TRACING THE MAZE
a dossier on women and tourism

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Tracing the Maze: A Dossier on Women and Tourism
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Contents

Introduction ~ 03

Section 1: Women and Tourism Policy

- Women and Tourism: Unfulfilled Promises, Continuing Myths, EQUATIONS ~ 06
- Women in Tourism: Realities, Dilemmas and Opportunities, EQUATIONS ~ 14
- Analysing the Gender Dimensions of Tourism as a Development Strategy, Lucy Ferguson ~ 22

Section 2: Tourism and Gender Relations

- Tourism Processes and Gender Relations: Issues for Exploration and Intervention, Indra Munshi ~ 42
- Tourism, Liberalization, Gender and the GATS, Mariama Williams ~ 55
- Tourism and its Impact on Gender: A Case Study of Goa, Anita Haladi ~ 63

Section 3: Women’s Engagement with Tourism - Issues and Concerns

- Women in Bangalore’s Hotel Industry, EQUATIONS ~ 75
- Women Speak! Women’s Engagement with Community Based and Nature Based Tourism, EQUATIONS ~ 103
- Silence is Not Spoken Here: Women, HIV and Tourism, EQUATIONS ~ 110

Annexure:

- Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India ~ 136
- Opening Doors is not Enough: Equality, Equity and Empowerment is What Women Seek in Tourism, EQUATIONS ~ 141
- Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010: Preliminary Findings, UNWTO - UN WOMEN ~ 145
- About the Authors ~ 153
Introduction

In our quest for tourism that is more equitable, sustainable and just we have had on our radar the impact that current forms of tourism development have on women’s lives. This is the third in a series of Dossiers on the issue of Women and Tourism. The earlier two dossiers (in 1998 and 2000) as well as many research studies, fact finding missions and papers, highlighted the gendered nature of tourism and provided evidence of how mainstream tourism development and policies placed a far greater burden on women and was often directly responsible for their exploitation.

The last decade of tourism development has undeniably placed a much greater emphasis on women. The claims and commitments made at national and international level to uplift the status of women have been stronger. The Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing plus twenty processes, the transformation of UNIFEM to UN Women are indicators of this intention at the global level. The UN World Tourism Organisation also mirrored this intent when it dedicated World Tourism Day 2007 to women and made the claim that “Tourism Opens Doors for Women.” Nationally as well, policies and plans have aimed to reflect this intent. However the results on the ground in terms of women’s political, economic, social and cultural empowerment have been less than satisfactory. Most women’s life continues to be a daily battle for respect, dignity, and equality in private and public spaces.

It is an undeniable fact that tourism does provide opportunity to women. However, it is worthwhile to examine whether the achievements are initiated by women as agents of their lives and future in an aspirational way, or imposed on them because they are forced to embrace them as a survival strategy. Also, creating opportunity is not enough to achieve empowerment in its true spirit unless it also entails breaking gendered power structures and enabling participation as equal partners. Therefore, it becomes imperative to examine the nature of women’s participation, their role in influencing decisions around tourism, and the extent to which they have been able to break boundaries. With this view, the dossier examines a range of the issues from tourism process to its outcomes with focus on following questions:

- What is the scope and nature of opportunities that tourism has offered to women?
- What approach has been adopted for women’s empowerment in tourism?
- How gender concerns are weaved into tourism initiatives?
- Has women’s participation and influence in tourism planning process enhanced?
- Is tourism less exploitative of women?

This dossier is a collection of more recent academic and action research work on the issues of women and tourism with specific focus on the Indian reality. Some articles and papers are EQUATIONS own work and others are select writings by other scholars and activists. It attempts to take stock of the shifts and progress in the last decade on the issue of women and tourism. It examines the trends, process and the outcomes, attempting to uncover what women have gained over the years, what is the cost they have paid to fetch benefits from tourism, and where they have reached in their effort to mark their presence.

We hope this dossier provides the necessary information and stimulation to take this debate further in the quest to make tourism more gender just.

EQUATIONS Team
June 2011
Abstract
This introductory paper aims at taking stock of developments in the last decade in relation to how women have fared in tourism development and processes in India. Drawing from published work including EQUATIONS own research, featured in this dossier as well as trends in the media, it aims to examine if any of tourism promises to women have been fulfilled and if any of the myths have been exposed.

On the world stage, one of the major claims been made with regard to women and tourism, is by the UNWTO on World Tourism Day 2007 - ‘Tourism Opens Doors for Women’. This claim was debated by several civil society organisations including EQUATIONS in its statement ‘Opening Doors is not Enough’ on World Tourism Day who asserted that the balance had not yet tilted in favour of women and that even at the level of disaggregated data there was little to show for tourism’s benefits to women.

There is growing academic and activist literature pointing to the ways in which eroticisation of labour and feminisation of low-income jobs in the entertainment industry exacerbate vulnerabilities of marginalised women rather than tending to ‘empower’ them. Civil society critique of tourism practices in the last two decades has consistently anchored itself on the position that the expansion of women’s roles in the economic spheres through increased work participation is an unsatisfactory indicator of gender equality in tourism.

Subsequently UNWTO and UN Women (formerly UNIFEM) have been working together to bring gender to the forefront of tourism, promoting gender equality, women’s empowerment and the mainstreaming of gender issues in national tourism policies and corporate decisions. The outcome of these efforts is the Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010, the preliminary findings of which have been released. Focused on developing countries, the report aims to develop a quantitative framework for monitoring women working in tourism, and makes the claim that tourism has the potential to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women. This is promising and we need to wait for the actual report to be able to engage in a substantive way with the research methodology and analysis. That being said this introductory paper spans the issues based more on trends from the media, EQUATIONS own engagement with tourism development in the country, and the voices and perceptions of women engaged in different roles.

At the national level, starting from the declaration of ‘Women’s Empowerment Year’ in 2001 by Government of India, the formulation of ‘National policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001’ and establishing ‘National Mission for Empowerment of Women in 2010 by Ministry of Women and Child Development is a long journey to ensure all round development of women. The Working Group and sub-groups on Empowerment of Women were formulated in 2006 to engender planning processes. There are initiatives taken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to identify gaps in existing laws. Important changes have taken place in the legal framework including amendments in laws. Landmark judgments have been recorded in recent years on cases relating to sexual harassment at the work place, divorce, maintenance rights and guardianship. There has been a push to mainstream gender concerns into various policies, programmes and action of Central as well as State governments through innovative tools and processes such as gender budgeting which tracks the planning process for targeting public expenditure in favor of women.
Corresponding to the push for gender sensitivity in planning process, the Ministry of Tourism has acknowledged tourism industry with a strong female presence and placed this as the reason why gender sensitisation and ensuring equal rights to women are important concerns of the Ministry. Tourism is seen to be a priority sector on the grounds of having extensive forward and backward economic linkages that build overall income, employment, especially for women, youth and disabled persons, thereby, bringing greater social equity and justice. The Ministry has taken initiative to include the gender component in its policy statements and projects when referring to eco-tourism and rural tourism. The National Policy of Tourism has identified eco-tourism as a means to ending unemployment, creating new skills, enhancing status of women thus, facilitating growth of a more just and fair social order.

These are fairly ambitious intentions and it is important to see the extent to which intentions have translated to results and changes on the ground.

The Impact of Tourism on Women
Employment Opportunities Offered by Tourism:
To start with the much publicised role of tourism in generating employment, it is true that the sector employs large number of women but gendered patterns in tourism careers and employment are equally well documented. The preliminary findings of the UNWTO - UN Women Global Report reinforce this trend. Concentration of women in lower grade jobs, invisibility of women labour and wage disparity is documented by the Global Report on Women in Tourism: 2010 recently published by UNWTO - UN Women. The report highlights that:

- Women are well represented in service and clerical level jobs but poorly represented at professional levels.
- Women in tourism are typically earning 10% to 15% less than their male counterparts.
- A large amount of unpaid work is being carried out by women in family tourism businesses.

The industry segregates women into areas of employment which commercialize their perceived domestic skills and “feminine” characteristics. The attitude towards domestic skills and feminine nature of work has further links with lower economic gains. The paper on Women in Bangalore’s Hotel Industry by EQUATIONS has documented the vertical and horizontal segregation along with the working conditions influencing their career prospects.

Tourism provides a market to harness women’s traditional skills and knowledge and thus offer an alternate source of income. However their participation in tourism reinforces existing gender relations as well as extension of their traditional roles. This is particularly visible in handloom, souvenir and textile sectors where women are concentrated in work which has as its basis their traditional knowledge and skills. While they undeniably reap economic benefit out of the opportunities being thrown up by tourism, the form of participation is more covert leading to invisibility of women’s labor. This is more acute in the case of women working as craftsperson, home-stay facilities etc. They are not seen as ‘actual contributors’ to tourism, recognized as stakeholders and thus their interests and concerns are overlooked in tourism planning processes.

Even their contribution is recognized, the perception attached to the work involved into these domain often results in their labor being under-estimated and under-valued. The measures to include women through these activities do talk about women representation but rarely give serious thought to the process as to how to enable women to break boundaries of back stage role and to take front stage role. Thus what gets neglected is the additional support and capacity building for women in terms of skill building, linkage with market, accessibility to materials and credit. There is a tendency to equate this type of women’s involvement with women participation (an idea which would also imply assertion of their rights and influence) which necessitates the need to examine the nature of women participation in these activities. Questions that accompany this trend are – the kind of opportunities being offered and how? Does it strengthen the existing division of labor or offer choices to women as to where and
what kind of role they want to play? Do they have a say about how they would prefer to use their skills while accessing those opportunities? Do they have influence to ask for the price of the services they are offering?

It is well established fact that the process and activities of development are reflection of the form of relationships that prevails in society - the relationship between man and woman, the division of labour among them, the role as defined by the society determines tourism activities. Given this socio-cultural fabric of tourism process, accessibility to the opportunities is another challenge before women. Patriarchal norms still have a strong hold on their mobility. In this respect, the paper Tourism Processes and Gender Relations: Issues for Exploration and Intervention by Indra Munshi shows how the andocentric nature of tourism process along with class and racial hierarchy advances the male viewpoint.

There is a need to recognize the socio-cultural dimension of women’s inclusion and design them into the strategies. Only creating economic opportunity is not enough until the process significantly alters the gendered power relations. The growth of tourism has a two way impact on the existing gender relations. On the one hand it consolidates the existing gender relations by denying women's capacities to contribute in the planning and decision making process and confining their roles to traditional maintenance and nurturing. On the other hand it does create openings to involve women in activities that are male bastions.

There are examples when women participation is architected into some of tourism projects but these initiatives require much attention to the socio-cultural context of women’s participation. The Endogenous Tourism Project is an example. The Endogenous Tourism Project- Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP-RTS) was a joint project of Government of India- Ministry Tourism and United Nations Development Programme (GoI-UNDP) to support the rural tourism initiatives of the GoI which would serve to create sustainable livelihood opportunities among low income communities living in rural areas.8 One of the key characteristic of this model was empowerment of women, youth and other sections of the community through the creation of livelihood options and managerial responsibilities. UNDP put down a norm that at least half the participants in the capacity building activities and decision making bodies promoted should be women.9 The institutional framework like Village Tourism Committee (VTC), Heritage and Tourism Committee (HTC) sought to address gender issues by challenging existing power structures, but social structures proved too hard to break through. The strong resistance by the men towards the participation of women in any of the decision making forums was quite evident with women being completely absent from of decision-making structures and process related to tourism. EQUATIONS paper ‘Women Speak! Women’s Engagement with Community Based and Nature Based Tourism’ explores the opportunities created by tourism, the spaces available to women and the extent to which these opportunities have accommodated women skills as well as their concerns.

Affecting Lives and Livelihoods:
Tourism has encroached on traditional livelihoods and increased the drudgery on women. The expansion of the tourism industry has, in many areas displaced communities, distancing them from access to natural resources, a phenomenon that impacts women the most. From beach destinations like Kovalam and Goa, to the serene Uttarakhand, tourism has broken down the earlier distribution of roles, with women having to bear greater burden of household chores. Before tourism became a provider of lowly jobs as guides, touts and masseurs and sellers of trinkets, when fishing and agriculture was the way of life, women and men used to bear equal responsibilities for livelihoods, with men catching the fish and women selling the catch. With the fishing grounds gone, men have become part of the tourism industry, and women confined to the four walls, their importance within the family reduced and their empowerment reduced, as men do not give them the same respect when they were part of the process of earning the family's livelihoods.

In the hill areas of north India, as men become tour guides in the tourist spots of the higher reaches of Himalayas, women have to bear the burden of
agriculture. In the hill areas, men in jobs, any kind of jobs are looked up to as “being in service” and women’s contribution through agriculture goes unnoticed and unsung. Further, with home stays becoming a new source of livelihood, the burden on women is even greater, as they have to fetch water and fuel, and cook not only for the family but also for the tourists, which is by and large part of their traditional role. Therefore, their contribution remains invisible that turns the opportunity into burden. The tourists are also an intrusion into the familial space, with women expected to keep away from them, which means they have to further isolate themselves in the interiors of the house.

The rampant growth of tourism industry has led to the scarcity of resources such as water, land and environmental degradation. In Pilikula Nisarga Dhama, one of the tourist destinations in Karnataka, government acquired the land for a Lake Garden and amusement park. Due to large scale tourism development the local community is denied of the access to the pond and the area is facing acute shortage of water.

Inflation of prices of local goods is another fallout of tourism development. The higher end of the industry as well as tourists can afford higher prices and they tend to corner the market. But the brunt of this price rise is borne by the local community, who cannot afford to buy commodities at such high prices on a daily basis. Women suffer the most due to the price inflation, as once again it is the women who take care of the needs of the family especially the needs like food. Additionally, they spend more time at the market negotiating over the prices of essential commodities especially food items. It also affect their health and well being as price rise results in reduced amount of food availability and usually it is the women who go without food or have to manage with what ever less amount that is available.

The marketing of tourism is one area which features women prominently. One wonders about the intention underlying such promotional activities. Is it to market tourism or to market women as a tourism product? The marketing of tourism has interpreted the leisure activity as a hedonistic pursuit, rather than a healthy voyage of discovery and an opportunity to rejuvenate the body and the mind. Such marketing of tourism is a global phenomenon. From Bahamas to Thailand, from the Gold Coast to Sri Lanka and to Goa, tourism is identified with an opportunity to have sex. Generally the brochures of beach resorts show women in bikinis lolling on beaches in order to attract male tourists. Goa is a case in point. Tourism here is synonymous sex, prostitution, alcohol, drugs and the attendant dangers.

The goal of generating revenue by using seductive language with images of women has made women vulnerable on various fronts. It starts with the perception about women as sex object and goes to the issues like trafficking, flesh trade and HIV/AIDS.

With sex tourism being the most negative and prominent example, there is a significant amount of sexual objectification of women working in the tourism industry. EQUATIONS paper Women in Tourism: Realities, Dilemmas and Opportunities demonstrate how women are expected to dress in an “attractive” manner, to look beautiful (i.e. slim, young, pretty) and to “play along” with sexual harassment by customers. For advertising and marketing, stereotypical images of women are in many cases part of the tourism product. Friendly smiling women, fitting certain standards of attractiveness, who seem to be waiting to submissively serve the customer’s every wish are being portrayed. Women working at destinations as well as indigenous women are shown in a stereotypical way in tourism brochures and other material. Women are often used to promote tourism, even if not linked to sexual exploitation. Beautiful, smiling women are often picked to cover brochures and other promotional material. Indigenous women are also used in promotional

**Commoditisation of Women:**

The language of patriarchy, heterosexuality and tourism promotion are inter linked primarily addressed to the need of male tourists. The language and the images used to market tourism create certain images about the place and women in tourist’s mind. Along with gender, racial and class hierarchy also matters where dark women from developing countries or poor background are seen as available.
materials and art of the area, depicting them as a cultural attraction. Even more disturbing is how the tribal woman is represented as exotic and desirable. Brochures and promotional materials are replete with phrases such as “a Reang belle with traditional jewellery”, “a smiling young Tripura girl”, “Khasi belle in dance costume” or just “tribal women”. Commoditisation is evident – a traditional motif becomes an “artefact” or “souvenir”, traditional dresses and accessories – “costumes” and ancestral traditions – an “experience”.10

Employment opportunities in the tourism and travel sector have traditionally been associated with objectification and sex tourism in South East Asia and in some Latin American and Caribbean Basin countries as also in African countries like Malawi. With greater international awareness about the indignity and human rights violation that govern sex tourism, and increased and sustained resistance from civil society groups, country governments and tourism operators have toned down advertising sex tourism with the wantonness that it was peddled some years ago (as sea, sun, sand and sex), but the debate continues whether the international efforts to enhance awareness have had any effect on sex tourism at all.

EQUATIONS paper on Women and HIV/AIDS shows how the projection of women in tourism promotional material along with their alienation from traditional livelihoods and resources, patterns of employment, and socio-economic status – come together to make the position of women in tourism precarious indeed. Women in tourism are eroticised and discriminated against; the natural outcome of this has been the rise of sex tourism. Further, it also includes media articles to confirm the growing nexus between tourism and HIV/AIDS.

The first victims of such tourism are women, particularly young girls and boys. In order to meet the demand of the predatory male tourists, the industry has looked the other, and even provided passive encouragement to trafficking. Trafficking by organised gangs has assumed disturbing dimensions as girls from north Karnataka and the Konkan region and southern Maharashtra and Nepal are shanghaied into the sex work industry in Goa. The rise of the moneyed middle class in India with its yen for the white skin has also seen girls from the erstwhile Eastern Bloc becoming sex workers in Goa.

The loss of dignity involved in such a development is only one of the aspects of the tragedy. The problem with sex work is that women who are driven into it hardly ever can find another, more dignified job. The lethal danger of HIV/AIDS constantly haunts them, as do the depredations of the pimps and the police. It is a life that has no security of any sort. Most of the women from north Karnataka who are trafficked return to their broken families after years, broken and many carrying the deadly virus. Most of the HIV/AIDS cases in north Karnataka have their origins in the sex shanties of Goa or the brothels of Mumbai.

The responsibility of the industry in encouraging sex tourism cannot be underplayed. Of late, the industry and the governments across the world have woken up and are making half-hearted efforts to cleanse tourism of its odium. For decades, the tourism industry consciously promoted tourism, implying directly or indirectly of the bounties of sex available in the tourism destinations.

The Impact on Local Culture and Mores:
Tourism has also brought in its train a cultural baggage which is alien to most communities. The leisure activities of the tourist, many times bohemian and hedonistic, have had the men and young men aping it. Alcoholism is common in most of the tourist destinations. Crime and prostitution is rife, in places in Mahabalipuram, which before it became a playground of the middle class of Chennai and the tourists, devastating the fisher economy, and changing the cultural mores and live itself forever. There is a tendency to perceive tourism as an exemption from behavioral norms set by social structure. It is believed that holidaying means being away from home and indulging in activities not socially approved in general. This belief has had varied impact on local culture and mores which in turn has intruded privacy of the place and has affected women’s mobility in public spaces.

In Kovalam and Goa, where tourists flock in for the beaches, the scanty clothing worn by the tourists and the influx of sex workers from the erstwhile
Soviet republics like Russia and Ukraine, the pot-seeking tourists from Europe and Israel have all broken taboos. The impact is on women, as they struggle to keep the youngsters within the confines of the family, resisting the undesirable changes, worrying about the future of their children, and the possible waywardness of their men folk.

Tourism has contributes to a wide range of issues – many of which seem insignificant but detract from the quality of life of local residents. Intrusion on daily life, loss of privacy, and a sense of crowding contribute to ill feelings towards tourism development. (George:2005).

Women in Governance - Rhetoric in Commitments: Compromising Goals:
EQUATIONS paper ‘Women in Tourism: Realities, Dilemmas and Opportunities’ argues that international, national and state level policies on tourism do state a general commitment to women’s empowerment but rarely go beyond that to understand and evolve specific measures.

In general the political and economic forums that structure and drive tourism policy and tourism development are dominated by male economic interests and agents. Capacitating women to take the leadership roles is missing. Silence on women’s potential to shape tourism policy and programmes continue whilst infrastructure led development has had a direct impact upon every woman. Lucy Ferguson’s paper ‘Analysing the Gender Dimensions of Tourism as a Development Strategy’ shows that development policies are not only ‘gender neutral’ but also ‘gender blind’.

The assumption inherent in the initiatives taken by the government is that women are readily available to absorb the slack in demand or employment. Various schemes can be examined where women are seen at receiving end but not in the role of influencers and shapers. The Ministry of Tourism has come up with certain schemes like bed and breakfast, home stays facilities which seemingly present opportunity for women to harness their potential and benefit on a commercial basis. However, it doesn’t include any process like capacity building, building leadership skills, awareness programme or institutional help to enable them to take charge of the projects on their own. Therefore, integration of women in tourism is being promoted with little attention paid to the challenges that women will face in accessing these opportunities.

Similarly, the interventions made to include women focus mostly on creating opportunities not onto building their skills to access those opportunities. For instance in the case of women’s entrepreneurship related to cultural tourism they face many typical obstacles - lack of capital to invest in raw materials, scarcity of raw materials and their availability at reasonable rates, absence of direct marketing outlets, difficulty of access to urban area, production problems, lack of guidance in product design and development. The initiatives taken during the 11th Five Year Plan which aimed at holistic growth and development of the handicrafts sector barely address the concerns of women artisans. Many promotional schemes like capacity building for service provider for Rural Tourism project by Ministry of Tourism, six generic schemes - Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastashilp Vikas Yojana, Design and Technical Up-gradation, Marketing Support and Services, Human Resource Development Scheme, Research & Development and Handicrafts Artisans Comprehensive Welfare Scheme make no mention on how to transform de jure equity into de facto equity. In spite of significant contribution of women in the sector, none of the schemes talks about how to ensure a large number of women artisans are benefited by the schemes or how to capacitate them to join the tourism development process as a confident partner. The Capacity Building for Service Provider schemes for Rural Tourism project covers building capacity/design inputs related to art and craft skills, cultural and natural heritage but with intention to develop tourism product and integration of target group with tourism supply chain. Its quite clear that the focus of these activities are more on creating linkage with artisan as part of the tourism promotion and not to build entrepreneurial skills among women.

The process of including women is often disconnected with the fact that their participation in public spaces is inter-woven with socio-cultural norms. These, therefore, require sensitively designed interventions for building their capacity and generating awareness and social change before
and during implementation of the projects. Mere creating opportunities will not increase women’s participation but may even backfire to increase their burden.

The tourism policy starts with the aim to position tourism as major engine of economic growth which limits its vision to women empowerment. Empowerment of women is seen narrowly where there participation has been confined only to economic gains disregarding the fact that economic gains doesn’t necessarily transform into gender equality or women’s empowerment.

Civil Society has critiqued that expansion of women’s roles in the economic spheres through increased work participation is an unsatisfactory indicator of gender equality in tourism. In fact, experiences on the ground show that women displaced from their traditional livelihoods are forced to take up the opportunities offered by tourism in informal sector. There is no empowerment in the process and in most cases they have no say in the process.

Measuring empowerment in quantifiable terms does not necessarily transform the power-relations exerting influence on women participation. Introducing quota system can increase their numbers but not their capacity to mould the development process in favor of women. Quantitative measures of participation in development may not accurately reflect the degree of power which women are able to exercise. Thereby, focusing only on quantity and not on the process can result in another form of exclusion and does not acknowledge the complexities embedded in socio-cultural realities.

**Broader Questions Emerging from the Trends:**

The discussion above has brought following challenges to the fore that needs to be answered if women are to be confident players and beneficiaries of tourism:

1. How can tourism be shaped to be more equitable and gender just in the light of the andocentric nature of tourism process and activities? This is a question that should be uppermost on the minds of policymakers considering that the major growth in tourism is taking place in Asia. While the global average annual growth between 1995 - 2020 is forecast around 4.1% and in Europe at 3%, the growth in Asia is around 6.3%. The main drivers of this projected growth are China and India, both countries not known for gender sensitivity. Given the fact that women in Asia, particularly in India enjoy less gender equality than their counterparts elsewhere, and that they bear the burden of home chores, such growth is likely to only increase the burden of drudgery on them.

2. What steps can be envisaged at the international and national level to rid tourism of its undesirable aspects such as commoditisation of women and the attendant dangers of trafficking, sex tourism, paedophilia and HIV/AIDS. Governments dependent on tourism revenue tend to be tardy in taking clear steps to protect women from exploitation in tourism for the fear that it may drive down tourist arrivals and would even tend to deny the existence of any problem. Hence, an overarching international convention banning sex tourism and asking governments to take specific and time-bound steps to implement the provisions should be debated.

3. How to make gender equality a fundamental component of sustainable tourism approach? This question entails many aspects such as what kind of development paradigm we want to work with? In that, where and how do we want to see women? What about differences between women along caste, class and ethnicity lines? What strategies should be adopted to achieve gender equality in spirit? There is a need to push Gender Development Index (GDI) as well as Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) if we want to broaden the narrow empowerment framework being used in tourism sector.

4. What could be measures to increase participation of women in political spaces of tourism to tilt the tourism development process in favor of women? Increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions in political spaces does not in itself translate to greater empowerment for women. Quantitative measures of women’s participation are inadequate as measures of women’s empowerment. Measures to increase the quantity of women representatives need
to be accompanied by measures to improve the quality of participation, in order to support women’s empowerment and more attention is needed to ways of assessing qualitatively women’s empowerment through political spaces. Hence confining their participation in quantifiable manner should be debated.

**Endnotes:**

* The paper was written by Surabhi Singh and S. Vidya based on a draft and framework by Aasha Ramesh (an independent researcher on gender and development issues).


8. EQUATIONS was commissioned by UNDP to review the process and learning to strengthen it as sustainable model of tourism. ‘Sustainability in Tourism: A Rural Tourism Model. A Review Report’ 2008.


10. This is our Homeland - A Collection of Essays on the Betrayal of Adivasi Rights in India, EQUATIONS, 2007

Abstract
In 1950, the top 15 destinations of the world absorbed 88% of international arrivals, in 1970 this proportion dipped to 75% and even further to 57% in 2005, reflecting the emergence of new destinations, many of them in developing countries. In this context, this paper explores what this growth has meant for women – particularly for women in destinations of the global south. To what extent do they benefit from this phenomenon? Has tourism opened doors for women? Has its unstoppable growth contributed to women’s empowerment? The paper examines the status of women and their leadership in tourism, the nature of women’s employment in tourism, women in tourism’s informal sector, the effect of depletion of natural resources on women and the challenges to women’s rights as stakeholders in all aspects of tourism development.

The Tourism Industry – On a Roll:
Consistent growth and increasing diversification has given the global tourism industry the reputation of being one of the fastest growing economic sectors worldwide. An ebullient World Tourism Organisation reports (UNWTO) that international tourism is very much on the rise - the number of international arrivals grew from 25 million in 1950 to 842 million in 2006 representing a 4.6% annual growth rate. The income generated by these arrivals surpassing the growth rate of the world economy, grew at a rate of 11.2% during the same period, reaching around US$ 735 billion in 2006.

While in 1950, the top 15 destinations of the world absorbed 88% of international arrivals, in 1970 this proportion dipped to 75% and even further to 57% in 2005, reflecting the emergence of new destinations, many of them in developing countries. The UNWTO forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of these, 1.2 billion will be intraregional and 378 million will be long-haul travellers.

Continuing world prosperity has clearly been the main driver behind this boom. Asia and the Pacific stand out as the motors of international tourism expansion and the tourism juggernaut continues to move notwithstanding manmade and natural crises. Emerging markets and developing economies especially in Asia, tourism promotion by national governments especially in developing regions, increased investment in infrastructure, marketing and advertising, development of domestic markets, liberalisation of air transport, growing intraregional cooperation and a growing number of public-private partnerships are key factors in this expansion in the tourism business.

So what does this growth mean for women – particularly for women in destinations of the global south? To what extent do they benefit from this phenomenon? Has tourism opened doors for women? Has its unstoppable growth contributed to women’s empowerment?

Frameworks for Women’s Empowerment:
The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice. These are essential to build a sustainable, just, secure
and developed society. For decades now, through vibrant movements and political struggles, women have challenged existing gender relations and patriarchal systems to reframe the development dialogue. They have placed issues of violence, race, caste and other forms of discrimination that hit women the hardest; and the need for equality and human rights of women - including social, economic, political, legal, sexual and reproductive rights - at the center-stage of this struggle.

Global processes from Rio, Copenhagen, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing to Durban, particularly the CEDAW (Convention for Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women), the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and its subsequent Beijing Platform for Action, have set out critical concerns and strategic action points. The battle for equality, to challenge the status quo, to demand action on women’s key concerns, to mobilise civil society in both the global North and South, and to push for a global reordering of the world’s resources continues with the same intensity but leaving one with little sense of progress on substantive issues. There has been enormous frustration at the lack of government commitment and accountability to development goals in general and gender equality commitments in particular.

