

2.2

Impacts of tourism

Tourism can have a range of impacts, both positive and negative, on a country's development and its environment. Some countries rely heavily on tourism for income and livelihood; for others it is not as important to their future. A geographic method of describing the positive and negative impacts of tourism is to classify impacts as social, historical, environmental, economic, political or technological factors (or SHEEPT factors).

2.2.1 One of the negative impacts of tourism is the associated waste. In many less economically developed countries, there is not the infrastructure to handle the waste created by growing tourism. Some countries, however, have made successful businesses from recycling the waste.

Impacts

There are many positive impacts of tourism on both the host country and tourists themselves. When people travel, not only do they contribute economically to the local environment, they can also take away a greater understanding and appreciation of another place and its people. The local community can benefit financially. However, in countries that have not planned for large-scale tourism, many negative impacts may be felt. These negative impacts can be social, environmental or economic. By identifying these, countries can attempt to address the issues to increase the sustainability and longevity of their tourist industry.

Governments need to plan and provide infrastructure to support their tourist industries. This infrastructure includes roads, bridges and airports, as well as government services, such as sanitation and garbage collection. Investment in infrastructure also benefits local communities.

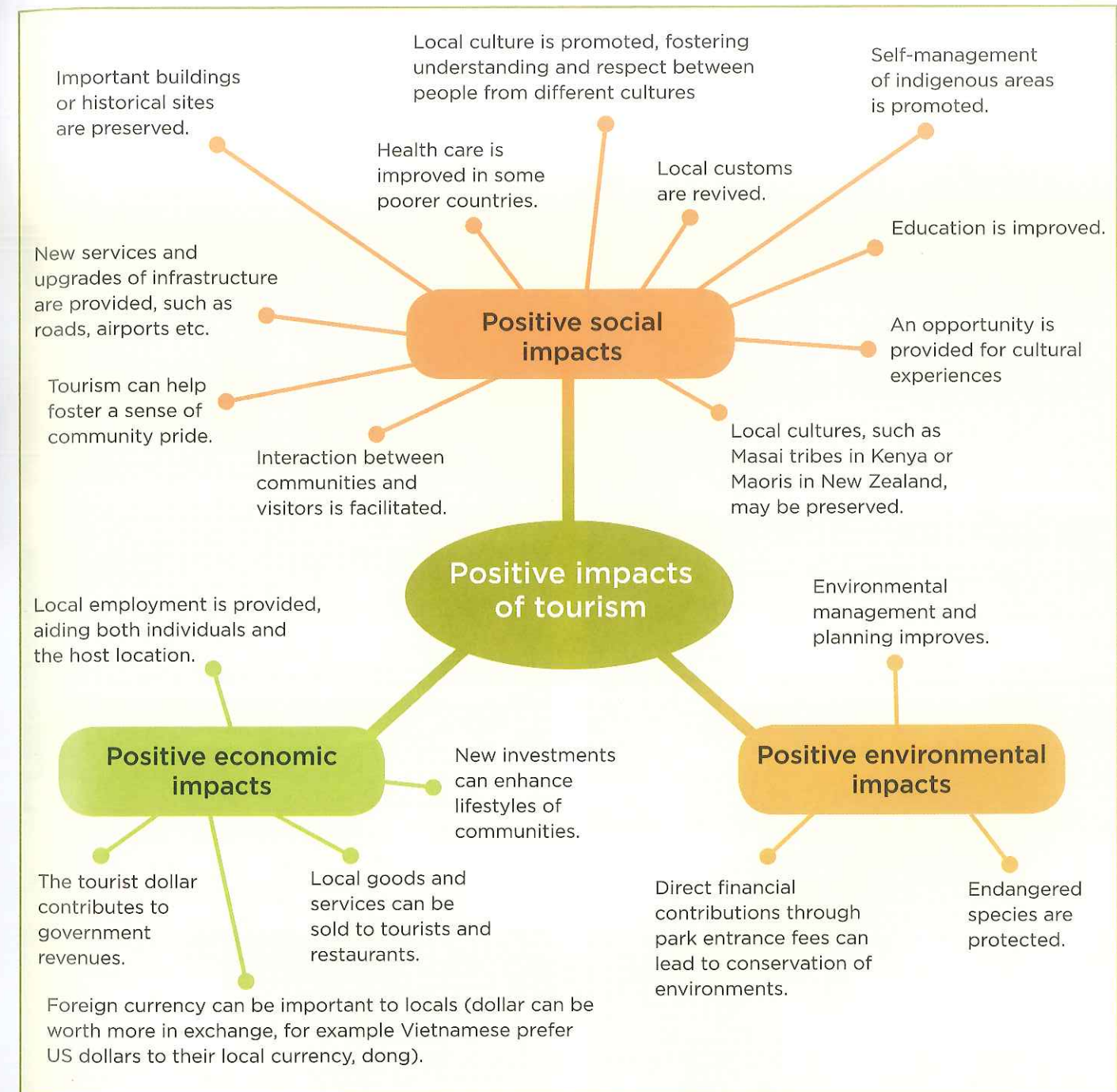
Degrading Mt Everest

Mt Everest is an increasingly popular climbing and trekking destination. This popularity, however, has led to a degradation of the landscape.

