

Preliminary Study on the Development of Barrier-Free Tourism for the Disabled

—Take Zhuhai Royal Hot Spring Resort as an Example

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Abstract. The living conditions of the disabled directly reflect the degree of civilization of a country. Nowadays, with the implementation of national leisure tourism in China, the disadvantaged group of the disabled should be paid more attention to. With the continuous improvement of the basic protection system for the disabled, the development of barrier-free tourism for the disabled is imminent. Which is of great significance to the sound development of tourism in the future and the impetus of social progress as well? From the perspective of barrier-free tourism for the disabled, this paper studies the tourism psychology and barriers of the disabled. Taking the Royal Hot Spring Resort in Zhuhai as an example, this paper puts forward corresponding countermeasures according to the development and existing problems of the barrier-free tourism for the disabled in the case site tourist destinations, so as to help these places to provide better barrier-free tourism facilities and services for the disabled.

Keywords: Disabled People; Barrier-Free Tourism; Zhuhai Royal Hot Spring Resort.

1. Introduction

At the present stage, although China has paid attention to accessible tourism for the disabled, there are few academic monographs on accessible tourism for the disabled in China, and even less on the tourism barriers, the development of the tourism market and the tourism psychology of the disabled in China, What's more the development of accessible Tourism for the disabled is far from that of the disabled abroad. At present, although there are relevant regulations for the construction of barrier-free facilities in tourist attractions in China, many scenic spots low use rate, suboptimal relevant barrier-free services, and the to-be-improved facilities. Therefore, the development of barrier-free tourism for the disabled still has a long way to go.

Through in-depth interviews and field visits to collect relevant data, this paper makes an analysis and study on the current situation of barrier-free equipment and services in Zhuhai Royal Hot Spring Resort, finds out the existing problems, analyses the influencing factors, and puts forward countermeasures for this situation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overseas Research Status

The research on Barrier-free tourism for the disabled has developed since the 1950s. In the research process, some scholars use inductive analysis method, and analyze it from different angles such as sociology and psychology at the same time. Ralph Smith (1987) first classified tourism barriers for the disabled into intrinsic barriers, environmental barriers and interactive barriers. Some other scholars have conducted empirical studies, such as Davis et al (2001), who examined the barriers faced by disabled tourists in Missouri. The results show that disabled tourists face more physical barriers than intangible barriers. The most common barriers encountered by disabled tourists in catering sector are accessibility and attitude barriers. Takeda and Card (2002) and others analyzed four sectors of tourism: transportation, reception, catering and tourist destinations, and established Accessibility and Attitude Barrier Model (AABM) for disabled tourists. The results show that accessibility barriers are more common than attitude barriers in tourism. On the research barrier-free tourism development,

foreign scholars not only study the development and improvement of the barrier-free facilities, but also emphasizes the tourism information accessibility. In the 1990s, Cavinato and Cuckovich interviewed 12 for tourism information barrier-free problem and two tour groups on the issue of accessibility to tourism information in the United States. Studies have shown that these travel-related organizations lack information or inaccurate information about the disabled. In 2006, Eleni Michopouliou, Dimitrios Buhalis proposed to develop an electronic tourism information platform for the barrier-free tourism development.

2.2 Domestic Research Status

The development of barrier-free tourism for the disabled in China is a new idea put forward under the situation of fierce competition in tourism. It was first applied in practice in 2003, and (The Declaration of Tourism City Cooperation in the Yangtze River Delta (Hangzhou)) was put forward, which clearly put forward the idea of constructing China's first barrier-free cross-provincial and municipal tourism area, which caused domestic scholars to study the regional cooperation of barrier-free tourism. However, Rao Huaqing believes that although the Yangtze River Delta has been built as China's first barrier-free cross-provincial tourist area, it ignores the tourism needs of the disabled. Following that, a few scholars began to study the development of the tourism market for the disabled. Zhao Ping and Zhang Zhele investigated and analyzed the barrier-free tourism for the disabled in Shanghai and Chengdu respectively. The survey showed that Shanghai and Chengdu lacked barrier-free material and environmental facilities, collective tourism for the disabled still belonged to public welfare rather than market, and the construction of barrier-free information environment was basically blank. The 2008 Olympic Games held in China accelerated the development of barrier-free tourism in China, promoted the diversification of barrier-free tourism in the academic circles, the research of barrier-free facilities, the barrier of tourism, and the tourism demand for the disabled.

