



“Impact of Climate on International Tourist in Maldives”

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Introduction

Climatic patterns play a key role in tourism because the weather directly affects the availability of tourists to visit a specific place at a particular moment. Tourists visit places with good sunny climates particularly those found in colder climates, and weather also affects the kinds of activities that do occur. As an illustration, certain destinations do best when it is dry and become less appealing when it is wet. Besides these regular seasonal changes, changes in climate have started influencing the just ordinary pattern of weather and thus one may find it difficult to predict the best time to move into a given location.

The study focusses on the famous tourist's destination in the Maldives which is a popular tropical destination with beaches and clear water. The climate of the Maldives is itself a selling point as the country has two known climatic periods of wet and dry that influence the number of tourists coming to the country. The effects of climate patterns on the international tourist movements, seasonality of tourism and activities provided in the Maldives will be discussed in this paper. It will discuss the impacts of these climate elements on the local economy and the tourism operators and how a shift in climate patterns can influence future tourism trends.

Impact of Climate on International Tourist Movements

The Maldives is a tropical paradise located in the Indian Ocean and its tourism industry largely depends on patterns of climate. International tourists Visiting the Maldives every year is estimated to be in the millions because of the warm and sunny climate with transparent blue oceans (Nyassi). Nevertheless, the movements of tourists are influenced by several climate-related factors including temperature, seasonal changes and the effects of climate change, which determines when and where tourists come to see. This section discusses how climate affects international tourist flows into the Maldives, with reference made on three aspects, namely, climate inclinations in international tourist flows, the influence of climate on destination selection, and long-term impacts of climate change in terms of visitor flows.

Climate Preferences of Tourists

When choosing a destination, climate issues usually influence tourists with the preference being those with warm and sunny weather. Such tropical destination as the Maldives is extremely popular among tourists with colder climate as well, in winter months (van Tonder, 2018). Due to the stable tropical weather, the Maldives is available as a destination throughout the year. Nevertheless, dry season, that usually covers the months of November to April is considered the peak times of the year when the Maldives can be travelled to. The weather during these months is finally cloudless with minimum rains and middle temperatures between 27°C to 31°C (82degF to 88degF) (Weatherspark, 2025).

The latest statistics demonstrate that 1,525,563 visitors came to the Maldives by September 2025, and 73.4 percent of them will be staying in resorts (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). Colder climate tourists, especially those in Europe, North America and East Asia will be willing to visit tropical islands such as the Maldives during their winter. As an example, China remains one of the top sources of tourists as, in the year 2025, it will have 241, 211 arrivals, which will amount to 15.8 percent of total arrivals. In the same manner, other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Italy are major stakeholders in the tourism sector of the Maldives, which indicates preference of warm and beach friendly destinations during cold seasons.

