



Tourism in Mediterranean Region: Problems & Prospects

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ABSTRACT

Mediterranean Region is one of the most visited destinations in global terms. An attempt has been made to study the problems and prospects in the tourism sector in the Mediterranean region with prime focus on the political impact on tourism and impact of global economic crisis on the tourism sector in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean sea is located between Europe, Northern Africa and South Western Asia with total area of 9,70,000 square miles and bordering 21 nations on 3 continents. EU guidelines ensures free movement of people, goods, services, common trade policies, regional development as well as tourism development.

Mass Tourism is an developed activity with major economic impact. Further attempt has been made to economic and political impact on the tourism activity across the Mediterranean Region.

KEYWORDS : Mediterranean Region, Tourism Industry, Problems, Prospects

Introduction:

1. Tourism industry in the Mediterranean Region 2010 was a magical year for Mediterranean Region. 2010 saw international tourist arrival of approximately 300 million (UNWTO, 2010) i.e. one third of the international tourist flow worldwide. This region is a prime tourist destination of the world. The major contributors are France, Spain, Italy. The region saw a annual growth of 8% from 2005 to 2010. In southern Mediterranean tourism centric countries are Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan as well as non-tourism centric countries of Algeria and Libya. Moderate tourism is experienced in Middle East, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine, Morocco. Egypt and Jordan saw a maximum growth of 9% in International Tourist Arrivals and 10% in terms of International Tourism Receipts. The region has high dependence on Europeans i.e. 60% of international arrivals are Europeans. This huge inflow of international tourists immensely supports the economic structures in most of the nations of the Mediterranean region. Africa-Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia South West Asia-Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon, Syria

Europe-Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey

Turbulent nations of North Africa i.e. Tunisia and Egypt saw a sharp decline of 31% and 33% respectively in 2010 in terms of International Tourist Arrivals and 51% and 26% respectively in terms of International Tourism Receipts. Israel and Morocco were the only glimmer of hope with positive growth in international arrivals at 0.6% and 1.6% respectively in 2010. International arrivals went down by 41% in Syria, 24% in Lebanon and 16% in Jordan.

2. Problems and Prospects

The political disturbances in the Middle East and North Africa has severely affected the tourism sector of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries which in numeric terms has resulted in 20% decline on average for the entire Mediterranean region in 2010. The sharp decline has been due to the global economic meltdown which begun in the latter half of 2008 and economic impact was sharply felt by the tourism sector especially the European market and Mediterranean region is highly dependent on the Europeans. Turbulences especially political and economic turmoil was experienced in Egypt and Syria which resulted in high drop of the tourism activity in Mediterranean region.

Table I: International Tourist Arrivals in 2011 & 2012 in the Mediterranean Region

NATIONS OF MEDITERRANEAN REGION	INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS (2011) (MILLION)	INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS (2012) (MILLION)
1. MONTENEGRO	1.2	1.26
2. LEBANON	1.65	1.37
3. SPAIN	56.1	57.7
4. ALBANIA	2.86	2.86
5. EGYPT	9.5	11.2

6. FRANCE	81.5	83
7. GREECE	16.4	15.5
8. LIBYA	---	---
9. MONACO	0.3	0.3
10. TURKEY	34.6	35.7
11. MALTA	1.42	1.45
12. ITALY	46.1	46.3
13. CYPRUS	2.4	2.5
14. TUNISIA	4.8	6.0
15. SLOVENIA	2.0	2.1
16. SYRIA	5.0	---
17. ALGERIA	2.4	---
18. CROATIA	9.9	10.4
19. ISRAEL	2.8	2.9
20. MOROCCO	9.35	9.4
21. BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	0.4	0.44

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Table II: International Tourism Receipts in 2011 & 2012 in the Mediterranean Region

NATIONS OF MEDITERRANEAN REGION	INTERNATIONAL TOURISM RECEIPTS (2011) (USD BILLION)	INTERNATIONAL TOURISM RECEIPTS (2012) (USD BILLION)
1. MONTENEGRO	0.86	0.82
2. LEBANON	6.87	---
3. SPAIN	60	56
4. ALBANIA	1.6	1.5
5. EGYPT	8.7	10
6. FRANCE	54.5	53.6
7. GREECE	14.6	12.8
8. LIBYA	0.06	---
9. MONACO	---	---
10. TURKEY	25	25.6
11. MALTA	1.26	1.26
12. ITALY	43	41
13. CYPRUS	2.6	2.6
14. TUNISIA	1.9	2.1
15. SLOVENIA	2.7	2.6
16. SYRIA	6.0	---

17.ALGERIA	0.2	---
18.CROATIA	9.2	8.8
19.ISRAEL	5.3	5.5
20.MOROCCO	7.3	6.7
21.BOSNIA&HERZEGO-VINA	0.65	0.6

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2. Objectives:

- (i) To investigate and review the tourism industry in the Mediterranean region.
- (ii) To analyse the problems and prospects of the tourism industry in the Mediterranean region.
- (iii) To analyse the political and economic impact on the tourism industry in the Mediterranean region.

3. Research Methodology:

The methodology includes the study of the problems and prospects in the tourism industry in the Mediterranean region. An analysis is done on the basis of the concerned literature on Mediterranean region. Descriptive study of the secondary data will help to understand and draw inference on the political and economic impact on the tourism industry in Mediterranean and offer ideas for further probe and research.

5. Suggestions and Recommendations:

The Mediterranean nations especially the Arab nations needs to innovate and develop strategies to encourage investment, product line and generate jobs in tourism. Due to political unrest and economic turbulence the countries need to upgrade their tourism sector in the Mediterranean nations and involve active participation of Public and Private Sector and local population. This close cooperation will bear fruits and allow tourism development to flourish in the Mediterranean region. Most of the tourists visiting Mediterranean region comes from the political and economic bloc i.e. European Union. A significant proportion of tourism revenue is generated by visitors from the Middle East nations such as Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. The gulf region has been affected immensely by global financial turmoil and recession mainly through drop in oil prices. The northern shore of the Mediterranean needs economic recovery in order to restructure the tourism sector in Mediterranean.

The bulk of the income of the Mediterranean originates in the European Union which is a major economic contributor for the Mediterranean region.

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