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URBANISM AND OVERTOURISM

Impacts and implications for the city of Hyderabad

Gaitree (Vanessa) Gowreesunker and Mahender Reddy Gavinolla

Introduction

Urbanism and overtourism are new realities in many popular tourism cities (see Sommer, 2018; Kiralova and Hamarneh, 2018; Séraphin et al., 2018; Ashworth and Page, 2011). Studies show that because tourism cities perform multiple functions that are conducive for urbanised tourists (Maxim, 2017), a new breed of travellers driven by globalisation and sophistication are increasingly opting for this form of tourism (see Maxim, 2017; Hall, 2006; Gowreesunker, 2019). As such, in modern tourism settings, research on urban places and their impacts on economy, society and environment have become conspicuous (Kuščer and Mihalič, 2019; Tribe, 1997; Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004). Urban areas are usually places with a dense population, a major transport hub and a gateway for further travel in the region, as well as commercial, financial and industrial centres, and they offer a variety of recreational and cultural experiences (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990; Kiralova and Hamarneh, 2018). As a result, when from one side, urbanism is an evolving phenomenon that is rapidly spreading over the tourism industry, in parallel, overtourism, as another emerging phenomenon, has also started manifesting in many urbanised cities (see Séraphin et al., 2019). Therefore, urbanism and overtourism cannot be treated using the same tool; rather, these are two distinct phenomena which deserve separate attention, as the former is a consequence derived from environmental development (Bock, 2015) while the latter is the outcome of too many visitors at a tourism place (Gowreesunker, 2019). However, in the context of tourism, it would seem that urbanism is linked to tourism and both may be managed jointly. Sommer’s (2018) study on “what begins at the end of urban tourism” is clear evidence that overtourism follows urbanism. Raising this point to another level, it would seem that consumerism has created a new breed of tourists characterised by emancipation, sophistication and urbanisation (Gowreesunker, 2019), whereas technology (among other factors) has influenced the phenomenon of overtourism (see Kuščer and Mihalič, 2019; Séraphin, 2018, 2019). If the root of urbanisation stems from technology, then it would be plausible to suggest that overtourism and urbanism are both connected. Urbanism is obviously a consequence of sophistication (Bock, 2015) whereas overtourism is a consequence of poor destination management (see Séraphin et al., 2018). This point is also supported by Smith et al. (2010) who assert that urban tourism is one of the most complex forms of tourism to manage, as urban areas are not exclusively used by the visitors only but also by residents and
working people who are connected (Kiralova and Hamarneh, 2018). Therefore, it becomes necessary to study both phenomena in parallel to better understand their impacts and implications for the tourism industry.

Additionally, in modern settings, research on urban cities is now gaining increased attention due to the impacts it carries along in its process (Tribe, 1997; Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004). Studies in tourism from the viewpoint of urbanisation have indeed been limited (see Hall, 2006; Sommer, 2018; Ashworth and Page, 2011). With this as background, this chapter aims at exploring the concept of urbanism and overtourism in an Indian city. Hyderabad (India) is chosen as a case study, as it is a well-known “high tech” tourism city having embraced urbanisation, but facing tourism challenges (see Das, 2015; Leonard, 2013; Brito, 2013). India is now a melting pot for cultural tourism and its long-term brand “Incredible India” used at the embryonic stage of its tourism development might no longer be effective with emerging phenomenon like overtourism and urbanism spreading rapidly across tourism cities. The methodological approach is based on the integrative research method and a case study. These are respectively inspired from Torraco (2016) and Yin et al. (2009). The study was solely based on written records, semi-structured interviews and a case study. The outcome of this exploratory study proposes some interesting information on the implications of urbanism and overtourism in Hyderabad. The findings show contrasting outcomes. It is found that urbanisation attracts a large number of visitors which in turn impacts on the social carrying capacity and hence, leads to overtourism. Signs of overtourism are found to be subtle in Hyderabad, but the possibility of the development of anti-tourism movements is high. In contrast, the constantly increasing level of urbanisation has encouraged urban tourism, which, in turn, contributes to the repositioning and diversification of the tourism industry in the state of Telangana.

The outcome of this exploratory study provides an improved understanding of the implications of overtourism and urbanism in Indian cities. Practitioners may draw from its results to make informed decisions on the management and development of urban tourism product based on emerging realities like overtourism. In light of prevailing methodological limitations, the outcome of the study might be indicative, but not necessarily reflective of trends and realities in other Indian cities.

The structure of the chapter is built around the following: The first part of the chapter will throw some theoretical insights on city tourism, urbanism and overtourism. The next part will draw a portrait of Hyderabad as a tourism destination. The third part of the chapter will provide some generic discussions derived from the findings. The focus will be on impacts and implications of urbanism and overtourism in the city of Hyderabad. The final section will close with a concluding note.

