

Develop the Egyptian tourist market to enhance Accessible tourism according to the international standards

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الملخص

يهدف البحث الحالي الي تنمية السياحة الميسرة في مصرمن خلال عرض الامكانيات المتاحة للسياحة الميسرة في مصر بحيث تتوافق مع المعايير الدولية للسياحة الميسرة . كما تكمن اهمية البحث الحالي في تطبيق الية هذه الامكانيات السياحة الميسرة وفقا للمعايير الدولية لقمفهوم التنمية المستدامة وتطبيقها في قطاع السياحة .و يشمل هذا الهدف في توفير سبل الراحة والرفاهية والامان بما يتماشى مع متطلبات هذه الشريحة ومدى توافر البنية التحتية والىفوق تحية في مصرلاتخاذها كمقصد سياحي يعمل علي جذب السياحة الميسرة لذلك تعد هذه الخطوات هامة لتطبيقها في مصر في قطاع السياحة من خلال التطبيق في مجال النقل والسياحة والسفر واماكن الاقامة . واشتملت ادوات هذا البحث علي المقابلات الشخصية مع الخبراء في قطاع السياحة كاتحاد الغرف السياحية وشركات السياحة وايضا في مجال الطيران تحديدا شركة مصر للطيران كشركة وطنية قابضة لقطاع الطيران وقد اسفرت

1 - باحثة ماجستير - كلية السياحة والفنادق- جامعة حلوان

نتائج البحث عن وجود بعض الفجوات التي يجب اشباعها لتوفير وسائل للراحة والرفاهية لتطبيق السياحة الميسرة في مصر طبقا للمعايير الدولية .

Abstract

The current research aims to display the criteria and facilities for accessible tourism in Egypt according to international standards. The importance of the current research is implementing the mechanisms and facilities for accessible tourism, that are in line with international standards for the concept of sustainable development and its application in the tourism sector in the Arab Republic of Egypt. This goal includes providing means of comfort, luxury and safety in line with the concept of sustainable development and the availability of infrastructure and super infrastructure in Egypt for taking it as a tourist destination that works to attract it to facilitated tourist destinations. Therefore, these steps are important to be applied in Egypt in the tourism sector through application in the fields of transportation, tourism, travel and accommodation. The tools of this research included personal interviews with experts in the tourism sector, such as the Federation of Tourist Chambers and tourism and travel agencies, and also in the field of the aviation sector, specifically Egypt Air, as a holding company for the aviation sector. The results of the research show that there are some gaps which need to be filled and the necessity of providing new means of comfort and luxury for applying

accessible tourism in Egypt in accordance with international standards.

Keywords:

Analyzing criteria - Accessible tourism - Egypt – Standards

Introduction: - 1

Tourism is a unique industry that attracts different types of tourists as it became a desire for recreation and fulfilment of motives. It also became a means for development for many destinations all over the world. All people should be capable to experiences and participat in tourism activities. People nowadays have access needs, whether or not related to physical conditions. some have intellectual limitations, disabilities, or age.(Devile & Kastenholz 2020) These different segments cannot be neglected. The Accessible Tourism Destination was enhanced in 2019 by ONTWO. A destination that fulfils needs and desires to enhance its tourist demand. (Jaelani, A. (2019).

Disabled people can be specified as follows:

- a) people with locomotion limitations
- b) people with sensory limitations
- c) people with speech limitations
- d) people with cognitive limitations
- e) people with mental limitations (Scheffers & Moonen 2023).

Although one billion or 15% of the world's population live with a form of disability (The World Bank, 2019), a few examples of good practices in accessible tourism have been implemented.

Those people with disabilities wish to enjoy their holidays with their families and friends. All over the world, the rights of people with disabilities have been enhanced to equal participation in tourism. As a result, increased demand for

accessible tourism facilities, products and service changes should occur. As (Ozogul and Baran 2016) said “tourism is a right for all people”. Therefore, it is necessary that the Egyptian market must implement appropriate applications, regulations and standards to support and serve accessible tourism. Technological advancements have made tourism witness a lot of changes from time to time. It have saved efforts, cost and effort. Technological advancements can be used to make accessible tourism achievable.