So, what is the role that tourism has played and can play in this important struggle for equality, equity and empowerment of women? In 1996, Vivian Kinnaird and Derek Hall in ‘Understanding Tourism Processes: a gender aware framework’ invite us to understand tourism processes from a framework of social differentiation. Gender is one key component. Kinnaird and Hall argue that tourism involves processes which are constructed out of complex and varied social realities and relations that are often hierarchical and usually unequal. The division of labour, the social constructions of “landscape” - both natural and human - influenced how societies construct the cultural “other” and the realities of experiences of tourist and host all show that in examining the issues of relationships; differences, and inequalities exist. They went further to argue that tourism’s identification as an industry based on the economic, social and political power relations between nations or groups of people represents the extension of the politics of gender relations.

Margaret Swain similarly argues that tourism is built on attractions to sameness and differences. “Is the world’s largest industry willing to be feminist?” she asks. A feminist worldview is non-androcentric. It explains phenomena in terms of women’s as well as men’s experiences. It is political when asking how to promote equity among women and men, based in understandings of the cultural and social positions of women and their subordination in relationship to men. It asks the question “does this work for women?” and seeks the perspective of women as well in interrogating data, frameworks, experiences and policies.

EQUATIONS has argued that international, national and state level policies on tourism do state a general commitment to women’s empowerment but rarely go beyond that to understand and evolve specific measures. The UNWTO’s Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, for instance, does not specifically address the gendered aspects of tourism although Articles 2, 6 and 9 are linked to some of the issues being debated. Article 2 calls to respect equality between men and women and promote human rights particularly individual rights for marginalised and vulnerable groups. It disapproves of exploitation of human beings, such as sexual exploitation. Article 6 concerns travel-related press material and other media and states that these should contain truthful and balanced information on travel destinations that could influence the flow of tourists. These media should not in any way promote sex tourism, it asserts. Article 9 on Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, focuses on the protection of legal rights of workers, their salaries and working conditions and argues that these should be guaranteed under the supervision of the national and local administrations. It also suggests that workers should be given sufficient social protection. Despite these clauses, it seems critical that the Global Code address issues of the empowerment and exploitation of women more directly, given the significant role that women play in tourism and the significant violations of ethics that are linked to women’s experiences in tourism.

Often women are exhorted to subscribe to an individual empowerment ethic - overcome what’s in your mind and you can do it! In celebration of World Tourism Day 2007 a leading travel and tourism
Policies and budgets have the potential both to perpetuate gender bias and blindness, and to transform them. Gender disaggregated data, gender-sensitive policies and indicators are essential to building up a picture of the nature and extent of gender inequality. We need to understand the way institutions with their gendered rules work and we need to develop the political will, processes and tools to challenge and change them. Gender audits and gender budgeting are tools that could be employed meaningfully - particularly at community levels. These in turn will impact women’s political participation and decision making on the forms, impacts, models and pace of tourism in their communities. It is time tourism recognised women’s agency and heard their voices in its development.

Women’s Status and Leadership – Participation in Decision Making and Political Processes:

In India, women have been viewed by governments and policy makers merely as extensions of the traditional roles they play in families and society - that of nurturers and caregivers. The focus was on promoting the welfare of women and thereby, children rather than empowering women to acquire their rights. Schemes and policies for women, therefore, were limited in both vision and approach. Rural India, where two-thirds of India’s population resides, faces enormous challenges in health, education, nutrition, employment and environment. Women bear primary responsibility in every one of these areas — day after day. India’s rural women have been systematically denied the freedom, resources, information and decision-making power they need to carry out these responsibilities and have been kept in an almost unimaginable state of powerlessness, illiteracy, isolation and malnutrition. The 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution mandated an unprecedented transfer of decision-making power and resources in the rural areas to local democratic councils - the panchayats. Most revolutionary of all, one-third of all panchayat seats are reserved for women — guaranteeing them a role in determining the future of their communities. If fully implemented, women potentially have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Early advocates of tourism viewed tourism employment as a positive way of integrating underprivileged subgroups of society into mainstream economy. However, these have tended largely to reinforce an existing sexist, ethnic and caste-based system of social stratification. In tourism particularly, women’s roles in economic production cannot be understood without reference to the cultural context of women’s structural position in society and the home. Kinnaird and Hall cite the example of tourism-dependent areas of Britain and Ireland to make this point. They argue that innovations like the ‘bed and breakfast accommodation’ in tourism ghettoize women in ways of work that are an extension of their domestic activities. This is particularly interesting in the context of India’s Ministry of Tourism (headed in succession by two very articulate women as Tourism Ministers) showcasing bed and breakfast accommodation schemes as a policy intervention towards women’s empowerment. Similarly the Rural Tourism Project of the Ministry, while having the laudable aim of women’s empowerment among other aims, has largely conceptualised empowerment in economic terms without taking into account the social patriarchal structures and roles that their lives are embedded in. These policy initiatives reveal the naiveté of the government in offering simplistic solutions to the need for genuine empowerment of women in tourism.
Often women’s economic empowerment programmes, particularly those for poor rural women, focus on micro-credit and self-help groups. This in some ways only increases the burden on women and limits their capacity to leverage productive and scaled up micro-enterprise. An evaluation report of the Rural Tourism Project of the Ministry of Tourism\(^6\) has more or less equated gender sensitisation to the formation of women’s self help groups and seems to believe that this is an adequate indicator of women’s empowerment. The focus instead should be on collective enterprise with women’s ownership and to ensure its success requires significant capacity building and market linkages.

**The Nature of Women’s Employment in Tourism:**

A very strong argument in favour of tourism development is that it generates employment at different levels due to the wide range of services and products it requires. Undoubtedly, there is truth and merit in this argument. However, it is important to understand what kind of employment local women have access to in tourism and what happens to men and women employed in tourism.

Tourism does provide a range of activities where women can participate and also creates opportunities for entrepreneurship development. Global data on numbers of women and men working in tourism-related professions suggests that the organised tourism sector is a particularly important sector where 46% of the workforce comprises women (in general, 30-40% of the workforce is women) (ILO 2007). Of the data available for the years between 1988 and 2005, it appears that there has been a broad increase in the participation of women in the tourism industry at a global level.

However apart from their overall presence in the industry, other factors indicate that women do not seem to benefit and be empowered particularly from tourism. As in many other sectors, there is significant horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market in tourism. Vertically, the typical “gender pyramid” is prevalent - lower levels and occupations with few career development opportunities being dominated by women and key managerial positions being dominated by men. In India too, women in the organised sector in tourism are relegated to relatively low skill, low paying or stereotypical jobs like front-desk and reception, housekeeping, catering and laundry services. They face very high risks of sexual harassment and exploitation and are discouraged from forming unions or associations to consolidate their strength and influence. The proportion of women’s to men’s wages is less. Women feature significantly more in part time and/or temporary employment and are typically paid less than men for the same work done.

The feminisation and informalisation of the workforce in tourism, particularly in developing countries, is a matter of concern. Unfortunately, few research studies focus on the gender dimension resulting in little quantitative data on this trend. Women are seen, and hence favoured, as a passive, compliant and sometime invisible workforce that will accept low wages without demanding for their labour and human rights. What remains constant is the low economic value accorded to work performed by women in conditions of exploitation, no job security and violations of human rights. This occurs both directly through prohibitions on labour organisation and indirectly through further abuses where women have claimed rights such as to organise or to be free from sexual harassment.

Many women workers face difficult, often exploitative conditions. India’s national newspapers carried a horrifying story of a woman working in an ayurvedic massage parlour in Kerala who was allegedly set on fire by her employer after she refused sexual favours to clients. The International Labour Organisation published a report highlighting the high levels of violence, stress and sexual harassment in hotels, catering and tourism. Unsurprisingly, it is mostly women in junior positions who experience these problems, but unlike in other sectors, women face harassment not only from colleagues and managers but also from clients. Factors such as late working hours, service of alcohol, dress codes, racism, negative attitudes towards service staff and the uninhibited, sexualised nature of tourism and tourism promotion contribute to a high-risk environment for women and younger workers, as well as ethnic minority, migrant and part-time workers.\(^7\) That these attitudes and difficulties
prevail primarily in small scale enterprises is another myth that needs to be exposed. As the case below (see box) highlights it took India’s national airline six decades to acknowledge that women can supervise cabin crew as ably as men!

**The Maharaja’s New Year gift:**

Air India, India’s national airline, has finally decided to catch up with the 21st century and to accept the non-discriminatory provisions in the Constitution that guarantee women equal rights. Incredible as it might seem, it has taken the airline six decades to acknowledge that women can supervise members of the cabin crew as ably as men.

On December 28, 2005, Air India issued a directive stating that women could henceforth be in-flight supervisors. All these years — the airline has been in existence since 1946 — there were different employment conditions that applied to men and women. For example, Air India’s female cabin crew were forced to retire many years earlier than their male counterparts. The first age set for retirement for them was 30. Slowly, after many battles it crept up to 50. Finally, some of these women turned to the Bombay High Court in 2003 and won the right to go on flying until 58, like the men. But the victory could not be savoured as within months the Supreme Court overturned the High Court judgment and held that it was not discriminatory to ask women to retire at 50.

The struggle was then taken directly to the Executive and in December 2003, the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Civil Aviation Ministry passed an order asking Air India to allow airhostesses to continue flying until the age of 58.

Kalpana Sharma, India Together January 2006

Sexist and gendered attitudes abound, making it difficult for women at all levels to claim equality and equity. The Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court Cyriac Joseph, speaking to an all-woman audience at the Asia Women Lawyers’ Conference on the theme “Women’s rights are human rights” declared “there was no point in women trying to be men and do all that a man is expected to do.” Cautioning women, he said, “Once you lose your womanhood, there is nothing left to be protected.”

**The Informal Sector in Tourism – Invisibilising Women’s Labour:**

The informal sector is the most direct source of income for local communities in tourism in developing countries. In the developing world 60% of women (in non-agricultural work) work in the informal sector. Much of this is linked directly and indirectly to tourism. The role of women in informal tourism settings such as running home-stay facilities, restaurants and shacks, crafts and handicrafts, handloom, small shops and street vending is significant. But these roles and activities that women perform in tourism are treated as invisible or taken for granted. The need to acknowledge the important economic contribution of women and ensure for them, access to credit, capacity building and enhanced skills, access to the market, encouragement to form unions, associations and cooperatives to increase their bargaining power and to ensure that their safety health and social security needs are met is critical.

Creating opportunities for income generating activities, effective marketing and integrating women’s entrepreneurship with various government schemes to promote women’s self employment, would be an important component to promote women’s participation in tourism development. The sharing of experiences in tourism, understanding and demystifying complex official documents, such as tourism policies, master plans, related to the industry, providing information about access to documents are also important steps.

Community based tourism initiatives, particularly of local women’s groups and co-operatives can be an accessible and suitable entry point for women’s participation in tourism. They seem to generate more long-term motivation than initiatives from outside. These activities help to create financial independence for local women and help them to develop the necessary skills and improve their education, which in turn increase self-esteem and help create more equitable relationships in families and communities.
**Women and Natural Resources:**
There is a direct correlation between the depletion of natural resources and increased burden on women in daily work in any region of the world. When tourism restricts community access to or contributes to the depletion of natural resources, it is women not only as homemakers, but also as community members, who suffer the most. Women’s access to and control over forest produce and water comes into sharp conflict when tourism usurps these very resources needed to fulfil their life and livelihood needs. The daily burden on women of finding water for the household or firewood for cooking is oftentimes doubled or tripled.

When tourism displaces people from traditional livelihoods or worse still physically displaces them, the worst affected are women who are engaged in the bulk of ancillary occupations like tobacco cultivation, coconut harvesting, fish sorting and processing which are jeopardised through such displacement. Transition from certain activities to others, for example away from agriculture, could have implications for food security. Certain traditional occupations risk being crowded out that could have an effect on the society as a whole. A study in Kumarakom in Kerala showed that women moved out of agriculture to tourism linked construction work as it paid them better daily wages. But having neglected the fields, they ended up losing on both counts as the construction work was only short-term but they could not return to cultivate fields overgrown with weeds. It becomes the prerogative of governments and the industry to ensure that rather than displace them, tourism should build and bolster supplementary livelihood options that women can choose from.

The demand for water by hotels can mean less local water for nearby farmers, which can affect food production and increase the workload of women in collecting water from other sources. The establishment of golf courses and special tourism zones or enclaves can also put severe constraints on land and water resources for communities burdening the women the most. The incriminating links between tourism and climate change will unfortunately add to the burden women already bear.

**Severe Abuse of Human Rights – Trafficking of Women and Sex Tourism:**
The gross violation of human rights due to sex tourism and trafficking of women are the shadow side of the booming tourism industry. Migration and trafficking of women, both from within developing countries and cross border to service the tourist trade is commonplace. Russian women to Thailand and the Philippines and Goa, eastern European women to European countries and women from Nepal and Bangladesh are trafficked to India to service the sex trade. The reports of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UNCHR) have highlighted the linkages between countries in economic transition and the increase in trafficking and forced prostitution of women.

Though there are efforts by few tourism service providers to condemn child sex tourism and actively participate in campaigns that combat it, tourism industry bodies have not taken serious action against the exploitation of women in trafficking and sex tourism. In fact while tourism is celebrated as a globalised and modernised form of development - it is global tourism, globalised crime and technology like the internet that have also given the sex industry new means of exploiting, marketing and supplying women and children as commodities to buyers.

**The Representation of Women in Tourism:**
The ideological constructs of the advertising industry have infused the tourism, aviation and hospitality industry. In tourism marketing, women are the ‘face’ of the sector, being the most widely-used objects in tourism promotion after natural beauty and cultural heritage. Women have been objectified and depicted as pleasure providers – their images often exoticised, patronising and misleading.

There is also a strong case for eliminating sexual objectification of women working in the tourism industry. With sex tourism being the most negative and prominent example, there is a significant amount of sexual objectification of women working in the tourism industry. Women are expected to dress in an “attractive” manner, to look beautiful (i.e. slim, young, and pretty) and to “play along” with sexual harassment by customers.
Stereotypical and sexist images of women are often part of tourism promotion in brochures and advertisements. Friendly, smiling and pliant women fitting certain standards of attractiveness, attired in traditional costumes, waiting to submissively serve the customer’s every wish is the typical portrayal of women in tourism material. The industry however has chosen not to be particularly disturbed by this view of women, of seeing it as a gross violation of their dignity and rights, and believes it to be justified in the sale of a product. It is time the global tourism industry takes responsibility for the way women are used in the selling of tourism and also addresses this in its code of ethics.

Tourism modifies local cultural practices in ways that affect men and women differentially. For example, in Kumarakom, increased houseboat tourism severely restricted privacy of local women who used the same backwaters to bathe and to meet with other women socially. When tourism makes products of culture, it tends to commodify women in particular – although both men and women are impacted by the insensitive selling of culture. Jane Henrici gives an interesting example of women in Peru – “Before the tourists came, when a woman wore flowers in her hair in public, it meant she was available to enter into a dating relationship. Once the tourists arrived they liked to take pictures of the photogenic women wearing flowers. Soon the pressure built for all women in the market to wear flowers – detaching it from its cultural meaning and becoming a pure aesthetic signifier in a touristic frame.”

The Challenges Ahead:
The tourism industry and stewards of tourism development face many serious social and human challenges in the years ahead. The growing links between migration - both voluntary and forced - and tourism needs to take into account the gender dimensions of this global phenomenon. HIV/AIDS is not only driven by gender inequality but entrenches it. Tourism is increasingly seen to have a role in this entrenchment in its links to trafficking, prostitution and sex tourism.

A categorical position condemning the blatant and inhuman exploitation of women in tourism through trafficking and the sex industry is a moral challenge that the global tourism industry needs to respond to. Declaring that the tourism product will not be promoted at the expense of women’s dignity, respect and rights is the other position that the industry needs to endorse and practice.

The increasing trend of promoting tourism in conflict zones and the consequent impacts it has on women who are already battling for survival is another matter of serious concern. Disasters and epidemics have an uneasy relationship with tourism – but gender dimensions are rarely integrated into assistance and reconstruction efforts with the focus being largely on the safety of tourists and revival of tourism infrastructure.

Engendering tourism policy and understanding tourism’s impacts on women will be key steps to combating the feminization and informalisation of the workforce in tourism, particularly in developing countries. Research that focuses on the gender dimension of this process could lead to policy and interventions that can work to the advantage of women. Most policies today focus on and favour large and medium enterprise in tourism. Shifting the focus to privilege small and micro-enterprise will not only lead to sustainable options, but create more viable spaces for women’s engagement in tourism.

Poverty, and in particular urban poverty, which threatens to be an issue of growing magnitude has deep roots in gender injustice. Tourism often wipes out the existence and means of livelihood of the urban poor in an overt manner while continuing to depend covertly on cheap labour and exploitative relationships in order to flourish. Ensuring basic protection in terms of social security, access to information and credit and market linkages will be critical to enable larger numbers of women in the informal economy - both in rural and urban areas - to gain from tourism.

Women’s engagement to assert their rights as stakeholders in all aspects of tourism development (planning, implementation, participation, ownership and monitoring) is also determined by their informed participation in decision-making spaces. Facilitating an understanding of tourism and its patterns among women would not only
enable them to raise questions about the course of tourism development but also make claims on its outcomes.

**Endnotes:**

* The paper was written by Rosemary Viswanath and presented at the conference “Tourism Opens Doors for Women” - UNWTO Think Tank: The Role of Women in Tourism on 27.09.2007 organised by United Nations World Tourism Organization at Bentota, Sri Lanka.

1. The experience of women as tourists is increasingly a topic for study and research. This paper however focuses on women who live in tourism destinations, particularly destinations in the global South.

2. Tourism Management, Vol 17, No 2 1996


4. Express Travel World September 2007


6. Evaluation study Rural Tourism Scheme, Mott MacDonald Ministry of Tourism, June 2007

7. Gender, Globalisation and Tourism Cultures, Presented by Dr. Annette Pritchard at the Special Meeting of Women Ministers of Culture, 2005 http://womenministers.government.is/Programme//nr/3269


9. There is no universally accepted upon definition of the “informal sector”. However, the interpretation of the term best suited for an understanding of issues referred to in this paper is provided by the ILO in its report – “Decent Work and the Informal Economy” (International Labour Conference, 90th session, 2002). “... These different groups have been termed “informal” because they share one important characteristic: they are not recognized or protected under the legal and regulatory frameworks. This is not, however, the only defining feature of informality. Informal workers and entrepreneurs are characterized by a high degree of vulnerability. They are not recognized under the law and therefore receive little or no legal or social protection and are unable to enforce contracts or have security of property rights.”

10. Gender & Tourism: Women’s Employment and Participation in Tourism, UNED- UK project report summary 1999


14. Calling to the Money: Gender and Tourism in Peru Jane Henrici Gender/Tourism/Fun (?) Eds Swain and Momsen CCC 2002
Analysing the Gender Dimensions of Tourism as a Development Strategy
Lucy Ferguson, 2009*

Abstract
For several decades, the relationship between tourism and development has been explored in the discipline of tourism studies and in policy-making circles. However, very little research has been carried out into the gender dimensions of this relationship. This paper is a first attempt to unpack some of the issues involved in such an undertaking, and to provide an overview of some of the key empirical areas that need to be taken into account for further research. Using the third Millennium Development Goal – gender equality and women’s empowerment – as its focus, this paper explores this theme from a critical perspective informed by feminist approaches to development. Combining literature reviews, analysis of policy documents and primary research this paper aims to provide an overview of the potential of tourism to contribute to the gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the tensions and complexities that this presents. It concludes by offering some tentative policy recommendations and an agenda for future research.

1. Introduction:
Although highly contested, the links between tourism and development are now well established in academic and policy circles. Less clear is the potential of tourism to contribute more specifically to the achievement of the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3), to ‘promote gender equality and empower women’. In order to explore this issue, this paper offers a feminist critique of contemporary tourism development policy. Drawing together extensive research into the gender dimensions of tourism; I set out the tensions between feminist visions of development and tourism development policy. It must be noted at this stage that the links between gender and tourism have been established relatively recently in development policy. As such, this paper is not intended to be a definitive evaluation of these policies, but rather a preliminary exploration of some of the conceptual issues and practical questions that need to be taken into account when looking at this theme. Early critical work on tourism development focussed on how the tourism industry often exploited colonial associations and turned to colonial power structures to promote and construct the industry in developing countries (Perez 1974, 1975; Britton 1982; Nash 1989). In response, tourism studies turned its attention to ‘alternative’ forms of tourism, suggesting that these were more likely to overcome the exploitative dimensions of mass tourism in developing countries (Lea 1993; Brohman 1996; Khan 1997). Research into the distribution of benefits from alternative forms of tourism suggests there is no automatic connection between ‘ecotourism’ (Duffy 2004) or ‘new tourism’ (Mowforth and Munt 2008) and greater equality in tourism destinations. The ‘pro-poor tourism’ (PPT) approach can be seen as an attempt to take these questions into account and to target the benefits of tourism more directly towards poverty reduction (Brown and Hall 2008). PPT has been extensively debated in the literature, with critics arguing that it serves to facilitate a reinforcement of global inequalities by not taking into account broader power relations of global political economy (Harrison 2008).
While this work on tourism development is useful in understanding changes in tourism development policy, it says little about the specifically gendered aspects of inequality embedded within tourism policy. A well established tradition of work on gender and tourism has addressed a broad range of issues, case studies and approaches. Scholars within tourism studies have long argued that tourism is a highly gendered industry (Kinnaird, Kothari and Hall 1994; Kinnaird and Hall 1996). As Vivian Kinnaird and Derek Hall argue:

Unless we understand the gendered complexities of tourism, and the power relations they involve, then we fail to recognise the reinforcement and construction of new power relations that are emerging out of tourism processes. From the values and activities of the transnational tourist operator to the differential experiences of individuals participating as either hosts or guests, all parts of the tourism experience are influenced by our collective understanding of the social construction of gender. (Kinnaird and Hall 1996: 100)

In spite of the diversity of research on gender and tourism, strong associations persist in the popular imagination between tourism and prostitution. Indeed, for many, this is the extent of ‘gender issues’ in tourism. Certainly, the sexual exploitation of women and children is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, and the emerging phenomenon of ‘sex tourism’ in developing countries has been extensively researched by feminists (Pettman 1997; Jeffreys 1999). However, recent work has suggested that sex tourism should be understood more as a phenomenon of inadequate state provision rather than as an intrinsic feature of tourism in itself (Montgomery 2008). Although this is a controversial argument with which many will disagree, it prompts us to acknowledge the political economy and developmental issues involved when discussing the relationship between tourism and prostitution. Moreover, the assumption that all research into tourism and gender is or should be about sex work and sexual exploitation serves to obscure the more subtle and nuanced aspects of these processes. If we look exclusively at the more obvious and sensationalist areas of ‘hyper-exploitation’ of women in tourism, many important gender dynamics fall by the wayside.

One such dynamic is the gendered characteristics of tourism work. Feminist research has identified a clear segmentation of men’s and women’s work in tourism. This shows how the majority of women’s work is concentrated in seasonal, part time and low paid activities such as retail, hospitality and cleaning (Sinclair 1997; Chant 1997). Research has also identified the ways in which global gender inequalities are embedded within the promotion and marketing of tourism destinations (Cohen 1995; Marshment 1997; Pritchard and Morgan 2000). However, to date, the majority of this work has focussed on the gendered outcomes of tourism development. In contrast, the aim here is to concentrate more specifically on the ways in which tourism development policy is in itself gendered.

This paper argues that there are two distinct ways in which gendered assumptions operate in tourism development policy: implicitly (i.e. ‘gender-blind’) and explicitly (i.e. ‘gender aware’). If we are to understand tourism development policy, I argue, we need to develop an analysis which incorporates both these aspects. We begin by looking at implicit or gender-blind assumptions, demonstrating how macro-level tourism development policy relies on gender inequalities embedded in processes of restructuring of the global economy. This task draws on a wealth of analysis from feminists working within development studies and global political economy, who offer an extensive critique of contemporary development policy and the contradictions and complexities this produces for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Next, the paper turns to analyse the more gender-aware aspects of tourism development policy – that is, policies which openly seek to affect change in gender equality or promote women’s empowerment, in line with MDG3. In order to do this I begin by outlining feminist critiques of contemporary development policy, setting out the dominant ‘gender paradigm’ and the ways in which gender is conceptualised in development institutions. I then go on to offer an overview of gender-aware tourism development policies and projects, exploring gender policy in the World Tourism Organisation and the World Bank, the two most significant global institutions for tourism development. Using policy documents and
interviews, I show how the gender aspect of World Bank projects corresponds to the ‘gender paradigm’ of contemporary development policy. The final part of the paper offers some tentative conclusions and recommendations around the potential for tourism to contribute to MDG3.

2. ‘Gender-blind’ Tourism Development Policy:
‘Development’ is not a neutral, benign process but one that takes place within a context of global restructuring, of which gender inequalities are a fundamental component. Although many aspects of tourism development policy do not contain an overt gender component, implicit gendered assumptions are nevertheless present. These assumptions operate in two key ways in development policy. First, macroeconomic development policy assumes that women will ‘pick up the slack’ of restructuring by continuing to carry out social reproduction work such as parenting and domestic work regardless of external circumstances. Empirical studies in developing countries mapped the ways in which structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the 1980s tended to increase and intensify women’s reproductive work, while also increasing women’s labour force participation, particularly in the informal sphere (Palmer 1992; Çatagay, Elson and Grown 1995). Such restructuring was found to transfer the costs of social reproduction from the state onto private households and communities, where most of the work was taken up by women (Kanji 1991, Chant 2006). Others concluded that the drastic cutbacks in state services and subsidies through development policy had led to a ‘triple burden’ (Momsen 1991) – of reproductive work, community responsibility, and paid work - for women. More recently, feminists have shown how social reproduction is being ‘reprivatised’ by the global restructuring of production (Bakker 2003), leading to an ‘increasing emphasis on individual responsibility for, and informalization of, social reproduction’ (Bakker and Silvey 2008: 8). In developing countries, this has meant that ‘much of the care burden has inevitably fallen back on women and girls’ (Razavi 2007: 1).

The second gender-blind assumption of macroeconomic development policy involves the gendered inequalities which are integral to global production. A long tradition of research into women workers in the export oriented economy outlines the global gendered division of labour (Kofman and Raghuram 2006). Such research has explored women’s work in a variety of sectors, including garment factories (Elias 2004), home-based work (Prügl 1999; Kantor 2003), domestic service (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003) and the service sector in general (Guy and Newman 2004; McDowell et al. 2005). Other studies include Carolyne Dennis’ research on women’s self-employment in Nigeria, showing how the SAPs of the 1980s made it more difficult for women to enter the most profitable parts of the informal sector due to the male bias in the growth of industrial employment, while at the same time increasing women’s need for such access (Dennis 1995). In her research on maquiladora (factories in export processing zones) workers in Mexico’s export processing zones - an industrial expansion hailed as being beneficial to women - Ruth Pearson argued that although Mexico’s share of technical, managerial and administration jobs has increased, these opportunities had not been made available to Mexican women (Pearson 1995). Collectively, this work demonstrates the ways in which gendered – and ethnic - inequalities are ‘central to the functioning of the global political economy’ (Elias 2004: 27).

In summary, as Shirin Rai (2004: 583) argues: ‘(P)articipants come to specific markets with ‘unequal’ capabilities and bargaining capacities and resources, as a result of and which inhere in unequal market structures, regulated and stabilized by gendered state formations, and characterized by more or less unequal power. Class and gender are two bases for unequal power relations operating in the market.

So what does this mean in terms of tourism? What does implicitly gendered (or gender blind) tourism development policy look like? The assumptions outlined above are manifested in tourism development policy at the macroeconomic level. The primary example of this is the extensive promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing countries’ tourism sectors. Employment in global hotel chains is notorious for poor working conditions, as documented extensively in the tourism studies literature. However, these conditions become even starker when looked at
through the lens of gender. The tourism industry is characterised by ‘the seasonal nature of many of its activities and (by) important fluctuations even in normal periods’. These features of the industry create a ‘generic tendency to operate on the basis of a core staff and to employ the labour needed for day-to-day operations under atypical contractual arrangements’ (ILO 2001: 48). This involves maintaining a large pool of temporary labour to be drawn upon in times of high demand, made up of predominantly young and/or female workers. Other features of the tourism industry include high staff turnover, long working hours, subcontracting, ‘flexible’ working conditions, the prevalence of ‘casual workers’ and seasonal variations in employment (ILO 2001: 56-63).