**Literature review**

**City tourism**

City tourism is one of the fastest growing travel segments worldwide and the changing nature of city tourism becomes increasingly apparent in many cities (Bock, 2015). It is regarded as one of the oldest and fastest growing forms of tourism where tourists travel for pleasure in cities other than their own (Sommer, 2019; Maxim, 2015). A wide variety of existing tourism resources in the urban area is a precondition of a city to attract tourists with various goals and motivations. If the city offers a greater variety of attractions and complementary capabilities, it can become more competitive in the tourism market. Examples of cities’ attractions are dining out and shopping facilities, performances, events and nightlife together with a wide range of
accommodation capacities (often in a different design or thematic ones). Inner-city leisure spaces, waterfront developments, festival marketplaces, casinos, museums, conference centres and sports stadiums are the physical manifestations of a wave of new local economic development initiatives for urban tourism and economic regeneration (Rogerson, 2002).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), city tourism (also referred to as urban tourism) is considered as trips taken by travellers to cities or places of high population density (UNWTO, 2012, cited in Bock, 2015). Tourism cities perform multiple functions and exhibit various characteristics that influence tourism development within their boundaries. For instance, Maxim (2015) describes London as the capital offering a large variety of attractions, including historic buildings, cityscapes, parks and promenade areas, cultural establishments, numerous restaurants, pubs and clubs, and hosts various cultural and sporting events. Martens and Reiser (2019) portray the city of Dubai as the most urbanised tourism hub in the Middle East. Their study was based on a cognitive image attribute of Dubai as a city destination. Likewise, Jutla (2000) paints an impressive picture of Simla as a tourism city by highlighting its natural and cultural landscape. Tourism cities in fact perform multiple functions and exhibit various characteristics that influence tourism development in these destinations (Simpson, 2016). They accommodate world-class attractions (Law, 2002) and are centres of business and cultural excellence; they offer visitors a number of benefits, such as easier accessibility through better connected airports, better scheduled tourism services, diverse accommodation facilities and a variety of entertainment options (Edwards et al., 2008).

City tourism is mainly driven by emancipation, sophistication and globalisation (Gowreesunkar, 2019). The proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has had a significant impact on the travel industry, as well as on tourist behaviour, and is also transforming the nature of travel and the actual tourist experience (Neuhofer et al., 2015). The new tourists make decisions based on “word of mouse” rather than the traditional “word of mouth”. This implies that choice of destinations is usually made by looking for online information (Séraphin and Gowreesunkar, 2019). According to Bock (2015), what makes city tourism distinct from other types of tourism is that cities have a high density of diverse cultural offerings in a relatively small area, attracting different types of tourists. For instance, the Calabar carnival in Nigeria yearly attracts worldwide tourists to its city called Calabar. African cultures have had a massive impact on carnival celebrations around the world. Despite being perceived as an unsafe and PCCD (post-colonial, conflict and disaster) destination (Séraphin and Gowreesunkar, 2019), this Nigerian city is a main gateway for tourists visiting the country and its success has a direct impact on the visitor economy of the destination. Eventful and happening cities have usually remained successful in offering its people escape routes from their hectic lives (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Quinn, 2005). In his study on city tourism, Bock (2015, p. 3) attributes a number of factors to the rising popularity of city tourism. These are detailed below:

- First, urbanisation is believed to reinforce the trend towards city tourism as people living in cities are more likely to associate with cities and the more they are inclined to visit other cities (UNWTO, 2019).
- Second, without doubt the proliferation of low-cost carriers has had a major impact on the popularity of city trips, mainly due to the fact that they made flights more affordable to the masses, but also because they expanded and improved flight networks, thus offering more city destination options and making them more accessible from a growing number of departure points than in the past, considerably decreasing travel times. As a consequence, this development has made a wide range of cities available to tourists at lower costs (Dunne et al., 2010).
Third, as the proportion of the population taking several trips per year continues to grow, there is a tendency towards an increasing number of shorter holidays rather than just one main holiday per year (TripAdvisor, 2015).

Fourth, due to the increasing availability and penetration of internet-based services during the travel cycle, information can easily be accessed, and the ease of making bookings online and retrieving a wide range of information while in a destination has greatly facilitated city tourism. As the biggest proportion in terms of the booking value of a city trip usually consists of the two elements transport and accommodation, it is relatively easy and not as risky to book online as, for example, a multi-country trip, a round trip or even a beach holiday where the hotel is not easily accessible from the airport by public transport. Moreover, as will be discussed in more detail later, the proliferation of ICTs, and in particular of mobile technologies, increasingly empowers consumers to create and plan further components of their city trip while in the destination. Due to the density of cultural offerings, the quantity of options to choose from in a city surpasses those of other destination types.

Finally, peoples’ perceptions of cities as tourist destinations have been changing. Nowadays, travellers no longer regard a city merely as an entry, exit or transit point, but as a destination in its own right (Dunne et al., 2010).

**Urbanism in tourism**

Urbanism is a “major force” that contributes to the development of towns and cities (Page and Connell, 2009, p. 471), and this is a significant factor for tourist destinations (Edwards et al., 2008). Urbanisation has therefore influenced the phenomenon of city tourism, and has contributed to the repositioning of the tourism industry within national economies (Ashworth and Page, 2011). Urban areas are usually places with a dense population, a major transport hub and a gateway for further travel in the region, as well as commercial, financial and industrial centres. They offer a variety of recreational and cultural experiences (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990; Page, 1995). Urban tourism is an important and one of the most dynamic forms of tourism; it is one of the leading factors of economic increase of European cities (Delitheou et al., 2010).