2 – literature Review

1 Definition of Disability

A disabled person means someone who needs rehabilitation service to meet the basic needs in society because impairment such as movement, related function, sensory function and mental function brings physical, social economic and psychological disability (Carty, et al ,2021)In Egypt there are approximately 5% of the total population has some form of disability. (Ghalwash, et al, 2021).

Accessibility is a central element of any responsible and sustainable development policy. It represents human rights imperative and an exceptional business opportunity. accessible tourism benefits people with disabilities and all the society as well. So, it's considered a social right for both citizens and visitors (Sica, Sisto, and Cappelletti, et al 2020).

Accessibility is a mean of ensuring that people with special needs are able to exercise their rights appropriately and face

social isolation by fully participating in society on equal terms with others (jBeqiraj,et al, 2019). A person with a disability is a person who cannot exercise all his or her rights in society, particularly his or her rights to travel or enjoy other tourism services as a result of a temporary or permanent disability. Moreover, people with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. People with temporary disabilities are people with crutches during a temporary period, the elderly, people carrying many bags, small children or people who are big size or dwarfed (El Shamy, & Elsehely, 2021)

Importance of accessible tourism

Accessible tourism enables all segments of people with disabilities to participate in and enjoy tourism experiences. These segments have the right to access their needs, whether or not related to a physical condition. Such as, older and less mobile people have access needs, which can become a huge obstacle when traveling or touring. Thus, the role of importance of accessible tourism is ensuring the tourist destinations, products and services to be facilitated to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. This includes publicly and privately owned tourist locations, facilities and services.

Accessible tourism involves a collaborative process among all stakeholders, Governments, international agencies, tour-

operators and end-users, including persons with disabilities and their organizations (DPOs). Implementation of accessible tourism in tourist destination should involves many factors, including accessing information, long-distance travel of various sorts, local transportation, accommodation, shopping, and dining. The impact of accessible tourism thus goes beyond the tourist beneficiaries to the wider society, engraining accessibility into the social and economic values of society.so Egypt has to put into consideration accessible tourism.

Egypt is preparing its market to receive such segment with all needs and services. Accessibility is a central element of any responsible and sustainable development policy. It is both a human rights imperative, as well as an exceptional business opportunity. In this context, accessible tourism does not only benefit persons with disabilities, it benefits all of society.

There are 12 million persons with disabilities in Egypt and since the impact of disability extends to the families of the individuals, there are about 36 million persons who are affected by disability in Egypt, which makes up 35% of the total population, according to the United Nations Development Programme.(disabilityin .org,2022)

To ensure that accessible tourism is developed in a sustainable manner requires that tourist destinations go

beyond ad hoc services to adopting the principle of universal design, ensuring that all persons, regardless of their physical or cognitive needs, are able to use and enjoy the available amenities in an equitable and sustainable manner. This approach foregoes preferential or segregated treatment of differently abled constituents to permitting uninhibited use of facilities and services by all, at any time, to equitable effect.

The improvements to physical and service infrastructure that come with a focus on accessibility also encourage a more multigenerational focus in development planning. For families with small children, accessible infrastructure – particularly in transportation, city planning and building design – improves the ability of these families to participate in social and cultural activities.

In the recent 2030 Agenda for Global Action containing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2019), “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. The universal design for accessible and sustainable transport systems, inclusive urbanization, and access to green and public spaces. [The United Nations World Tourism Organization](#) (UNWTO) predicted tourism will increase and experience sustained development, reaching 1.8 billion international tourists by 2030.

The United Nations is committed to sustainable and equitable development. Certainly, making basic adjustments to a

facility, providing accurate information, and understanding the needs of disabled people can result in increased visitor numbers(Cerutti, S., & Trono, A. 2020) Improving the accessibility of tourism services increases the quality and their enjoyment for all tourists, as well as improving quality of life in the local communities. (Streimikiene, etal(2021).