The Role of Climate in Destination Choice

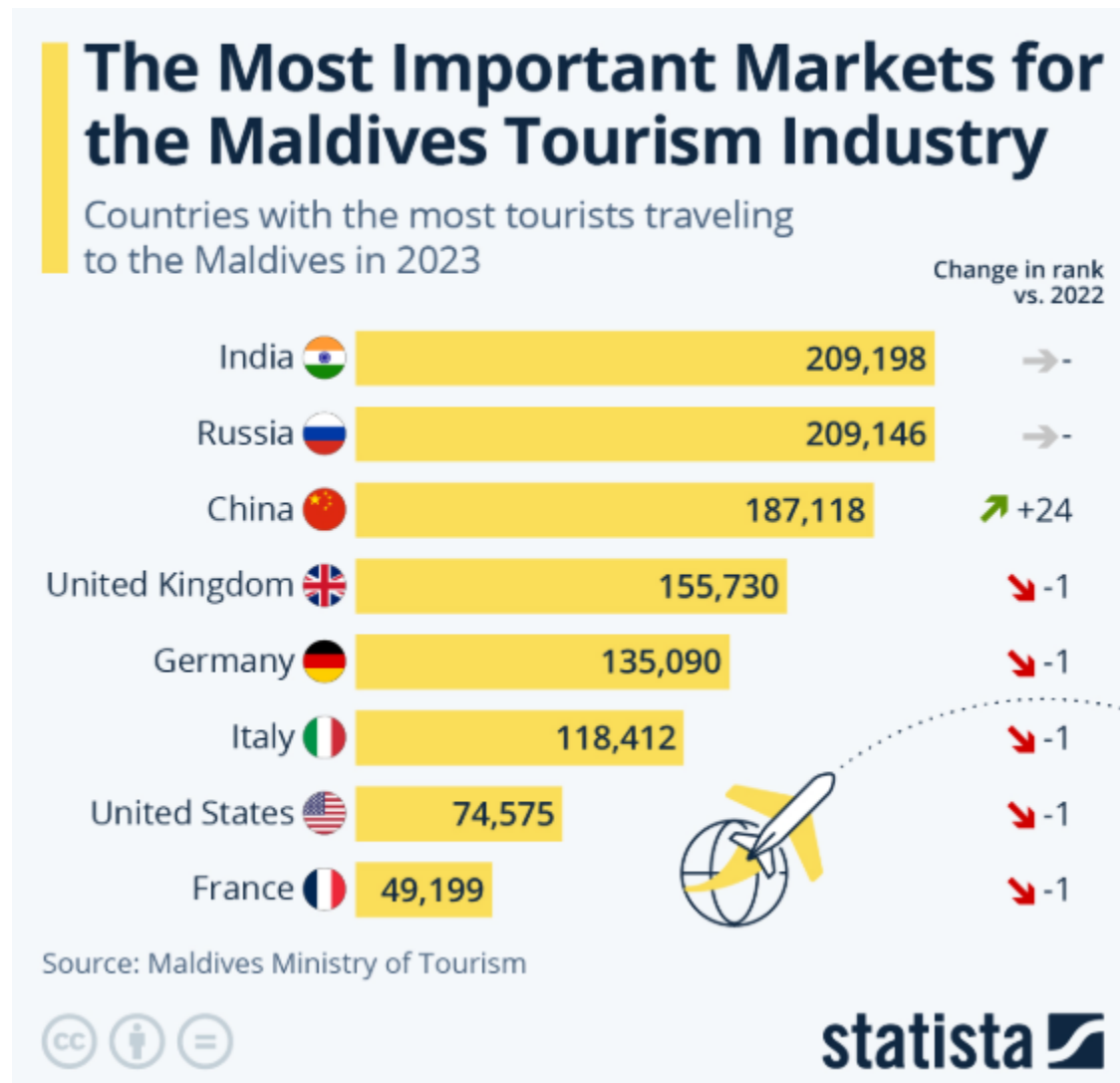
The climate is tropical, and this affects not only the season when the tourists come but also the places where they travel. The Maldives with their warm climate relying heavily on climate conditions is a great destination since tourists can always find it convenient during or after travels to the Northern Hemisphere owing to the extreme winters (Fortune, 2018). This is especially because of the number of tourists who come during dry season whereby the Maldives reports a drastic figure of tourists.

In 2025, the Maldives saw an increase in tourist arrivals from regions that typically experience cold winters. India, for example, saw 87,699 tourists visiting the Maldives by September, which accounted for 5.7% of the total arrivals (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). This significant growth reflects the Maldives' proximity to India and its appeal to Indian tourists seeking an escape from the cold months. Moreover, the Maldives continues to draw visitors from Russia, which accounted

for 183,057 arrivals in 2025, contributing 12.0% of the total market share (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). This strong interest from colder regions highlights how climate plays a pivotal role in the Maldives' attractiveness as a tourist destination. The predictable, pleasant weather provides a consistent experience for tourists, making it a reliable choice for those seeking to escape the cold.