Urban tourism is sometimes complex and difficult to define, as it depends on many factors such as the size of the town, its history and heritage, its morphology and its environment, its location, its image. Law (2002) characterises urban tourism merely as tourism in urban areas. Ashworth (1992) noted that tourists seeking to visit urban areas consider the experience of urban tourism as closely related to visitor satisfaction and the standard of services based on visitors’ demands, a point also shared by Page (1995). Based on his studies on the relationship between tourism and urban areas, Law (2002) defined three elements of city resources. Primary elements provide the main reasons why tourists visit cities and consist of facilities for activities such as cultural sport and leisure facilities, and factors of recreation and relaxation such as physical characteristics and socio-cultural characteristics. Secondary elements are related to accommodation services, restaurants, shops and other services. The additional items are designed to facilitate access to primary and secondary elements through accessibility e.g. transportation, parking places, tourist information offices, leaflets and maps, and are not the primary attractor of visitors. Urban tourism can generate income and employment in the urban area. Schofield (2011) states that urban tourism can create jobs and revenues for a government that are often higher than the income from other types of destinations. The global options for travel destinations are extensive, so cities compete alongside all others, for visits longer than short breaks, or single visits (Dwyer et al., 2009).
Urbanism and overtourism

Consequences of urban tourism

While the growth of tourism in cities is generally encouraged by policy makers as it brings economic and social benefits to an area (Simpson, 2016), there are also a number of negative consequences which should not be overlooked. For example, existing congestion could get worse due to increased numbers of tourists; certain areas may become overcrowded, and conflicts may arise between the needs of visitors and locals (Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Law, 2002). Other challenges include protection of the environment, conservation of heritage and preservation of the local culture, while improving the quality of life of residents. Therefore, urban tourist destinations face significant challenges. Furthermore, in cities “leisure tourism is now just one of many different mobilities that bring people” to these areas (Maitland, 2016, p. 14), with other less visible forms of tourism also present, such as the VFR market, educational and health tourists, or even internal tourists (visitors from the city itself). The presence of these various forms of mobilities in cities make it difficult to distinguish between touristic and non-touristic behaviour, and thus to understand tourists’ consumption demands. In addition, the sharing economy and peer-to-peer platforms such as Airbnb put pressure on the traditional tourist accommodation model and can create property conflicts (Gutiérrez et al., 2017), adding to the challenges of managing tourism in cities.

In a globalised world that affects tourism development in most cities, these environments face a number of challenges, including pressures from standardisation as they “need to negotiate the challenges of updating their appeal to visitors” while trying to maintain their distinctiveness (Maitland, 2012, p. 1). They are centres of corporate headquarters, business services, transnational institutions and they control “the flows of information, cultural products and finance that, collectively, sustain the economic and cultural globalisation of the world” (Knox, 2005). Despite their advantages, these cities are as vulnerable as other urban destinations to ecological, social and developmental problems (Ng and Hills, 2003). More recently, Maitland (2016) published a paper focusing on how tourists are experiencing world tourism cities, using evidence from London. Worth noting is also the work of Simpson (2016, p. 27) who discusses “tourist utopia” in three “post-world cities” – Las Vegas, Dubai and Macau – destinations with the common characteristic of being enclaves within larger states. Besides the complexities in terms of economic, social or political functions, these destinations have to deal with the diversity of the people experiencing such places either as residents, visitors or migrants (Stevenson and Inskip, 2009). Hence, it can be observed that world tourism cities display a number of characteristics which add to the challenges of planning and managing tourism in urban environments.

Overtourism

Overtourism, as a phenomenon, has been described from various perspectives. In plain terms, it refers to a destination suffering the strain of tourism (Richardson, 2017). In broader terms, it relates to a situation when a popular tourism destination no longer wishes to entertain tourists due to the negative consequences caused by tourism activities. For instance, across Europe, many destinations (Barcelona, Cambridge, Dubrovnik, Florence, Oxford, Rome, Venice, and York) are voicing their concern regarding the development of the tourism industry via protests, graffiti and physical intimidation (see Tapper, 2017; Séraphin et al., 2018). The claim is that overtourism is harming the landscape, damaging beaches, putting infrastructure under enormous strain and pricing residents out of the property market. A common thread in this early work was that excessive tourism concentrations led to harm to the local environment and negative attitudes.
among residents living at popular tourism destinations. Kuščer and Mihalič (2019), on overtourism in Europe, explain that the phenomenon is related to economic, social and environmental unsustainability. According to their study, overtourism implies too many tourists at a place and in an unsustainable way so that sustainable tourism can never be achieved. Indeed, overtourism represents an excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences through enforced permanent changes in their lifestyles, access to amenities, changing physical environment, increase in property price and other economic discomfort which negatively affect their quality of life (Milano et al., 2018). These observations coincide, to a great extent, with the characteristics of urbanism and city tourism discussed above. For instance, countries like Nigeria, Germany and the United Arab Emirates use the world’s online platforms to market their city tourism product like trade fairs and exhibitions (Dubai), Calabar Carnival (Nigeria) and beer festival (Munich) (see www.expo2020dubai.com, www.carnivaland.net/calabar-carnival/, www.oktoberfest-besuch.de/). As a result, over-exposure and visibility of the destination along with successful marketing campaigns conducted by destination management organisations (DMOs) and image building attract more tourists. Because tourism is an information-intensive industry, the search for information is guided by various models (Gowreesunkar and Dixit, 2017), and the internet is considered to be the most powerful because it can quickly alter a tourist’s image of a destination. The image of a destination plays a significant role in its ability to attract visitors; the more positive the image is, the more it attracts tourists, and hence overtourism; the less exposed is a destination, the less it attracts tourists, and hence is less visited (Séraphin and Gowreesunkar, 2019). In today’s technology-mediated environment, word of mouse travels quicker than word of mouth. This implies that tourists share their experience within a click of their computer mouse and their impression counts more than marketing experts. Based on the fact that online reviews play a major role in the way a destination is perceived, it becomes quite obvious that tourists will tend to choose specific, and often, the same destinations.