The tourism industry in Egypt is considered one of the biggest economic revenue in the balance of payment. As 25%of Egypt's gross domestic product (GDP) is coming from the tourism sector.(*FaladeObalade, et al 2019*).

Egypt has adopted the sustainable concept since 2015, it has set a strategy to follow the 18 goals to reach sustainability.

Accessible tourism is a part of the responsibility and sustainability strategy. It represents human rights, implementing the facilities and services needed in an essential means in achieving such a concept.

Car parking facilities and location	Pathways – provision, gradient and camber	Directional and locational signage
Audible and visual signals/warning signals	Stairs/lack of lifts	Showers and change rooms roll-in showers
Ramps – provision, gradient, camber	Doorways, doors and circulation space	Handrails – provision and positioning
Public utilities – gateways, checkouts,	Telephones, post boxes, automated teller Machines etc.	Street crossing provisions and time delays for pedestrian crossings
Lighting levels	Location and types of controls – switches, door handles, water taps etc.	Hearing augmentation systems
Recreational facilities – swimming pools, spas etc.	Furniture and fittings – height and location	Toilets numbers and unisex provision

Fig 1 Access requirements in the tourist destination for people with disabilities(PWD) according to

Source (Chakwizira et al, 2021)



Fig 2: Standards for Infrastructure according to disabled people

source (*Amucheazi et al, 2020*).



Fig 3:Standards for Airports and Air travel disabled people

according to source (Allen et al,2019)

1- mobility disabilities in the airport

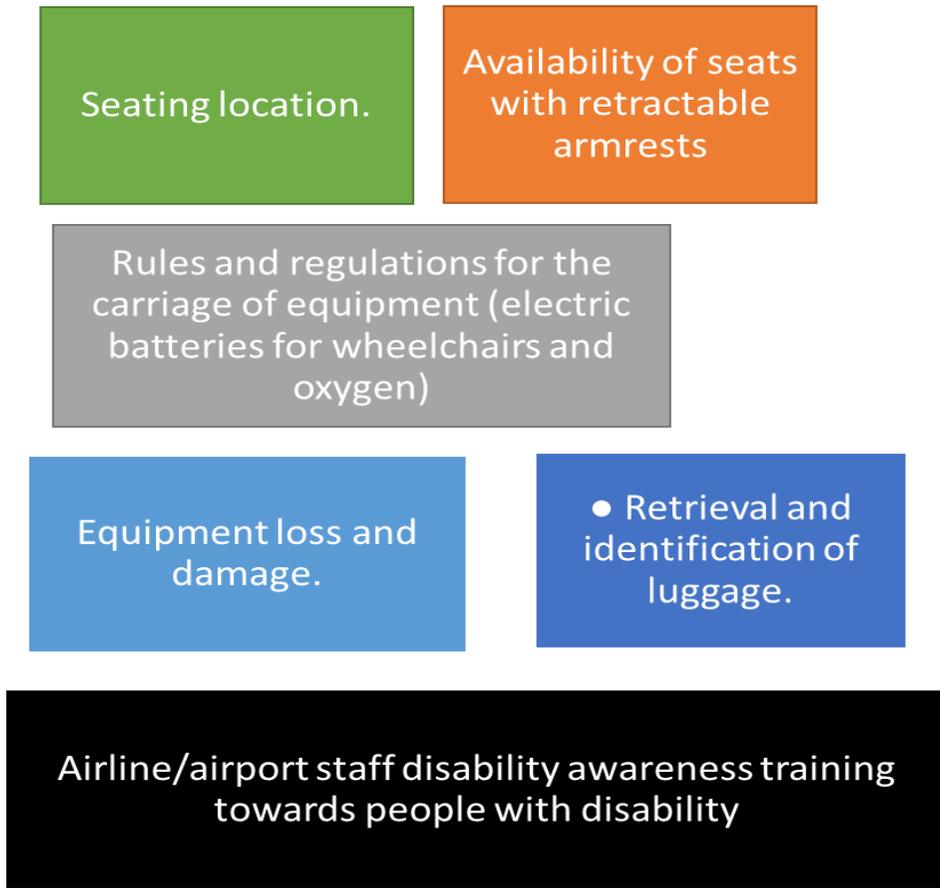


Fig 4 :Standards for transportation for disabled people

Source:(Davies, 2020)