Figure 1

Countries Tourists Visiting Maldives Ranking (Zandt, 2024)

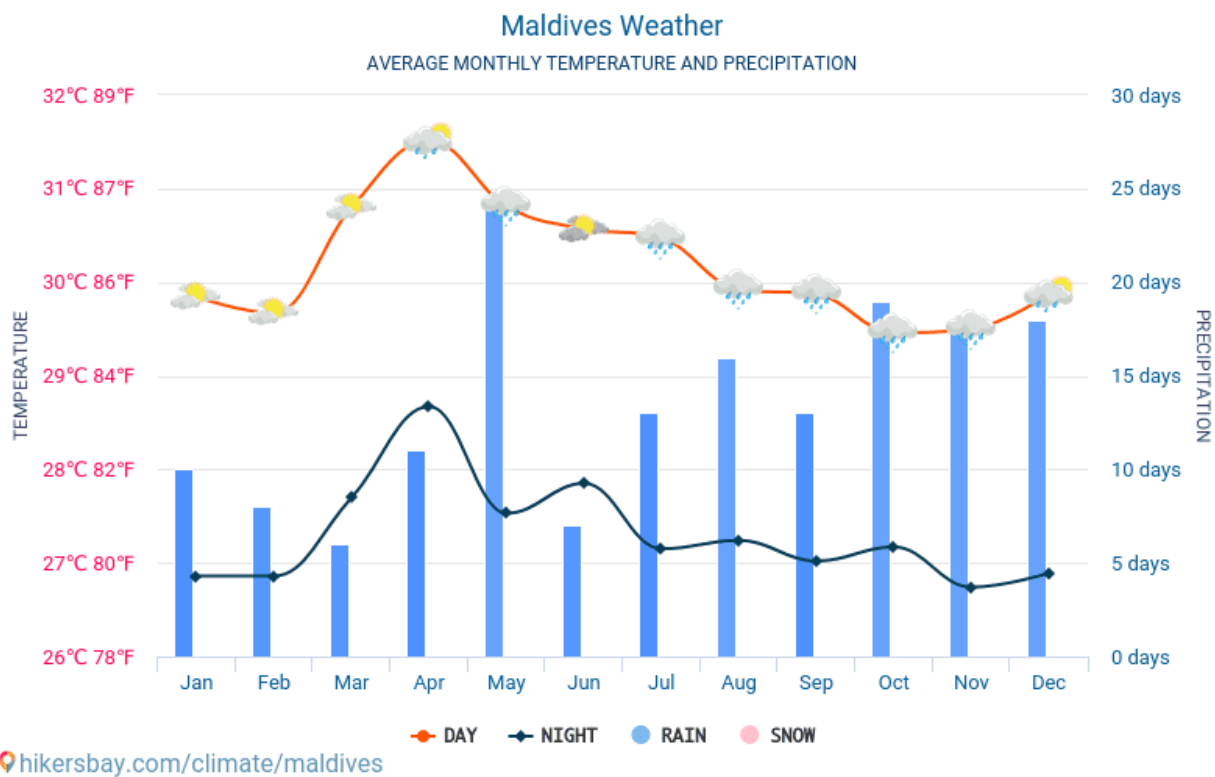


Seasonal Shifts and Changing Weather Patterns

The Maldives tourism industry is characterized by seasonality which is mostly influenced by the variation of climatic patterns. International visitors are at greatest during the dry season extending to November through April (Rabeeu et al., 2022; van Tonder, 2018). It is the season of hot weather, clear skies, and little precipitation, so it will be the best time to take on any outdoor adventure such as snorkeling, diving, and beaches (Weatherspark, 2025). Nevertheless, increased humidity, stronger winds and more rainfall during the wet season (May to October) may turn away tourists who want to experience ideal conditions during their vacation time.

Figure 2

Maldives Weather Pattern (Hikersbay, 2025)



The Maldives has been witnessing consistent growth in the number of arrivals throughout 2025 with January registering 214,863 arrivals and the December predicted to witness even higher increases because of the high number of tourists coming to the islands to have the holiday (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). Nevertheless, the wet season, May to October, registers a reduced number of tourists. As has been noted, in May 2025, 135,614 arrivals were registered, the growth rate at that

time was 13.1 as compared to the same month in 2024 with October arrivals projected to go down (Ministry of Tourism, 2025).