In gender terms, the ILO reports that women account for 46 per cent of workers in wage employment in tourism globally. However, expanding the definition to include catering and accommodation brings the proportion of female labour up to 90 per cent. To quote the report in detail:

They [women] occupy the lower levels of the occupational structure in the tourism labour market, with few career development opportunities and low levels of remuneration (some estimates suggest that wages for women are up to 20 per cent lower than those for men). The greater incidence of unemployment among women is attributed to their low skill levels and their low social status in many poor countries. They also tend to be the first affected when labour retrenchment occurs as a result of recession or adjustment to new technology. It should also be noted that the majority of workers in subcontracted, temporary, casual or part-time employment are women (ILO 2001: 74).

Any analysis of the gender dimensions of macroeconomic tourism development policy that promotes FDI by large tourism companies needs to take into account the structural gendered features of work in tourism. M. Thea Sinclair (1997) argues that work in tourism should be understood as a reflection of wider inequalities in the tourism industry. She points to the fact that the fun and escapism enjoyed by tourists depend on the labour provided by workers in the tourism industry. However, these power relations need to be analysed carefully, as there are not only divisions between tourists and workers in terms of income and wealth, but also between workers, primarily along gender but also race lines. Such inequalities between workers, she argues, affect the relative income, status and power of those involved, resulting in a clear segmentation of men’s and women’s work in tourism, the majority of women’s work being concentrated in seasonal, part time and low paid activities such as retail, hospitality and cleaning (Sinclair 1997). Sylvia Chant (1997) also points to the gendered nature of work in tourism:

Female recruitment in formal sector enterprises catering for international tourists tends to draw heavily on male constructed and male-biased gender stereotypes and to place women in occupations which in many respects crystallise and intensify their subordinate positions in society, whether through their assignation to low-level, behind-the-scenes domestic work as laundrywomen or chambermaids, or to jobs where their physical attributes are used to attract men or to gratify male sexual needs, as in front-line hotel, commercial and restaurant posts and in entertainment establishments (Chant 1997: 161).

Multinational hotel chains have been criticised as setting a precedent for flexibilised, low-skill labour with little room for mobility and promotion of staff (ILO 2001). However, in many ways this is also true of smaller organisations such as ‘boutique’ hotels employing between 20 and 100 staff. Likewise in small, ‘family run’ enterprises those employees who make up the main body of the workforce do not tend to see much social mobility in their jobs (Sinclair 1997a). As such, there is strong evidence that tourism employment generated through FDI promotion is unlikely to greater gender inequality, and indeed may exacerbate inequalities.

2.1. Outcomes of ‘Gender-Blind’ Tourism Development Policy:

In spite of the structural gendered inequalities of work in tourism, feminists have always been acutely aware of the ways in which women’s entry into the paid workforce tends to have contradictory and complex effects on gender relations and the lives of women workers (Tinker 2006). Analyses
of women’s work in the global economy offer a framework for analysing these tensions. As Chant (2002: 550) argues, ‘the emancipatory prospects of female labour force participation are constrained by the prejudicial terms under which women enter the workforce’. Diane Elson and Pearson (1998: 199), in a discussion of women’s work in export processing zone factories, identify a ‘tendency to intensify the existing forms of gender subordination; a tendency to decompose existing forms of gender subordination; and a tendency to recompose new forms of gender subordination’ (emphasis added). Processes of tourism development have involved similarly complex challenges to traditional gendered power relations, as will be outlined below.

In many ways, tourism development has had a radical impact on gender relations in destination countries. As Chant argues, despite the structural inequalities of women’s participation in tourism production, such work has some benefits for the empowerment of women workers: the bringing together of women in such a way, she argues, has the potential to lead to women tourism workers ‘acting by themselves, for themselves, to demand fairer treatment in the workplace, the home, and in wider society’ (Chant 1997: 164-5). Sinclair (1997a) similarly points to some of the increased benefits of work in tourism for women – for example, she argues that such work can lead to greater status in the household and consequently increased bargaining power in the household context. In the words of Irene Tinker, such changes can be interpreted as ‘empowerment just happened’. Global socioeconomic transformations of the last twenty years have led to a shift in gender relations by undermining ‘subsistence and traditional farming communities, altering the sexual division of labor and opening cracks in the foundations of patriarchal control’ (Tinker 2006: 270). In my own research, many women workers in the tourism industry in Central America discussed how they felt working in tourism contributed to their personal and economic empowerment. They talked about how male control over household income had been diminished by the many opportunities for women to earn money in tourism communities. Others enjoyed the interaction with people from around the world, in particular being exposed to different gender norms such as women travelling alone or men taking primary responsibility for childcare.¹ However, these benefits tend not to be accompanied by wider influence in society, due to the dominant ideology of the ‘normal’ household structure, and the absence of women’s control over local decision-making.

In summary, the implicit or gender-blind assumptions of macroeconomic tourism development policy which has promoted FDI in the context of global restructuring has lead to a series of complex and sometimes contradictory outcomes for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Although tourism work is highly stratified by gender due to the kinds of labour it requires and the ways in which such labour is to be performed, to some extent it can be argued to have contributed to economic and personal empowerment. However, it is less clear whether such individual gains have been translated into broader social and political influence in society. A large body of literature exists to analyse these tensions, and can help us understand the implicit or gender-blind assumptions of tourism development policy and how these map onto broader questions about gender equality and women’s empowerment. We now move on to discuss the more explicit gender dimensions of tourism development policy.

3. Feminist Approaches to Gender and Development Policy:

In order to explore the gender dimensions of tourism policy, it is useful first to set the context within which such policy is made. I begin by offering an historical literature review on feminist critiques of development, before setting out more clearly how this can be applied to contemporary tourism development policy. The debates summarised here are well rehearsed in the field of gender and development. However, it is worth going into some detail here in order to contextualise contemporary issues for those who may not be familiar with this body of literature. The point here is to demonstrate that the inclusion of ‘gender’ within a development policy is not unproblematic. That is, there is no straight-forward relationship between making ‘gender’ more visible in development policy and gender equality and empowerment outcomes.

The seminal work of this kind is Ester Boserup’s Women’s Role in Economic Development, in which
she argued that women had been left out of development policies and as such their needs had been, marginalised (Boserup 1970). Building on this argument, the women in development (WID) approach aimed to include women in development policy in order to decrease inequalities between women and men (Tinker 1976). Working largely from a liberal feminist perspective, early work in the WID field argued that the solution to gender inequality lay in widening women’s access to tools, technology and education. The most effective way of achieving women’s integration into the development process, such writers argued, was through increased access to employment and entry into the marketplace (Rogers 1980).

General disillusionment in the late 1970s with the supposed ‘trickle-down’ effect of the modernisation approach to development encouraged a rethink of approaches, giving rise to the ‘anti-poverty’ approach of WID which argued that low-income women should be identified as a vulnerable group in need of particular attention from development planners (Waylen 1996: 39). The solutions proposed were based mainly around income-generating projects for women, making no analytical connection between women’s reproductive roles and the links between the reproductive and productive economy (Waylen 1996; Rai 2002). WID feminists did not offer a radical critique of the modernisation approach to development and remained within the paradigm of modernisation theory, using insights from liberal feminism to inform their critique of development policy and outcomes (Kabeer 1994). As summarised by Jaquette and Staudt (2006: 46), the WID view ‘was that women were excluded from or discriminated against in markets and that they would act entrepreneurially if they had even minimal resources to do so’.

Socialist feminists in the 1980s argued that the WID paradigm failed to take into account the exploitation involved in the spread of capitalist social relations, of which they identified gender inequality as a fundamental component (Benería and Sen 1981). Studies from a gender and development (GAD) perspective concentrated on global processes of the spread of capitalism and the impact of such processes on inequality. The focus was also turned away from women as a group to the more overtly political category of gender and gender relations, centring more explicitly on power relations (Waylen 1996, Rai 2002). Caroline Moser (1989) argued for a re-focussing on gendered power relations in the study of development in order to challenge gender roles and tackle macroeconomic issues from an overtly feminist perspective. This shift to a discussion of gender relations and inequality was not merely a theoretical shift, but should also be understood as a response to changes in the international system such as the introduction and the emerging era of democratisation (Jaquette and Staudt 2006).

Early work in the field of GAD involved studies that traced the links between the household and the broader international context. Maria Mies (1982, 1986), for example, analysed the links between processes of informalisation and ‘housewifisation’ in the global economy. In their article on ‘nimble fingers’, Elson and Pearson (1981) noted how gender inequalities were exploited by firms looking for fast, obedient workers. Much of this early socialist feminist work was criticised by feminists in developing countries working from a postcolonial perspective, who argued that the work of ‘First World’ feminists portrayed poor women as victims and failed to see how racial hierarchies intersected with gender hierarchies to produce historically and culturally specific forms of oppression that GAD analysts could not account for (Mohanty 1988, Lim 1990). As such, it was argued that early GAD work was overly deterministic in its approach, not allowing for the agency of women in developing countries. In many ways the rise of the postcolonial feminist critique of development can be seen as part of a wider process of the diminishing influence of materialist explanations of gender inequality (Jaquette and Staudt 2006). Work such as that of Marianne Marchand and Jane Parpart (1995) began to question notions of GAD from a more postcolonial perspective, exploring ideas about the role of language and discourse in development theory and policy.

In policy terms, the shift to the gender and development paradigm manifested itself most strongly in terms of commitments to gender mainstreaming by international institutions (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002). In spite of
this, some feminists have argued that the radical terminology of the GAD critique has often been used interchangeably with the more (neo) liberal aspects of the WID perspective (Pearson 1999). For example, Rai (2002: 73) argues for a re-focussing of feminist development work on relations of production and accumulation in order to avoid the ‘cooptation’ of feminist language and politics in development policy and practice. The point here is that the relationship between feminist academic analysis and gender policy in development is highly contentious, and reiterates the point that policy commitments to ‘gender’ need to be critically analysed if we are to understand their potential to contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

More recently, commitments to GAD and gender - mainstreaming have been somewhat overshadowed by the introduction of MDG3 as the primary reference point for gender policy in development. In many ways, MDG3 can be seen as a less radical goal than its forerunner – the Beijing Platform for Action, which established gender-mainstreaming – as it does not make links between economic restructuring and gender inequality. It is important to note that the target associated with goal three (promote gender equality and empower women) is to ‘eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015’. As Elias and Ferguson (2007) argue, the MDGs sanction an approach in which:

‘(a) gender issues are reduced to easily quantifiable measures of economic efficiency (or ‘human capital’ development) and (b) ‘gender mainstreaming’ has been effectively replaced by a development agenda that views gender issues in a much more limited sense.’

One institution that has received a high level of attention from feminist academics and activists is the World Bank. Since the emergence of the ‘post Washington consensus’ in the late 1990s, the emphasis on poverty alleviation (or ‘pro-poor growth’) has had a significant impact on gender equality policies and programmes within the Bank. Contemporary feminist work has argued that this attempt to combine a ‘gender-friendly’ approach to poverty reduction whilst maintaining a commitment to neoliberal structural adjustment is ultimately limiting (Perrons 2005, Griffin 2006, Bergeron 2001). The problem for some feminists with the overarching interest in poverty reduction is that it is characterised by a lack of any discussion concerning the links between economic growth, development and macroeconomic policy changes and the perpetuation of gender inequality.

Alongside commitments to poverty reduction, the second central component to Bank gender policy – consistent since the 1970s – is the firm belief that employment and income generation should be understood as the foundation of empowerment for women (Bedford 2003). This commitment to economic empowerment for women manifests itself in various ways in contemporary World Bank policy. Despite an official change in rhetoric from WID to GAD, in practice gender policy in the Bank has meant getting more women into paid work. In recent World Bank publications on gender and the MDGs, it is clear that gender inequality is viewed not so much as a problem in itself, but rather as a barrier to economic development and poverty reduction. The most recent substantive statement of gender policy within the Bank is Gender Equality as Smart Economics, which aims to ‘increase World Bank Group work to empower women economically’. As argued above in the critique of MDG3, this programme fits within a somewhat ‘instrumentalist’ understanding of the relationship between gender equality and development. As the report clearly states:

Studies show that when women are given economic opportunity, the benefits are also large for their families, their communities, and ultimately for national development efforts. Opening economic opportunities for women puts poverty reduction on a faster track and steps up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, which include the eradication of poverty and hunger by 2015 (World Bank 2007: 5).

As such, the key paradigm for gender policy within the Bank can be understood to have two fundamental objectives: to empower women economically (without any discussion of broader notions of empowerment); and to do this in order
to more efficiently achieve other poverty reduction goals. This overview of gender and development policy demonstrates the tensions and conflicts over the meaning and deployment of ‘gender’. We now turn to an analysis of how these debates can be applied more specifically to tourism development policy.

4. ‘Gender-Aware’ Tourism Development Policy:
As set out above, gender policy in development is made in a somewhat de-politicised environment, where many of the more radical aspects of the feminist agenda have been obscured or marginalised (Cornwall et al. 2007). This is the context in which tourism development policy is made. As such, we should not expect the gender content of tourism development policy to easily overcome these constraints, and should bear this in mind when analysing its potential to contribute to MDG3. The discussion above demonstrated how making ‘gender’ visible in development policy does not necessarily lead to gender equality and women’s empowerment. The aim here is therefore to explore how these tensions and issues play out in the context of tourism development. There is no globally-agreed policy statement on tourism and MDG3. Nevertheless, some bilateral donors have demonstrated a commitment to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment through tourism. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funds a number of projects which integrate gender and tourism, along with other aspects such as reproductive health. In Honduras, for example, JICA gender specialists have provided awareness-raising and confidence-building training for indigenous women making handicrafts and other products for the tourism industry. Also in Honduras, Norwegian funding and expertise was directed towards a feasibility study on the potential for tourism to contribute to gender equality (World Bank 2003). However, such examples are sporadic at best and suggest that the links between gender and tourism have not been explicitly made in bilateral institutions. As such, we now look at two global institutions in turn – the World Tourism Organisation and the World Bank – in order to analyse the content and focus of their gender and tourism policy.

4.1. The World Tourism Organisation:
One institution we might expect to provide some guidance on gender equality issues is the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). However, despite being a United Nations specialised agency, the UNWTO has been comparatively slow on the uptake with gender mainstreaming compared with other global institutions. Although the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme has been well-established since 2002, gender equality objectives have never been an explicit component of this. Indeed, gender as a concept was not widely used in the organisation until 2007. Within the institution, gender falls within the remit of ‘Cultural, Social and Ethical Aspects of Tourism’ department, where it is just one of several areas the small team is concerned with, along with migration, human rights, non-discrimination and the protection of children. As such, there are limited resources with which to develop and promote a strong gender agenda. Nevertheless, those within the UNWTO with a concern for gender issues managed to take advantage of the theme of World Tourism Day 2007: ‘Tourism Opens Doors for Women’ in order to raise the profile of gender issues in the institution. As part of this event, a roundtable involving a broad range of participants was held with the express purpose of exploring the relationship between this theme and the MDGs, setting up a work agenda for the future.

Following on from this, a further UNWTO Forum in Berlin in March 2008 explored the theme of Women in Tourism. The Action Plan to Empower Women through Tourism developed during the Forum includes the following objectives:

- Establish a multi-stakeholder taskforce;
- Put in place a data collection system, including desk research and case studies;
- Initiate a biennial UNWTO-UNIFEM report on the situation of women in tourism;
- Expand the website www.tourismgender.com into a PORTAL to serve as a global knowledge sharing e-network;
• Build international awareness about opportunities for women in tourism;

• Call upon UNWTO members to take vigorous steps to support gender mainstreaming in national development processes so as to achieve women’s equality in the tourism sector;

• Foster a network of activists, ambassadors and advocates and experts in gender issues from around the world’.5

Of particular interest amongst these activities is the Women in Tourism Taskforce. The first activity of this Taskforce is a project aimed at women working in five star hotels in developing countries, offering education, human resources and decent training for women. The Taskforce will work with hotel chains and local NGOs in order to teach basic skills in order to boost women’s confidence in other aspects of their lives.6 However, in spite of these initiatives the only clear over-arching policy statement from the UNWTO is the institution’s ‘triple commitment’ to the MDGs. These are outlined as follows: that tourism should benefit the poor; promote the protection of the environment; and support the empowerment of women.7 As such, it is too early to make any in-depth analyses of UNWTO gender policy. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to keep a close watch on these activities and they will merit future research in order to explore the ways the institution grapples with the complex issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

4.2. The World Bank:

A key tourism policy shift has taken place from macro-economic concerns towards micro-economic analysis:

The Bank uses the analytical lens of tourism to explore barriers and constraints (...) to investment, to examine micro-policy reform, to decentralize institutional structures, and to promote public-private partnerships. (...) This approach is leading to important and more focused micro-level and policy interventions that are targeted at outcomes like raising the livelihoods of local people (Hawkins and Mann 2007: 358).

This research is useful in understanding the way the Bank’s overall approach to tourism development has been reoriented towards micro-economic and poverty reduction or ‘propoor’ objectives. However, it tells us little about how gender is conceptualised within this new approach. Although no single document exists to outline the Bank’s approach, several projects identify an explicit link between tourism and gender equality or empowerment. We outline four of these here, paying particular attention to a project in Copán, Honduras, on which extensive primary research was carried out by the author. These projects are firmly embedded within the World Bank’s gender paradigm set out above, which sanctions women’s integration into the productive market economy as the primary route to empowerment.

The ‘Transfrontier Conservation Areas and Tourism Development’ project in Mozambique is cited in a World Bank list of ‘gender and rural development’ projects so is useful in understanding the paradigm of gender and tourism policy.8 The Project Appraisal Document states that:

Tourism, natural resource management and small enterprise development are all areas that offer particular opportunities for employment, income and participation by women. In cooperation with NGOs, the Government is also supporting women’s associations that assist women household heads with weak economic capacity (World Bank 2005: 132).

As such, the ‘gender’ component of this project is reduced to creating opportunities for women’s
economic empowerment. Although listed as a showcase project for gender and rural development, questions of equality and empowerment are not present in the project documentation. In Bolivia, a tourism development project for Lake Titicaca includes a ‘gender’ component. It aims to ‘promote actions aimed at improving gender equity and improve opportunities for Aymarh women’ (World Bank 2007a: 98). However, there is little exploration of how this might be done and what this might mean in practice.

A recently approved ‘Sustainable Tourism Development’ project in Ethiopia (June 2009) is more explicit in its understandings of gender, which suggests that the links between tourism development and gender may be becoming more prominent in World Bank work. The Project Appraisal Document offers more details about how women are to be involved:

In Axum the social issues are largely around the planned activity of (i) enhancing the town square as a social arena (e.g. cafes and souvenir outlets managed by locals) and (ii) restoring some traditional houses possibly to transform them into small lodges run by community-based entrepreneurs who could also benefit from the matching grant scheme. It is desirable that a particular attention be given to vulnerable groups such as women and the youth so as to generate employment and incomes for them (World Bank 2009: 33).

The construction of Ethiopian women as a ‘vulnerable group’ is interesting here, as it clearly casts women as victims in need of the ‘help’ of tourism development. The only solution offered to overcome such vulnerability is generating employment and incomes. In practical terms, it is suggested that ‘these groups’ be given priority in jobs in the new tourism site in areas such as ‘ticket sales, parking attendants, guides etc.’ (World Bank 2009: 33). Again, understandings of gender within this project are firmly embedded with the economic empowerment approach set out above.

One project in particular is being hailed as a success story for tourism development’s potential to contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment. The ‘Regional Development in the Copán Valley’ project in Honduras included ‘gender’ as a key component from the outset. I deal with this topic in greater detail in a forthcoming article (Ferguson 2010), yet some key points are worth emphasising here in order to understand in more detail the World Bank’s approach. As might be expected, rather than addressing issues of inequality in development outcomes and processes, the Valle de Copán project focuses on the potential of tourism to generate the conditions for ‘marginal groups’ (women, young people and old people) to access the opportunities afforded by tourism. Women’s participation in handicraft production for the tourism market is perceived by development workers as a method by which women’s groups can be integrated into the market as well as offering a tourist attraction to potential visitors to rural communities, which at the same time is said to enhance cultural awareness and local conditions. Tourism in this sense is understood as an economic activity that can integrate women into the economy, which in turn allows them to contribute to the family economy and strengthen their personal development.

This conceptualisation of gender equality fits broadly within the World Bank paradigm outlined above. The primary understanding of gender policy within the project is that it relates to women in their roles as producers of tourism goods and services. In general, support and assistance for these productive activities is what constitutes the gender component of policy. As such, issues of gender equality are left out of the picture as equality of opportunity and participation are the goals of policy. Women receiving training in Honduras through the Copán Valley project argued that such training did not take into account broader issues within their lives. For example, although women may receive training in basic accounting and marketing skills, wider issues of concern to them were not addressed.

Women’s integration into the tourism market through World Bank projects is being pursued with little awareness of the significant barriers to participation faced by women working on tourism microenterprise projects. Research on the outcomes of gender and tourism projects is scarce, predominantly because of the relative newness of the phenomenon. As such, a summary of the
gendered outcomes of the Copán project will have
to serve as a guide here. First, as argued above,
the outcomes of tourism development on gender
relations in tourism destinations are complex and
uneven. Just because the World Bank project did
not take a radical view in its ‘gender component’,
that does not mean it did not provide opportunities
for local women to challenge gendered power
relations. Even activities such as women travelling
from rural villages into town to attend workshops
and events caused a disruption of traditional power
relations. Likewise, the granting of sums of money
to groups of women to set up their own businesses
had a significant impact on rural communities and
challenged the ways that both women and men
perceived and performed traditional gender roles.

The aim here is certainly not to say that World
Bank tourism development funding is unable
to contribute to gender equality and the
empowerment of women in tourism destinations.
Indeed, in many ways the effects of such funding on
gender relations have been significant. The point is
that more radical starting points and more feminist
expertise at all stages of gender and tourism
development policy could offer greater potential to
move beyond narrow understandings of economic
empowerment. I now turn to some reflecting points
on what this might mean for future gender and
tourism policy, and what kinds of research might be
needed to support this.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations:
This paper has taken a critical approach to the
relationship between tourism and MDG3. By
exploring both implicit and explicit gendered
assumptions embedded in tourism development
policy, the paper has highlighted some of the
tensions and complexities of this issue. A key
criticism of current policy is that very limited notions
of women’s empowerment – that is, economic
empowerment - are used to justify and legitimise
these policies. As Chant (2006: 101) argues, access
to material resources is ‘unlikely to have a significant
impact on women’s empowerment without
changes in other social, cultural, and legal structures
of gender inequality’. There is no necessary
correlation between an increase in resources and
the redress of power relations (Kabeer 1999). As
such, it can be concluded from the research that
economic empowerment as experienced by many
women in tourism development communities does
not tend to translate into meaningful a redress of
power relations beyond a relative improvement
in economic conditions. That is, empowerment
through the market remains empowerment in the
market, to the exclusion of more wide-reaching
societal change. Although tourism development
may reconstitute gendered power relations in
narrow economic (or market) terms, in reality
the broader power structures of inequality across
society remain profoundly gender-biased, a pattern
which is in many ways not only reinforced but also
fuelled by processes of tourism development.

However, such a critical perspective is not
necessarily the most fruitful way of opening
channels of debate and exchange with policymakers
and development practitioners. In an attempt to do
this in a constructive manner, I offer some tentative
guidelines or recommendations for channelling
the potential benefits of tourism more effectively
towards achieving MDG3. First, the promotion of
tourism as a macroeconomic development strategy
for poorer countries could be carried out with
a more explicit understanding of the gendered
implications of this policy. Extensive research exists
into the unequal ways in which tourism work is
structured. As such, tourism companies should be
held to account for their gender policies (whether
explicit or implicit) in order to provide more
opportunities for promotion and training for women
workers and to redress the historical imbalances in
tourism work. Second, there could be a more open
debate in tourism policy circles about the politics of
women’s empowerment and gender equality. This
would allow gender and tourism policy to move
beyond narrow, market-based conceptualisations
and to present more creative and innovative ways
of achieving MDG3. Third, policy-makers could pay
more attention to feminist analyses of tourism
development. We need to move beyond generalised
statements about the contribution of tourism to
MDG3 and begin to explore the practical ways in
which this relationship can be operationalised.
This would require the involvement of feminist
academics and practitioners at all stages of the
tourism policy process – including implementation
– to ensure that such policies retain a political
commitment to broad notions of gender equality
and women’s empowerment.
As demonstrated in this paper, research into the nexus between tourism and MDG3 is currently limited. The guidelines above are tentative precisely because of the lack of detailed, analytical research in this area. This would benefit from further research in a number of priority areas: the outcomes of World Bank gender and tourism projects; gender and tourism policy in bilateral and regional funding agencies; and UNWTO’s emerging gender agenda. Also, more research into grassroots feminist tourism projects across the world -such as the Zona Franja tourism and women’s empowerment project in Nicaragua – would offer alternative ways of understanding gender and tourism, and provide inspiration for creative and progressive ways of harnessing tourism to contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

**Endnotes:**
* The paper was published by Universidad Complutense de Madrid and a later version is now available in Current Issues in Tourism (http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a934837855-db=all-jumptype=rss)

1. Interviews with women tourism workers in Costa Rica, Honduras and Belize carried out between September 2005 and April 2006.


4. Interviews with tourism development practitioners in Honduras carried out in May 2008


6. This analysis is based on interviews with staff from the World Tourism Organisation, Madrid, June 2009 and September 2009


10. Interviews with indigenous women who participated in the World Bank project, Honduras, December 2005

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SECTION 02

TOURISM AND GENDER RELATIONS
Abstract
Tourism processes, as this article argues, like other processes and relations in society are gendered. The gender bias is built into the discourse of tourism practices, images, and activities, which, by and large, privileges the male viewpoint. Researchers, academics and social activists have questioned the hegemonic male view of tourism at different levels, although their voices are still weak. In light of the fact that tourism processes are expanding rapidly in the globalising world, there is a need to strengthen these voices, both at the local and global levels. For a start, the agenda of women’s movements everywhere must include the demand for greater participation of local people in tourism planning and development, especially if rights and interests of people in tourist destinations in the third world are to be protected. Only then can they share equitably in the benefits that result from tourism.

Tourism and its multiple dimensions, although a relatively unexplored area of academic interest in India, is by now a well established field of social science research in Europe and America. However, in the fast growing literature on tourism, one is struck by the paucity of writing on issues related to tourism processes and gender relations. It is observed that there is a male bias in tourism research which subsumes distinct female experience and behaviour of tourism and tourism related activity in the dominant male experience. Whereas in reality, Wearing and Wearing point out, “Gendered tourists, gendered hosts, gendered tourism marketing and gendered tourism objects each reveal power differences between women and men which privilege male view and which have significant impacts on tourism image and promotion” [quoted from Pritchard and Morgan 2000:885].

This perspective, although largely neglected, is crucial to an understanding of tourism processes, according to Kinnaird et al (1994) in the light of the following. First, that tourism is constructed out of gendered societies and therefore all aspects of tourism related development and activity embody gender relations. Second, gender relations both inform, and are informed, socially, in diverse and complex ways. And economic, political, social, cultural and environmental relations are all part of the process of tourism development. Tourism is not separate from them but engages all of them. Third, since tourism-related activity has become an important part of development, the social, economic and political relations which result are part of the overall relations of power and control, which can be articulated through race, class and gender [Kinnaird et al, 1994: 5].

However, one of the issues explored in tourism writings relates to the gendered character of employment patterns resulting from tourism. It is clear that there are differences in the nature and type of tourism generated employment that is available to men and women. And this, of course, has significant social consequences. Although inadequate, attention has also been paid more specifically to the growth of sex tourism which has turned certain destinations into “pleasure peripheries”. A much less researched area is the gendered nature of tourism images and experiences. It has been suggested that, there
is a interrelationship between the language of patriarchy and heterosexuality and the language of tourism promotion.

I propose to focus specifically on these issues within the context of gender, tourism and development. The paper will highlight the gendered nature of tourism processes, production and consumption of tourism experiences, in the context of power relations and dominant patriarchal values within societies and between nations, the developed and the developing. The analysis will throw up issues which are significant to understand gender inequalities in tourism processes, which require special critical attention from academics, planners and policy-makers, and political organisations, as well as open up hitherto neglected areas for intervention by women’s groups. I will illustrate the issues with reference to Goa, a major tourist destination in India.

**Significance of Tourism in Modern Times:**

To define a highly complex phenomenon simply, tourism is essentially a leisure time activity, involving some movement, a journey and a period of stay in a new place/places. To be a tourist, as Urry observes, “is one of the characteristics of the ‘modern’ experience. Not to ‘go away’ is like not possessing a car or a nice house. It is a marker of status in modern societies and is also thought to be necessary to health” [Urry 1990: 4]. The difference between pre-modern travel and modern tourism is spelt out by Ning Wang: first, whereas in the past tourism was a luxury, available only to elite group, in modernity and late modernity, tourism is a mass consumption. Second, in today’s society, there is a massive social organisation or a “tourism production system”. Commodification of tourism is part of overall capitalist commodification. Third, while pre-modern travel was an occasional event, modern tourism is a mass phenomenon, an institution, “an institutionalised leisure and consumer activity characterised by pleasure seeking” (2000: 13-14).