Over-mobility triggered by new tourism trends (rental websites, low-cost tourism, technology and online information sources, packaged holidays) and the substantial and fortuitous increase in demand for some destinations are also at the origin of the phenomenon of overtourism (cited in Séraphin et al., 2019). With sophistication, globalisation and emancipation, people are indeed increasingly indulging in tourism and this is well supported by indicators from the UNWTO, which reports that the number of international trips taken yearly has increased from 25 million in the 1950s to 1.4 billion in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019). Likewise, the work of Séraphin et al. (2018) on the “Fall of Venice”, clearly explains that current and recent issues of overtourism in Europe are mainly due to a laissez-faire economy which allows policy makers and entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and expand exponentially due to the growth of digital bookings, which promote and offer ceaseless experiences over sustainable travel.

**Contextual framework**

**Hyderabad**

The contextual framework sets out the geographic limits of the study. For the current study, the city of Hyderabad is chosen as a case study. Hyderabad is the capital of the Indian state of Telangana and it comprises two main cities, namely Hyderabad and Secunderabad (Madhusudhan, 2016). With a population of about 8 million and a metropolitan population estimated above 9 million, it is the fourth most populous city and sixth most populous urban agglomeration in India (Das, 2015). Hyderabad is an urbanised city often referred to as the “high tech” city and
it is a major centre for public sector enterprises, education, defence establishments and the pharmaceutical industry and has been on the global map in the last couple of decades due to its emergence as the global hub for information technology, allied services and for highly skilled, trained manpower (Ramachandraiah and Bawa, 2000). Figure 7.1 locates the city of Hyderabad in India.

Tourism in Hyderabad

Hyderabad has emerged as one of India’s world-class tourist cities and according to the Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC), domestic visitors in the Hyderabad circle accounted for approximately 1.7 million visits in the fiscal year 2018 (www.statista.com, 2019). Foreign tourist arrivals rose from 2.33 million in 2016 to 2.71 million in 2017. As a result, tourism is a booming business, due to its rich culture and heritage sites. Hyderabad is a cosmopolitan city gifted with varied cultures, communities, art and architecture. Today this cosmopolitan city has preserved the wealth of heritage as traditional art and architecture in the form of monuments, buildings and lakes, granite rock formations that exhibit a mixture of different cultures and natural landscape. There are a multitude of religious buildings, galleries and shopping streets in the city. Hyderabad comprises both natural tourism and man-made attractions such as the Ramoji Film City, Golconda Fort, Hussain Sagar Lake, Chaar Minaar, Qutubshahi Tombs, Salarjung Museum and State Archaeological Museums, and urban tourists are increasingly visiting Hyderabad for the urbanised aspects of the city (Guntuka et al., 2017). These resources provide a wide variety of attractions for tourists, and over a period of time the city has emerged as a diverse and important tourism destination in India (Karan, 1979). The city is famous for its theme parks and monuments, which include the masterpiece Chaar Minaar, Golconda Fort and the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Site of the Chowmahalla Palace.

Figure 7.1 Location of Hyderabad in India.
Moreover, Hyderabad has been included in the list of the world’s creative cities for gastronomy for the year 2019; the city is famous for local dishes like biryani (flavoured spicy rice cooked with meat and potatoes), haleem (a special spicy soup made with local ingredients and meat) and khoobani (sweet made from a unique local fruit). The area of study, Chaar Minaar, a mosque monument with four pillars (Chaar means four and Minaar means pillar in the local Hindi language), is a global icon of Hyderabad. In this respect, many tourism businesses have been established around this area as it has the strong potential of attracting tourists and investors. Chaar Minaar is also known as the “city of pearls” due to its numerous pearl and diamond trading centres and it has attracted lots of formal and informal tourism businesses. Slocum et al. (2011) define the informal economy as all those individuals and businesses that engage with tourists and the tourism industry, but are not registered with any formal association or trade organisation. Informal business in the Chaar Minaar area comprises street food vendors, local tour guides, transport providers, music performers, artisans, prostitutes, providers of home-stays, tourist helpers and beggars. These form part of the Chaar Minaar landscape and urban tourists are increasing around this area (see Malik and Roy, 2012; Pathirana and Gnanapala, 2015; Hailu, 2017).