This seasonal pattern demonstrates the impact of climate on the time-documented arrival of tourists. At the ideal weather conditions of the dry season, the tourists increase whereas the unpredictable rainfall and humidity of the wet season scares some tourists. Therefore, at the season when there is no rainfall, a great deal of tourists prefers visiting the Maldives because they want to enjoy as much as they can of outdoor entertainment, such as snorkeling and diving, and spending time in the idyllic beaches.

Impact of Climate Change on Tourist Movements

The tourism of Maldives suffers as well as benefits climate change. The islands in the country are very low and therefore the country is highly susceptible to effects of climate change factors such as increased sea levels and greater extreme weather conditions (Sovacool, 2012). These transformations pose threat to the tourism infrastructure of the Maldives which includes coastal resorts as well as the private islands, both of which are the main tourist attraction in the country.

The number already surpasses 1.5 million tourists in the Maldives (with 73.4 per cent of them resorting to stay) which reflects the current land of the already high demand despite the imminent setback of climate change (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). Nonetheless, the sustainability of such tourism development remains doubtful because of the increase in sea levels that may erode beaches and destroy coral reefs- major tourism attraction sites. Such environmental dangers may lower the level of competitiveness that Maldives has as the ideal tourist destination especially among those interested in the underwater experience as well as maintenance of a perfect beach.

In addition, weather-induced occurrences like storms and cyclones are increasing in frequency due to climate change and this has the potential to disrupt travel plans, destroy infrastructures and scare away tourists. The literature on tourism in the Caribbean has revealed that the industry of tourism in the tropical areas is very susceptible to climatic changes, and the same can be said about the Maldives (Mackay & Spencer, 2017).

The relationship Between Climate and Seasonality in Tourism

Maldives is a perfect tropical Island ranging over Indian Ocean and boasts of pure beaches, crystal waters, as well as colorful coral reefs. These eco-tourism lures have proven to be one of the best international tourist destinations as far as sun, sea and serenity are concerned. Nonetheless, tourism in the Maldives is directly connected with the climatic changes, as they determine the tidal wave of visitors over the year. This relationship is very important when it is understood by the stakeholders who would like to maximize tourism strategies and achieve sustainable growth.

Climate-Driven High and Low Seasons

The Maldives is semi-arid and has two regions which comprise the dry northeast monsoon (Iruvai) and the wet southwest monsoon (Hulhangu). The dry season between the months of December and April are characterized by clear skies, low rainfall (Weatherspark, 2025). This is the thought of them as being the prime tourist season as they entice tourists to come in seeking warmth and sunshine who are colder climates.

On the other hand, during the wet season, which includes the months of May through October, there is a higher amount of humidity present, greater rainfall occurs and often storms occur, especially between previously mentioned months; June through September (SNO, 2025). Such unfavorable conditions do not mean that the Maldives is not a year-round destination, some tourists even attract the wet season, to play witness to the unique weather patterns of the place and the marine life.

Impact of Seasonality on Tourist Arrivals

Maldives tourist arrivals can be seen to have a distinct seasonal trend with the highest inflow seen that was registered during the dry season. To cite an example, in 2025, the Maldives received more than 1.3 million visitors by August, and with a good concatenation, it appears that there is a heavy inflow of visitors during December to April (Maaldif, 2025). Such inflow is conditioned by the positive weather scenarios which contribute to increasing the popularity of outdoor activities like snorkeling, diving and beach hanging.

The wet season experiences a reduction in tourist arrivals, but it is not the highest as in other destinations. As of May 2025, till July 2025, the Maldives saw a total of 445,498 tourists arrived,

which is equivalent to 13.1 percent upsurge during 2024 (Maaldif, 2025). The fact that this is growing in the traditionally low-peak months suggests changes in the travelling patterns and more tourists are ready to visit it in the wet season not only because of the improved weather forecasts but also because of improved infrastructure and special projects in advertising.