It is said to be the “largest peace time movement of people”. Statistics provided by the World Tourism Organisation show a remarkable increase in the number of international travellers from 25 million in 1950 to 425 million in 1990. Since the second world war, the growth of tourism industry and its promotion by international financial organisations as an agent of economic development and change has been unprecedented. As the largest industry in the world, it obviously holds a very influential position in the world economy. In 1994, international tourism produced approximately $3.5 trillion in gross output (6.1 per cent of global GDP) and employed close to 130 million people, 6.8 per cent of workers worldwide. For the same year, the tourism industry accounted for 12.3 per cent of consumer expense, absorbed 75 per cent of the total capital investment, and paid almost 6 per cent of total tax payments [Apostolopoulos1996: 1-2]. It represents 7 per cent of all world exports [Kinnaird et al, op cit:2]. In addition to developments in the international tourism market, domestic/national tourism is also increasing rapidly partly due to the prevalence of increased leisure time and affluence, as well as the encouragement of tourism in regions seeking to develop their economies. Overall, tourism has witnessed tremendous growth as a result of increasing affluence in the last half century, more leisure time and disposable income, development of better communication system, information technology, and a culture of travel.

Modern tourism industry is international in character and becoming increasingly so with rapid globalisation. The system hinges on a group of national and transnational corporate actors and governmental and inter-governmental agencies, such as hotel chains, airlines, travel companies, travel agencies, tour operators and international travel organisations [Cohen 1996: 59]. In another sense, too, tourism is increasingly globalised. “With touristic consumerism expanding worldwide and tourists travelling further afield” , Wang observes, “various people, nations, and places are becoming involved in this touristic globalisation and being exposed to its positive and negative consequences. No longer can a culture or a people remain insulated” [Wang, op cit: 2]. Almost every cultural object or site can be turned into a tourist attraction as more and more regions come within the orbit of tourism, especially international tourism. There is already speculation about tourism in space.

**Tourism and Development:**

During the 1960s tourism was, and continues to be, considered “a passport to development”, for the
underdeveloped countries. It was seen as a “soft”
development alternative for stimulating economic
growth. Through foreign exchange earnings and
creation of employment, tourism could provide
an opportunity for people of poorer countries
to increase their income and standard of living.
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and
Development (OECD) spoke of the almost limitless
growth potential in tourism. Both the World Bank
and the United Nations promoted tourist industries
in developing countries. The UN declared 1967 to
be the International Tourism Year. Tourism was
presented as an easy option for development
because it relied largely on the national resources
already present – sand, sun, friendly people – and
required no vast capital investment. A number
of developing countries embarked upon tourism
without giving adequate attention to its long-term
consequences. Although since the boom of the
1960s, views about the negative social, cultural
and environmental effects of tourism have been
expressed, the enthusiasm of the developing
countries continues to be high. There exists a
substantial body of literature which highlights the
adverse socio-cultural consequences of tourism.

Even its economic benefits have come under
doubt. Scholars have realised that tourism is not
a secure growth industry. It is prone to seasonal
fluctuations and is unpredictable precisely because
it is dependent upon a wide variety of factors, at
the international level, upon which the destination
countries have little control. Given the nature of
inclusive package holidays where payment is made
in advance, the destination countries do not earn
much foreign exchange [Crick 1996: 21-23]. It has
proved to be more capital-intensive than predicted,
nor has employment been stimulated to the degree
expected. The profits go to the elites, the wealthy
and the influential, at the local as well as the global
levels.

A deeper structural criticism of modern tourism
comes from dependency and world system theorists.
With the growth of modern tourism establishment
into an international complex of airlines, hotels,
travel agencies, transport companies and the like,
there is allegedly an increasing domination by the
centre (from industrial countries where the tourists
originate), of the periphery (the less developed
destinations). “Thus, a dependency syndrome
emerges. Tourism becomes identified as a form of
imperialism or of metropolitan dominance in a neo-
colonial setting in which the natives particularly the
third world countries are systematically exploited”
[Dann and Cohen 1996: 308]. Tourism is thus seen
as a mechanism which incorporates the poor,
developing countries into an essentially exploitative
global economic order.

Given that tourism processes are constructed,
promoted and consumed in the hierarchical,
unequal, global and national systems, women and
men experience tourism and are affected by it very
differently. Issues of class, race, gender shape and
are shaped by tourism processes very differently at
international and local levels. An illustration of this
is provided by the gendered pattern of employment
generated by tourism (both international and
domestic) in the developing countries especially
with respect to sex tourism. I will deal with them in
the following sections.

**Employment and the Gender Bias:**
One of the major benefits of tourism is believed to
be generation of employment for the local people
in the tourist destinations. While this is widely
accepted as true, there is less awareness, however,
of a gender bias in the nature of employment
available to men and women. Studies have shown
that there are gender differences in the type of work,
the seasonality of employment, wage structure and
so on. In most instances tourism reinforces the old
division of labour although in some cases a new
division of labour is also created.

In the hotel and catering industry in Britain, for
example, gender stereotyping and sex segregation
at different levels of employment activity is evident.
“Women work as counter and kitchen staff,
domestic and cleaners, while men work as porters
and stewards. Over 50 per cent of men employed
in the industry are in a professional, managerial
and supervisory occupation.”[Kinnaird et al op
cit: 16]. A distinct gender division is reported by
scholars in the form and extent of flexibility in
working practices. It is more common for men to
have jobs which involve “functional flexibility”. The
“operative positions” of cooks, waiting and bar
staff, kitchen hands, domestic staff and cleaners
are overwhelmingly filled by women, majority of them as part-time employees. They do not have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills and experience to become functionally flexible as full time employees who are more likely to be males [Urry 1990: 80].

Case studies from other regions have also found women to be employed in less stable, lower paid and lower status jobs. Low skilled jobs are seen as good opportunities for women and ethnic minorities. Sexist and racist social ideologies as well as existing social stratification systems are found to be reinforced by tourism services [Kinnaird et al op cit:17]. Data from northern Cyprus, for example, suggests that pressure from family and husband may restrict the choice of jobs by women. For example, there is a preference for reception work, housekeeping and cleaning rather than work at the bar, as waitress or tour guide. Female participation in business in family run hotels and guest houses is acceptable since “it occurs within the protection of the family environment [Scott 1995: 395-96].

Evidence from Goa,¹ India, also suggests that in general the low skilled and wage jobs are occupied mostly by women particularly in hotels. A number of migrant girls from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are engaged in the sale of small handicraft items and as masseurs on the beaches. It is an important source of income for them. In addition, a number of Goan men and women run small shacks serving food and drinks on the beach. Women/families are also involved in keeping “bed and breakfast” tourists in their private homes, letting out rooms or a part of the house to tourists, preferably foreigners. The tourism department encourages people living in coastal areas to keep tourists as paying guests.

In most such instances, however, the old gender division of labour is not challenged, although clearly, chores like cooking, serving, cleaning, washing, which are unpaid household work of the traditional housewife, now become commercialised. Other studies also show that the “providers of commercialised hospitality within the private home are overwhelmingly female... with increasing male representation as establishments become larger, for example, small hotels.” Hosting at home is generally perceived as a gendered occupation [Lynch and MacWhannel 2000: 106].

An important element of hosting at home is the extension of unpaid household work to paid work within the home. The site of work associated with nurture and care for the family is transformed into one of commercial activity for a stranger, although the personal element does not disappear altogether. The fact that the tourist, the stranger, is also looking for a “home” and a “homely atmosphere” away from home, is significant but outside the scope of this paper. In her new role, the woman of the house continues to play, to differing degrees, the quintessential mother, cooking, feeding and looking after the “guest”.

The income from running a shack on the beach or hosting at home does enhance the financial and social position of the family, and the woman. I was informed that generally the income is spent on the family. “Even the tip given to the woman goes to the family. The family may invest the money in a car or a motor bike but not in a washing machine, which would make life easier for her.” At the same time, keeping guests at home or running a restaurant doubles the burden on the woman. While the husband works only in the restaurant, the wife takes care of the family, “cooks at home in the morning, and then in the restaurant, goes back home to do other chores, and returns to the restaurant to work till late at night”. Do women acquire control over the income from these activities or does it become a part of the family pool, do they experience other types of freedom as well, are questions that require closer examination. Different regions will show very different results, depending upon a variety of other factors like their overall social and economic standing in the family and community.

There are instances of enhancement of women’s independence, resulting from their incorporation into tourism generated employment. Evidence from Greece, Barbados, Mexico, Ireland and the Caribbean seems to support the above argument. While the traditional division of labour remains unchallenged and unaltered, the new opportunities do enable women’s labour to enter the public domain [Kinnaird et al op cit: 17]. This, of course, has other social consequences which must be further explored in tourism research. For example, tourism has resulted in greater economic autonomy and power for women in Mexico. The incidence

¹ Goa is a state in western India.
for female headed households are found to be dominant in areas where tourism employment is available. Tourism developments in a region may well expand the range of choices and freedoms available to women, and therefore improve the quality of their lives.

In Goa, several persons reported that income from tourism has resulted in greater confidence and freedom for women, for instance “they go to restaurants, go out with friends and feel free”. Unlike Goan men who develop relationships with foreign women tourists just to be able to go abroad, women may develop contact with foreign men to be in an equal relationship.

**Pleasure Periphery and Sex Tourism:**

Another way in which women are included in the tourism related labour force is sex tourism. The four “s” factors, i.e., sun, sand, sea and sex have become associated with tourist resorts in general. Countries which utilise tourism as a strategy for development create a situation in which women’s sexuality is seen as an object of attraction for the male gaze, both domestic, but more so, foreign tourists. Parts of the world, especially the developing countries like Thailand, Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka have acquired the reputation of being the “pleasure periphery” for the developed tourism generating metropoles including Europe, the US, Japan, and others. The power relations between tourism generating and the destination countries, and unequal gender relations in both, is the context in which the increase in international sex tourism can be analysed. The pleasure seeking, adventurous male tourist from the affluent, developed countries and the stereotypical “submissive”, “feminine”, female from poor underdeveloped countries characterise the dominant trend in sex tourism of present times. Which is, of course, not to deny the existence of sex tourism between the developed, affluent countries.

Sex tourism, by and large, involves women [Shaw and Williams 1994: 90] although men are also a part of the business, as for instance the “beach boys” in Jamaica. White women are also known to look for sex partners when on vacations. This phenomenon exists in Goa as well. Young Goan men are known to engage in providing sexual service to women (and men) tourists on a commercial basis. It is suggested that some female tourists are able to use their economic power to “indulge their racialised sexual fantasies while away from home, imaging Goa as eroexotic” [Routledge 2002: 206].

In some destinations like Kenya, Gambia and several Caribbean islands, female sex tourists are said to be more prominent than their male counterparts. As women improve their social and economic position, one may expect more and more female tourists seeking sexual services from male prostitutes or call boys all over the world.

Significantly, however, Pruitt and La Font point out, the term “romance tourism” is used to distinguish these relationships from those of sex tourism. Here, the commercial character of sex tourism is hidden behind “the discourse of romance and long-term relationship, an emotional involvement usually not present in sex tourism”. And neither partner considers their interaction to be prostitution, although others may label it so. Emphasis is placed on courtship rather than the exchange of sex for money [Pruitt and La Font 1995: 423].

Pritchard and Morgan sum up the factors on which sex tourism is founded. First, the poverty of the people which encourages women to enter the sex business. Second, male tourists see women of colour as someone more willing and available. Third, the industry is supported by political and economic institutions and businesses which encourage men to travel to certain countries specifically to purchase the sexual services of local women [Pritchard and Morgan 2000: 888]. It is also suggested that men seek sexual service in the developing countries not only because it is cheaper, but because the commercial character of the interaction between the prostitute and the customer is somewhat disguised under tenderness, readiness to please, etc., on the part of the prostitute [Oppermann 1999: 255].

It must be noted that colonialism and militarism encouraged prostitution in many countries even before the modern international tourist appeared on the scene. In present times, however, sex tourism has become a mechanism through which the governments of these countries seek to further
their national economic goals [Hall 1996: 270]. Scholars have pointed to the post-war development of the new international division of labour which radically reconstructed the economies of south-east Asia through their closer integration within the global economy. The influx of rural women to urban areas to support their families, the overall marginalisation of female participation in the labour market, their exclusion from the industrial sector, have been factors responsible for their entry into sex business [Shaw and Williams op cit: 91].

In Korea the ‘kisaeng’ tourism is synonymous with Japanese oriented tourism prostitution. In 1985, there were an estimated 2,60,000 prostitutes in South Korea, the majority of whom came from economically backward rural areas. The Korean government even congratulated them for their “heroic patriotism”, for contributing towards the economic development of their country. Although women’s groups like the South Korea Women’s Church Alliance has strongly condemned the practice, the Korean government has chosen to ignore it so as not to spoil its economic relations with Japan [Hall op cit: 273, 274].

It is common knowledge that the promotion of sexual services is an important part of marketing Thailand as a tourist destination. It is estimated that there were between 5,00,000 and a million prostitutes in the early 1980s. Of course, not all prostitutes cater to sex tourists. Besides, many Thai women become “rented wives”, somewhat like the kisaeng of Korea, who accompany the tourists, particularly to Holland, Germany and Japan. A number of Filipino women are known to travel to Japan and Germany. Most of the female and child prostitutes in Thailand come from the poor north and north-eastern regions. Until the end of 1980s the government promoted sex tourism as a means to earn foreign exchange to the extent that ministers openly advocated tourism prostitution as a means of employment generation. In 1990s although prostitution for local customers was more prevalent, foreign-oriented prostitution was extremely important to Thailand’s accumulation of foreign capital.

Boonchu Rojanasathien, a former vice premier of Thailand and an internationally known banker, encouraged provincial governors of Thailand in 1980 to make their provinces more attractive to tourists and thereby create more jobs for the people. His appeal read as follows, “Within the next two years we need more money. Therefore I ask all governors to consider the natural scenery in your provinces, together with some form of entertainment that some of you might consider disgusting and shameful because they are forms of sexual entertainment that attract tourists. Such forms of entertainment should not be prohibited if only because you are morally fastidious. Yet explicit obscenities that may lead to damaging moral consequences should be avoided within a reasonable limit. We must do this because we have to consider jobs that will be created for the people” [quoted from Holden, Horlemann and Pfafflin 1983: 13].

There has been a weakening of the sex market in Thailand in recent years and interestingly, both external and internal factors are responsible for it. Growing public awareness of the AIDS crisis as well as the work of women’s protests are important. But changes in Japanese society such as the improved status of women in Japan, Leheny points out, and rapidly increasing number of Japanese women travelling abroad has put pressure on the government to change Thailand’s sex market image. In fact, given that women constitute an appreciably lucrative tourism market, since their spending patterns result in fewer leakages than men’s do, Japanese women represent the greater potentially profitable demand group. Tourism Authority of Thailand’s designation of 1992 as “Women’s Visit Thailand Year” signals such a development [Leheny 2003: 380].

In response to a growing phenomenon of sex tourism throughout Asia, a few students’ and women’s groups organised themselves against it. In 1973 the first demonstration took place in Seoul, Korea, where students held banners which said, “Our motherland should not be turned into a brothel for Japanese men.” In 1981, through his travel in south-east Asia, then prime minister Zenko Suzuki of Japan was surprised to be confronted with strong protest groups in Manila and Thailand. A protest letter prepared by 68 organisations in the Philippines said, “we would like to forget Japanese military imperialism. But now instead of
military uniforms, the men come in business suits dominating Asia through a pernicious form of socio-economic imperialism which tramples on the Asian peoples’ right to human dignity” [O’Grady 1981: 39].

That racist and gender inequalities may be reinforced by tourism experience is shown by Crush and Wellings in the case of Lesotho and Swaziland. “Exposure to independent black African through the tourism experience, far from diluting racist stereotypes held by white South Africans, tends only to reinforce them. Thus blacks are cast in servile position, throughout the industry...black women are reduced to the level of sexual objects meant for the proclivities of white male South Africans...” [Crush and Wellings 1987: 103]. One of the most significant social impacts, the authors note, has been the obvious growth of prostitution in the two countries. An important factor in their analysis is the defining context of a regional political economy dominated by South America. Not only women, but children, the most vulnerable section, too are involved in the sex service. In 1994, 61 End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Exploitation (ECPAT) provided the following estimates of children in the sex industry – 5,00,000 in Brazil, 4,00,000 in India, 2,00,000-8,50,000 in Thailand, 2,00,000 in Nepal.3

Cheap airfares, the opening of countries once closed because of war or other political reasons, and the advent of the internet have provided opportunities for tourist looking for underage sex partners. In the last few years paedophilia appears to have increased substantially or at least more information seems to be available now. In the case of child sexual abuse, class, and race factors seem to be more important than gender. Young boys are as much victimised as young girls. For example, sexual abuse of young boys is more common in Sri Lanka, while more young girls are abused in India. Modern gadgets like sophisticated cameras and video filming equipment are some of the aids used by the offenders, who are generally white men, although women are also involved.

It is reported that international networks of child sex abusers is rapidly increasing. They share information on the “safest” places for child abuse in the world. There is also a huge market for child pornography on the internet. India and other south Asian countries are slowly replacing south-east Asia as the venue of choice for sex tourism given that there are fewer legislations against child abuse in these countries. Also, because European tourists believe that AIDS is not as rampant among children in India. A large number of tourists are seeking out India, the main destination being Goa precisely because of the lax legal and security measures there. They know that it is easy to escape the local administration as well as the law. Since Bangkok has become “too hot” for European paedophiles, they have turned to Goa and Kerala [Virani 2000: 88].

According to Nishita Desai (2001) of Child Rights Goa (CRG), Goa is in danger of becoming a destination for sex tourism. Although Goans themselves like to deny it but it is well known that not only migrant women but Goan women too are involved in sex business. Women and girls are supplied through the hotels, lodges, restaurants to domestic and foreign tourists. They may also accompany the man out of the state for short periods. Majority of the prostitutes are from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, few from Nepal, Bangladesh, West Bengal, and even countries of the former Soviet Union. Although not entirely a product of tourism, prostitution has got a boost from increased tourism. Studies show that while sexual exploitation of children may have existed prior to tourism in Goa, the number has risen due to domestic and foreign tourism. Though migrant children are the worst victims of sexual abuse, local children are also lured by paedophiles under the guise of providing “better opportunities” [Desai ibid: 14]. The Washington Times in an issue referred to Goa beaches as particularly favoured by tourists from Europe, America, Australia, Japan and reported that it was set to rival Bangkok in the child sex tourism (p 17).

The migrants are usually from the drought-prone regions of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. While the adult migrant men are engaged in construction, stone quarrying or scrap collection work, women and children often work selling trinkets, handicraft items, fruits, nuts, soft drinks to tourists on the beaches. Many work as masseurs, and come into contact with “friendly” tourists who give them money and gifts in return for sexual favours. Between 1984 and 1991 Freddie
Peats ran a children’s home, taking in orphaned boys and those from broken homes and sexually abusing them. Peats also used the boys in the production of pornography and prostituted them to foreign paedophiles. He was convicted, but many like him have managed to escape the law. Thanks, however, to the efforts of some organisations like Child Rights Goa and several citizen’s groups the government has woken up to the prevalence of paedophilia in Goa, and begun to take action against it.

An important point has been raised by Davidson and Taylor with regard to the westerner’s desire for sexual contact with local adults and children. It is structured, according to them, by their “racist constructions of the exotic and the erotic “primitive”, while their racist assumptions about cultural “difference” are used to justify and defend their sexually exploitative acts. At the same time, for most Goans the fact that the prostituted women and children are primarily migrants, and “so the ‘Other’, makes their fate a matter of indifference” [Davidson and Taylor 1996: 29]. Neither the Goan people nor the government regard the problem as serious simply because “outsiders are involved in it”, who “spoil the name of Goa”. The solution, therefore, is “to throw them out of the state”.

Flavia Agnes puts it in the wider context of exploitative global system, when she writes, “In the global trade-offs, while India is already marked as a place for the supply of cheap labour, lax environmental safety laws and the under-the-table dealings, will it now have another plus – a sex tourism attraction? Will the poverty ridden, malnourished children, the most vulnerable segment of our population, become its fodder, while the state machinery is caught slumbering?” [Agnes 2004: 19]. It is, however, also important to note that not only the exploitative world system, but the unequal gendered societies of both the first and third worlds, is the context in which gendered differences and bias in tourism can be understood. It is significant that the white male tourists alone do not demonstrate their sexual power over the stereotypical “passive”, “traditional”, submissive coloured women, but coloured men also focus their gaze on the “bikini clad”, white women. The object of tourism consumption, in both instances, is the female body. It is common knowledge, for example, that Indian men like to visit Goa for voyeuristic purposes, to ogle at the scantily dressed women, both Goan and foreigners, believed to be “free”, “fun-loving”, “permissive” and “easily available”.

For Enloe, tourism is profoundly gendered, based on the ideas of masculinity and femininity in the societies of departure and destination. “The very structure of international tourism needs patriarchy to survive” [Swain 1995: 255]. Crucial to this discussion is the gender bias in the creation of tourism images and the “interrelationship” between the language of patriarchy and (hetro) sexuality and language of tourism” [Pritchard and Morgan op cit: 884].

**Tourism Images:**

Pritchard and Morgan (2000) argue, on the basis of analysis of brochures and advertisements, that language and imagery of tourism promotional material “privileges the male, heterosexual gaze above all others”. Studies, although few on the subject, note that tourism brochure representation of men tend to be associated with action, power, ownership, while representations of women tend to be associated with passivity, availability and being owned. They point out that tourism advertising and the myths and fantasies promoted by tourism marketing are dependent upon shared conceptions of gender, sexuality and gender relations [Pritchard and Morgan op cit: 889).

Like advertising images in general, tourism advertising images also invariably represent the male view. The masculine and feminine attributes are defined largely as the adventurous, strong, “macho” man, and the passive, sensuous, submissive woman. The tourism advertising material is replete with the images of the “erotic” and the “exotic” woman who lights up the fantasy world of the tourist. For example, Caribbean women are presented in tourism literature as sexual mulattoes with free time to enjoy the beaches and the male visitor. The dominant image of women in the tourism generating countries is that of “scantily clad young women in exotic surroundings appealing to the fantasies of middle aged businessmen who are feeling threatened by the improvement of women in the North (ibid:891). In China, the government promotes ethnic tourism
using exotic images of women dressed in traditional ethnic dress even though they have gained some measure of economic independence through tourism enterprise, they remain “exoticised female images” [Kinnaird et al op cit: 18]. The dominant image of women in tourism material in India is that of young women, traditionally dressed in every finery, submissively welcoming the tourists with folded hands. In contrast, the rural/tribal women are shown as both erotic and exotic. In all these instances women are represented as the object of men’s desire, of male tourist consumption.

In most cases the sexual image is quite explicit. As for example, “Thailand is a world full of extremes, and the possibilities are limitless. Anything goes in this exotic country, especially when it comes to girls” [Shaw and Williams op cit: 90]. Or “Vietnam awaits you”... and “is as alluring as ever”. Or “India awaits you... the timeless mystery and beauty of India has been waiting for you for 5,000 years. She is an indescribable and unforgettable land only by visiting the country can the truth be experienced… Everything you desire can be found in India... every whim will be gratified” [cited in Pritchard and Morgan op cit: 897]. A Frankfurt advertisement stated “Asian women are without desire for emancipation, but full of warm sensuality and the softness of velvet” [Kinnaird and Hall op cit: 28]. South-east Asian airlines such as Thai Airlines, Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific have portrayed “submissive” Asian women in their tourism promotional material. Singapore Airlines ran a campaign of “Singapore Girl – you are a great way to fly” [Hall 1996 op cit: 268]. A recent advertisement which was hastily withdrawn said, “Go Goa, everything included”.

Not only women, even landscapes, places, are exoticised and sexualised, imbued with feminine attributes, meant to attract and gratify the male gaze. The motive of the “virgin” beach is the most commonly used. For example, “Niagra is ‘seductively restless’ and ‘tries to win your heart with her beauty’”. Jamaica is “tempting” and “innocent”, “sensuous”, “seductive”. Fiji offers “waterfalls tumbling through virgin forests”; Seychelles offers “seas that were made for pleasure”; Tahiti is called “The Island of love”. Brochures of important travel and tour agencies in Germany represent India as “exotic”, “enchanted/magical”, “colourful”, of “abundant beauty”, “fairy tale scenes”, “romantic”, “India awaits you as an event of colours”, all are images with gender undertones.

In the brochures of department of tourism, government of Goa, Goa is imbued with feminine qualities. It is described as “irresistible”; with “captivating landscape”; “Goa beckons with its sheer natural beauty”; “the land of dreams dresses herself for yet another occasion. Life here blooms and surrenders to the reminiscent beauty. Watch the tall palm trees sway in the cool breeze, while you submit your mind to the serene hinterland of Goa. Experience the magic”; “Experience and explore a world of infinite possibilities”; “the seductive Goan coast is sprinkled with excitement. ... All of this adrenaline rush under the same sun”. Goa is sold for the “highly playful spirit on the Goan beaches”. The image of a “seductive”, “beautiful”, “magical”, “captivating”, “mesmerising”, “enchanted”, “charming”, place/landscape waiting for the visitor quite clearly represent a masculinist view.

**Hedonism and Hospitality:**

In order to understand the gendered, sexualised character of tourism processes, it is useful in my view to examine two important ideas, pleasure, and hospitality, which are central to tourism activity. Despite the wide range of tourist motivations it cannot be denied that tourism is about holidays, about unrestrained pleasure. As Urry points out, “it is about consuming goods and services which are in some sense unnecessary. They are consumed because they supposedly generate pleasurable experiences which are different from those typically encountered in everyday life... to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscape which are out of the ordinary” [Urry op cit: 1].

The term “hedonism” is often used to describe touristic activity. To be a tourist is to withdraw, temporarily, from everyday social obligations. Instead of duty and structure, one has freedom and carefree fun, including hedonistic regression to drugs and nude sun bathing [Crick op cit: 327]. And sex may be seen as a part of the relaxation, conspicuous spending, having fun, letting go and experiencing the “different”. Given that the tourist
behaviour is relatively freer and unconstrained by norms at home, sexual liberties may be taken without serious consequences. In fact, behaviour which may not be acceptable at home, is totally acceptable and even expected while holidaying. Crick’s suggestion is useful that the tourists’ world is constructed of many inversions – from work to play, normal morality to sexuality, conspicuous spending rather than saving, freedom rather than structure and indulgence rather than responsibility” [Crick op cit: 332].

Concepts of “liminal”, liminoid” and “liminoidal” have been developed and used to understand the inversionary behaviours of tourists. “Once in a liminoidal state individuals’ behaviours are altered to a anti-structure…or antithesis of their home environment.” It allows individuals the freedom to experience that what is not acceptable in the home society, or to “enact the inversionary behaviours of the anti-structure” [Currie 1997: 894]. Lett’s investigation of sexual behaviour of individuals on holiday led him to conclude that during holiday periods tourists acquire a sexual licence allowing them to behave contrary to their normal behaviour [cited in Currie ibid: 89].

Relaxation of codes in respect to food, dress, liquor, and even sex during vacations is intrinsic to tourism. Or else what is the point of getting away? The unequal power relations between the tourist generating and destination countries, and between the sexes, especially the white tourists and the coloured locals, both men and women, only encourage this behaviour. On the other side, the destination countries, in their attempt to promote tourism, and development, sell an image of themselves as ready to provide all kinds of services, including sexual service to the tourist. A discourse of “hospitality” is constructed to attract tourists, both domestic and foreign but especially the latter, with the promise to satisfy every whim/need/desire. Goa for example, is projected as “a perfect host”, where “hospitality is an established tradition” and where people are “friendly and extremely happy-go-lucky”. The image of the submissive, smiling Indian woman ready to serve every need of the tourist is ubiquitous.

Underlying all tourism promotion efforts, everywhere in the world, is the impression created that the tourist is more than welcome in the place of destination. The offer of friendliness and hospitality is carried to an absurd extent in a Scottish tourism advertisement, for example, “Come look under our kilt. We are friendlier than you think.” It is especially so in the Asian countries where there is said to be a tradition of warmth, friendliness and hospitality.

However, the use of the term hospitality itself in the tourism discourse is open to question. In anthropology, hospitality denotes caring for a stranger in order to establish a relation based on reciprocity and exchange. In the context of introduction of financial transaction within the hospitality nexus, as Andrews observes, principles of obligations and reciprocity are no longer existent. Therefore, the financial transaction which characterises the nexus between the tourist and the local people, euphemistically called “guests” and “hosts”, remove the real motives behind hospitality [Andrews 2000: 236, 237].