According to the TSTDC, the increase in the number of urban tourists in Hyderabad Minaar is favoured by factors such as increased infrastructure, accommodation facilities, transport services and connectivity, particularly the development of international airports, the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) industry and the promotion of tourist attractions. Moreover, rapid urbanisation, increased connectivity, change in the socio-economic condition of the middle-classes, globalisation, the technology business, healthcare and the MICE industry have all increased mass and domestic tourism. With the propagation of globalisation and the development of technology in Hyderabad, the cities of the Global South and North are increasingly connected and more easily able to communicate (Sudhira et al., 2007). With increased demand for growth of IT and IT-enabled services and the changing socio-economic and political situation in Hyderabad, the city took advantage of the developing services sector (Das, 2015) such as the international airport, highways, hotels, convention centres, ultra-modern shopping malls and multiplexes. State government gave immense importance to the development of the tourism infrastructure in the city, particularly at the potential heritage sites, and it was mentioned in the Vision 2020 tourism development and management plan. Over a period of time, and after implementation of the projects proposed in the Vision 2020 plan, the city of Hyderabad has come to generate a global space and flow for tourists. In 2014 the National Geographic’s Traveller magazine listed Hyderabad as the “second best place in the world that one should see in 2015” (Telangana Tourism, 2015).

**Methodology**

Literature reviewed shows that urbanism and overtourism have links as they both have people as a common factor to manage. Therefore, both phenomena need to be researched jointly in order to understand their impacts and implications on the tourism industry. As overtourism is an emerging topic, an evolving one, it was deemed appropriate to use the integrative review method and a case study. These are drawn from the work of Whittemore and Knafl (2005) and Yin et al. (2009) respectively. According to Torraco (2016), integrative literature reviews address two common types of topics, namely mature topics and new and emerging topics. The integrative review method chosen seeks to undertake an interdisciplinary discussion about urbanism and overtourism in the context of the city of Hyderabad. As such, content analysis (websites and online reviews), desk-based research (research publications and newspaper
articles) and a case study were used in order to produce a meaningful synthesis of the overall situation. According to Yin et al. (2009), case studies are employed in many situations when little is known about a topic and when the scope of research is to contribute to the current knowledge, in this case on urbanism and overtourism in Hyderabad. Veal (2011) also underlines the merits of case study methodology in tourism research as it helps in understanding complex phenomena by analysing individual examples.

This exploratory study therefore took place in various phases. The first step comprised a literature review conducted by the two academic researchers whereas the local collaborator was not involved. The aim was to highlight the literature gap. The second stage was undertaken by the second researcher who is a resident of Hyderabad. The study took place from January 2019 to March 2019. This period was chosen, as the main researcher was attending a training session in the city of Hyderabad, and hence, she used the opportunity to collect data; this saved travelling and accommodation costs. Data were collected during weekdays (18 days scattered over ten weeks) and the main investigator was accompanied by the local collaborator. The duration of the survey was approximately eight hours and on a few occasions went beyond nine hours. Since the focus was mainly on urbanism and overtourism, the popular tourist site of Chaar Minaar was chosen for observation.

By focusing on Chaar Minaar (Figure 7.2), the chapter provides rich information on the characteristics of urbanism and overtourism in this tourism site. The study being exploratory in nature, it was deemed appropriate to adopt a qualitative approach which made possible the investigation of the research topic through the analysis of multiple sources of evidence (Yin et al., 2009).

A total of six semi-structured interviews (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008) were conducted with top management and mid-management representatives of the department of Telangana Tourism in the city of Begampet. This technique is one of the most important sources of data collection in case study research (Yin et al., 2009) and has been widely used in tourism studies (Pizam, 1994). The officers were chosen based on their position in the planning and marketing department of Telangana Tourism. They willingly accepted to participate in the interview which was less than one hour in duration. Appointments were sought and the exercise was spread over two weeks (three interviews per week). Questions were formulated around: impression of Hyderabad as a tourism city; strength and weakness of the city; urbanisation and tourism development in the city; the impacts on economy, society and environment; opinion on overtourism; the link between overtourism and urbanism; the future of Hyderabad as an evolving “hi-tech” urbanised tourism destination. The interviews proved particularly useful in gaining rich data on the implications of urbanism and overtourism in Hyderabad. To thank the interviewees, a key ring from Mauritius (the main researcher’s country) was presented as a token of appreciation for their participation in the survey.

To co-ordinate data from observations and interviews, the main researcher kept field notes. Content analysis was done through data selection, a data reduction process, structuring, coding and interpretation of meaning. The use of secondary sources was helpful to identify some similarities and differences with other tourism destinations and cities of India. The primary data were then analysed in conjunction with secondary data. During the final stage, analysis of the written descriptions of both phenomena was undertaken. In so doing, data included in the notebook were read and re-read, bracketed and compared to draw the final implications and conclusion. The final stage also involved the assembling, cross-validating and content analysis of data collected from those methods.

One of the limitations of this study is inherent to case study research, this method being often criticised because it provides little basis for generalisation – “scientific generalisation” (Maxim,
Figure 7.2 Chaar Minaar.
Source: Authors.
2015, p. 14). Although the findings from case studies cannot be generalised when compared with those obtained from random sample surveys for example, a number of inferences can be made and these may apply to other contexts. Indeed, Yin et al. (2009) argue that in case study research another type of generalisation applies “analytical generalisation”, which is oriented towards theoretical propositions rather than enumerating frequencies. Another limitation relates to the representativeness of the officers that took part in the interviews. Even though not every stakeholder was covered in this study, efforts were made to include more representatives from diverse sectors to gain a better understanding of the implications of urbanisation in tourism development in Hyderabad.