Figure 3

Seasonal Tourists Arrival Maldives (Ministry of Tourism, 2025)

Tourist Arrivals - Monthly

	Arrivals			Growth % 2025/2024	Daily Average 2025
	2023	2024	2025		
January	172,499	192,385	214,863	11.7	6,931
February	177,915	217,392	214,091	-1.5	7,646
March	173,514	194,227	203,468	4.8	6,563
April	164,357	168,366	198,322	17.8	6,611
May	120,959	119,875	135,614	13.1	4,375
June	120,363	123,284	141,772	15.0	4,726
July	145,620	167,528	186,738	11.5	6,024
August	154,854	176,175	192,058	9.0	6,195
September (1st-8th)	32,034	31,367	38,637	23.2	4,830
TOTAL	1,262,115	1,390,599	1,525,563	9.7	6,078

Economic Implications of Seasonality

Tourism causes economic impacts to the Maldives with a strong sense of seasonality. Its peak season incurs a lot of revenue, more rooms of a hotel are occupied, and more money is spent on luxury services oriented and more money is used on the ancillary businesses like transport and shopping. Low season, however, comes with its own drawbacks such as decreased revenues for the businesses, layoffs, and wastage of resources. To take care of these impacts, there have been strategies by the stakeholders to lure tourists during the wet season. Among them are the provision of lower prices and the unique experience such as whale sightseeing, manta ray sightseeing, and the peace and exclusivity of visiting the destinations when they are less crowded (The Times, 2024).

Shifting Seasons and Climate Change

Due to global warming, conventional weather patterns will change, which will cause a change in the seasonality of tourism activities in the Maldives. More irregular monsoon patterns have been created due to a rise in global temperatures, with late start times, and increased strength of rainfall during the wet season (Maldives Nomad, 2025). Such transformations may potentially impact on the travel arrangements and expectations of tourists and therefore the tourism industry needs to adapt to these changes.

Moreover, the Maldives is vulnerable to the long-term levels of climatic changes, such as the increased sea level and coral reef erosion. The estimates suggest that in 2100, the sea level may rise to a high of 0.9 meters, which may submerge low lying islands and affect the coastal resorts (IFC, 2024). This may manifest itself as scaring away tourists through such environmental changes, and altering the seasonal patterns of tourists, which highlights the importance of sustainable tourism activities and climate resilience planning. Dynamics of climate and seasonality are characteristic of the tourism industry of the Maldives.

Influence of Climate on the Availability and Patterns of Tourism Activities Water-Based Activities

Tourism activities related to water like snorkeling, scuba diving and swimming are core in the Maldives tourism experience. Underwater adventure and water sports play very well in the Maldives where ocean temperatures are optimal and opposite to other places (Weatherspark, 2025). These activities are best in the dry season (November to April) seasons when the seas are laid and visibility in the seasons is high with little rainfall. Crystal clear and warm waters provide tourist with ideal opportunities to view the coral reefs and marine life of the Maldives.

