehabilitation and post-disaster reconstruction.

Space technology plays a crucial role in efficient mitigation of disasters. While communication satellites help in disaster warning, relief mobilization and tele-medical support. Earth observation satellites provide required database for pre-disaster preparedness programmes. The technology also helps to handle disaster response by monitoring activities and post-disaster damage assessment, along with reconstruction and rehabilitation. Hence there is a requirement for determining the role of space technology in evolving a suitable strategy for disaster preparedness and operational framework for their monitoring, assessment and mitigation, which identifies gap areas and recommend appropriate strategies for disaster mitigation.

### **Rebuilding the tourist industry**

Distinctive destinations recognize unique cities and towns that are working to preserve their tourism products and promote different segments of tourism industry which help to enhance their community and encourage others to enjoy all they have to offer. Destinations across the country that offer an authentic visitor experience by combining dynamic downtowns, diverse cultural activities, attractive architecture and a strong commitment to historic preservation will highlight sustainability and revitalization measures.

### **Restoring confidence through information dissemination**

It is imperative to document and disseminate restoration project information to learn from experience and eliminate costly, repetitive errors. The restoration is in its infancy stage and every project is a unique learning process. Projects are more cost-effective and have a higher degree of success through planning, application of science-based methods, monitoring and adaptive management.

## **The inclusion of different plans or schemes**

Disaster Management has a wide connotation. It does not merely mean various aspects of disasters and various schemes meant for their avoidance. If the disaster management plans / schemes are to be effectively implemented other segments of the society should be clubbed together. The exclusion of any plan may prove very expensive. On the contrary, effective inclusion and coordination of plans can do miracles.

## **Steps in Disaster Management**

### **The pre-disaster stage**

This stage focuses on minimizing the damage to life, property and environment, before the disaster strikes and at the prohibition stage; various schemes are drafted for controlling the damages to minimize the effects of disaster.

### **Preparedness**

It refers to the readiness, on the governmental, social and personal levels, to effectively face the disaster that has already visited and includes practical disaster-layouts.

### **The warning of disaster**

It is very crucial that immediately after receiving slightest hint of a disaster, the information about its advent reaches the entire danger-prone area.

### **Response & relief measures**

This includes a wide-ranging activities including the erection of control booths, action according to the action-plan drafted, the broadcasting of danger notice.

### **The post-disaster stage**

While restoring the normalcy, it is also equally necessary to ensure that if, unfortunately, the disaster revisits, the extent of damage is lesser. Restoration includes assistance, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

## **Revival / resurrection**

In revival, the focus is on the erection of facilities of greater competence than those built in pre-disaster stage. Erection of new buildings, taking ultra care of durability while erecting various essential facilities – are some illustrations of revival activities.

## **Development**

The reconstruction of the affected region and bringing back people's lives to normalcy is a pretty long process – especially because of the existence of severe financial constraints.

## **A Systematic Approach - Improves destination Restoration Success**

To assist planners in conducting cost-effective monitoring for destination restoration, techniques can be developed consisting of four components:

1. Planning
2. Construction and Implementation
3. Assessment of Performance
4. Management of the System

## **Planning**

The key element in planning the restoration project would require: Conceptual modeling, site assessments, and cost estimation.

## **Conceptual modeling**

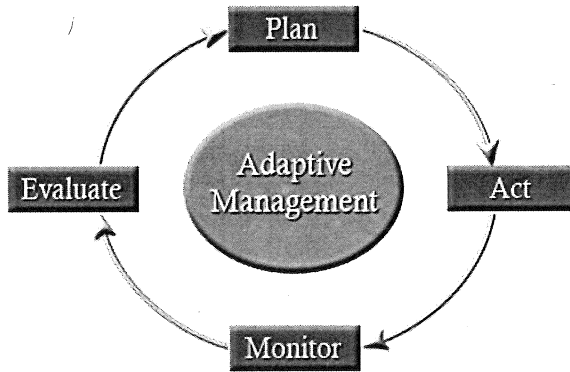
The conceptual model details the structural aspects of the system that must be developed to meet the goals.

## **Site assessment**

If the site lacks the characteristics necessary to reach performance goals, the restoration project will likely fail.

## Cost estimation

The end of the planning stage involves cost estimation. Restoration managers must account for land acquisition, engineering design, and construction, among other factors.



Applying the continual evaluation process of adaptive management leads to cost-effective, successful restoration projects.

## Construction and implementation

Projects that require less physical restructuring of the site are more likely to develop successfully without human intervention. Projects requiring more engineering to massively rework the site often have a higher degree of uncertainty.

## Assessment of performance

Post-implementation monitoring should focus on a parameter indicative of the original goal. There are numerous low-cost ways to effectively monitor a restoration project.

## Management of the system

Restoration plans should be modified according to the principles of adaptive management. Thereby restoration policy can be understood well.



## Conclusion

Disaster Management would suggest measures to relieve pressure on the upcoming destinations through proper crisis intervention. Therefore, an appropriate approach is to be adopted with an integrated planning process. Here environmental concerns can be a critical input for developmental plans.

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