Terms like “hospitality”, “guest” and “host”, create an aura of a personalised relationship between equals (with positive connotations) around what is a highly commercialised and impersonal interaction. It is also significant that the relationship between the “guest” and “host” is an unequal one, given that the latter occupies a higher financial position in purchasing goods and services (ibid: 236). But a discussion of these terms in anthropological and sociological literature on tourism is not the concern of the present paper.

**Conclusion:**
I have attempted to show that tourism processes like other processes and relations in society are gendered. The gender bias is built into the discourse of tourism practices, images, and activities, which, by and large, privileges the male viewpoint. Although this viewpoint still dominates, it is not totally unchallenged. Researchers, academics, social activists have questioned the hegemonic male view of tourism at different levels, although their voice is still weak. In the light of the fact that tourism processes are expanding rapidly in the fast globalising world, there is a need to strengthen these voices.
Organisations and womens’ groups have taken up the issue of prostitution in some countries. In Goa there has been an organised protest. The Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz (JGF), Children’s Rights in Goa (CRG), Bailancho Saad, Annaya Rahit Zindagi (ARZ), has been protesting against prostitution and paedophilia since the 1980s. The JGF was formed, in their own words, to protect the Goan population from the threats posed by “an indiscriminate, immoral tourism policy being promoted by the government. In which our coastal niches are being expropriated and handed over to luxury tourism” [Mayrhofer 1997: 84].

Bailancho Saad has protested against tourism related prostitution and the vulgarised image of Goan people projected by tourism advertisements. Goa is shown as a land of “wine, women and song”. The tourism department and big hoteliers have used bikini clad women in their advertisements and brochures to woo tourists. With the increasing demand for sun, sea and sex, these sexist advertisements have seriously distorted the image of women in Goa and conveyed the message of their easy availability. This in turn has led to increasing sexual harassment of women in Goa, both local and foreign [Saad Publication 1994].

The church in Goa, as in other parts of the world, has openly criticised tourism-related developments. It points out that the self-respecting local people, earlier employed as farmers, toddy tappers, fishermen are being employed in the hotel industries “in servile positions”. “Their wives and daughters become prostitutes or masseuses; their children become touts, pimps or errand boys” (ibid: 85). Churches from Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean have expressed concern over tourism from the first to the third world countries. The World Council of churches has been extremely critical of the “negative effects of rich tourism in poor countries” [O’Grandy op cit: XIII].

It must be noted that tourism-related practices have not received enough critical attention by political organisations including womens’ groups in India and in many other parts of the world. This is so primarily because the ideology which regards tourism as a means to development in the developing countries continues to dominate. Besides, not enough information is available on effects of tourism, given the dynamics of power relations between the developing and developed countries and within the developing countries. Much more study, research and activism is necessary if these processes are to be understood and regulated. The challenge to this very complex phenomenon must come at the local and global levels. For example, struggle to stop sex tourism must be undertaken not only in countries where it occurs, but also in countries from where the offenders come. A demand for greater participation of local people in tourism planning and development must appear in the agenda of womens’ movements everywhere, if the rights and interests of people in tourist destinations especially the third world are to be protected in the long run; and if they are to share equally in the benefits that result from tourism. Given that the fastest growing destinations are in the third world countries, that currently about 30 per cent of all international tourist arrivals are in them, a great deal of caution in the management of tourism has to be exercised by the governments and people of these countries, so that some regions and people do not degrade themselves for the pleasure of others.

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Endnotes:

1. Tourism traffic to Goa has risen phenomenally from approximately two lakh tourists in 1975 to 14.07 lakh in 2001 of which domestic tourists account for 11.47 lakhs and foreign tourists for 2.60 lakhs. Goa’s income from tourism in foreign exchange has gone up from Rs 32.64 crore in 1986-87 to approximately Rs 600 crore in 2001 which represents a rise of about 25 per cent every year. It is estimated that 20 per cent of its population earn their livelihood, directly and indirectly, from tourism activities (Statistics 2004, Department of Tourism, Government of Goa, Panaji).
2. Kisaeng act as companions to Japanese businessmen and travel with them during their visit to Korea. Their role is regarded as an integral component of the conduct of Japanese business overseas and may be linked to a contemporary equivalent of the “comfort women” role that Korean women were forced to take during Second World War. Kisaeng tourism is still a major factor in attracting Japanese male tourists to Korea.

3. Figures are available at www.arches.uga.edu/?haneydaw/twwh/traf.html

4. Collected from brochures of travel and tour agencies in Germany, including Gebeco, Studiosus, Meier’s Weltreisen, Thomas Cook, Dertour, for 2003 and 2004.

References


**Introduction:**

Tourism is one of the oldest areas of economic activity to be covered under the WTO’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Tourism and travel related services account for about 11% of World GDP and employ about 200 million people worldwide. They also represent 34% of world service exports (UNESCO Courier, 1997). Furthermore, given that there are about 700 million international travellers per year, tourism and travel related sectors have become dynamic sources of income and a major strategic sector for development in many countries, especially those in the global South.

Tourism and travel related services are still strongly dominated by Northern countries. The main sources remain Europe and the US, with some new influx form Asia and Latin America. Almost half of world tourists come from six countries in Europe which are also among the world’s top ten tourism earners/spenders). The US is number one in tourism spending/earning and the second most popular destination. East Asia and the Pacific are expected to be second in generating tourists in 2020. (UNESCO Courier, 1999).

The rise in technology, which is critical for success in the tourism and travel sectors, advantages the North, allowing for further consolidating of their stronghold over this sector. The control of core tools of tourism is found in the North: air travel, hotel, Internet and e-commerce. Increasingly electronic technology is facilitating the sale and marketing of airline tickets and hotel accommodations.

This is an important context from which to consider the likely consequences of the growing push for greater and rapid liberalisation in tourism by the North. Because the central tendency of liberalization is to reduce the role of developing country governments in directing tourism investment and policies, serious questions exist as to the future (and the limitations) of tourism as a tool for development in the South.

**The Political Economy of Tourism:**

Modern international tourism is rooted in the dynamics of colonialism and dependency. As Chachage (1999), Munt (1994) and Naipaul (1978) noted, early nineteenth century tourism focused on exploration, hunting and trading in colonial territories. This was a fact of colonial conquest and hence was linked to the issues of the alienation from land and natural resources with underlying ethnic racial, class and gender dynamics. This form of tourism and its gains were controlled by the colonial power, tour operators and owners of steamships and domestic railroads within the countries. This tourism was also primarily extractive and depleted natural resources such as skins, ivory and fauna, in order to sustain the wealthy.

The development of mass tourism in the 1950s and 60’s led to the inclusion of the middle class in “fun and sun” adventures in the developing world. But even the new forms of tourism of the 1980’s and 1990s still carry echoes of the past as it is increasingly returning to the theme of exploiting the “exotic” and nature. This is seen for example in the development of modern day ‘adventure tourism’—hiking backpacking, trekking and ‘eco-tourism.’ These forms of tourism are no more in the sole control of developing countries nor do they deplete or extract fewer natural resources than the previous tourism cycle. More visitors mean greater toil on local infrastructure with implications for the lives of the local people. Golf courses not only utilise arable land but also divert water from agriculture and local consumption. Elsewhere, other forms of tourism such as cruise shipping, which is reportedly one of the least beneficial tourism industries in terms of inflow of money and the retention of tourist dollars, contribute to a variety of environmental problems (mainly marine pollution) in terms oil waste and the production of sewage, garbage and noxious liquid substances.

Today the mechanism and devices of control and access to tourist arrivals and the struggle between
sending and host countries over retention of tourist expenditures are different. But developing countries still have weak bargaining power vis-à-vis international tour operators and experience discrimination. Ultimately, these countries must survive in an increasingly competitive global tourism sector in which natural competitive advantage is becoming less and less significant.

Tourism is more than ever an information sensitive industry which is greatly impacted by modern technological innovations such as the Internet, worldwide web and electronic commerce. Unfortunately, these tend to widen the divide between developed and developing countries with the potential for siphoning much of the potential gains from tourism back to the developed countries. There is growing consolidation and centralization of the tools of the tourism trade among a few players. These players, who are primarily based in the North, control the information and online reservation services.

New information technology and networks such as the Internet therefore have an important affect on the trade competitiveness of developing countries (UNCTAD 2000). The development and interlink of tourism and e-commerce is resulting in the slow demise of travel agents; increasing resort to proprietary web pages; on-line one stop shopping; and a more complex tourism product—which involves the consumer being able to customise her/his itinerary. But many travel agents in developing countries do not have access to the investment capital to participate effectively with foreign tourism suppliers.

Tourism, Economic Development and Equity Issues:
The biggest myth of tourism and development is that ‘tourism is quick, cheap and easy, given that the basic ingredients are sun, sea, smile and culture’. In its most basic form tourism builds on nature, adventure and culture (New Frontier 2000). Tourism is expected to generate revenue in the form of foreign exchange earnings, increased income, employment and development of infrastructure—all this is expected to arise from the net benefit of tourism receipts. Ultimately, tourism should also generate demand from other sectors of the economy such as agriculture, manufacturing and other services. Growth in tourism is also argued to facilitate foreign capital inflows which reduces the need for domestic savings and capital accumulation.

Tourism can be good for development when it engenders a strong inflow of foreign exchange, and positive intersectoral linkages, which promote growth of other sectors. This increases overall income and employment in the economy. Tourism can also lead to immiserating growth (there is some growth but it is accompanied by rising poverty and unemployment) if the output of non-traded goods and services the tourism sector requires does not increase. Thus the conventional wisdom that tourism is unambiguously good is problematic. First, it does not recognise the drain of resources and loss of revenues abroad. Second, it often ignores distributional and other key factors associated with the goods and services used by the tourists (Grassl, 1999). Third, it ignores the social, gender equity and environment impacts of the welfare effects of tourism.

The trend towards more and more privatisation and liberalisation may in fact dissipate the benefits of tourism on development in spite of the widely acknowledged increasing demand for certain types of leisure activities and the availability of abundant female labour. Thus tourism development may not be in line with social, sustainable development for some of these reasons:

- Ownership of resources, which is skewed to the North and Northern based foreign direct investment.
- Most small and medium sized businesses, which are the major local players in developing countries, cannot compete with the large well financed and overly capital endowed foreign competitors.
- Problems around land (land grabbing and land speculation. The rapid expansion of tourism is encouraged by the privatization of government owned assets including parks, and community lands that have traditionally been the homes and sources of livelihood for many
citizens for generations. Privatization and land speculation to establish game reserves or other tourist attractions creates greater inequality in access to common property resources and raises the price of existing real estate. In the worst case it may be associated with large-scale removal of entire groups of people. All of these have the impact of exacerbating poverty and crime and ultimately destabilizing the society.

- Ecological/environmental effects.
- Gender bias and inequities: trafficking, sex tours: women’s health and morbidity.
- Poverty and inequality.
- Displacement of other sectors, such as decline in domestic agricultural sector.

Tourism and Gender:

The issue of tourism, tourism development and gender equality is multi-dimensional. It ranges from the low profile and persistent issue of the lopsided responsibility for social reproduction and community resource management between men and women; the differential and gender-based nature and consequences of access to social and economic resources; the pervasive reliance on (and at the same time the invisibility of) women’s labour in the hospitality sector; and the high profile issues of sex tourism and HIV/AIDS. All women from peasant women, indigenous women, working women, old women, young women and girls, and women who head household are affected to different degree by tourism and tourism development. Men of different social classes are also affected negatively and positively by changes in the tourism sector. And men in poorer classes may also suffer similarly to poor women from the welfare reducing impact of loss of access to resources. Undeniably, there are significant gender biases and inequality in terms of access to employment and physical and social resources that may predispose women to have greater vulnerabilities and constraints in enjoying the presumed benefits of tourism development.

We can demarcate these impacts across four categories: 1) Employment in the formal labour market, 2) Women’s activities in the informal sectors and sustainable livelihood, 3) Women’s social economic empowerment (in terms of consumption and access to resources including government services and 4) Women’s influence and decision-making around tourism development policy.

Formal Sector Employment:

Like all other forms of employment, access to tourism-related employment is gender based. Men tend to predominate in the formal sector of the tourism in some countries in the South. In India, women equal a small percentage of the employed (2.98%), and in Sri Lanka it is higher (14.9%). In the Caribbean and Latin America the percentage is significantly higher at 35% (Badger 1993). Men and women, who are seen as cheaper labour than men, are segregated due to gender stereotyping and sex segregation into different occupations. Even where women are the main tourism workers, they tend to predominate in the majority of menial, semi-skilled, domestic and service type occupations. For example in Barbados and Jamaica, women are employed in less stable, lower status work such as housekeeping, reception and other services. Due to lack of unionization, these jobs require low skill, are low paid and have the lowest security of tenure and benefits (Badger 1993). In some countries men are often employed as stewards, porters, and tend to be over-represented in professional managerial and supervisory positions. A recent survey of the literature on women and tourism by EQUATIONS points out the following:

In the food sector of the industry women are at the bottom of the hierarchy as restaurant helpers, cooks (not Chefs) and waitresses - all the lowest paid parts of the food sectors. Chefs in fancier restaurants where salaries and tips are substantial are more likely to be males.

In the travel sector, women have access and employment to seasonal, part-time or minimum wage jobs. Women tend to dominate small travel agencies and the majority are travel agents but men control the major sectors: airlines, railroads, hotel chains, car rental companies, travel magazines. Foreign control areas are also male dominated. (EQUATIONS, 2000)
The sexual division of labour operates at all aspects of tourism and travel related industries. Given the condition of work, generally low pay, lack of benefits and absence of human resource development in this area, serious concerns arise about women’s longer-term prosperity. Though increased tourism may mean more jobs for women questions must be raised about the nature, quality and type of work activities available; and the differential access of men and women to such opportunities. In addition, there is the larger picture of tourism relation to women’s longer term interests and its potential for the transformation of gender inequalities and biases.

**Informal Sector Activities and Sustainable Livelihoods:**

In the informal sector gender hierarchies also exist. Women dominate in the informal sectors where they provide a wide range of services to tourists – washing clothes, petty trading, cooking and childcare. The EQUATIONS survey and Badger 1993 report point to the fact that there are ‘gender differences in the selling of memories (post cards and souvenir)’. Women are often involved in the production of ethnic handicrafts and the marketing of such items while men provide services and support women’s home craft production. In some cases while women produce the works and sell them in local markets, men control the wholesaling in urban centres.

Overall, some women in some countries may gain financial autonomy and some measure of economic independence from their participation in informal markets linked to the tourism trade. In the EQUATIONS survey examples of Mexico, Kuna of Panama and Sani of Yunan, China are typically presented as examples of such gains. But some of the same researchers also noted that women appear to be invisible and neglected in cultural and historical attractions, though they may figure prominently in advertising, post cards and souvenirs (EQUATIONS 2000).

**Sex Tourism:**

Women are often exploited in the marketing of tourism (given existing gender perceptions and stereotypes that dominates social relations in the host and sending countries). As seen above, even in the formal labour markets there is the manipulation of the sexual division of labour that shunts women to the lowest paid jobs. Likewise, as noted by Badger (1993) there is much manipulation of gender differences in order to ‘feed the fantasy of the male tourist’. Very often this occurs at the benign level of women being offered opportunities in frontline (hospitality) positions in the tourism industry. Such opportunities are linked to women’s presumed feminine qualities of being more sociable and more hospitable than men. But increasingly women are directly exploited as sexual playthings and earners of foreign exchange in prostitution (a traditional activity) and now the new explosion of sex tourism. As noted by Badger (1993) ‘sex tourism is now becoming one of the ‘steadiest, least seasonal and most lucrative opportunities for women’. The down side is that it has tremendous health hazards and it can be dangerous.

The issue of sex tourism has been raised as a key issue in the appeal of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) destinations. This is particularly the case in Thailand and Cambodia where there is an influx of young girls who are from Burma, Indonesia, Laos and China who are being exported to work in Thai bars and brothels (New Frontiers 1999). In Cambodia, children are often bought and sold like cattle in Bangkok or the beach resorts and there is an active slave trade in young sex workers (New Frontiers 1999). Vulnerable women and children are preyed upon and girls 13-17 are forced into sex work; many start as housekeepers and then go to Karaoke bars or nightclubs. The pervasiveness of sex tourism in Thailand has led to it being referred as ‘Thighlandia’. This trend does not only apply to South Asia. Sex tourism is an enduring feature of Caribbean tourism. While in some cases such as the gay and paedophilia market the customers are exclusively male, this is not true for the Caribbean where there is high incidence of female customers patronising male sex suppliers.

**Women’s Social and Economic Status and Empowerment:**

Women’s social and economic status and overall economic empowerment are influenced by their status and role in the family and community; their social reproduction responsibilities (as purveyors
of food and essential services) and their access, ownership and control over their resources. Tourism impacts greatly on all of these, negatively or positively. In terms of family and community life, tourism can either bring greater access to basic services (road, water, electricity and sanitation) or it may reduce such access if services are diverted to hotels and resorts or there are restrictions on access to local resources due to tourism development. For example, it is reported that in Western Samoa, tourism has led to the commoditization of traditional beliefs and practices and undermines traditional customs that gave specific well-defined rights and resources to men and women. Through its direct impact on local prices (land and food) as well as its indirect impact via changes in the exchange rate, tourism can add to women’s social reproduction burden. It certainly will impact their access to and ownership of economic resources. Furthermore, if tourism development is promoted via tax breaks for hotels and the construction of tourist attractions, this will divert resources from the social budget with negative implications for social services. All of these have negative impacts on women’s daily lives, work activities, food & nutritional status, and access to education and health care. Thus as Fillmore (1994) argues, women often pay the cost of tourism disproportionately while reaping few of the benefits.

On the positive side, increased employment in tourism can increase women’s financial and economic autonomy. Likewise, increased revenue from the tourist sector into the government coffers may be available for the promotion of social development. Thus much depends on the governments’ ability and willingness to use fiscal and monetary measures to ensure that there is social development linked to increased tourism development. Governments would also have to take proactive measure to promote better jobs and working conditions at all levels of the tourism sector as well as special policies to promote women’s involvement at the higher and more lucrative levels of the tourism sector. Whether such actions are possible and chosen by economic decision-makers will depend on two main factors: the opportunities and constraints built into the multilateral trading system which now governs tourism and the activism of women and other social activists to create governments that work in the interest of gender equity and human development. We will explore the first issue in next section.

**Influence, Power and Decision Making:**

In general, the political and economic forums that structure and drive tourism policy and tourism development are dominated by male economic agents. Few women get to play an active role in shaping tourism policy and practise at an official level. But increasingly, women in their many roles are finding ways to have an active voice in tourism. The struggle over the nature, extent and pace of further liberalization in this sector and other sectors is now ongoing over the liberalization agenda of the World Trade Organization. This arena provides a good space for women’s activism on these issues locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

**International Trade in Tourism and the GATS:**

**Implications for Economic Development and Social and Gender Equality:**

Thus defined, international tourism is increasingly becoming a significant part of global trade. It is one of the top five export categories for about 83% of countries in the world. International trade in tourism is concentrated in developed countries. The share of the South is about 1/3 of total international tourism. But it is a fundamental source of income and foreign exchanges for a number of Southern countries. Tourism is lauded for having a higher positive multiplier spillover effect than most economic sectors. It is widely claimed that for each job created in tourism there are 9 jobs generated in other areas. To date it is the only sector in the service area where developing countries have consistent surpluses.

East Asia and the Pacific are the fastest growing tourism areas, but there is a high degree of concentration of arrivals and receipts among and within the South. Singapore, Hong Kong and China each have a higher sum of tourist arrivals and receipts than the sum of Thailand, Indonesia and South Asia.
Tourism is also linked to other areas of the economy: agriculture, land and labour. It is also inextricably intertwined with air transportation, the major means used by tourists arriving in the South (a U.S. $414 trillion industry), and communication. Given this, the liberalisation of tourism has major implications for social development and gender equality.

Liberalization tends to ‘prioritize global commerce over everything: self-reliance of communities, human rights and health and safety’ (Pera and McLaren, 1998). Andrea Yoder writes that there is already a problem in enforcing standards in the tourism industry such as prior informed consent for local initiatives, and environmental regulations (Yoder 1998). Many of these pro-social and human development measures are already in conflict with WTO rules. Wallach and Sforza write that WTO orchestrated uniform global standards [which are designed by TNCs] to promote harmonisation of standards may ‘facilitate the growth of consumer culture, [but they] militate against standards which reflect differences in cultural values. Such differences are seen as undesirable because they fragment the global market’ (Wallach and Sforza, 1999).

In this context a great deal of attention and importance must be focused on the current negotiations for further liberalization of tourism under the GATS. According to EQUATIONS, the GATS impacts tourism via rules and regulations on the production, distribution and marketing of tourism services (mode of supply), tour operators supplying services cross-border in other countries (cross border supply), international visitors (consumption abroad), the flow of international hotel chains, branches or full ownership of hotel chains and agencies in other countries (commercial presence); and the activities of tour guides and hotel managers (presence of natural persons). It also has impacts on air transport and communications.

The direct impacts of the GATS as it relates to tourism would include:

- The GATS would allow foreign companies to merge or take over local companies. This is a threat to indigenous-owned and operated sustainable tourism initiatives.

- The GATS would allow upward pressure on the exchange rates with implications for real wages, price of land and other resources as well as for traditional exports such as agriculture, mining and fishing.

- Domestic regulation rules may impact governments’ use of taxation policies to prevent de-industrialisation and de-agriculturalization.

- Governments will not be able to mitigate or limit the impact of the outflow of repatriated earnings from FDI, which will result in reduced welfare.

- GATS may also prove detrimental to eco and heritage tourism development.

- The GATS also has serious implication for pro-poor tourism that attempts to generate net benefits to the poor. The core of this strategy is to ‘unlock opportunities for the poor with tourism rather than to expand the overall size of the sectors. But this requires domestic regulation to remove some barriers to entry and to enhance their ability to participate effectively in tourism.

The economics behind tourism liberalization as discussed in section II is based on the idea that tourism will yield overwhelmingly positive benefits on growth on development. But this is based on input/output studies that show that increased tourism implies across the board expansion of economic activity (Grassl, 1999). This ignores distributional impacts and forward and backward linkages that are endemic problems in developing countries’ economies. It also does not take into account that tourism growth may come with increased competition with other sectors such as domestic agriculture and other export areas. Most of these sectors are the ones which provide wages for women. And, while tourism may bring employment it is often seasonal and highly exploitative.

This discussion raises some important questions about the social and welfare impacts of GATS driven liberalization of tourism. It also points to some
strategic interventions that are important for promoting more balanced gender and social equity outcomes of GATS driven liberalization of tourism services. However, the strategic interventions dedicated to promoting the long-term strategic gender interest of women are predicated on a certain amount of latitude in developing countries ability to manipulate and regulate the agents, mechanisms and processes of tourism development. The fact that this latitude is constrained not just by the traditional conflict between the desires and influences of national elites and those of the poor but in the main is circumscribed by regional and multilateral trade rules makes it critical that these extra-national policies be fully interrogated for their social and gender accountability. Some important actions include:

**Possible Actions Women can Take Globally:**

- Call for a moratorium on the GATS to systematically assess the impact of the GATS, particularly on women, tourism and development.

- Invite women to become active in the debate on trade in tourism.

- Demand renegotiations of the GATS with the intent to promote economic and social justice, gender equality and sustainable development.

- Encourage the inclusion of gender representatives of civil society at every level and occasion at which the regulation of trade in tourism services and other goods is considered and negotiated, both nationally and internationally.

- Continue studying the GATS through the IGTN Economic Literacy Course (www.genderandtrade.net) and other resources.

**Endnotes:**


1. There are numerous requirements about the disposal of cruise ships’ debris. For example, sewage should undergo biological treatment and garbage such as solid waste collection should be given to trash collection agency at port. Likewise, glass should be crushed and recycled at port. But there is no way to really hold cruise ships accountable

2. This section relies heavily on the set of articles in Continuing Saga of Marginalisation: A Dossier on Women and Tourism, EQUATIONS 2000, in particular, Women and Tourism- Theoretical writing by Vivian Kinnaird and Derek Hall; Exploring the political role of gender in tourism research by Linda K. Richter; Invisible host, invisible guests by Mary Fillmore; and Badger 1993

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Tourism and its Impact on Gender:  
A Case Study of Goa  
Anita Haladi, 2005*

Introduction:
Goa, a small state on the western coast of India, has witnessed a tremendous growth in tourism since the 1970’s. Though tourism began in an informal manner in the early 60’s, the real spurt in tourist arrivals began in the 70’s. Today, the contribution of the tourism sector to the economy of Goa in SDP terms is second only to mining. Goa crossed the one million tourist mark in 1994 and the growth in the inflow of tourists, both domestic and foreign continues. The Government of Goa declared tourism as an industry in the year 2000. Tourism is largely perceived as an engine for growth for the economy of this state.

If tourism growth has to optimize benefits to the local population, there is an urgent need to assess its impact on different target groups. Who benefits and who bears the cost of tourism are questions that are equally, if not more important than, how much has Goa’s economy benefited from tourism.

Tourism is an industry that has an impact on economic, social, environmental and political conditions and on gender relations. For any economic activity to be considered as important and meaningful, an assessment of its impact on the lives of people needs to be carried out. Most often, we tend to highlight the economic benefits of tourism from a growth-centered perspective instead of a people-centered perspective. As soon as policies for tourism begin to be shaped, the emphasis shifts away from people to profits. Today, the government in Goa seems mainly concerned with visualizing new products and new players in the sphere of tourism. Given this scenario, the impact of tourism on gender receives the least priority and is completely ignored by people in general and by policy makers in particular.

Women constitute a significant proportion of the total population of our state (Population of Goa 1.3 million according to the 2001 Census). In addressing the issue of tourism, we cannot simply ignore what is happening to our people and women because of tourism. It has been amply proved by researchers and activists that economics and politics influence gender relations. The need for gender equality does not need over emphasis. If a policy impacts people and gender relations, we need to make a serious effort to understand how this happens and how we can create policies that improve gender relations and the status of women.

Studies show that women have benefited from tourism in some ways. Tourism being a labor-intensive industry has created employment opportunities for all including women and ILO estimates that 46% of the total workforce in tourism consists of women. However, studies also tell us that in developing countries, women only earn 70% of the wages that men earn from tourism. Like in all other sectors, gender stereotypes and traditionally defined gender roles are responsible for the horizontal and vertical gender-based segregation of the labor market. Lesser education, lesser opportunities for skill development and training, lesser access to credit, a lower health status, a lower socio-economic status and, the invisibility of women in policy making contribute to women receiving lesser benefits from tourism. International tourism that is market-driven necessitates high capital investment that tends to be controlled by powerful/vested interests that are characterized by a lack of concern for the well-being of local communities and women.

Tourism today is an integral part of modern consumerism. As leisure and wealth increase, tourism consumption also increases. Marketing of tourism has become increasingly competitive and has resulted in enhancing gender stereotypes that depict women as passive, dependent and available.
Tourism brochures, including the ones prepared by the tourism industry in Goa, have used women as sexual and exotic markers. Despite disclaimers from the authorities responsible for this distortion in the image of women, Goa has been marketed as a land of Sea, Sun, Sand and Sex. Goa like Thailand and Sri Lanka, has witnessed an increase in sex-tourism and also an increase in crimes against women and children (both local and tourist).

The growth of tourism in Goa has also led to destruction of traditional occupations and the environment. Resource allocation has become skewed in favor of the tourism industry and land alienation is a serious concern (See “Fish Curry and Rice”, Goa Foundation, 2002). The impact of a skewed developmental approach that disregards implications for the people has been well documented by many. However, in the light of the growing emphasis by the Government on tourism as an engine for growth in Goa, one needs to make an effort to research on its impacts on the people and on women in particular. Since 1995 (4th World Conference on Women, Beijing), gender-mainstreaming has been adopted as a strategy for gender equality. The main aim of gender-mainstreaming is to incorporate a gender perspective in all policies at all levels and at all stages by policy makers.