Overall findings and discussion

The link between urbanism and overtourism

The overall findings show that city tourism is a complex phenomenon that overlaps with urbanism and overtourism in Hyderabad. Overtourism and urbanism have consequences on people and people are the causes of overtourism and urbanism. Driving factors for city tourism in Hyderabad are mainly an increase in purchasing power of the middle class, improved connectivity, affordable accommodation, development and promotion of the tourist sites, increased concern over safety and security from the government, technology and business tourism. The mentioned factors have boosted tourism demand ultimately leading to overtourism, and overtourism in the city is causing serious threats to the environment and monuments. The same outcome was observed in Lisbon by Richard and Marques (2019). The authors explained the term “overtourism” as an overdose of travellers and the solution was wise cultural management. Indeed, Chaar Minaar might also go through the same phase if timely action is not taken. For instance, statistics from Telangana Tourism show that popular tourist site Golconda Fort attracted around 775,810 tourists in 2004, which increased to 17.2 million in 2017 (Telangana Tourism, 2019). This shows that there is an increase which can lead to an “overdose” as mentioned by Richards and Marques (2019). Due to the rapid urbanisation, the city is receiving an excessive number of visitors, and this has led to Chaar Minaar and Golconda Fort having issues with toilet facilities, water, and sound pollution (Pulla et al., 1985). The impacts of urbanism are also reflected in the consequences of overtourism. For instance, increased traffic congestion due to the increased number of tourists creates noise and air pollution at Chaar Minaar, causing damage to the monument, following which conservation becomes an issue. Similarly, an increase in the number of tourists at the monuments causes drainage and garbage problems, as the cities are not well planned and the streets are not pedestrian friendly. Furthermore, during the season and festival time, it is difficult to manage the number of tourists which blend with the locals and cause friction and anti-tourism behaviour. Interviews from officers revealed that traditionally, tourism was regarded as a profitable activity in Hyderabad, but nowadays, tourists are infiltrating spaces and places so much that the industry is seen as a pain rather than gain, a point also noted by Séraphin et al. (2018) with regard to Venice. To exemplify the context, heritage tourism is ambitiously promoted in Hyderabad, and this has caused those places to be overcrowded not only with tourists, but also with locals (Singh and Gowreesunkar, 2019), thus leading to overtourism. The growing number of tourists to the city is imposing increased pressure on the destination – for example traffic, congestion, pollution, crime and threats to the natural environment. Moreover, it was also noted that during festivals like Ramzaan, the city is overcrowded to the point that locals show resentment. For instance, they do not allow visitors to park their cars near their premises.
Overtourism is relatively new to India and recently started in places like Goa, Agra and Kerala (Routledge, 2001; Sreekumar and Parayil, 2002). Sustaining urban tourism while controlling overtourism with its various social and environmental implications (public transport improvements, traffic congestion, conflicts between hosts and visitors, limited space, street vendors), was recognised as a challenge by interviewees. Sustainability, together with planning and managing tourism, and working in partnership are, however, among the key drivers of success identified by researchers if an urban destination is to succeed in the long term (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007). Therefore, in order to stay competitive on the tourism market, the Telangana Tourism Department needs to better understand the complex environments in which they operate and to take a leading role in bringing together the key stakeholders involved in tourism development in order to address the challenges. Hyderabad as a sustainable city should have concern over its cultural and natural environmental assets, and minimise impacts on locals. One of the major objectives of the Vision 2020 tourism development is not only to generate socio-economic and employment benefits but also to provide quality life to the local community and environmental sustainability (Dwyer, 2000). Although the vision is fulfilled to some extent in the context of economic benefits, the increase in the number of tourists at the major heritage sites has led to the phenomenon of overtourism. However, ultimately the issue is to provide a better quality of life to the local community and a better quality of experience to the tourists, but this can also lead to issues of environmental sustainability. This view is also shared by Pearce (2011), who argues that in most cases, tourism is part of a broader urban context and cannot be separated from other phenomena arising in the tourism environment.

Impact of technology on urbanism

Overall findings also reveal that changes in consumerism and technology have mainly fuelled the phenomenon of urbanism. Looking at Chaar Minaar area through the lens of urbanism, it would seem that the type of tourism product available suits corporate time-conscious visitors who for a short period of time have all possible realisable options to choose from (Bock, 2015). Tourists of the twenty-first century are busy and they look for facilities to capitalise on time and money (Gowreesunkar et al., 2018). Obviously, urbanism has not only boosted tourism, but also created a new breed of tourists whose characteristics can be explained along a spectrum of emancipation and sophistication. The “new urban tourists” visiting Hyderabad are savvy and knowledgeable and their decision-making process is influenced mostly by online reviews. Tourists’ perception of Hyderabad is shaped by many factors, among which, online reviews dominate, a point highlighted in the work of Gowreesunkar and Dixit (2017). Undoubtedly, technology has a major role to play in converting destinations to overvisited places and hence overtourism. Taking the example of Haiti (a post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destination), Séraphin (2016) has explained how technology can completely alter the image of a destination. Technology-savvy tourists draw extensively on the internet, and these interactive media not only yield information but also provide feedback, and hence influence the image formation and decision making of tourists. In most cases, common people are seen as experts, as they post about their experience and tourists mostly trust their comments as compared to dedicated and qualified marketers. Exposure of destinations on social media and TV shows completes the traditional campaigns of promotion and communication from official tourism boards and maximises their visibility (Gowreesunkar and Dixit, 2017), eventually causing more people to visit and hence, over-visitation.
Cultural tourism and overtourism