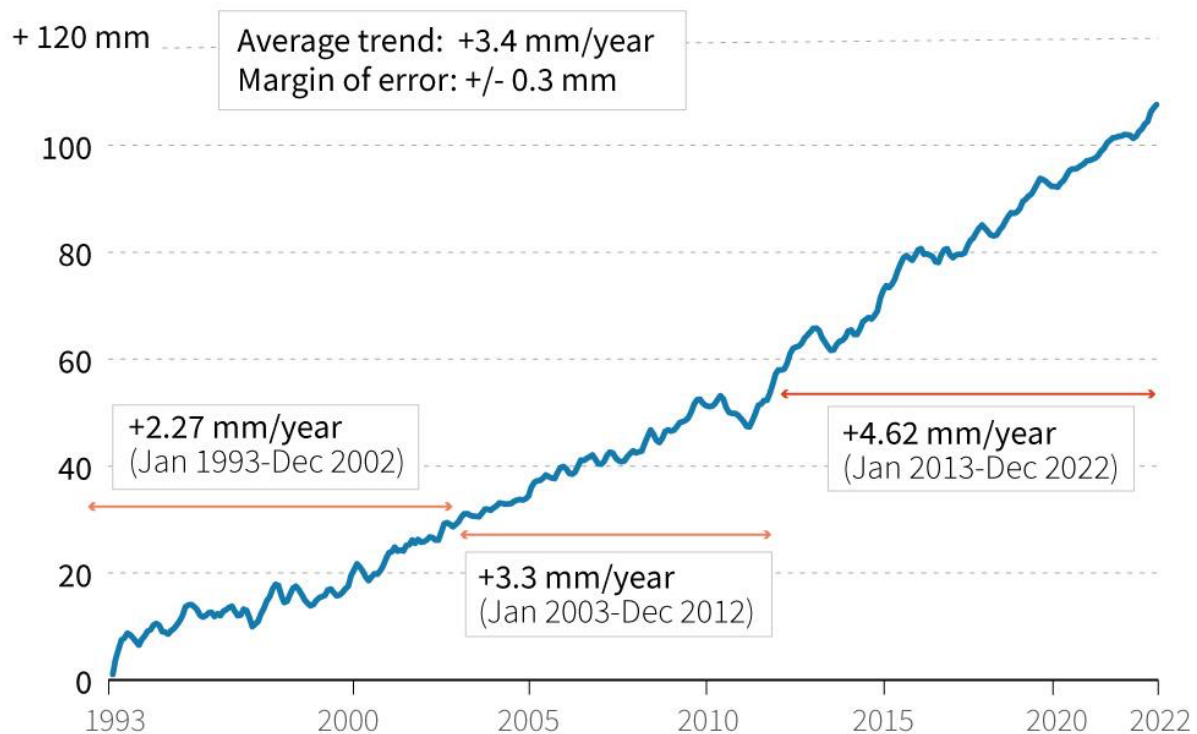
Nevertheless, in wet season (May to October) the weather changes and sea conditions might be described as rough. These activities are not as attractive with the increased rainfall, brewing winds and diminished visibility in the water. As an example, treatment in water may decrease dramatically, ruining snorkeling and scuba diving. Also, the increased risk of storms and rough sea may result in the cancellation of water activity, which indirectly has an impact on the level of tourist happiness and the experience (UNWTO, 2024).

Among the most topical problems of water-based tourism, the growing sea levels due to global climatic changes must be mentioned. The average rate of sea rise has accelerated to 4.62 mm per year between the years 2013 and 2022 according to the world Meteorological organization (WMO), as compared to the previous rates (WMO, 2022). This increasing sea level increase is a threat to the beaches, coral reefs and the resorts of the Maldives that may cause them to damage the marine ecosystem that draws snorkelers and divers. This may eventually cause the decrease of the underwater operations and calling into question the Maldives as a top diving spot.

Figure 4

Maldives Rising Sea Level (WMO, 2022)

Accelerating sea level rise



Source: WMO

Outdoor Tourism Activities

Climate conditions have a profound effect on outdoor activities like green tourism like beach tourism, fishing, and adventure sports. Maldives is also renowned because it has clean beaches and visiting the beaches is one of the biggest attractions to foreign visitors. The dry season is particularly the most favorable season when it comes to its popularity with beach activities, particularly sunbathing, beach sports, and beach relaxation. Nonetheless, the wet season presents erratic weather characterized by heavy rains and humidity, making the tourists not have a pleasant time in the east coastal wetlands (outdoor activities).

The other main outdoor activity in the Maldives is fishing as both recreational and commercial fishing attract high tourist populations. Another common activity that is offered in the aspect of tourism is fishing tours, although fishing expeditions are mostly used during dry season when the sea is calm, and the water has favorable circumstances. In wet season, the rough waters and strong winds may render fishing perilous or not very entertaining hence reducing the enthusiasm of tourists. Such a change in weather pattern can affect the flow of tourism and cause peaks and slumps in the number of people visiting the places (Hashim, 2025). Sports like kite surfing, windsurfing and parasailing are also the sports that demand very particular weather, and in particular calm seas and steady winds.