Given below are statistics that show the growth in tourist traffic to Goa from 1985 to 2004:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Tourists</th>
<th>Foreign Tourists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>682575</td>
<td>92667</td>
<td>775212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>736548</td>
<td>97533</td>
<td>834081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>766846</td>
<td>94602</td>
<td>861448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>761859</td>
<td>93076</td>
<td>854935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>771013</td>
<td>91430</td>
<td>862443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>776993</td>
<td>104330</td>
<td>881323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>756786</td>
<td>78281</td>
<td>835067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>774568</td>
<td>121442</td>
<td>896010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>798576</td>
<td>170658</td>
<td>969234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>849404</td>
<td>21091</td>
<td>1059595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>878487</td>
<td>229218</td>
<td>1107705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>888914</td>
<td>237216</td>
<td>1126130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>928925</td>
<td>261673</td>
<td>1190598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>953212</td>
<td>275047</td>
<td>1228259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>960114</td>
<td>284298</td>
<td>1244412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>976804</td>
<td>291709</td>
<td>1268513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1120242</td>
<td>260071</td>
<td>1380313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1325296</td>
<td>271645</td>
<td>1596941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1725140</td>
<td>314357</td>
<td>2039497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 (Jan - Oct)</td>
<td>1367223</td>
<td>205212</td>
<td>1572435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Due the importance of assessing the impact of tourism on women and gender relations, I have been conducting a micro-study in Calangute, Candolim and Baga (popular destinations in North-Goa) and in Cacra (a village predominantly inhabited by indigenous people) in the state of Goa. The purpose of this study is to understand the nature and extent of impact of tourism on women in Goa. My presentation includes some of the primary findings of my ongoing research and attempts to trace the growth of tourism in Goa and its socio-economic implications at the micro level. I have relied on both primary and secondary sources of information for my research. This paper would therefore focus on the following concerns related to tourism and gender in Goa:

- The growth of tourism in Goa
- The employment potential for women in tourism
- The socio-economic problems related to tourism and its impact on gender
- Evolving strategies to combat the negative consequences of tourism

**The Growth of Tourism in Goa:**

Goa which was liberated from 451 years of Portuguese rule in 1961 became the 25th state of the Indian Union when it was conferred statehood on the 30th of May, 1987. A tiny state in India on the western coastline, Goa has an area of 3702 sq.kms. The State’s population according to the 2001 Census is 1.34 million. Although Goa joined the National mainstream 14 years after India’s independence, the tourist traffic to this state has registered a phenomenal growth from 0.2 million in 1975 to 1.57 million in 2004.
From the table given above, it is evident that the tourist traffic to Goa (both domestic as well as foreign) has been steadily increasing over the years. The average duration of stay for domestic tourists is 5 days as compared to foreign tourists who stay in Goa for 9 days on an average. Out of the total number of foreign tourists visiting Goa, 43% come from the U.K. and the rest are from Europe, Russia and the U.S.A. Almost 50% of foreign tourists arrive by charter flights the number of which has increased from 24 in 1985 to 532 in 2004. The Government and more specifically, the Department of Tourism has started an aggressive marketing campaign to promote tourism and more specifically, to attract a larger number of foreign tourists to the state. The Economic Survey 2003-04 of the Government of Goa states that, “Though Goa is a very small state both in terms of area and population; it contributes significantly to the national exchequer. Goa receives over 10% of foreign tourists visiting the country and 15% of the nation’s foreign exchange earnings from tourism are generated in Goa annually”.

Towards tourism promotion, the government has planned several initiatives including strengthening marketing strategies, beach development and safety measures, heritage conservation and the regulation of water sports. The master plan for tourism mentions proposals for at least two golf courses, seven more resorts, four food parks, recreational and amusement parks and offshore casinos. However, the measures as those included in policy documents have failed to mention any specific initiatives for environmental protection/promotion or any specific measures to generate employment for the local population. Gender concerns are certainly not reflected in any of the policy initiatives.

**Employment Potential for Women in Tourism:**

Tourism is projected as a labor-intensive industry that has a multiplier effect on employment and income. Being a heterogeneous, multi-segmented industry it offers employment to people in a variety of sectors. Employment is created in sectors both directly and indirectly related to tourism.

One of the objectives of this ongoing research has been to ascertain the potential for employment for women in the tourism sector in Goa. According to government estimates, nearly 20% of the total employment in the State is generated in the tourism sector. However, government documents do not contain any kind of statistics related to how much employment has been actually generated in the tourism sector. In Goa, people find employment in travel agencies, as tour operators, the transport sector (taxis and motorcycle taxis, tourist buses), in shops and cafes, Bakeries, laundries, beauty salons, boutiques, cybercafés, the entertainment business and event management, as travel guides, renting rooms and vehicles, in shacks along the beach, etc. In the coastal belt of Calangute and Candolim alone, there are 790 shops, 35 travel agencies, 72 shacks, 849 bars/restaurants, 560 room rentals, 453 large and small hotels and guest houses, 2 art galleries, 3 dental clinics, 8 pharmacies/drug stores, 14 bakeries, 18 supermarkets, 28 camera/photo shops, and 30 beauty parlors.

The Hotel industry is perceived as a major source of employment by the local population. In Goa there are 414 hotels which include 11 (5 star deluxe), 3 (5 star), 2 (4 star), 19 (3 Star), 24 (2 star), 19 (1 star), 1 (heritage category) and 14 (run by the Goa Tourism Development Corporation), among others.

Given below are some of the primary findings that are an attempt to quantify the extent of employment for men and women in one of the sectors namely, the hotel industry in Goa:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Hotel</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Male Employees</th>
<th>Number of Female Employees</th>
<th>Total Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ronil Beach Resort</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Aguada Beach Resort</td>
<td>5 Star Deluxe</td>
<td>Sinquerim</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majestic</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>Porvorim</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angels Resort</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>Porvorim</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Mandovi</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa Marriott Resort</td>
<td>5 Star Deluxe</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perola do Mar</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmo Lobo Resort</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Candolim</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alor Holiday Resort</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapusa Residency</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mapusa</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Delmon</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldeia Santa Rita</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>Candolim</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falcon Hotel</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago Resorts</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Sea Shell</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Candolim</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Rosa</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnum Resort</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Calangute</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dona Alcina</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>Candolim</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Check in</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Neptune</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Arcadia</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Rajdhani</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Virashree</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Sohni Inn</td>
<td>1 Star</td>
<td>Panjim</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Priti</td>
<td>2 Star</td>
<td>Mapusa</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenilworth Beach Resort</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Utorda</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogmalio Beach Resort</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Bogmalio</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizon Beach Resort</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>South Goa</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These are primary findings and the ongoing study proposes to cover 10% of the hotels in each category.
From the table given above we can see that out of the 28 hotels covered so far, the total number of persons employed is 2328. The number of men who are employed (2202) far exceeds the number of women (306) in the hotel industry in Goa. (86.8% of those employed in this industry are men compared to women who are just 13.14% of the total).

A study conducted in North Goa by “Bailancho Saad”, a women’s organization in 2000, revealed the following:

- The total number of women who find employment in the tourism sector is much lesser as compared to men.
- The type of employment that women find is depends more on their personal appearance and conversational skills as compared to their educational qualifications.
- Employment in this sector is seasonal, contractual and is characterized by a high labor turnover.
- Working hours are long and irregular.
- Wages during the off-season are considerably lower than during the peak season.
- Most of the women have given up traditional occupations in agriculture and fishing to find jobs in the tourism sector. Government statistics reveal that between 1991 and 2001, the percentage of cultivators and agricultural laborers in the workforce decreased by 26.2 and 19.3 respectively and that the percentage of workers in the household industry and other workers has actually increased by 43.3 and 45.6 respectively (Economic Survey, 2003-04, Govt. of Goa).
- Though there is equal pay for equal work, women find employment in lower positions and thus end up earning much lesser than men from tourism.
- Most of the respondents did not have specialized training / education directly related to tourism.

**Women Seeking Employment in Male Dominated Areas of Work: A Case-Study:**

The following is a case-study of a young woman from a tribal community in Goa. Seema comes from a socio-economically deprived community and has fought her way through most of her life to become one of the first women to acquire a heavy motor vehicle license. She always dreamt of getting a job as a bus driver in the state-owned transport corporation. However, her dreams were shattered as her application was rejected on the grounds that giving a job to a woman would set a trend that would reduce job opportunities for men a sector that has been traditionally male-dominated!

Refusing to give up her dreams, Seema is fighting for her rights together with a women’s organization (Bailancho Saad) in Goa. Today, she drives a jeep that ferries tourists to a popular tourist site that is only accessible by road. However, she continues to face ridicule from other transport operators who continue to pressurize her hoping that she will give up!

Observations during the course of my research have also revealed the following:

- The number of women in the hotel industry is significantly lower than men.
- Women are mostly employed in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs and have lesser opportunities than men to find employment in the tourism sector in Goa.
- Women are mostly employed in the front office and house keeping departments, are employed on a contractual basis and consequently receive lower wages than men.
- There are 146 travel agencies and 91 tour operators in Goa. However, even cursory observation reveals that most of the jobs in travel agencies are occupied by men. The number of women in managerial positions is insignificant and those who do find jobs here are employed as front office or secretarial assistants.
- The transport sector is totally dominated by men.
• Even in tourism related businesses like shops, shacks, cafes, and restaurants etc that are mostly owned and operated by men, women are employed in lower end jobs where their wages are lower than men.

• Tourism continues to attract young girls and boys who often drop out of high school to work in low paid jobs in this sector. (The drop out rate is 42.21 for students from standard I-X).

• Today only a very small percentage of the students consider obtaining training/education in tourism related skills as an option before seeking employment. Even if they consider tourism as an employment option, they prefer to begin in semi-skilled/unskilled jobs.

• Government statistics (Economic Survey, 2003-04, Govt. of Goa), reveal that from the year 1991 to 2001, the percentage of women marginal workers has increased from 3.8 to 7.5 whereas, that of main workers has decreased from 16.8 to 14.8. Thus there has been an actual increase in the number of women casual workers in the state.

• Tourism does not provide steady employment. The maximum numbers of tourists visit only four out of the eleven talukas (administrative divisions of the state) and so the benefits are concentrated in these areas.

Even if we are to accept the argument that tourism bestows economic benefits by way of generating employment, it is evident from the data and findings mentioned above that the total number of job opportunities for women in the tourism sector is very low and is characterized by gender stereotyping and discrimination. We can therefore safely conclude that the net benefits to women from tourism are extremely low.

The Socio-Economic Problems related to Tourism and its Impact on Gender:

When we try to understand the implications of tourism for the people living in tourist destinations, it is important to look beyond the obvious economic benefits like foreign exchange earnings, revenues and employment generation. The socio-economic problems generated by tourism have to be understood and possibly quantified if a true assessment is to be made. Some of the major concerns related to tourism development in Goa are as follows:

1. Migration and its Implication for the People of Goa: Goa has witnessed an increase in migration since the early sixties. However, the extent of migration has definitely increased since the mid-eighties entirely due to tourism. Since attaining statehood in 1987, Goa embarked upon massive infrastructural development for the purpose of tourism promotion. Goa has a fairly high literacy rate and there has been a gradual shift in preference for skilled and non-manual jobs by the educated youth. The increased demand for manual labor is met by people who migrate to the state from neighboring areas where there is a scarcity of employment opportunities. People from other states are brought in by labor contractors who do not take responsibility for providing the workers with decent facilities for housing and sanitation. Consequently, there has been an increase in urban slums where migrant men and women lead a vulnerable and marginalized existence due to the conflict between them and the local population.

In addition to construction labor, the coastal areas have attracted migrants who come to Goa during the tourist season to sell handicrafts to tourists. Men, women and even children sell their wares to tourists in order to make a living. These families live in make-shift huts and are constantly harassed by the police and by the locals who perceive them as a threat to their own businesses.

Besides workers who migrate to the state to satisfy the demand for manual labor, there are an increasing number of wealthy people from other parts of India and foreign tourists who have migrated to Goa. Wealthy businessmen have invested capital in the state and own the larger business concerns (Most 5 star hotels, casinos, entertainment centers etc, are owned by people who have migrated from outside the state), thereby taking a larger share in the profits generated by tourism. It is the latter category of migrants who pose a threat to the interests of the local population in the state.
Migration has thus led to a conflict over resources such as land, food, water and housing. Besides the conflict over resources, there has emerged a constant tussle over employment opportunities (for skilled/semi-skilled and unskilled jobs) between the local youth who are grappling with growing unemployment and the migrants who vie for jobs both in the tourism and non-tourism sectors.

2. Tourism and Escalating Prices:
With the boom in tourism, the number of tourists sometimes exceeds the total population of the state. The demand for food, transport, entertainment and other resources that is generated during the peak season pushes the prices for essential commodities upwards. The economy of household which is mainly managed and sustained by women faces manifold problems that are rightly perceived as detrimental to the economic and health status of people, specially women. Though it is argued that rising prices benefit the sellers/producers, the actual benefits are shared by many in the marketing chain, thus leaving serious questions about the net gain when compared to the high consumer price index (the CPI for industrial workers in 2001 for Goa was 555 compared to 458 for the rest of India) that places tremendous pressure on the economy of households in Goa.

3. Lack of Sustainable Alternatives to Tourism:
The economy of Goa today largely depends on tourism and mining for its sustenance. Though efforts have been made to work out alternatives, these have not been rigorously pursued and hence continue to be largely obscure in the developmental strategy of the state. The emphasis in all policy documents is on tourism and very little attention is paid to the possibility of developing other sectors as alternatives to tourism. Traditional occupations are constantly under threat either due to the lack of attention by the state or due to tourism itself. Attempts by the big hotels to privatize beaches and cutting off access to the beach has led to problems for traditional fish workers. Even as recently as last month, huts used by fish workers to store fishing boats and nets were demolished by the state to make way for beach expansion plans to support tourism at Colva (a popular destination in South Goa). Tourism is therefore considered as the only option for generating employment by the locals.

Goa has also witnessed a large scale out migration by men to other parts of India and out of India in search of employment. There are many households headed by women who bear the burden of family rearing and nurturing entirely on their own.

4. Tourism, the Commercialization of Culture and its Implications for Women:
The culture of Goa has been erroneously represented as that of the Catholic upper caste elites. The tourism industry has further appropriated and strengthened this image to market Goa as a state that symbolizes nostalgia for its colonial past. In almost all tourism related literature Goa is characterized as female and is sold to potential male consumers (tourists). Advertisements by the private hotels, airlines and even the government have depicted women in a derogatory manner seeking to commodify women as objects waiting to seek gratification from male tourists. In 1993, at the Berlin Tourism Fair, a Government of India audio-visual depicted two beaches in Goa sandwiched between erect nipples of a white woman’s breasts. Women’s organization who have been protesting such distorted and derogatory advertisements claim that women in Goa have been subjected to increased sexual harassment, violence and prostitution as a result. Western travel magazines have also reportedly used this gendered marketing strategy to promote Goa as a destination where “you can leave your guilt behind at the moment when you travel and indulge in your wildest fantasies”. In addition to the growth of violence against women perpetrated by this form of sexist advertising, it has also promoted a market for sex trade that has resulted in increased trafficking of women to the state. Prostitution networks have proliferated along the coastal belt and with the help of sophisticated technology have made detection and prosecution more difficult for law enforcement agencies.

The commercialization of culture can also be witnessed in the manner in which local customs and traditional events have been appropriated by the government and the tourism lobby. The so called Goan dances and culture that are on display at hotels, on boat rides and the state sponsored carnival are examples of the attempt to use women as baits to attract tourists! Goa has been thus painted as land of tolerant, peace loving people,
westernized, easy going and a land of fun, frolic, festivals and feni (locally brewed liquor). People visiting Goa (both domestic and foreign tourists) when asked about what attracts them to Goa; often reply that it is the “wine and women”.

Goa has also witnessed an increase in domestic tourists who come to Goa to ogle at topless women sunbathing on the Goan beaches. Though nudism on beaches is prohibited by law, one often encounters topless or semi-nude men and women on the beaches who become targets of voyeurism that often translates into sexual harassment.

In addition to the commercialization and erroneous depiction of culture, the promotion strategies used by tourism players have contributed to increased drug and alcohol abuse by both the tourist and the local youth. Rave parties are characterized by the availability of cheap liquor (due to lower state taxes), easy availability of drugs and the open use of drugs and alcohol by tourists, entice the youth who participate in these events.

5. The Environmental Impact of Tourism:
The government’s plan for tourism promotion has not included either a Cost-benefit Analysis or an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Plans have continued to ignore the need to assess the carrying capacity of the state while promoting tourism expansion. Tourism has generated a variety of environmental problems which include:

- The diversion of water for the use of hotels and for construction that has left the locals to face a severe water crisis that places a severe burden on the women in these areas. Water from wells in villages is transported by water tankers to the tourism belt to meet the growing need for water. The continuous draining of water from wells has resulted in wells becoming dry due to the lowering of ground water levels. The proposals to construct more resorts and golf courses would only heighten the problem of water scarcity.

- The tourist belts of Calangute, Candolim and Colva do not have any sewage treatment facilities. Studies submitted to the government have shown that the sewage in the areas has contaminated groundwater aquifers that pose a serious health hazard to people who live here.

- The garbage generated by hotels and tourists who visit the coastal areas is enormous and creates a severe burden on the meager resources that have been allocated by the government for its disposal. The coastal areas have garbage strewn all over (plastic and non-biodegradable waste).

- Goa has also become a recognized party center and the coastal areas are subjected to deafening noise generated by all-night parties and events that are regularly held on the beach.

- Rampant construction of hotels and concrete structures has flouted all norms and regulations. The coastal belt of Calangute, Candolim and Baga has been converted into a concrete jungle thereby destroying the natural beauty of these places and creating impediments to traditional occupations like toddy tapping and fishing.

Since the early 90’s, Goa has also witnessed a gradual but definite increase in pedophilia. Till Freddy Peats was convicted of child sexual abuse in 1996, very few in Goa were even aware of the possibility of such acts of violation against children. The Freddy Peats case threw up many questions among which was whether this was an isolated case or whether the malaise of pedophilia had indeed become widespread in Goa.

When a small group of child rights activist studied the problem, it became evident that pedophiles posing as tourists have been visiting our state and abusing our children by taking advantage of their vulnerability and weak laws that make detection and prosecution extremely difficult. The continuous and deliberate attempts by the government and a majority of Goans to push the issue under the carpet had contributed to the growth of tourism related child sexual abuse. The problem has been well researched and documented (“See the Evil”, Nishtha Desai, 2001).
Due to the prolonged battle waged by child rights groups and women’s organizations in the State, the Government has had to finally acknowledge the problem and has enacted the Goa Children’s Act that includes specific provisions to protect children and to prosecute the violators. Child Rights Activists have elicited support from the local communities residing in the tourist belt to protect all children from pedophiles. The message that now goes out to all visitors is: “Tourists are welcome, Pedophiles are not!”

Evolving Strategies to Combat the Negative Consequences of Tourism:

Ever since the Government declared tourism as an industry and put forward a ‘master plan” to promote tourism, questions have been raised by citizens and NGOs about its implications for the people. Protests have been made against the environmental degradation, destruction of traditional sources of livelihood, commercialization of culture, the promotion of golf courses and casinos, illegal constructions, privatization of beaches, against issuing more licenses to bars, pedophilia, etc.

The protests have been led by the affected villagers and have been often supported by NGOs like the Goa Foundation, Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz (Army of Vigilant Goans), Bailancho Saad, Children’s Rights in Goa, Jan Ugahi, and Bailancho Ekvott, citizen’s committees, freedom fighter’s associations and others.

The following demands were placed before the Government by concerned groups and citizens in 1997: (See: “Fish Curry and Rice”, Goa Foundation, 2002)

- Tourism promotion should not distort the image of Goa, its people and specially women.
- A ban should be imposed on granting any further licenses for the production and sale of alcohol. Bars should be regulated. Drinking should not be allowed on buses, in market places and on the streets.
- No permission should be granted to casinos either on land or sea and gambling should be prohibited.
- There should be a code of dress and behavior for tourists in order to prevent disrespect to local traditions and culture.
- The Government and the Tourism lobby cannot expand tourism at the expense of the local people.
- The Master Plan for Tourism should be placed before the people for comments and suggestions.

These groups have successfully thwarted attempts to violate environmental norms, to privatize beaches, to commercialize the carnival, to promote golf courses and casinos in the state of Goa.

Strategies used have included mobilizing affected people and the general public, using the media to promote awareness, producing alternative literature on tourism related issues, lobbying with sensitive legislators, holding protest marches and sit-ins, organizing a people’s carnival wherein awareness about the dangers of tourism was generated, etc.

Villagers Protest the Licensing of Bars and The Construction of A Water Sports Facility in Cacra:

Between 1999 and 2001, the villagers of Cacra (a tiny fishing village consisting of 45 houses with a population of approximately 450 people from the tribal community), came out in protest against the licensing of a bar which they perceived as a nuisance to the village. The women in Cacra believed that the bar was responsible for promoting alcoholism among male members of their community and that it was impacting the lives of all women in the village. Consequently, they elicited the support of a women’s organization (Bailancho Saad) and approached the authorities with a protest petition and forced the bar to close down. Goa has a liberal alcohol policy to support tourism in the state. Licenses are freely issued and lower taxes on alcohol enable even the poor to consume it. Similar protests have been organized by women in other villages in Goa.

In 2001, the owners of a 5 star deluxe hotel in North Goa, began constructing a jetty for a proposed water sports facility in Cacra, without even bothering to
obtain the necessary permission from the village panchayat (local self-government institution at the village level). The construction began at a rapid pace and alarmed the villagers, especially the fish workers whose access to the sea was restricted and whose fishing nets were damaged. The hotel owners had also dug a well in the area to draw water for the construction without consulting the villagers. Constant pumping of water from this well resulted in the lowering of water levels in the well used by the village. The villagers approached the panchayat and sought an explanation. With the support of NGOs they lodged their protests and finally approached the Chief Minister of Goa who was forced to ask the hotel to stop construction immediately!

It is important to note that in both these instances, the women in the village were proactive in their protests as they perceived the developments in their village as those that impacted and threatened their lives.

**Conclusion:**
From all that has been said above, it is evident that tourism has generated many problems in Goa – problems that impact the lives of women both directly and indirectly. In order to make development equitable and meaningful, it is imperative that every plan, proposal or policy be based on a clear understanding of the possible impact these would have on the status of women. Women’s groups in Goa have been continuously partnering with the concerned citizens and groups within and outside Goa, to evolve strategies to combat the negative influences of tourism on gender. Researchers and policy makers need to develop a gender-sensitive insight into the developmental models that are currently practiced. The above paper is a modest attempt to begin the journey towards such an understanding.

**Endnotes:**
* The paper was presented during the session on ‘Traveling Women in Asia’ at the ‘9th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Women’s Worlds 2005 (WW05)’ on 23.6.2005 organized by Korean Association of Women’s Studies (KAWS) and Ewha Womans University at Seoul, Korea.

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SECTION 03

WOMEN’S ENGAGEMENT WITH TOURISM
- ISSUES AND CONCERNS
1. Introduction:

Women in India, like in almost every nation, make up the poorest of the poor, constitute amongst the most marginalized, exploited and disempowered sections of society, and face repeated violations of their basic human rights. Gender equality and women’s empowerment have been asserted to be human rights and a pre-condition for social justice. Women’s movements all over the world, including India, have fought for it. They have challenged existing gender relations and patriarchal systems to reframe the development dialogue. They have argued for including women’s rights and women’s roles as active participants and beneficiaries in the development process.

The need to address gender discrimination is seen in large global processes and mainstream development efforts. Recognising women’s centrality in development processes, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) argued that one of the main development challenges faced by the world today is that of the condition of women and decided to ‘promote gender equality and empower women’. MDG also addresses “the equal rights and opportunities of women and men” and pledges “to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (CEDAW). With the approach of the 30th anniversary of CEDAW, the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the 10th anniversary of the MDG, the question arises: have women been truly empowered? Has gender equality been achieved or does it continue to be a distant goal?

However research and the stories of women engaged in tourism around the world has shown that it is an industry that is far from being gender just. A strong argument in favour of tourism development is that it generates employment at different levels due to the wide range of services and products it requires. Undoubtedly, there is merit in this argument. However, it is important to understand what kind of employment women have access to in tourism. Tourism does provide a range of activities where women can participate and also creates opportunities for entrepreneurship development. Global data on numbers of women and men working in tourism-related professions suggests that the organised tourism sector is a particularly important sector where 46% of the workforce comprises of women (in general, 30-40% of the workforce is women) (ILO 2007). Of the data available for the years between 1988 and 2005, it appears that there has been a broad increase in the participation of women in the tourism industry at a global level.

However, research and the stories of women engaged in tourism around the world has shown that it is an industry that is far from being gender just. As in many other sectors, there is a significant horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market in tourism. Horizontally, women and men are placed in different occupations - women are employed as waitresses, chambermaids, cleaners, travel agents, sales persons, flight attendants, etc., whereas men are employed as barmen, gardeners, construction workers, drivers, pilots, etc. Vertically,
the typical “gender pyramid” is prevalent in the tourism sector - lower levels and occupations with few career development opportunities being dominated by women and key managerial positions being dominated by men. Early advocates of tourism viewed tourism employment as a positive way of integrating under-privileged subgroups of society into the mainstream economy. However, these have tended largely to reinforce an existing sexist, ethnic and caste-based system of social stratification. In tourism particularly, women’s roles in economic production cannot be understood without reference to the cultural context of women’s structural position in society and the home.

With India’s tourism industry on the path of expansion, government is encouraging investment in tourism in the country. To encourage women’s participation in the tourism industry and provide training opportunities for the same, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India initiated the scheme like ‘Project Priyadarshini’. The Project ‘Priyadarshini’ was launched on December 9, 2005 with the aim to bring in women in greater numbers in the core area of tourism at all levels. It aimed to employ women in non-stereotypical areas in the Indian travel sector, like driving taxis, becoming guides etc. It also provided for training for self-defence, vehicle repairing and knowledge of other related domain. While launching the project the then Minister of Tourism, Ms Renuka Chowdhury had said that, “The whole idea behind Project Priyadarshini is to address the key issue of gender bias in our society. The gender ratio in India is getting more skewed by the day. In many pockets of states like Rajasthan and Punjab, for instance, for every 1,000 men, there are only 800 women. If this isn’t alarming, what is? We shout from the rooftops about caring for the girl child. But in reality women in our society are perceived as a ‘burden’. So the ministry is doing its bit by economically and psychologically empowering them through this scheme.”

Talking about the Priyadarshini Project, Mr. K.L. Das, Regional Director, Delhi, MoT said, “Integrating gender perspectives into tourism is particularly important as the tourism industry is one major employer of women and offers various opportunities for independent income-generating activities for them.”

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between tourism and employment of women in relation to the hotel/hospitality industry in Bangalore, as a part of the formal tourism industry.

2. Objectives and Background of the Study:
We decided to interrogate the claim “Tourism opens doors for women” to understand through one case study what opportunities the hotel sector were providing to women in terms of employment? Is the tourism industry creating possibilities for women to achieve independence and empowerment in economic and personal terms? What role does and can tourism play in the struggle for equality, equity and empowerment of women?

The study decided to focus on the hospitality sector in the tourism industry, as part of the organised sector in Bangalore. It focussed on understanding the opportunities available to women in the hotel sector - career options, growth options, incentives given, social securities available, job satisfaction, equal opportunities available in the work space etc. These issues are viewed under the general working conditions in the hotel sector with a specific focus on gender related conditions, policies, guidelines and legislations.

The study decided to also look at the formative stage: college-level educational facilities available to female students to attain comprehensive specialised skills necessary to join the hospitality sector in the formal tourism industry. These specialised courses range from Bachelor of Hotel Management (BHM), 6 months trade diploma courses to 4 years bachelor’s degree and even masters programs. In the last decades, a variety of hospitality courses have opened all over India. The interaction with the students was intended to understand the facilities available and the motivation of the female students: why do they study hotel management, what do they believe they can and will achieve in the future, etc. Attention was also given to the ratio of male and female students joining these colleges.

As a first step, the female students in hotel management courses were interviewed and their responses analysed in consideration of their background, motivation, expectations and
goals. As a second step, the study focussed on the female employees in the hotels. This included their percentage of representation in this sector, educational background, economic and social background, motivations, aims, achievements and possible sacrifices for their career. Both results were evaluated, with the aim to examine if the students’ expectations matched with that of the experiences of the women employees in reality and also to find out what in reality the picture currently looks like.

3. Methodology:
This paper is based on qualitative data collected through interviews with a range of people from the hotel sector and colleges of hotel management, data from tourism research papers, and secondary data collected from media articles.

3.1 Research Questions:
The main research questions that this study centred on were:

- **Background information about the hotels, including interviews with hotel management.** This included the ratio of male to female employees in general and at different levels of employment; women’s career options, growth options, salary structure, gender-related policies and benefits, working conditions, social securities, job satisfaction and equal opportunities in the workplace.

- **Personal interviews with female employees.** Each employee interviewed was asked to give specific personal information such as family background, place of birth, family status, level of education, employment status and work experience. The interview covered questions about their motivations in joining the hotel sector and their personal experiences in the workplace. The discussions involved issues including equal opportunities in the hotel sector and general working conditions such as hours of work, employment contracts and policies relating to female employees. Matters such as employers’ expectations of female employees and discrimination- including sexual harassment, were also discussed. The researcher also tried to find out their perceptions of the societal opinion about women working in the hotel industry, including those of their male colleagues.

- **Information about the courses in hotel management colleges, including interviews with college faculty.** The required information consisted of availability of the course and career prospects for the hotel management students.

- **Personal interviews with female students.** The students were first asked to share personal information about themselves such as family background and place of origin. The interview then covered topics such as their motivation to enrol in a professional tourism course, consideration in deciding career options in the tourism industry, favourite subjects on the course, future hopes and plans with respect to career and personal life, assessment of career opportunities, growth prospects, perceptions about equality in employment, the expectations of employers and social attitudes towards women’s employment in the hotel industry.