Festivals play a major role in the promotion of the city tourism and attract large numbers of tourists. Interviews revealed that in Hyderabad, festivals are tourism resources attracting both locals and tourists. For instance, in September and October, the state celebrates a floral festival (in local Telugu language it is called “Bathukamma”, which means “Live Forever”). The festival is celebrated for nine days and on the ninth day Bathukamma is immersed in a pond or lake or other body of water. Although the festival is seasonal and is celebrated for nine days, with the floral immersion taking place on the final day, it has created several environmental issues in the city due to the lack of control, mismanagement and the unsustainable way the celebrations proceed. However, floral immersion is eco-friendly, having several medicinal values. The festival has started being celebrated on a large scale in the city. Bonalu is a major Hindu festival of the city celebrated annually either in July or August, when Goddess Mahakali is worshiped and given thanks. Mahakali exists in various forms. Celebrations begin at Golconda Fort followed by other parts of the city. Thousands of devotees throng the temples to pay obeisance to Mahakali with folk dance and music. The festival attracts a large number of visitors to the Golconda Fort (Telangana Tourism, 2019). Likewise, Ganesh Chaturti, a Hindu festival, is celebrated annually in August or September with the installation of Ganesha idols. Generally, the festival in Hyderabad ends on the tenth day and the idols are carried in a public procession to Hussain Sagar Lake to be immersed in the water. On the one hand, these festivals promote cultural tourism, but on the other hand, they attract mass tourists (domestic and international). As a result, locals suffer the consequences of overtourism and overcrowding. The festivals cited above are witnessed by thousands of visitors and on immersion day at Hussain Lake, roads are closed and many non-Hindu residents face challenges to use the public infrastructure. Traffic restrictions and congestion are witnessed and access to basic amenities and facilities, water, toilets disturb the locals’ routine lives. Moreover, there are no public toilet facilities in the vicinity of the Hussain Sagar Lake. Therefore, the lake and other water bodies in the city are polluted due to mass tourism activities. Use of plastic bags and carrier bags at the lakes are also leading to an increase in solid waste, creating problems for the aquatic animals and affecting the quality of water. Additionally, loss of originality, authenticity and commodification has also been observed (Madhusudhan, 2016). These consequences have obviously caused an antagonistic sentiment among the locals.

In recent years, terms like overtourism became unfortunately common in a number of tourism destinations and these situations gave rise to further new phenomena like tourismphobia and anti-tourism movements. Cities such as Barcelona, Venice and London are voicing their concern regarding the development of the tourism industry via protests, graffiti and physical intimidation (see Smith et al., 2010; Tapper, 2017). These destinations under anti-tourist anger are already planning to monitor tourists and tourism more closely possibly by limiting the number of visitors. In the context of Hyderabad, signs of overtourism are found to be subtle, but the possibility of an anti-tourism movement remains high. Locals tend to manifest their discontent by troubling tourists. For instance, in the interview gathered from Telangana Tourism officers, it was noted that locals misguide beggars in order to discourage them to wander in their local environment. For instance, a few observations indicated that locals were expressing discontent in the preferential treatment given to foreigners in shopping centres. The tourism industry is based on the people and places and the interaction between them and the industry is extremely sensitive to the social and physical conditions of the destination’s micro and macro environment. The reasons for anti-tourism are due to the fact that the large number of tourists visiting Hyderabad are affecting the quality of life of locals and they do not really buy from locals. Rather, they
use several natural and man-made resources and cause undue pressure on some infrastructures, on the quality of residents’ daily lives, their mobility and in some areas on the price and rent of resident accommodation, goods and services. This has been witnessed in the work of Mathew and Sreejesh (2017) who investigated the impact of responsible tourism on destination sustainability and the quality of life of the community in the state of Kerala (India).

Since urbanism attracts urban tourism, the state is interested to further invest for profitability while the locals’ concerns are not prioritised. Hence, this kind of development slowly leads to residential areas losing their unique identity and character due to businesses increasingly adapting their offerings to the lucrative tourist demand. The “high tech” city is an example. But, from another perspective, it can also present development opportunities for deprived areas like Borabanda, Kamala Yadgar and Macca Masjid.