Climate Effects on Infrastructure and Tourism Offerings

The tourism infrastructure in the Maldives is especially susceptible to climate change, and in peril of increasing levels of sea level. The Maldives being a low-lying island country is extremely prone to flooding, erosion and loss of an island altogether. The availability of their beaches and water surrounding is an essential part of resorts, most of which are on their own island, to offer what could be termed as the idyllic experience that draws in the tourists. The rising speed of sea level rising at rates of 4.62 mm annually in 2013-2022 is a major thorn in the flesh of such resorts as the increase in sea level can wipe out beaches and damage infrastructures along the coasts (WMO, 2022).

Climate conditions also influence the infrastructure of water-based transportation including boats, seaplanes and ferries. Rough seas and heavy rain during the wet season may interfere with the transportation services, rendering it hard to travel between resorts and islands. This may lead to

on-time schedule slippage, cancellations and reduction of tourist satisfaction. Moreover, more storms will come and destroy infrastructure, and it will cost a lot to repair them and pull resources out of the tourism industry.

Shifting Tourist Preferences

The preferences of tourists are also changing because of changing climate patterns regarding the kind of activities and destinations they would prefer. In seasons like when the weather does not favor traditional outdoor events such as snorkeling, diving and fishing, (the wet season), there might be a decline in outdoor action and a drift towards indoor action by the tourist. The changing preferences may be met with more spa treatments, wellness programs and cultural experiences in the resorts. As an illustration, spa retreats and yoga classes and even cooking classes might gain more popularization during the wet season, when these tourists seek substitutes to field trips

Discussion

The Maldives as a leading tourist destination in the tropics is highly affected by the climate which determines the flux of the international tourists, seasonal nature of tourism and the availability of the tourism activities. Maldives climate is one of the factors that play a central role in determining the movements of tourists to the country, the dry season (November to April) attracting maximum tourists (Rabeeu et al., 2022). Visitors in colder places like the north of America and Europe visit the Maldives due to its pleasant, sunny climate and therefore, the dry season is the best time to visit (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). Conversely, during the wet season (May-October) there is reduced inflow and an overcast climate resulting in increased rain & humidity coupled with strengthening seas, this discourages tourists from using beaches and activities involving water as well.

Climate and the seasonality relationship is examined in the tourism patterns of the Maldives. Most of the visitors come during the dry season because of the pleasant weather and during the wet season (Fortune, 2018), fewer visitors visit the country but of greater significance are low-cost tourists because of reduced accommodation costs. Climate change is another issue, because it changes these seasonal patterns: with a larger number of unpredictable weather conditions, e.g.

cyclones or inconsistent year-long monsoons, it is impossible to continue the traditional routes (UNWTO, 2024).

Moreover, climate is the direct determinant of tourism activities in the Maldives especially water activities such as snorkeling and diving. In the dry season, clear and calm seas make the activities optimum, and in the wet season, due to rough seas, availability is limited (Moore et al., 2013). As the effects of climate change intensify as witnessed by the rising sea level and extreme weather, there are high chances of such tourism patterns being intimately influenced later.

Conclusion

In multiple aspects, climate is a key determinant of the Maldives tourism sector. The tropical climate of the country generates two seasons of high and low, with the dry season that occurs between November and April drawing most of the international tourists who would be after sunny weather and calm seas. Conversely, because it is the wet season, which is accompanied by heavier rainfalls and unpredictable waters, there are fewer visitors though some low-budget tourists manage to find cheaper fares. This season's change has a direct impact on the rates of arrival of tourists and patterns where the high seasons generate high demand for accommodation facilities and services. In addition, the Maldives climate significantly influences supply and pleasure of the tourism activities. Snorkeling, diving, and swimming water activities are most suitable during the dry season because the rougher seas and the spots with poor visibility prevent these encounters in the wet season. The infrastructure within the Maldives such as resorts and water transportation would also be susceptible to climatic conditions, and climate extremities would interfere with tourism provision. Moreover, there are also long-term risks of weather changes caused by the climate change to the resorts and marine environment of the country that are regarded as a source of tourism interest. Embracing these challenges and coming up with sustainability will play a key role in ensuring that the Maldives remain among the highly preferred products as a global tourist attraction.

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