2-Standards for Rail for the disabled people according to (Kočárková, et al ,2020).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barrier Free access to railway stations including car parks, rampways and unisex accessible toilets, baby change facilities. ● Assisted ticketing service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tactile directional and warning tiles on railway platforms. ● Braille signage, and Universal clear signage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hearing Loop assistance at railway stations and on trains. ● Trained customer assistance. ● Portable ramps to access trains. ● Spacious seating areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On board – long haul – Accessible unisex toilet (with baby change facility). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Universally accessible information (web pages, alternative format brochures). ● Dedicated Assistance station service.
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Fig 5: Guidelines for Buses for disabled people according to Source(Unsworth, et al, 2021).

The most important standard access information requirement about accommodations for disabled people.

involve the following: according to (Pehlivanoğlu, 2019).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of continuous pathways (from parking or drop-off throughout all hotel facilities and to the room) ● Provision of orientation for people with vision impairments, including blindness; ● Table heights; 	<p>Reception counters are too high.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bed heights; ● Clearance under beds; ● Switch and handle locations; ● Hand-held shower hose ● Lever taps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toilet height; and positioning of the toilet (distance from the walls and front clearance). 	<p>No steps into rooms; Door widths and Door stops weight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Location of cupboards, fridge, TV, clock radio, telephone, ironing equipment, etc.; ● Availability of telephone typewriters and visual signals for deaf people; 	<p>space in rooms; Location of cupboards, fridge, TV, clock radio, telephone, ironing equipment, etc.;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability of telephone typewriters and visual signals for deaf people; 	<p>Uncluttered furniture layout;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cupboard height and reach; ● Access to balconies; ● Mirror location; ● Hand basin positioning; ● Need for adequate shower chair or bench; ● Location of handrails;
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Challenges that confront the disabled may include:

1. Untrained professional staff capable of informing and advising on accessibility issues
2. Inaccessible booking services and related websites.
3. Lack of accessible airports and transfer facilities and services (*Mahmoudzadeh & Kourdi Sarjaz, 2019*).
4. Unavailability of adapting and accessible hotel rooms, restaurants, shops, toilets and public places.
5. Inaccessible streets and transport services.
6. Unavailable information on accessible facilities, services, equipment rentals and tourist attractions. (*LINDEROVÁ & SCHOLZ, 2019*).

Parts of the Accessible Tourism Chain:

This service chain consists of 3 parts:

- a) Travel preparation including preparation, provision of information, and booking.
- b) Travel action including the journey to a destination, arrival and orientation, accommodation, catering, leisure time and sports, service and assistance, entertainment and culture, tours and shopping, and the return journey (*Rebstock, 2018*).
- c) Travel post-processing involving memories and confirmation (El Shamy, et al ,2021). In general, people with disabilities have the same travel requirements as ordinary people; however, a person with disabilities will face obstacles that are different from those that ordinary people

may face while making a trip. Thus, disabled people make different demands to the tourism chain. So, it's very important not to forget one of these chain links, because "a journey is like a chain. (El Shamy,et al ,2021)

Research methodology:

The research focused on applying the criteria of accessible tourism in Egypt according to the standards of accessible tourism. The research used data collected from semi-structured interviews.

Research instrument

For data collection, the methodology of the research is based on semi-structured interviews that are considered an appropriate technique for commonly used in qualitative research. They allowed us to explore the various aspects related to accessible tourism semi-structured interviews allow researchers to collect data that are rich in detail. The interview form was prepared to achieve the research goals to assess the current status of Accessible Tourism in the Egyptian tourism sector, and also to detect the steps taken to minimize the barriers facing Accessible Tourism.

