

Versatility in Hospitality Industry around the Globe A Case Study on Modernisation and Modification of Bhutan

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Abstract: *The Kingdom of Bhutan is well known for its distinct national and cultural identity based on Vajrayana Buddhism (Shrotryia, 2006). Many elements of governmental policy, such as the principle of Gross National Happiness and a cautious approach to tourism development, are rooted in Buddhist values (Ura et al., 2012). In the quest to preserve its culture and safeguard against some of the negative effects of tourism, policy makers in Bhutan have tightly controlled the way tourism operates in the country (Nyaupane and Timothy, 2010). Tourism is essentially a people-to-people business, and the success of the tourism experience and the impacts on the host community depend on the host-guest relationship (Smith, 2012). The scope of this work will cover food and beverage purchasing decisions, human resources, transportation and souvenir sales in the tourism and hospitality industry in Bhutan. To achieve these research objectives, 19 in-depth interviews were conducted with hotel general managers in the main tourism areas of Thimphu and Paro. Our findings reveal that, while the controlled nature of tourism in Bhutan certainly protects its residents from the negative excesses of global tourism, numerous policies also impede tourism and hospitality from spreading their benefits more widely. Founded on the principle of Gross National Happiness (GNH), Bhutan's tourism policy embarks significantly on equitable socio-economic development, environmental conservation, promotion of culture and good governance – the four pillars of GNH. Significant transition took place in 1952 during the reign of 3rd King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck following the introduction of land reform and establishment of the National Assembly in 1953, which marked the beginning of modernization of the country. Until the mid- 1960s, Bhutan was a non monetized economy, operating in isolation from the rest of the world. The birth of the tourism industry in 1974 marked another significant era where tourists/visitors from outside the country were allowed for the first time in the country. Bhutan now generates a significant amount of its national revenue from the tourism industry. The present paper attempts to synthesise the tourism development process in the country by the unique Bhutanese development model and its contribution to the country's economy. [1].*

Keywords: Tourism, Cuisine, Industry, Culture

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