3.2 Research Design:
**Primary Source Data**
Ten hotels were visited in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The hotels ranged from budget to five star luxury hotels and included independent as well as chain hotels. In addition, six colleges of hotel management in Bangalore were visited.

127 people were interviewed in total. 63 people were interviewed through personal interaction/ conversations and focus groups, and the remaining 64 participated through questionnaires.

The types of people interviewed were as follows:

- **Human Resources (HR) and other hotel managers.** Firstly, the HR Manager of every hotel was approached for permission to be interviewed in order to understand the HR policies of the respective hotels, and to interview the female employees. Background information about the hotel, its policies
and working conditions were discussed. Permission to interview women employees was requested. In two cases, interviews with other male department managers were also undertaken.

- **Hotel employees.** 34 female employees from various hotels were interviewed. Only 27 agreed to give face-to-face interviews; the other 7 employees responded via the questionnaire. Initially the aim was to also interview some male employees, however due to some research challenges, it could not be realised.

- **Hotel Management College faculty:** The principals and department heads of the colleges were an important source of information. They supplied all the required information about the subject-options available to students and the career scope for hotel management graduates.

- **Hotel Management College students:** 15 personal interviews were undertaken and 25 students filled in questionnaires in order to gauge their opinions on the employment of women in the hotel industry.

- **Karnataka Tourism Office employee.** Only one interview was possible in order to obtain information about government schemes and training provisions for women who want to join the tourism industry.

**Secondary Source Data:**

- **Newspaper articles.** Media articles of the last three years were reviewed in order to get an overview of the expansion, employment patterns and trends of the hotel sector, as well as upcoming issues.

- **Other sources.** Several websites and books were referred to concerning relevant legislation, policies, schemes, impending bills and other documents, for an overview of the legal framework with respect to employment in the hotel sector.

### 3.3 Data Collection:
The data was collected via:

- **Questionnaires.** These were used to collect data from the students. The same method was initially planned to be used for obtaining information from female hotel employees. However, this could not be realised due to objections raised by the HR managers in most of the hotels. This restriction led to a limited number of interviews with women employees instead.

- **Guided interviews.** These were the main source of information collected. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face. Interviews with hotel managers and faculty members were conducted inside their workplaces and the students were interviewed on campus. With respect to the employees, while some had to be interviewed in front of their managers, others were interviewed outside the hotel during their lunch breaks.

- **Focus groups.** Depending on the context and suitability, a few interviews were conducted in groups of two to five people.

### 3.4 Research Challenges and Limitations:

- A major challenge of this study was getting the participation of the hotel sector in terms of finding representatives (HR managers and general managers) who were willing to be part of the research and to be interviewed. In most cases, initial email and telephone call approaches were not responded to and hotel managers were uncooperative or refused to give interviews. Accessing hotel employees was particularly difficult, since most HR and general managers refused to grant permission to the researcher to talk to their staff. In a few cases, where permissions for interview were granted, the HR manager insisted on attending the interview. This possibly came in the way of a more open conversation with the employees.

- Language barriers made conversations with some hotel support staff difficult.
As only female employees were interviewed, in this section the term “employees” refers only to female employees.

All of the interviews with hotel employees were conducted during their working hours; therefore many of them could spare only a little time to be interviewed.

The availability of data about government training provisions in the hospitality sector and tourism industry, with a focus on female employment, was nearly non-existent.

3.5 Data Analysis:
Apart from the background information collected through the literature review, this study is based on the interpretations of the interviews conducted. Broadly, following themes are covered to seek opinions of the respondents.

1. The perception about women working in hotels
2. Being a woman in the hotel industry: burden or benefit?
3. Working women in the hotel industry
4. Working mothers in the hotel industry
5. Measures to ensure physical safety and prevent
6. Sexual harassment of employees in the hotel industry
7. Working conditions of women in the hotel industry
8. The hotel industry as a career choice for women: How and why?

4. Employment of Women in the Hotel Industry in India:

4.1 Background
According to a recent study, “Gender Equality and Women's empowerment in India”, undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, in addition to education, employment can also be an important source of empowerment for women. Employment is considered an important means of women empowerment as it provides financial independence, alternative sources of social identity, and exposure to power structures independent of kin networks (Dixon-Mueller, 1993). Nonetheless, early marriage, child bearing and limited access to education limit women’s ability to participate in the labour market, particularly in the formal sectors. By contrast, male gender roles are compatible with employment and men are typically expected to be employed and to be bread winners for their families. Not surprisingly, men dominate most formal labour markets. National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-3 conducted in 2005-6 found that, among all women aged 15-49, 43% had been employed at any time in the past 12 months with the majority of them being currently employed. By contrast, 87% of men in the same age group have been employed in the past 12 months. It was also observed that most employed women work for someone else, away from home, and continuously throughout the year; about one in three women do not receive monetary compensation for their work or receive at least part of their payment in kind. Most employed women work in agriculture; only 7% work in professional, technical, or managerial occupations.

Tourism being a labour-intensive activity, it does provide a range of activities where women can participate and also creates opportunities for entrepreneurship development in tourist destinations. The tourism industry represents a big economic sector and its environmental and social impacts are obvious and have been well documented. Integrating gender perspectives into the discussion of tourism is particularly important as the tourism industry is a major employer of women, offers various opportunities for independent income generating activities, and at the same time affects women’s lives in destination communities. Global data on numbers of women and men working in tourism-related professions suggests that the organised tourism sector is a particularly important sector where 46 % of the workforce is women (in general 30-40% of the workforce is women) (ILO 2007). Of the data available for the years between 1988 and 2005, it appears that there has been a broad increase in the participation of women in the tourism industry at a global level.

4.2 Literature Review:
Corresponding to the growth of the tourism industry, the hospitality sector is seen to be on a growth path in India. Today it is India's third largest industry, employing 9.5 million people. During
the year 2006-07, the industry’s revenue was Rs. 604.32 billion, an increase of 21.27% on the previous year. In 2010, the industry is expected to touch Rs. 826.76 billion. In the context of this growth, it is estimated that “...there is an annual demand for two lakh trained human power” to service the industry. To meet this demand, there is a great need for professional education and training. To meet this, many colleges of hotel management have opened up all over the country in the last two decades. In 2008, India had 175 hotel management training institutes, from which around 18,000 students have graduated.

Despite this great need, the number of women employed in the formal tourism sector in India is not very high, although the number is increasing, according to many of those interviewed.

The literature review is now structured in the same categories as the questions and themes posed to the interviewees.

4.2.1. General Employment Scenario in the Hotel Industry:

Global recession has adversely impacted several Indian industries, especially hospitality. With a downswing in revenues, hotel management companies have decided to tighten their belts and right size their workforces as well as the remuneration packages drawn by them. These are the findings indicated by the 2010 India Salary Survey Report. Excerpts from the 2010 India Salary Survey indicate that the median salaries of positions across the hotel hierarchy have seen dramatic movements. While declines have been observed across departments, Resident Managers have been the worst affected with a 46 per cent decline in the median salaries. HVS observes that though the position is not being rendered redundant, it is certainly experiencing a strike-off from the hierarchy of several hotel companies across India. Several Resident Managers have known to have been promoted with no replacements being proffered. The survey however does show an increase in salaries of Departmental Heads across Front Office and Food & Beverage, thus indicating a renewed requirement for quality professionals to guide these revenue producing areas more efficiently than earlier. The rise in the salaries across the Food and Beverage domain may also be attributed to the emergence of quality stand-alone restaurants and food chains that are recruiting hotel professionals from the said department at extremely competitive packages. According to the Survey, for other departmental head positions, the decline in salary may be attributed to either or a combination of the following reasoning:

Salary rationalisation across all Department Head positions, movement of people within the company by means of internal promotion, which has provided the promoted employee a larger span of control with notional hike in overall compensation, recruitment been undertaken at lower compensation levels than benchmarks redundancy of positions emergence budget and economy hotels that have significantly lower compensation trends as compared to first class or luxury hotels.

There is rising discontent amongst the employees in the hotel industry. The Bangalore Jilla Hotel Karmikara Sangha (the Bangalore District Hotel Employees Union), which is affiliated to the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), urged the Karnataka Labour Department to fix the minimum monthly wage for workers in the hotel industry in Bangalore at Rs. 10,000. According to the sangha representatives, Bangalore had become a costly city to live in. Prices of all essential commodities were on the rise such as house rent, electricity and water charges and the cost of education. The State Government had not revised the minimum wage of hotel employees for eight years. The sangha urged the Government to order hotel managements to fix a minimum wage of Rs. 10,000, plus Dearness Allowance. They alleged that lodges, restaurants and star hotels were recruiting workers on contract, depriving them of the notified minimum wage, weekly off, annual leave, bonus, healthcare under the ESIS and Provident Fund benefits. The fate of workers in the many clubs in Bangalore was no better. They urged the Government to abolish the system of contract labour.

The general working conditions in hotels affect the work of both men and women. However since this study focuses on the employment of women in the hotel industry, working conditions pertaining only
to women will be analysed in this section. Working conditions in this context include remuneration and the terms of employees’ contracts, such as working extra hours.

Considering these informally extended working hours and almost non-existence of overtime pay, are salaries in the hotel industry adequate compensation for the given time and effort? Beyond that, does it pay back the investment of three to four years of expensive studies? An article by Express Hospitality talks about the “High course fees in comparison to low pay packages” which subsequently discourages students to join the industry.

One article headline put the situation as “Five-star careers (but only) one star salaries”.

There is certainly a need for a wage increase for hotel workers, especially in Bangalore, where the median salary of an employee is among the lowest in the country, with an average wage of Rs. 25,000 a month.

With respect to equal pay, Article 39(d) of the Constitution of India declares, “the State, in particular, shall direct its policy towards securing that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women”. In order to recognise these principles, the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, which was already mentioned before, was implemented. The Act guarantees equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex.

As already discussed, the hotel industry falls under the Shops and Commercial Establishment Act 1961. The Act aims to provide for the regulation of working conditions in shops and commercial establishments in the state of Karnataka. Detailed specifications about conditions, like working hours, overtime, salary as well as safety measures etc., are defined in the individual standing order of every individual establishment.

4.2.2. Perception about Women Working in Hotels:
Public opinion has a significant impact on the development of a society, and it simultaneously reflects all relevant change and progress. From this perspective, it was deemed necessary to get a deeper understanding of the current public opinion of the study topic.

From ongoing media discussions, one gets a sense that in India women are now beginning to hold senior managerial positions in the workforce. For many of these women, “the sky is not the limit”. One article says that in the past, women “were discouraged to join the ‘immoral world of hotels’” and “parents were unwilling to allow their daughters to work late hours and night shifts”. But perceptions are changing.

In 2005, approximately 50.16 lakh women were part of the active workforce in the organised sector, of which 41.77% worked in the private sector. The question arose as to how much of this organised sector women work force working were actually employed in the hotel industry, which for many years was a male-dominated area.

Opportunities for women in the hotel industry: The sky is not the limit!

As mentioned earlier, the hospitality industry is considered to be one of the largest industries in terms of employment in India. Furthermore, it is one of the fastest growing industries and hence there is a constant increase in demand for employees. According to an article, “…there will be a 45% increase in the number of five-star hotels in the [Indian] Capital in the next two years. In other metropolitan cities such as Bangalore, Mumbai and Kolkata, there will be a growth of 25% in the hospitality industry by 2010.”

The mass media portrays employment in the hotel sector as one where anyone can have a great career. Job prospects for both men and women are growing and the sector provides limitless growth opportunities. In particular, “women have multiple opportunities, to suit their skills and temperament, as the industry is geared towards personalised service. They can fit into any role in the hotel industry (...
One cannot generalise the prospects and it is solely up to an individual to reach great heights.”

4.2.3. Being a Woman in the Hotel Industry: Burden or Benefit?

“A woman is naturally endowed with skills that are advantageous to the hospitality industry such as relationship building, and good communication skills. The very concept of being hospitable to a guest is ingrained in a woman and comes naturally to her. Being more skilled at multi-tasking, a woman’s ability to balance work priorities with family and household responsibilities provides her with an edge, especially in an industry where work timings may be erratic.”

This statement is typical of the many views expressed in the media about the employability of women in the hotel industry. Women are believed to be better hosts and caretakers and hospitality is considered as their natural talent, since most women take care of families and home. Also, it is perceived in the industry that women are more soft-spoken, attentive, patient and better with customer relations than men. Certainly, some of these perceptions can be true, but do they indicate gender stereotyping, segregation or even discrimination? Furthermore, do female employees have access to all departments, even those which require less ‘female attributes’? In other words, do they have equal opportunities?

The research took into consideration the issue of the gender-specific vulnerability of women. Studies have shown that working women are vulnerable to sexual harassment and are subject to discrimination with respect to opportunity and remuneration. Women working in the hotel industry are widely perceived to be vulnerable to physical abuse because their work involves a lot of interaction with hotel guests and they have to work at night. The research conducted queried the welfare policies and protection measures provided to female employees by their hotel employers.

4.2.4. Working Women in the Hotel Industry:

According to a study, since the number of women who choose a career in the hospitality industry has been increasing, women’s status is of more concern than ever. It was reported that some 41 percent of hospitality managers were women (Diaz & Umbreit, 1995), and by examining hotels having over 500 rooms, the study found that only 2.6 percent of those properties’ managers were women. The numbers of women in general manager positions were even fewer (Wood, 1998). A look at the statistics of the women in top management (general manager) positions in the lodging industry illustrates the situation, only 10% of the American Hotel and Motel Association (AH & MA, 2004) were women.

Researchers have identified a number of factors that function as barriers to women’s career advancement. These included glass ceiling, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, organizational culture, and work and family conflict.

- **Glass Ceiling:** The glass ceiling refers to invisible, generally artificial, barriers that prevent qualified individuals, e.g. women, from advancing within their organizations and reaching their full potential (Knutson & Schmidgall, 1999). The term was popularized in the 1980s when it became a significant concept in the workplace in the United States. It describes a tendency for women and minorities to be over represented in the lower levels of an industry, but underrepresented at senior levels. Even though great strides have taken place in recent years, there remains room for improvement.

- **Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment:** Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) found that more than 80 percent of men and women perceive gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace as an ongoing problem. According to their research the reasons why most women graduates left the hospitality industry was due to gender discrimination or sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is simply not basing employment decisions on an individual's acceptance or rejection of sexual advances. Another form of sexual harassment is the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Repeatedly staring provocatively and making off-colour jokes or remarks also are considered sexual harassment (Woods & Kavanaugh).
• **Organizational Culture:** Recent research has concentrated on masculine organizational culture as an explanation for the glass-ceiling phenomenon, that is, organizational culture forms a barrier for women’s careers. Studies also have reported that there are only small differences between the management styles of male and female managers. These differences had decreased to the extent that these cultures were more male-dominated (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Many investigations have concluded that women in senior management positions have adapted their behaviour to emulate traditional male styles (Brownell, 1994).34

• **Work and Family Conflict:** In recent years, research has shown that work-family conflict also affects women’s career advancement. Mallon & Cassell (1999) found that the expectation of long hours was a significant barrier to seeking promotions for many women in the industry (Mallon & Cassell, 1999).35

4.2.5. **Working Mothers in the Hotel Industry:**
Most women in India, like in many other parts of the world, are expected to maintain a balance between work responsibilities and home duties. As a result, the pressure endured by them doubles. In addition to this, if the woman is a mother, the pressure triples. This part will therefore focus on the multiple responsibilities of a working woman. The legal aspect of family-friendly policies will be clarified. The next part inquires whether and how hotels offer benefits to their female employees, such as family-friendly working hours, part-time employment, flexi-time, maternity leave and provisions for child care.

The Employees’ State Insurance Act 1948 does “provide for certain benefits to employees in case of sickness, maternity and employment injury and to make provision for certain other matters in relation thereto.”36 It defines maternity leave and cash benefits for pregnant women. The existing wage-limit for coverage under the Act, is Rs.10,000 per month. Women who earn more than the stated maximum wage will not be covered by the Employees’ State Insurance Act, but is under the provisions of the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961. Both acts regulate employment of women before and after childbirth and provide for 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, medical bonuses and certain other benefits. While the benefits under the Employees’ State Insurance Act fall under the principles of insurance and therefore require contributions of the employer and the employee, the Maternity Benefits Act is an employer’s liability scheme. Therefore, the employee does not have to pay any contributions towards the maternity benefits.37 38

Unlike women in the private sector who have 84 days of maternity leave, women employed in the government sector have been entitled to 135 days since 1972 and in September 2008, this was increased to 180 days with pay. Furthermore, unpaid leave granted in continuation with maternity leave can be extended to two years for these women.39 Bringing “corporate sector and private firms under the purview of this law”40 was discussed but this attempt apparently failed.

In 2006, the Ministry of Women and Child Development announced the introduction of a policy that will make it mandatory for private and public organisations to provide working mothers with child care facilities in the form of crèches and day-care centres.41 However information about the continuation of this policy is scarce. Around the same time the Rajiv Ghandi Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers was introduced. The scheme provides assistance to NGOs for running crèches for infants and sanctioned 804 new crèches in the state of Karnataka between 2006 and 2007.42

It appears that changes are happening in order to better support working mothers and the government especially seems to be aware of the need for benefits. But has the hotel industry adopted any of these changes? What kind of benefits for working mothers do hotels provide?

“Workplaces have traditionally been designed keeping men in mind, with long hours and the expectation of total commitment to work”43 the hotel industry being no exception. If employers want to build a loyal female workforce, they would have to invest in family-friendly policies. Unfortunately, it seems that hotels are not family-friendly workplaces. As it often requires a 24/7 commitment, the work is impractical with unsociable and long hours,
sometimes including a six day week with work on weekends and holidays and a lot of shift work and overtime.

It would appear that hotels do not currently have very family-friendly work policies. This does not only refer to women, but to men as well. Still, there is a huge difference, as for women, “...their duties as moms still take precedence.”44 They are not only the birth-givers but also the expected caretakers, as there is no concept of paternity leave existing in Indian law.45 The lack of a father’s opportunity to take responsibility, the lack of childcare provisions, the lack of an adequately long maternity leave and the lack of family-friendly working hours are shortcomings that are not only evident in the hotel industry. “That coupled with the absence of any encouragement from the government agencies to enforce laws that make work places women friendly, has made the ride a not-so-smooth one for the city’s working moms.”46

4.2.6. Measures to Ensure Physical Safety and Prevent Sexual Harassment:

Women are more likely to face different forms of violence and discrimination in their everyday and working lives than men. The Indian government provides a set of rules and regulations to protect women in the workplace.

Section 66 of the Factories Act 1948 effectively banned women from working night shifts, by stating that no woman shall be required or allowed to work in any factory beyond the hours of 6 am to 7 pm. This was the law until 1999, when the Mumbai High Court passed an order allowing women to work in the Santa Cruz Electronic Processing Zones during the night. Following this, the High Court of Andhra Pradesh withdrew Section 66 of The Factories Act 1948, claiming it to be unconstitutional. This declaration was upheld, because Section 66 violated the fundamental right to gender equality, discriminated women on the grounds of gender and interfered with the fundamental right of petitioners to carry out their right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. The Madras High Court in this regard made several provisions for the safety and security of women and the preservation of their dignity and honour before declaring Section 66 of The Factories Act 1948 unconstitutional. The provisions included:

“...employers should prevent and deter any sexual harassment and provide procedures to resolve, settle or prosecute any such act; the employers should maintain a complaint mechanism, including a complaint committee headed by women and half the members of the committee should be women; women should be employed only in batches, of not less than ten or not less than two thirds of the total nightshifts’ strength; separate work sheds, canteen facilities, all women transport facility, additional paid holiday for menstruation period, medical facilities should also be provided besides two or more women wardens to work as special welfare assistants; the employer shall provide proper working conditions with respect to work, leisure, health and hygiene and there should be proper lighting in and around the factory where female workers may move, there should be security at entry and exit points of factory and at least twelve consecutive hours of rest or gap between shifts; the employers should send fortnightly reports to the inspector of factories about night shifts including any unwanted incident and also to the local police station.”47

Finally, the Factories (Amendment) Bill 2005 was introduced by the Union Government in 2005. The amendment allows women to work in factories between 7pm and 6am, but only on the condition that their employer ensures their safety and protection through occupational health and equal opportunities policies, dignity and honour protection, and transportation to the nearest point of residence.48

However the hotel industry does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Factories Act but is under the Shops & Commercial Establishments Act 1961. Even though the government has discussed bringing hotels under the jurisdiction of the Factories Act and a rising demand from hotel industry employees, the Labour Ministry “finally buckled under pressure from the powerful lobby of hoteliers. This had left the industry under the Shops and Establishments Act.”49 A change would have meant an improvement in the working conditions of hotel employees as the industry would have had to fix proper shifts, pay overtime, ensure workers’ health, safety and welfare facilities.50 Gender-related safety measures are an important issue in the context of this study; since they are not included in the Shops &
Commercial Establishment Act 1961, the provisions of The Factories Act were taken as the standard against which the realities were compared.

In light of the rising numbers of women working in the business process outsourcing sector (BPO), in 2007 the Karnataka Government renewed the debate about women working night shifts by planning to revoke an existing provision of the Labour Act 1961. The provision banned women working night shifts beyond 8 p.m. in shops and commercial establishments and hotels. These establishments would, “have to re-schedule the working hours of their women staff to ensure that their duty hours do not stretch beyond 8 p.m. with the State Government deciding to strictly enforce, from July, the provision banning night shifts for women.” This decision was taken because of several complaints about sexual harassment during night shifts. As may be imagined this holding provoked “...an outcry among women groups, which called the move regressive.”51 ‘The Express India’ quotes many women activists calling this “open discrimination”53 and ‘The Hindu’ quotes an Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka member saying, “Women are vulnerable to violence but it does not give the government the right to ban them from working at night.”54 Under pressure, the government decided to revoke the ban in May 2007.

A big step towards equal opportunities for female employees in the hospitality industry was taken in September 2008, when the Karnataka High Court lifted constraints on the employment of women in bars and restaurants. The court denounced Rule 9 of the Excise Rules and Section 20(2) of the Karnataka Excise Act 1965, which both prohibited employment of women in bars, as violating the Constitution.55

Studies find that sexual harassment is still endemic, often hidden, and present in all kinds of organisations. Yet it is still not always viewed as a problem, which has to be systematically tackled. The issue is of concern for both women and the employers as studies show that sexual harassment touches lives of nearly 40-60% of working women.56

In 1997, sexual harassment was for the first time recognised by the Supreme Court in India as human rights violation and gender based systemic discrimination that affects women’s right to life and livelihood in the case Vishakha vs. State of Rajasthan.57 The Court defined sexual harassment very clearly as well as provided detailed guidelines for employers to redress and prevent sexual harassment at workplace.

Vishakha guidelines apply to both organized and unorganized work sectors and to all women whether working part time, on contract or in voluntary/honorary capacity. The guidelines are a broad framework which put a lot of emphasis on prevention and within which all appropriate preventive measures can be adapted. One very important preventive measure is to adopt a sexual harassment policy, which expressly prohibits sexual harassment at workplace and provides effective grievance procedure, which has provisions clearly laid down for prevention and for training the personnel at all levels of employment. However the implementation of these guidelines remains poor.

Under the growing demand for a specific legislation, the National Commission for Women (NCW) in association with Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India in 2006 drafted the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2006. NCW taking into consideration the feedback received from the Ministry of Law and Justice and from civil society organisations, revised the 2006 Bill and proposed “Prohibition of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Bill 2010”. According to the NCW’s proposed Bill “sexual harassment infringes the Fundamental Right of a woman to gender equality under Article 14 of the Constitution of India and her Right to life and live with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution which includes a Right to a safe environment free from Sexual Harassment.” It also flows from the international “Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)”ratified by the Government of India in July 1993, which recognizes the right to protection from sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity as universal human rights.

Salient features of the proposed revised Bill in January 2010 are as follows:
The Bill proposes a definition of sexual harassment, which is as laid down by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan (1997). Additionally, it recognises the promise or threat to a woman’s employment prospects or creation of a hostile work environment as ‘sexual harassment’ at workplace and expressly seeks to prohibit such acts.

Section 2 (a) provides protection not only to women who are employed but also brings any woman who enters the workplace as students, research scholars, patients, client, customer, apprentice, and daily wage worker or in ad-hoc capacity. Section 2 (f) has broadened the scope of the definition of employee which includes a person employed at a workplace for any work on regular, temporary, ad hoc or daily wage basis, either directly or by or through an agent, including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer, whether for remuneration or not, or working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, whether the terms of employment are express or implied and includes a domestic worker, a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice.

Section 2 (l) (v) includes “Unorganized Sector” which shall come within the meaning of “workplace”, means all private unincorporated enterprises including own account enterprises engaged in any agriculture, industry, trade and/or business and includes sectors. This section brings unorganised sector within the ambit of protection.

Employers who fail to comply with the provisions of the proposed Bill will be punishable with a fine which may extend to Rs 50,000. Since there is a possibility that during the pendency of the enquiry the woman may be subject to threat and aggression, she has been given the option to seek interim relief in the form of transfer either of her own or the respondent or seek leave from work.

The Bill provides for safeguards in case of false or malicious complaint of sexual harassment. However, mere inability to substantiate the complaint or provide adequate proof would not make the complainant liable for punishment.

Through the implementation mechanism proposed, every employer has the primary duty to implement the provisions of law within his/her establishment while the State and Central Governments have been made responsible for overseeing and ensuring overall implementation of the law. The Governments will also be responsible for maintaining data on the implementation of the Law. In this manner, the proposed Bill aims an elaborate system of reporting and checks and balances, which will result in effective implementation of the Law.

Though the NCW had recommended covering domestic workers under the proposed Bill, however, the Government has decided to exclude domestic workers from the definition of employee. On 7th December 2010 the Government introduced the Bill in the Lok Sabha. Civil society groups across the country raised concern over the exclusion of domestic workers as they are the most vulnerable to sexual harassment and atrocities like verbal insults, physical assault, less pay and over work. It is hoped that the Bill will come into effect taking into consideration the revised sections and clauses proposed by the NCW and the National Advisory Council.

4.2.7. The Hotel Industry as A Career Choice for Women- How and Why?

“It’s not just engineering or medical degrees that youngsters are chasing these days. With prospects of self-employment and jobs, many are opting for a diploma in Hotel Management…”

The hotel and hospitality sector has become a popular choice for those looking for employment options. Currently, the younger generation considers a degree or diploma in hotel management to be the best way to enter the hotel sector.

Besides the common education loans provided by banks, every student is eligible to apply for
scholarships or partial or full tuition fee waivers which some colleges offer to students from weaker economic backgrounds. Furthermore, some colleges gave financial support to students from hotelier or defence family backgrounds and others gave admission preferences to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and further backward categories. However, the financial aid programs offered are very limited.

5. Interview Results: From Hotels

5.1 From Managerial Staff

5.1.1. Women in the Hotel Industry:
According to the HR managers, 50% of those with a hotel management background join the high-end hotels, five stars and above. This is primarily because of better career prospects, higher pay structures and greater work prestige. On the question of profile of the women employees, interviews with several HR managers confirmed that employment of women in the hotel industry is still mainly restricted to front-office, back office and housekeeping. Nevertheless, women seem to have good opportunities when it comes to a career in these positions. The managers sounded positive in saying that there is a positive change predicted towards employing women in male dominated departments like food and beverages.

Only one of the visited hotels gave overtime compensation through compensatory time off. Others said that there arises no need for compensation as employees only worked for the regular nine hours, including a one-hour lunch break.

5.1.2. The Perception about Women Working in Hotels:
Interview responses show that women are still a minority in the employment scenario in the hotel sector. The male managers, who were interviewed, seemed to hold biases in their perception of women’s employment in the hotel sector. Asked about the possible causes of the very low or non-existent number of women working in their hotels, the answers from male senior hotel managers included:

- “Very few women apply as they are discouraged from joining the hotel sector”
- “it is not essential to have women employees”
- “There is simply no need for women in this sector, the hotel always ran perfectly without them”
- “Girls are causing problems and therefore it’s not good to have them in the workforce. They are making friendships with male workers and then the concentration of the work goes down.”

Some of the managers thought that the demand for female employees was on the rise. One HR manager even said that at present, female job applicants are preferred over male applicants, where they held equivalent qualifications and experiences. One of the factors that emerged from the interviews is that the growing hospitality sector has a constant demand for skilled and unskilled workers, which includes women.

5.1.3. Being a Woman in the Hotel Industry: Burden or Benefit?
The response to this section in terms of equal opportunities and remuneration was found arbitrary. As all the hotel managers uniformly and emphatically said that the hotel gives equal opportunities to both genders whereas they have accepted earlier that women employees are mainly concentrated in front office, back office and housekeeping jobs.