The interviews were conducted on a telephone basis and were conducted with top managers, experts, and decision-makers in the public and private sectors. Interviews have been conducted with travel and tourism agencies in Cairo at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, The General Egyptian Authority for Tourism Promotion, with the aviation

sector, and accommodation sector to explain their views about the standards and mechanisms of accessible tourism in Egypt. These interviews were from August 2022 through November 2022. The interview questions were **divided into 3 main objectives:**

1-Evaluating the strategies of applying accessible tourism in Egypt Air(Aviation sector) and its accessible services for people with disabilities, PWD.

2- Measuring the criteria of services in the Ministry of Tourism and the facilitated infrastructure for people with disabilities(PWD)

3-Are there standards for applying accessible tourism in the accommodation and transportation sector?

Each one of these axes contains a set of questions aimed to clarify their point of view depending on their reality of tourism experiences related to their positions as experts.

1- Evaluating the strategies of applying accessible tourism in Egypt Air (Aviation sector) and its accessible services for the disabled, elderly, patients, and children.

This axis clarifies experts' opinions about the aviation sector in improving accessible services for disabled passengers with limited mobility. Experts confirmed(100%) that EGYPT AIR put equipment on the plan to suit people with special needs. patients, and elderly who need to travel. Egypt Air developed a number of guidelines for airports to ensure the possibility of access to travel. according to experts (most of them). All experts announced that Egypt Air is applying the standard and mechanisms of accessible travel depending on IATA

regulations, they also declared that Egypt Air worked to offer a 20% discount for people with special abilities.

2-Measuring the criteria of services in the Ministry of Tourism and the facilitated infrastructure for people with disabilities(PWD).

(3 from 6) experts agree (50%)that there are serious steps to remove existing challenges and barriers facing) PWD) and find an innovative solution to allow this special segment to enjoy tourism activities with accessibility like other tourists.

But there are (Three of the other six) who see that the Ministry of Tourism still needs to work to create the appropriate climate in terms of infrastructure, providing training and developing market policies to attract this segment.

3-Standards for applying accessible tourism in the accommodation and transportation sector.

All experts agree(100%) that hotel establishments are a trend towards accessibility in the accommodation sector. And at the beginning, the preparation of hotels for this segment was an individual effort, especially in the Sharm el Sheikh and Hurghada hotels and recently it has become a general policy of the state so this kind of hotel is mandatory within the most important standards of the hotel establishments rooms. The new standards have been applied to the Egyptian hotel sectors in all tourist destinations, starting from Alexandria in the north to Aswan in the south.

-Results and conclusion

1. Cairo International Airport provides facilities and services for people with special needs and the elderly and provides lounges to facilitate travel procedures and clear papers by providing wheelchairs, in addition to the cooperation of customer service and airport workers with this category of travelers.
2. Egypt Airplanes are working to provide a facilitating tourist service for people with special needs, the elderly, patients, and children from the beginning of booking the ticket until boarding and leaving the plane after arriving at the airport to fly.
3. lack of interest on the part of some tourism companies in Egypt in accessible tourism, especially with regard to tourist transport buses, as well as the lack of facilities during the implementation of tourism programs, and the lack of special roads that pave the way for people with special needs, which reduces the expected tourism income from the segment of people with special needs, which is a high income compared to the rest of the other segments of tourists.
4. There is an assessment of the current situation on the part of officials in the Ministry of Tourism with regard to the equipment provided by tourism companies as well as the facilities provided for people with special needs in the five-star hotels in Cairo and the extent of their readiness to receive them.