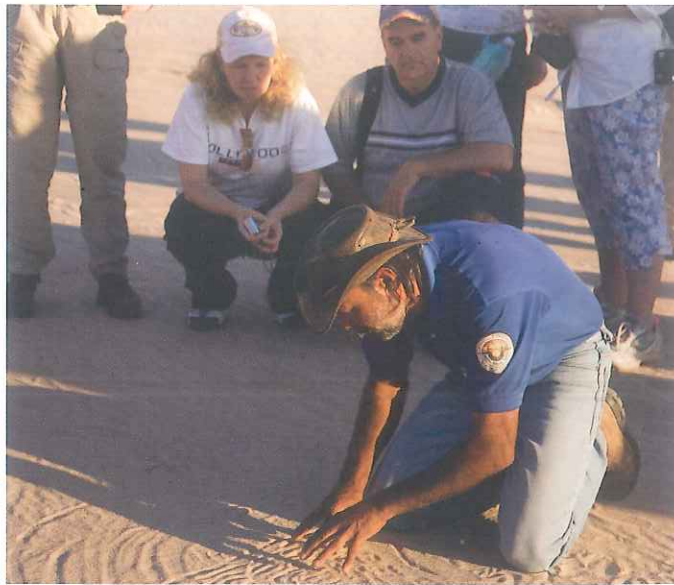
The mountain is now littered with rubbish, discarded oxygen bottles, tents and cigarettes. Climbers regularly ascend Everest to collect these items, as well as the dead bodies of climbers who never made it down the mountain.

Trekking also has a direct impact on deforestation, as one trekker can use as much wood in one day as an average Nepalese family.

Positive impacts of tourism



2.2.2 The positive impacts of tourism can be divided into sub-categories: social impacts (those that involve culture, history and customs), environmental impacts (those that benefit native flora and fauna) and economic impacts (those that involve money).



2.2.3 Indigenous tourism can be a win-win situation. Tourists can learn about and appreciate traditional cultures while providing communities with income and employment opportunities in the tourism sector.



2.2.4 National parks help protect important environments. Park rangers help protect these environments and can play an important role in educating visitors.



2.2.5 Angkor Wat, Cambodia. Income generated by visitors helps preserve and repair this important temple complex.



2.2.6 Local costumes and everyday goods are often displayed for sale in local villages in remote highland areas. In some countries, villagers descend on tourists as they tour the villages and stay with them all day in the hope of getting a sale!

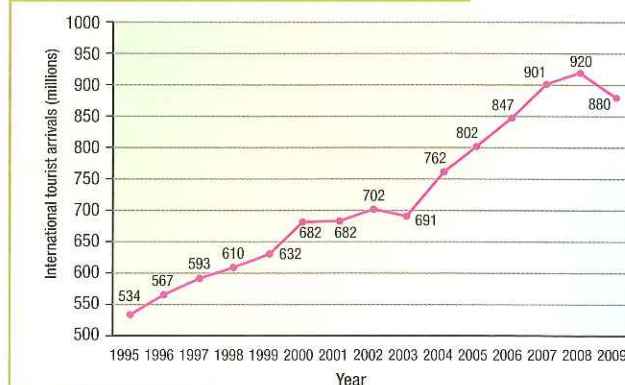


2.2.7 It is important to be aware and sensitive of the local culture and customs when you travel.



2.2.8 Due to political unrest in Thailand in 2010, many tourists cancelled or changed their holiday plans. Tourism authorities in Thailand estimate that the political unrest has cost the industry close to a billion dollars.