3. Current Situation and Existing Problems of Barrier-Free Tourism for the Disabled in Case Sites

3.1 Current Situation of Barrier-Free Tourism for the Disabled in Case Sites

In 2018, China issued (the Code for the Construction of Tourist Barrier-free Environment) which has clear requirements for accessible facilities in scenic spots. Among them, no-less-than-two barrier-free entrances and exits are required, and the width is at least one meter; soft packing is required for bulges; barrier-free signs should run through the tour route all the time; requirements for barrier-free toilets are more specific; at the same time, specific requirements for the width and smoothness of barrier-free roads in scenic areas are also specified. The norm clearly stipulates that the barrier-free environment construction of scenic spots, parks should be promoted. It also suggests that leisure resorts should be implemented according to the actual reference.

3.1.1 Peripheral Traffic Services

Although Zhuhai Royal Hot Spring is located in Doumen Town, it has convenient transportation. Buses arrive directly at Royal Hot Spring Resort in the city and district. In addition, Royal Hot Spring arranges four daily shuttles to open pick-up and delivery services at Gongbei Port, Jiuzhou Port, airport and Hengqin Port. In addition, since the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Royal Hot Spring Resort has set up a special line car for Royal Hot Spring Resort, the port hub of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, which runs once from Monday to Friday and twice daily on Saturdays and Sundays. It takes about an hour to drive from Zhuhai City and Hengqin Port to Royal Hot Spring Resort; while only half an hour to reach Royal Hot Spring Resort from Zhuhai Airport. The traffic is convenient and fast.

3.1.2 Provision of Tourism Information for Disabled Persons

The online tourism information of Royal Hot Spring Resort has been consummated day by day, but little attention has been paid to the propaganda and consultation of, the disabled on the Internet.

There is no consultation information related to tourism for the disabled and professional reception services for the disabled in the official website, Wechat Public Platform, Tianmao Store and other major third-party platforms. There is a lack of relevant information about accessibility facilities, special services for disabled tourists, and what type of hot springs are more suitable for the disabled.

3.1.3 Accessibility Facilities for Disabled Persons

There are two parking spaces for the disabled in the resort, one is between the hot spring lobby and Cloud Comes Inn, the other is between the hot spring lobby and the Yu Ying Zhuang Hotel.

There are two elevators in Cloud Comes Inn. The elevator space size and the position of buttons meet the requirements of barrier-free elevators. Through field research, we know that the Changsheng Zhuangjia Hotel under construction will construct two barrier-free rooms according to the proportion of accessible rooms and standard requirements, with standard barrier-free elevators and related facilities, so that the disabled can reach any area of the hotel and room.

Barrier-free facilities related to Royal Hot Spring have been gradually improved, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of barrier-free facilities in Zhuhai Royal Hot Spring Resort

Region	Barrier-Free Ramp at Entrance	Barrier-Free toilets	Parking Spaces for the Disabled	Barrier-Free Elevators	Barrier-Free Signs	Barrier-Free Rooms	Wheelchair	Blind Roads
Cloud Comes Inn	1	1	1	N	3	N	1	N
Yu Ying Zhuang Hotel	1	N	1	Building	2	N	1	N
Xiao Tang Town	1	N			N	N	1	N
Hot Spring Area	1	N			N	N	1	N
Royal Restaurant	1	N			N	N	1	N
Fireworks Yard	1	N			N	N	1	N

3.1.4 Field Services for Persons with Disabilities

Through the field investigation and study, we know that the staff of Royal Hot Spring has a strong sense of service. In case of inconvenience in action, they will take the initiative to inquire or provide help before checking in. When checking in for the disabled, Royal Hot Spring will let the staff arrange the room near the elevator on the first floor and send it to the room for quick check-in. Which facilitate the passage of the disabled and provide wheelchairs for the disabled in hotels and inns. In the Hot Spring Area, the disabled are regarded as VIP guests, such as: 24-hour staff on duty in the open-air Hot Spring Area, active support, wheelchairs on the steps of the ground, are equipped with wooden ramp board to facilitate their forward passage, to help the disadvantaged up and down the hot spring pool, to the dressing room or to assist in the shower and other services.