**Urbanism and re-invented beggarism**

Interviewees reveal that urbanism has also attracted a new form of tourism as recently researched by Gowreesunkar et al. (2019). Historically, cities have been major tourist attractions and potential sources for both formal and informal businesses (Ashworth and Page, 2011). For instance, in Chaar Minaar, among the informal businesses are counted beggars, as studies show that begging is an informal profession in Chaar Minaar and beggars are often involved in some forms of trade with locals (see Malik and Roy, 2012; Pathirana and Gnanapala, 2015; Hailu, 2017). Khan (2017) has reported that there are about 15,000 beggars (of which 1,500 are children) in the city of Hyderabad. The survey was undertaken by a voluntary organisation in the context of a governmental mission to make Hyderabad a beggar-free city. The study further reveals that approximately 14,000 beggars roam around tourism cities, of which 98% of them are professionals earning as much as 24 crore Indian rupees (US$3,374,400) per annum. This gives an indication of the amount of money yielded from the begging business and therefore provides legitimacy to the work of Riaz and Baloch (2019) who argue that a growing number of educated people are now increasingly joining the begging business rather than respectable professions. As a result, the new smart and savvy beggars are now increasingly tapping into city tourism (see Delap, 2009; Brito, 2013; Gössling et al., 2004; Andriotis, 2016). They play on the sympathy of tourists and try to capitalise on this encounter by establishing contact with the tourists in order to maximise benefit, even after the end of their visit. Beggarism is found to be a networking activity, where beggars capture attention by using physically disabled children, pathetic-looking old people and pity-evoking mothers carrying children in order to establish a contact to be used in the long term. For instance, connected beggars operate in a cartel and from key locations to maximise their prospects. As such, they are found near important public places like bus stops, metro stations, public gardens, religious sites, tourist markets, taxi stands among others. With progress in technology, begging has turned out to be a lucrative form of business in many tourism countries (see Bukoye, 2015; Andriotis, 2016; Qiao et al., 2017) and educated people are found to be more interested in joining the begging business rather than respectable professions (see Riaz and Baloch, 2019). From an urban tourism perspective, begging is seen as part of the tourism process, as engaging with beggars is a way of experiencing the local lifestyle and hence it contributes to the tourists’ experience (Brito, 2013; Kotler et al., 1993). For instance, Brito (2013) identified a type of tourist in India who regularly visited and had privileged relations with individuals belonging to the begging community. A similar observation was also noted in the city of Heraklion (Greece); beggars were successful in evoking pity and they established contact with a small number of sympathetic tourists (Andriotis, 2016). Moreover, performing beggars also attract tourists (Figure 7.3). From a tourism point of view, begging can be a very powerful pull
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Figure 7.3 Performing beggars in Chaar Minaar.

Source: Authors.
factor because of its authenticity, a point also shared by Qiao et al. (2017, p. 282): “begging can be transformed into an activity that is seen as part of local culture or traditions, ‘begging’ could be seen as adding to the flavor of destinations”.

**Destination management**

According to Minguzzi (2006), destination management organisations (DMOs) are responsible for the planning, marketing, management, product development, industry advocacy and coordination of the tourism destination. The DMO is the nerve centre at the destination and as such, its role is not only focused on cost minimisation or customer satisfaction, but rather on relationship optimisation (Gowreesunkar, 2019). City tourism is an opportunity for communities and their people to share the benefits of tourism, which is why the relations between the sector and the communities need to be strengthened. In contrast, overtourism creates frustrations among stakeholders and degradation of tourism resources while urbanisation does not always favour locals as per data collected in Hyderabad. To tackle both issues and related perverse impacts, the role of the DMO is key, as it is the authority which regulates the tourism system and works for the benefit of the destination and its people. Prioritising the welfare of residents above the needs of the global tourism supply chain is as important as satisfying the increasing demand of tourism and sustaining tourism stakeholder businesses. Furthermore, it is observed that one of the leading strategies to be adopted in pursuit of overtourism reduction is pushing tourism from over-demanded to under-demanded spaces. While such a policy may make some sense, it also encapsulates several risks and, if not well managed and controlled, may end up shifting overtourism to other locations instead of reducing the consequent stress. The DMO’s role is therefore to devise pre-emptive strategies to ensure a balance is maintained and destinations have their share in tourism.

**Conclusion**

This chapter sought to provide some insights on the implications of urbanism and overtourism in the city of Hyderabad. Observations and opinions drawn together, it would seem that urbanism and overtourism are inevitable in an era characterised by globalisation, sophistication and emancipation. Because of the overlapping nature of overtourism and urbanism, it is important to re-think city tourism from a refreshed perspective. Overtourism and urbanism have consequences on people who nurture contrasting and conflicting interests and people are the cause of overtourism and urbanism. One of the critical success factors in this vicious circle lies in the role played by DMOs. DMOs need to ensure that product development achieves a balance between the optimal tourist experience and a commensurate local benefit. Tourists must also play their part by making travel choices that are sensitive to the places they visit and those who live in and around them. Tailor-made management strategies like creative tourism may be developed to cope with the current situation. Research, planning and ongoing dialogue between stakeholders like tourism operators, regulators, civil society groups and local residents are essential. Prioritising the welfare of local residents above the needs of the global tourism supply chain is obviously vital, as residents form an integral part of the tourism experience. Moreover, prime consideration needs to be given to ensure that the level of visitation fits within a destination’s capacity. Last, but not least, it is important to learn from lessons derived from destinations facing challenges of urbanism, overtourism and anti-tourism.
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References


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