5. professional experts are aware of the importance of the accessible tourism market and the number of returns that can be achieved from it.
6. There are currently preparations to remove existing challenges and barriers and find innovative solutions to allow this special segment to enjoy tourism activities in an easy way like other tourists.
7. The necessity of cooperation between the public and private sectors due to the presence of many challenges facing such tourism, which require government officials, legislators, tourism investors, service providers, and financial institutions to integrate their resources and expertise, in a manner that results in the achievement of maximum social and economic benefits.
8. The Arab Tourism Organization is working to establish a specialized council for accessible tourism in the Arab world, in which a number of experts, academics, and specialists participate, to raise the efficiency of the human element by organizing training courses and holding and organizing conferences and seminars to raise awareness of the concept of accessible tourism.
9. There are places that provide tourism services for people with special needs, such as hotels, tourist attractions, bazaars, beaches, and accommodations in hotels.
10. There is still a lack of interest on the part of some tourism companies in Egypt in accessible tourism, especially with regard to tourist transport buses, as well as the lack of facilities during the implementation of tourism programs.

11. The Ministry of Tourism is working to create the appropriate climate in terms of infrastructure, providing appropriate training, and developing market policies and incentives to attract this segment.
12. This segment of tourists is characterized by loyalty and frequent visits to the tourist destination if the appropriate environment is available that meets all their needs.

Recommendations:

he study has concluded the following recommendations:

1. Conduct extensive studies on the actual demands of special needs visitors together with providing statistics on the present and potential number of visitors to Egypt.
2. Provide the necessary funds to initiate the use of modern technology to promote special needs tourism to Egypt in order to communicate with new markets.
3. Ministry of tourism should hold awareness workshops on how to deal with special needs visitors and the virtual tour technology for tourism staff in different sectors.
4. Propose an annual update for these technological devices and receive feedbacks for further development of the system.
5. Studies should be undertaken to develop a system that can predict the site of the user and reply his requests, which create the interaction between the environment and the special need visitor²¹.
6. These kind of portable devices need to be light weight, easy to carry and have a fairly big screen to suit the different needs of a more demanding user, and being readable even in direct sunlight. The software must be adapted to every group of users regardless of their age and impairments.

7. The mobile tour guide should be available with different preferred reading languages, and launched in travel agencies, hotels, museums and major heritage sites.

8. Tourism service providers should communicate more with special needs organizations to exchange accurate and reliable information for strengthening tourism services to better meet diverse consumer needs.

9. Travel agencies and tourism training institutions have to develop tourism planning information especially for people with vision impairment. They need to provide travel agent web sites, marketing and destination information in auditory tactile formats.

10. People responsible for following up tourist facilities and other tourist sites should enforce a number of rules and regulations that these facilities and sites be provided with services for special needs visitors to attract more numbers of this type of visitors

the study has concluded with the following recommendations:

1-Tourism Promotion Authority and Federation of Tourism Chamber

1. Tourism Promotion of tourist sites in Egypt in proportion to the characteristics of people with special needs and the elderly.
2. The necessity of having an internationally recognized guideboard for the disabled.

Federation of hotel room

3. Low-level reservation and reception desks are suitable for wheelchair users. In addition to places that facilitate movement.
4. Availability of responsible persons trained on how to deal with people with special needs
5. Availability of information on the antiquities in the museum that suits all categories of people with special needs, especially those with blindness. (UNWTO)
6. The necessity of having guides trained in sign language for the deaf and dumb.
7. The need to train workers in the tourism sector to deal with people with special needs and the elderly and provide guidance services.
8. Travel agencies and tourism training institutions have to develop tourism

Develop the Egyptian tourist market to enhance Accessible tourism.... جهاد صالح

planning information, especially for people with vision impairment. They need to provide travel agent websites, marketing and destination information in auditory tactile formats.

2-Ministry Of Tourism

9. responsible for following up on tourist facilities and other tourist sites should enforce a number of rules and regulations that these facilities and sites be provided with services for special needs visitors to attract more numbers of this type of visitors.
10. Tourism service providers should communicate more with special needs organizations to exchange accurate and reliable information for strengthening tourism services to better meet diverse consumer needs.

National Tourism Organization (NTO)

11. The role of the government in providing infrastructure and making it suitable for people with disabilities (PWD).
12. Availability of many toilets suitable for people with special needs.

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