During the opening of the "Big Dinner Temple Fair", full-time staff holds the "Care for the Aged, the Weak, the Disabled and the Pregnant" lead card for special groups, and there is no need to queue up to lead directly into the green channel.

3.2 Problems in Tourism Development of Disabled Persons in Case Sites

3.2.1 Incomplete Accessibility Facilities for the Disabled

No barrier-free facilities were built at the beginning of Royal Hot Spring Resort's construction, most of which were built or renovated later. From Table 1, we can see that, firstly, barrier-free facilities are not fully equipped but single, mainly concentrated on ramps, wheelchairs and barrier-free toilets. Besides, there are no blind roads for other types of facilities and equipment for disabled persons. Secondly, the number of facilities is not complete: although the main buildings have ramps, which can guarantee the free access of disabled persons to the main places of activity in the resort. However, there are too many steps in the larger activity area for the disabled to pass. Because the steps are too small at the beginning of construction and there is no room for improvement, they can only be handled flexibly when there is demand and temporarily replaced by long wooden boards. The barrier-free elevator of Cloud Comes Inn has less obvious signs for barrier-free elevators.

3.2.2 Lack of Scientific Management Mechanism for Accessible Facilities

Barrier-free facilities are managed and maintained by non-professionals. Only the cleaners carry out daily cleaning of such facilities, being lack of professional technical knowledge, therefore it is difficult to meet the requirements of barrier-free facilities management. Every Friday, leaders of Royal Hot Spring will conduct a "comprehensive quality inspection" on 12 items of health, safety, service, attendance and work discipline of all departments. However, the inspection of accessible facilities only concerns about health and safety. Whether facilities are lacking or not is not included in the inspection items.

3.2.3 The Service System for Disabled Tourists is not Perfect

Employees of Royal Hot Spring have a strong sense of service to disabled tourists and have certain subjective initiative. However, their service actions to disabled tourists are based on their moral standards and humanitarianism, which are different from other services of the Royal Hot Spring, such as "Four Etiquettes", "One Royal Umbrella" and "Actively Meeting the Front", which have the service standards and regulations' bundles and norms. In addition to that, problems such as non-targeted special services for different types of disabled people, unspecific classification of services, insufficient system of rewards and penalties still exist.

3.2.4 Lack of Attention to Barrier-free Tourism for Disabled Persons

In the tourism industry, star rating is basically carried out in accordance with (the Rules for Classification and Assessment of Quality Grades of Tourist Scenic Spots) compiled by the National Tourism Administration. In this rule, the proportion of accessibility-related items is small, accounting for only 10 points in the 1000-point assessment, which barely involves accessibility toilets, wheelchair services, simple ramps of tourist centers and other items. Royal Hot Spring's concern to barrier-free facilities is mainly based on star rating. In interviews, some managers of Royal Hot Spring have recognized the importance of barrier-free tourism for the disabled, but the number of people concerned is small, the attention is not high, and the action has not been taken seriously.

3.2.5 Disabled Tourism Professional Service Team has not Yet Formed

In the interview, we learned that there is no statistics on the reception of disabled tourists by Royal Hot Spring Resort, and Royal Hot Spring Resort has no rules and regulations from top to bottom to train staff in standardized services when facing disabled tourists. As far as the current situation is concerned, the direct visitor departments are verbally communicated by the customer manager to the staff of the department how to serve, which are basically imparted by their own experience. And there are no relevant documents. Therefore the professional service team of tourism for the disabled in Royal Hot Spring has not yet formed. From the perspective of tourism industry, the turnover rate of employees is high, especially in the front-line Department of direct noodles. Without a complete barrier-free service management system, on the one hand, it is difficult to guarantee the quality of service for disabled tourists; on the other hand, it also needs to pay a certain human cost.