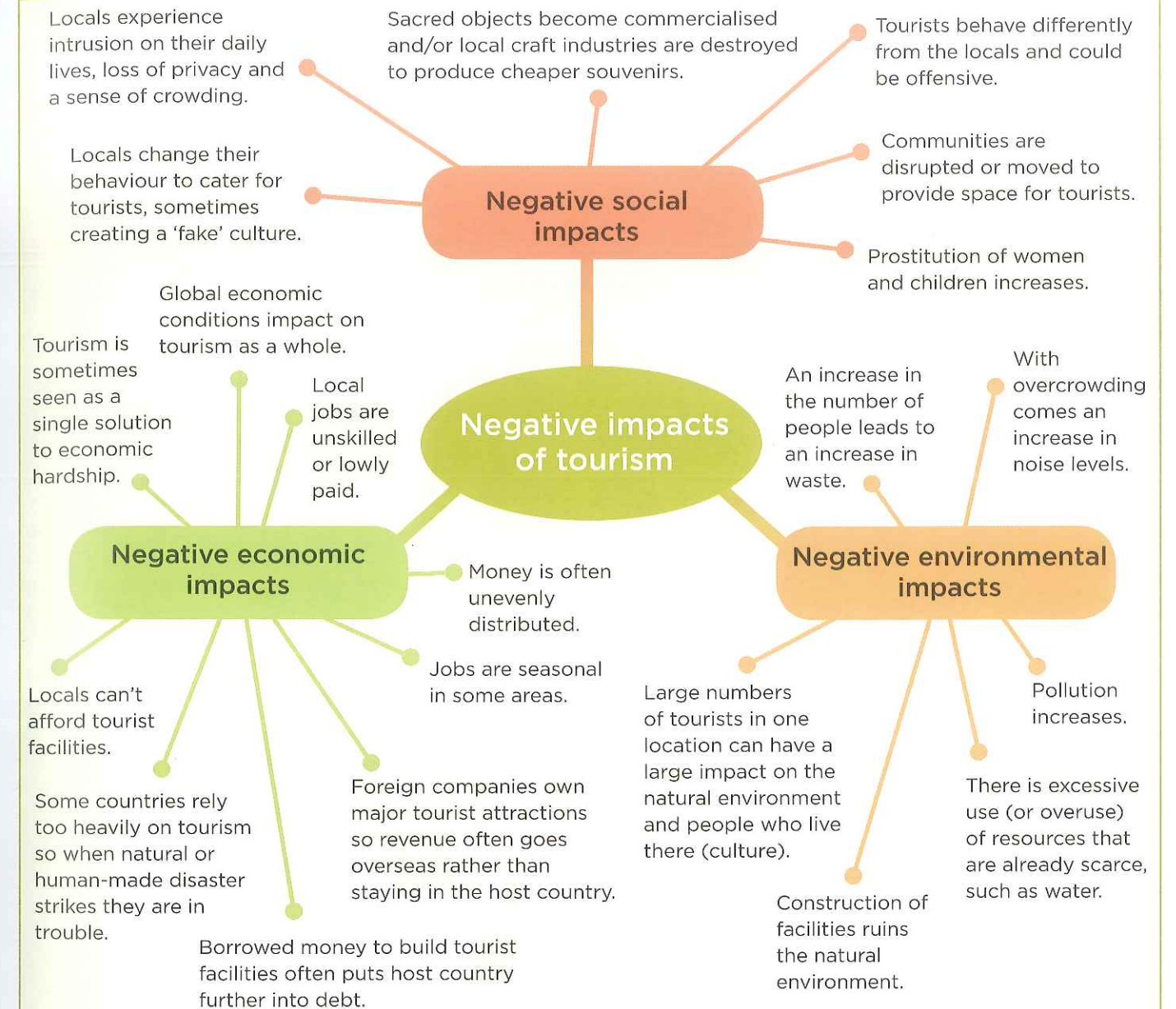
International tourist arrivals, 1995–2009



Source: Pearson

2.2.9 The two decreases in a steady incline are related to the SARS and Bird Flu outbreaks (2003) and the Global Financial Crisis (2008). Local economies suffered due to circumstances beyond their control.

Negative impacts of tourism



2.2.10 Some impacts of tourism can be damaging to a country's historical and cultural heritage and may benefit outside investors rather than the locals.

For tourism to be sustainable in the long term governments need to not only ensure they manage resources and infrastructure to attract tourists but ensure that tourism education and local employment are also considered.

Sustainable tourism

Tourism should be constructed around existing points of interest, be it natural environments, heritage areas, cultural experiences or economic activities. Community involvement in planning and implementation gives tourism a better chance of success and also enables a more sustainable approach to tourism in the long term.