4. The Development Strategy of Barrier-free Tourism for the Disabled

4.1 Strictly Abide by the Star-Rating Criteria of Tourism Industry and Attract the Attention of Decision-Makers

The development of tourism cannot be separated from the promotion of national policies and the help of urban tourism system. In 2016, the State Council promulgated (the Outline of Planning to Accelerate the Process of Well-off for the Disabled), and approved (the 13th Five-Year Plan for Implementing Barrier-Free Environment Construction) jointly issued by 13 departments, such as the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the Commission on Ageing, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, and the National Tourism Administration. Star rating plays an active role in guiding and stimulating tourism industry. Leaders of tourism enterprises should attach importance to it. They should lead the whole staff to plan the barrier-free facilities and services in the resort according to the actual situation so as to promote the development of barrier-free tourism for the disabled.

4.2 Improving Accessibility Facilities for the Disabled

Holiday resorts can invite people with disabilities who are willing and qualified to have free experience through internet, new and traditional media, so that they can find out deficiencies existing in accessibility facilities and signs help improve the current situation. Furthermore, an annual inspection plan for such facilities should be formulated. The cleaners responsible for cleaning the facilities and equipment in the resort area should also pay attention to the damage of barrier-free facilities when cleaning. Especially in the "health inspection", the inspection of barrier-free facilities should be included to avoid the situation that facilities are damaged and cannot be used. At the same time, we should improve and add according to the market dynamics, upgrade and reform according to the needs of the disabled tourism, and do a better job in the management of barrier-free facilities and equipment, so as to make the whole management process smoother.

4.3 Eliminate "Discrimination" in Ideology and Serve Well

The training of service personnel should start from the ideological level they should first respect the disabled people from the bottom of the heart. In particular, special service skills should be trained for direct visitor employees, such as information transmission between employees when receiving disabled tourists, speech norms when communicating with disabled people, the use of disabled equipment, etc. At the same time, professional staff able to serve the blind and deaf-mute types is required. Rules and regulations to serve disabled tourists are also needed, which needs continuous improvement according to the requirement of humanization. For example, the service performance of disabled tourists can be included in the "Golden Button" employee evaluation options of Royal Hot Spring, and material or spiritual incentives can be given to the better performers, thereby improving the tourism service system for disabled tourists, improving the tourism service level of disabled tourists and improving the tourism experience of disabled tourists.

4.4 Establishment of Disabled Persons Tourism Information Base

In order to effectively develop barrier-free tourism for the disabled, first of all, there must be data as the basis. Holiday resorts should establish a database for disabled tourists, such as gender, type of disability, the number of companions, and type of special. From the perspective the disabled, they can feel once again the service that meets their specific requirements and feel the VIP courtesy; from the perspective of the holiday resort, the establishment of the disabled tourists' information base will facilitate disabled tourists in the future and provide better services; from the social point of view, the establishment and enrichment of the information base will help the disabled tourists to develop their tourism. It has a guiding role in retaining information for the future society's information base for the disabled.

4.5 Integrating the Internet to Expand Tourism Publicity for Disabled Persons

Network is the most important way for modern people to get information, but it is difficult for people with disabilities to know the status quo of barrier-free facilities in holiday resorts. In the network search, questions like "Which scenic spot barrier-free facilities is better?" "Which scenic spots are suitable for the disabled?" exist. After improving the facilities and upgrading, the resorts can add the introduction of barrier-free facilities and related information to the official website of the resort, so as to facilitate the disabled to inquire and understand the situation. Especially in the official self-help booking page to add "whether there are inconvenient peers" and other information check, if having peers, staff can call ahead to know the situation, so as to provide better service.

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