5.1.4. Working Mothers in the Hotel Industry:
Due to the 24/7 nature of the sector, most hotels were not very open to the idea of part-time employment, as it would not meet the work profile needs of most positions. Neither was flexi-time an opportunity. Some hotels employed women on break shifts which means work during the busy hours of breakfast, lunch and dinner. These break shifts are rather an extra burden than a relief, as the employee is on a kind of standby for the whole day.

With regard to Maternity Benefit Act 1961, only one of the visited hotels offered an extra month of leave for women in special or difficult situations as well as the option to extend maternity leave through
accumulated leave days. In this case, a woman had the chance to stay with and take care of her newborn child for up to five months.

None of the hotel provided child care facilities in the form of crèches or day care centres.

5.1.5. Measures to Ensure Physical Safety and Prevent Sexual Harassment of Employees in the Hotel Industry:
Many hotels do not allow female employees to do night shifts. While physical protection is given by the hotels, policies concerning sexual harassment, gender discrimination etc. is negligible. Only one out of all the visited hotels had an anti-harassment committee. All others had no sexual harassment policy. The managers explained this deficiency by saying that there was never any occasion that required implementation of such policy. They did not see any need for such policy and saw even less need to set up a redress mechanism / complaints committees, a mandatory body as per Vishakha guidelines. The HR managers explained that the HR department would look after problems related to any harassment. All the HR departments were headed by men and only one department actually employed a woman. It seemed that most of the HR managers did not want to talk about this topic. When the question was raised, many of them reacted defensively and claimed that sexual harassment was not an issue in their hotel.

5.2 From Female Hotel Employees:
The number of women employed in the hotel industry was observed to be generally much lower than that of men. This phenomenon was identified during the interviews. We were informed that female employees represented a maximum of 25% of the workforce in the formal hotel sector. Women comprised on average 10% to 15% of staff in four to five star properties, and the number dwindled with the category of the hotels.

The researcher felt it was important to understand what female employees in the hotel industry believed was the perception of Indian society about their profession, is a female hotel employee accepted in society nowadays, does she get support from her social environment, at home and at work, and do they approve of and appreciate their profession?

5.2.1. Perception about Women Working in Hotels:
The responses from the employees towards this question turned out to be very diverse.

Positive Perceptions: 34% said they believed that the reputation of women employed in the hotel industry had improved in the last decade. In the words of an employee with 10 years’ experience of working in the hotel industry (and therefore witness to many changes):

“Now it [working in the hotel sector] is very well respected. When I started, it was not (...). Before, [when it came to women working in the hotel] they used to think twice, but now it is a good exposure. Everybody is having a good exposure in this sector. (...) I didn’t like to start myself. When I started even I thought twice. I had to struggle, fight for years against many odds and then I’ve come up. But now there is a vast change to what it was ten years back. Now it is good.”

According to another employee who has been employed in hotel for over 20 years: “…Previously very few ladies would come to work in the hotel industry. But now, the scenario has changed, especially in the cities. They [women] are equally considered like men.”

Quite a number of newly-employed employees agreed to these statements.

Another opinion was that the respect and reputation towards female hotel employees generally differed between those living in rural and urban areas. The impression amongst the employees was that “In metros, people are much more open, but restrictions continue to exist in rural areas.”

Negative Perceptions: Nearly 25% of the employees interviewed believed that the general reputation of women employed in the hotel industry is still quite bad. According to a female hotel trainee: “[Women’s work in the hotel industry] is not respected and I describe it with sugar coated words.”
An assistant training manager, working for the last five years said: “According to the Indian culture, females shouldn’t work in the hotel industry. People here are not very open. Even for that matter, when I had to start, my parents were actually against me doing the hotel management course. The Indian mindset is like that hotel is a sector where women are not meant to be [employed], in any kind of job. Especially when it comes to accommodation, people here think that many things happen.

According to a house-keeping executive with experience of working in hotels for more then 20 years, “In the remote areas, people do not think high about women employed in hotels. They think these women are of bad character. However, in urban areas, people these days do not hold such perceptions.”

The Age Factor: The acceptance of the profession also differed amongst different age groups. While the younger generation looked at the hotel sector as a lucrative and respectable employment avenue, it was not the same with the older generation. According to a sales manager:

“...the thought [female should not work in the hotel industry] actually is not with the younger generation. The younger generation do not hold any such preconceptions. [It is a prejudice of] mostly the people of older generation, those who are above fifties as they belong to that generation who had faced restriction themselves.”

Respect vis-à-vis Position of Power: An important criterion for respect towards women’s work in the hotel industry is the position that a woman holds in the hotel. In this context, a banquet sales executive said: “If you are in a higher level, ok, fine. But if you are in a lower level there is no respect.”

Prejudices and Misconceptions: The range of prejudices and misconceptions are varied:

“...they think we girls have to look pretty and have to speak to the guest and that’s it.”

“...it [work in the hotel] is not really accepted as graceful.”

“... they believe if you are working in a hotel you are selling alcohol or you are involved in loose activities.”

“Some of them still think it is a very unsafe working area for a girl and not appropriate.”

When asked about the glamour associated with working in the hotel industry, one employee responded it “is not as rosy as it seems.”

“I think men get it in their head that if you wear a short skirt or you are working in an industry like this you would be easily approachable”.

Social Support Structure: Most of the employees said that their families supported their career choice. A few voiced the concerns that their families had and the difficulties they had to face. According to the experience of an assistant training manager:

“... nowadays, they [parents] are supporting me very well. Before they were like ‘What do you do over there? Why do you work so much?’

Some held the view that while studying hotel management is still not appreciated, working for the hotels are gradually being accepted in the society. Some statements from interviewees - “During my schooling I wanted to do hotel management but then, of course, my parents were not too ok with hotel management, so I had to do something else. But at the first chance I got, I joined work in the hotel. I wanted a straight road, they didn’t allow me, and so I took a round road.”

“In India, when a girl studies hotel management it is not really accepted as graceful. But, when she enters the job, people are more open because it is a job, you get paid for it. ...”

5.2.2. Educational Background and Career Growth Opportunities:

What was noteworthy was the low number of employees who actually held a hotel management degree. Most of the employees interviewed did not have a degree or diploma in hotel management or any other course related to the tourism industry. Some said that they could not opt for hotel management course because of the high cost
factor associated with such courses. From all of the interviewed women employees, only 26% had studied hotel management; 44% had other degrees such as Bachelor of Commerce or Arts and 24% had left school after the tenth or twelfth grade. 19% of the interviewees with other graduation degrees were in managerial posts. Only 5% of the female employees without any degree worked as executives. It was interesting to find people with various degrees and education level working in the hotel industry.

63% of the employees agreed with the claim that the tourism industry- including the hotel sector- ‘opens doors for women’. They said that the hotel sector has immense career growth options because “new jobs are always getting created.”

33% stated that growth depended on different factors. Educational background is perceived as an important factor in terms of being able to avail of opportunities and in determining the position in which a woman worked:

“If you have a proper background of study, then it is easy and nowadays many women are studying and there are a lot of women candidates”

“I think the only opportunity for growth that a woman has is only if she is really well-educated. For someone who is not so educated, maybe not.”

“There are opportunities, but you have to be very smart.”

A few of the employees expressed their desire to continue their studies in order to achieve a better position in the sector. A telephone operator who had not taken the final exam of a graduate degree in Commerce said:

“I am doing my studies again. The subject I have failed, I want to do again and I want to do MBA. (...) I need more income, the salary part, that’s why. If I study more, at least I get to do a better job profile. [What I get now is] good but I want better than this.”

Like most sectors, in the hotel sector, the better and more specialised an education one has, the better and higher a position one can get into. 67% of the female employees with a hotel management background held management positions. With respect to the need of educational background, especially for female employees, one industry trainee explained that:

“...you need to put in a lot yourself so that you get the experience and then you move up. But I don’t think that any woman would be working 10 to 15 years and then looking for a promotion. I have seen a lot of guys do that... women cannot put in that much time...”

A quality professional educational background was perceived to always have an added edge over the number of years of work experience. On an average, the employees interviewed did not have many years of work experience. 66% had worked for less than five years in the sector. Confirmed by the HR managers, the female workforce in the hotel sector is clearly young, mostly below 30 years of age.

Even though it seems to be easy for women to enter the hotel industry, a further analysis of the issue of career growth opportunities is essential. The interview focused on the opportunities for promotion available to female employees- a critical component for career growth. As mentioned earlier, the industry demands an investment of a large amount of time and effort from its employees in order to prove their efficiency. In this context, an employee who is a working mother and had joined the industry two years ago said:

“The disadvantage of a woman is that you can’t stay back till 12 pm even when your work demands it. Maximum time you can stay back is till 8pm or 9pm. But men can continue staying back at work space for long hours, sometime as late as 1am - 2am. That is a vital limitation for most women employees.”

“No family time. I have absolutely no family time.”
On the question of equal opportunity, the employees had different opinions from that of the hotel managers. For them, being a woman in the hotel industry has its burdens and benefits. According to some of those interviewed, women are most suited to roles that require interaction with guests because they are assumed to be naturally welcoming and hospitable. One front office assistant explained:

“Because guests will interact with a girl more and they look to a girl for a smile. If a guest is coming in a bad mood, if we smile he feels good.” Another said, “Women should be presentable to attract the guests.”

This viewpoint supports the perception that women extend hospitality “from home to hotel.”

5.2.3. Working Mothers in the Hotel Industry:
This section addresses the issue of how women handle being both mother and employee. 47% of the employees were working mothers. 18% of them had children over the age of 12 years and only 6% had more than one child. At management level, six out of nine women had children. Therefore, the average number of working mothers is quite high in the hotel industry.

Most working mothers were employed on general shifts and not expected to work late hours. There were mixed opinions of this practice. For example, one working mother said, “I feel that the employers are a little softer on the women. Keeping in mind that we have family obligations, we have to run a home. So there is a little more leeway.”

On the other hand, an industry trainee stated, “As soon as an employer knows that a woman is married and she has a family to look after, I think they would not burden her with so much work... I don’t say that in a nice way, because he understands that she has a family to look after. I am not saying that because he is concerned. It is more like, ‘Ok, fine, anyway she is leaving at six’.”

Only 13% of the employees with children worked general shifts. Most women with young children relied on day care help from their mother, mother-in-law or live-in domestic help. The importance of family support was said by one of the employees, “It’s manageable because support system is there from my in-laws. That’s the main advantage how I can manage everything.” An assistant sales manager said, “My mother manages my child. She stays with me. Otherwise, it is not possible. I couldn’t have done it, if I had no support back at home. Then, working in the hotel would not have been possible.”

Some interviewees talked about women leaving work after having children. According to them since part-time work was not encouraged by the hotel managements and maternity leave is very short, many women decide to take a longer break in order to spend more time with their child, as did a few of the working mothers interviewed.

A few respondents said that when taking extended maternity leave, a woman cannot be sure about her re-entry into work and it is quite likely that she will have to take a lower position. In this context, one of them complained about her difficulty in getting back into work, “I took the maternity leave for 7 month, not for 3 month. So somebody else was recruited in my position. So, when I came back and I could not join the same hotel again. Only three month they keep your position for you. (…) I struggled to get a new job for nearly two and a half month.”

Others spoke about the sacrifices women had to make when concentrating on a career. They said, “At least more than 50% of the managers are without children. There are very few who will manage a balance. Most of them are still single or at least without children.” One assistant training manager who did not have children said, “… now, at the position I am in, thinking of a child would be my secondary priority. Because it will cut off my career.”

Most of the women managers interviewed were working mothers. However, the general view was that majority of women managers were unmarried. One of them stated, “... in hotel industry most of the women in top positions who I have seen, at least 40%, are not married.”

Another reason for women leaving work is marriage. As we have seen before, female work participation in the hotel industry still does not have the best reputation in Indian society. It was reported that
often the husband did not agree on the wife’s profession and would ask her to leave the job in the hotel, as had happened to one of the interviewees. One employee with a BHM background explained, “... in an Indian arranged marriage scenario, people would like their daughter in law to have studied a BSc or a B Com, but not BHM.”

These mentioned reasons for women retiring from work early might also explain the average young age of female employees noted earlier. As the majority of the interviewed female employees were under the age of 30, the assumption can be made that many women leave the hotel industry when they get married and have children.

The work/life balance of these employees also depends on the department they work in and the expected hours of work pertaining to their roles.

“It depends on what you have taken up, on the departments you are working for. That is how the timing goes.”

5.2.4. Measures to Ensure Physical Safety and Prevent Sexual Harassment of Employees in the Hotel Industry:

As previously mentioned, only a minority of the women interviewed worked night shifts. This was because it was not compatible with their family life and because some hotels did not want to provide the mandatory physical safety measures for them to work nights. This was generally the case in the lower categories of hotels. Most four and five star establishments did have some women working night shifts. These women are provided with provisions such as transportation to their residence. The conditions of transportation varied, however. Some hotels made sure that female employees travelled home in an all-female environment with a GPS to keep track of their whereabouts, while others did not. Furthermore, the timings of drop off/pick up provided by the hotel differed. Only one hotel would arrange to transport female employees any time after 8pm, while the others would not offer a driver before 10pm or 10:30pm.

Most hotels were found to be maintaining reasonably good safety and security measures within the premises. Even though this provision was basically a necessity for the accommodated guests, it was also an advantage for the female employees as some of them mentioned that they did not feel insecure at work, “...we have all the facilities over here and all the security. Even when I do night shifts, I can go alone at 1 or 2am downstairs to the cafeteria.”

Another employee said, “... hotel is a very secure place (...) the people outside always think that security is the negative part of the industry, but no, it is not. It is a very good industry (...). From evening shift onwards the hotel provides facilities to drop the ladies back and pick up those who work in night shifts”.

But when these personal safety measures fail, do the employees complain to the HR departments or instead they keep the matter to themselves?

A conversation with another independent researcher who is working on a survey (separately from this one) on sexual harassment in hotels has been very informative in this context. Her observation during her research to the above question showed, “There are many employees who keep it to themselves. According to them the HR is not very keen on seeing the fact (...). I found most of them only sharing it to their colleagues, but not to the HR. They feel that the HR won’t accept the fact that sexual harassment happens in their hotel. They will say, “No, it will be your mistake. It is because of you. It’s about how you put yourself across.” so the female do not confide to anybody else except their colleagues.”

During interviews conducted by us, half of the employees said that they would definitely complain to the HR department. Amongst the rest, 12% said that they would not complain but instead probably “just cry and leave the job”, another 35% were not sure about how they would react.

Interestingly, many employees interviewed believed that if harassment should ever happen to them, it would be because of the way they carried themselves. As some employees explained-

“We feel that in India if a women stands up for herself and she is confident enough to defend herself then she is safer”
“…it’s just how you keep yourself away from it. It (happened to me once and it) I did not elevate it to the authorities. It’s just on the basic level, how you handle people”

“…we should know how to present ourselves in the workplace. We know there are two different gender, male and female. Female is always the weaker section…”

One of the interviews said that, “…with any male colleagues, I maintain some distance. I start interacting with them only after I know them well. I believe, if I try to be too close, they are likely to interpret it differently. So I always keep some distance when I interact with my [male] colleagues.”

Most employees we spoke to were not aware of any sexual harassment policy in their hotel, and, what the policy entailed. While 52% admitted to having no information at all, 31% claimed that they knew about it. Only 17% of those interviewed said that they knew of gender related policies in their hotel, but were clueless about the specificities of those policies.

5.2.5. Working Conditions of Women in the Hotel Industry:

Being a service sector that operates 24/7, the expectation from the workforce in the hotel industry is generally high. According to one of the interviewees, “12 hours a day is expected from you. The least you can do is eleven hours. If you go below that or even leave on time, they think you have not completed your work (...) If you need to grow, you have to be there at least 12 hours. The manager needs to see you all the time.”

33% of the employees interviewed said that they regularly worked extra hours; between one and three hours extra was said to be normal. An assistant sales manager complained, “Ahh, working hours are bad. I do very long hours…” There are surely many employees who follow their scheduled hours, but probably not the ones who were looking for career opportunities in the hotel industry. Those who are focused on a career in the hotel industry will have to give long working hours, as this is seen as proof of commitment to one’s job, and helps prospects for promotion.

Almost all of those interviewed felt that there was no gender discrimination in terms of pay. Only one employee felt there was a difference. Further information could not be obtained from the said employee, because of the presence of the HR manager during the interview. When questioned, the HR Manager did not show any willingness to discuss the issue.

Another issue for consideration was the kind of employment contract the employees worked on. As per the information obtained during interview, 80% were permanently employed, even though some were still on probation, which lasts six months. In contrast to the rest of the employees, those in higher positions usually went immediately into permanent employment. The other 20% worked on contract; they were not employed at the managerial level and worked on so-called ‘fixed term’ contracts. According to their performance, their contract is then extended, terminated, or turned into permanent employment (which seemed to be the most common case). Most employees and managers saw a fixed term contract as another form of probation period. It was considered to be of disadvantage for the employee and an advantage for the employer as termination is easier, less benefits and leave is required to be given.

5.2.6. The Hotel Industry as a Career Choice for Women- How and Why?

Most of the employees interviewed were not very critical of their managers and male colleagues. 68% said that they were respected and supported by their male colleagues and 64% felt that their managers treated them equally to their male counterparts.

Hotels were found to be a melting pot for people from many educational background and level – open to people with different qualifications and experiences. Most of the employees we spoke to said that the decision to join the hotel industry was self made and not because someone else persuaded them to join. The spectrum of reasons and motivations behind these decisions were wide and diverse. 44% were interested in tourism, 37% did not have any special interest of working in the tourism industry and the remaining 19% developed
an interest in the intercultural aspect of tourism and the opportunities of working abroad while they worked in the hotel industry.

5.3 From Hotel Management Colleges:
Hotel management is taught at various institutes in India and Bangalore offers a great choice of colleges. Most of them offer a three to four year bachelor course for which the admission fee ranges from around Rs. 45,000 to over Rs. 100,000 a year.

According to the principals, teachers and the students, the training in the hotel management colleges puts emphasis on an all-round education and development of the students, and therefore offers a wide range of potential fields of work. The BHM students are not only trained in kitchen and housekeeping but also in subjects such as accountancy, sales and marketing, law etc. and thereby they can enter all kind of industries. The most common employers of the hotel management graduates, besides hotels, are airlines, cruise ships and the colleges themselves, also hospitals, large software companies and others.

5.3.1. Hotel Management College Students
(Only female students were interviewed. So, students refers only to female students.)

The ratio of women studying the hotel management colleges was not much different from the ratio of women working in the visited hotels. Both had a maximum of 25% participation of women. This can be one of the reasons of relatively low number of employees’ working in the hotel industry having degree in hotel management.

All the BHM students interviewed felt that they hold better opportunities for employment and career prospects in the hotel industry than the non-BHM degree holders. Aware of their advantageous position some of them said, “It is a stepping stone and with the degree you know where you are going. What is possible, you know.” and “I think it depends on the degree that we have, we will be promoted much faster”

5.3.2. Perception about Women Working in Hotels – From the Eye of the Students:
81% of the students said that they believed that hotel industry has immense employment potential for women and the sector provides opportunities for women to achieve economic independence. One of them explained, “For the employees, the hotel industry is [a great employment opportunity] because new jobs are always there.”

19% of the students were not sure about work opportunities in general, as they believed them to be dependent on different factors.

34% of the students interviewed said that the reputation of women employed in the hotel industry had changed positively in the last century and most of them had family support in choosing their field of study. One of them said, “I think, nowadays the hotel industry is quite good for women.”

Others were less positive. They felt that people from older generation and those from non-urban background still have reservations about women working in the hotel industry. One of them said, “A large part of our society, at least 70%, have very conservative opinions... especially, the older people and those from rural background...” According to a final year student, “Many of the people don’t have a good idea about the girls that work in the hotel. They think they don’t have a good character and good background. Most people who do not know the industry, they have a general mindset that the industry is not good for girls. But this is for the people that don’t know about it. They just have a general overview so they think the girls [employed in the hotel industry] need to look pretty and need to speak to the guests and that’s it.”

On the issue of favoured areas of work in the hotel industry, 52% of the students expressed their preferences to work in food and beverage production or service. They talked about their plan to get into the kitchen or bakery and a few into bar and service. However, a ‘reality check’ through our interviews with the employees showed that in practice these departments were predominantly male dominated.

5.3.3. Being a Woman in the Hotel Industry: Burden or Benefit? – The Views of the Student:
85% of the students clearly expressed that they were unsure of gender parity in allocation of work
in the hotel industry. They felt that while men had liberty to work in any section/service in the hotels, when it came to women, certain specific work in specific departments are allocated to them. In certain departments, especially those which are predominantly male dominated, women have to struggle hard to be recognised and acknowledged.

A student with six months industry training said, “…females are given the light jobs and males are given the heavy load jobs. Since we can’t do heavy work, so all the paperwork and stuff are given to the female employees to do”.

Another student with work experience expressed the opinion that the kitchen is not the right work place for women.” Work in the hotel kitchens, according to the students involved “physical strain and therefore do not match the work profile of women”. However, other students did not look to be convinced of this argument and considered this practise to be “discriminatory” and “an insult to their skills and capabilities”.

The students said that according to their seniors from college, who have already joined work in the hotel industry, the managers are not very encouraging about women working in services other than the front desk, housekeeping and guest relationship.

5.3.4. Working Mothers in the Hotel Industry- Perception of Students:

The students had various views about work life balance.

Being worried about managing family and work, one of them said, “You can not keep a family and the hotel industry together. At least for a female it is not possible. Hotel asks a lot from you.”

Another student was of the view that, “I don’t think both is possible. I think all the females will take time out after marriage. That’s what I would do because it is not easy.”

Few others were a bit more optimistic. They planned to achieve a good position in their career before taking a break to start a family. Few of their observations were like, “It’s really difficult. I will have to do it [the career] before I decide to get married and then, when it is all settled I can come back and join a good post. So I built up a career first and then I join back later.”

“I think once your career succeeded, you obviously think of a family. But that is only after a successful career. I think you can find a balance. Initially out of college you will focus on a career. So you make sure your career is on high and then think of family.”

5.3.5. The Hotel Industry as a Career Choice for Women- How and Why? – the Students Voices on Why They Decided to Study Hotel Management:

The students spoke about various reasons for deciding to study Bachelor of Hotel Management – a professional course aimed at developing trained manpower for hotel industry. Apart from the general motivation to do hotel management studies we specifically asked them if they had special interest in the tourism industry that had made them take up the course. It was asked if the fact that the hotel industry is part of the growing tourism industry and therefore opens opportunities on the international market was an important aspect in their decision-making. Specifically, their interest in intercultural exchange and the opportunity to work abroad were taken into account. 72% of the students considered this to be a decisive aspect, since they would like to have the opportunity to work abroad or generally like the idea of interacting with different people from various cultural backgrounds. In the context of this question the students also added that the growth which the tourism industry in India is undergoing was another key factor for their choice. According to them growth in the tourism industry leads to growth in the hotel industry and this leads to greater job opportunities. According to many of them, “The motivation was because this industry is on a hype nowadays and there are employment opportunities.”

Some said they were inspired by their family. One of them said, “My parents are both in the hotel industry and they own a restaurant. Because of them I got inspired.” Another student said, “My dad did the same course. He inspired me to join.” There were also inspirations from others like, “I got inspired by my cousin brother, who works for the Taj (a Indian Hotel chain) in the front office.”
There were also few who said that they took up the course as they did not want to do graduation in commerce or science stream of subjects and wanted to do professional degree in something different.

The responses were the following: “There are hundreds and thousands of engineers out there. A normal student only thinks of engineering or medical, they can’t think of something else. I wanted to do something different. I had not seen anybody, none of my friends or my family in this industry.”

“From a very long time I have been very interested in learning about food and varieties. I always liked cooking and so wanted to join a field where I can cook various things.”

What was appealing to many students was that the courses are very practical, creative and interactive:

“In this particular degree course you study many fields under one roof. You get to study about law, about nutrition and many other subjects. This helps you to build independent perspectives and good for overall development.”

“We do all the courses, a bit of everything and a lot of self development, [for example] how to carry yourself.”

According to another student “[I took up hotel management] because it is more practical than other subjects.”

Basically, I wanted to do something that is different and very interactive, something that’s fun learning.”

“I love interacting and dealing with people, so I thought this might be very interesting for me and so far I have really enjoyed it.”

With the multi-disciplinary nature of the courses and the resulting broad range of work opportunities in mind, many students did not see their career limited to jobs only in the hotel sector.

However, the spirit sounded dampened amongst a group of students from final year who had just completed a six-month industrial training. Some of their views were the following:

“You probably will find some girls that want to join hotel industry. But, after studying so much no one wants to work in an industry where one needs to give at least 12 hours every day. The related compensation/pay is also not high”.

“...as long as you don’t have a lot of passion about working in a hotel... one cannot work there”.

“I also actually don’t want to work in a hotel, because I want to specialise in bakery. The problem about the hotel industry in India is that they do not care what the candidate’s specialisation is on. They just dump you wherever they need you. All the people that I know in the hotels- they have specialised in something and they are working on something else.”

This particular observation of students of final year coupled with what some of the employees had to say about the pattern of employment in the hotel industry calls for further research and probe.

6. Conclusions:
As the majority of data collected was from the employees and students, most of the important findings of the research arise from these two groups. There were several points on which they were in agreement and others in which it was clear that the students’ perceptions of women working in hotels did not match the reality confessed by the employees interviewed.

The following are the main findings of the interviews:

- It is a significant finding that both employees as well as students felt that the reputation of women employed in the hotel industry had changed positively in the last decade. This has more to do with the overall change in the society, general broader perspective and acceptance amongst people in urban areas.
- Women with various degrees and education level worked in the hotel industry supporting the finding that the hotel industry provided multifarious employment opportunity to all, including women. It did not call for any
homogenous group of people to support its functioning. However, it has impact on their career growth.

- The hotel management degree provides them an edge over others who do not have the degree, however, it seems to mostly improve their accessibility to job opportunities. It has little to do with the position or departments they will be placed in. The industry seems to regard gendered traits like age, their presentability more than education qualifications.

- 33% of the female employees interviewed said that they regularly worked extra hours; between one to three hours extra was said to be normal. In contrast, only one of the visited hotels gave overtime compensation through compensatory days off. The others said that there would not be any need for compensations as the employees would only work for the regular nine hours, which included a one-hour lunch break.

- Majority of both employees and students believed that “Tourism open doors for women” and there are opportunities for growth. However, under this context it would be important to find out why some final year students who had the opportunity to intern in the industry sounded disgruntled. The same also applies with respect to the observations from employees who said that women are seen in specific roles in the hotel industry. They are not encouraged to work in departments like food & beverages, and the kitchen. To attract more professionals to work for the hotel industry, the hotel industry needs to seriously brainstorm on the issue and stop such discriminatory practices.

- The major motivation to work in hotel industry amongst the employees was very similar to the motivation of students taking up degree course in hotel management. According to both the groups the constantly growing hospitality sector has a constant demand for skilled and unskilled workers, which includes women, thereby increasing the employment opportunity.

- No different from trends in other areas, men dominate the upper employment levels as managers, professionals and technical persons. In the middle sector, there is considerable number of women -primarily in clerical positions. In the lower sector again there are women, working as maids and waitresses. Though the typical “gender pyramid” is prevalent in the hotel sector also, there is a slow shift towards recognising women’s ability to handle managerial posts.

- While most women are still employed as subordinates, with limited career development opportunities, the equation seems to be changing. With more and more women from cities and towns opting for higher education, in general the number of working women is gradually on the rise. It is especially evident in the service sector, including hotel industry.

- Lack of support for working mothers in form of crèches or day care facilities are found to have implication on the career growth of women employee as well as students. They both opined that it is difficult to manage both responsibilities, therefore the career break is often the only option before them. With the present system where employees have to privately arrange for child care, working on general shifts was the only option left to women. Also, they shared that there is no surety that they will get the same position after getting back from leave. Majority of the interviewed working mothers said that childcare centres and crèches would be of great use to them and their peers, as most of them had young children. Under the condition that all employees are required to work for long hours, the hotels should provide childcare facilities.

- The industry has found to have preventive approach when it comes to provide safety measure as most of the hotels did not allow women to work in night shifts. As a result, they are forced to work on general shifts which may have implication for their career growth.

- Non-formation of sexual harassment committee, lack of awareness among staff and
indifferent attitude of HR manager towards the issue of sexual harassment is a major concern.

• There is a need to organize awareness programmes for hotel staff to enable them to look at the issue more sensitively. Hotels and other organisations in the hospitality and tourism need to have sexual harassment policy and implement its mechanisms as per the Vishakha Guidelines of the Supreme Court. It is a mandatory requirement.

• Long working hours result in women finding it very difficult to bring in a work – home balance. The general work and family space division amongst men and women are gradually undergoing change but calls for much social deconstruction to bring about a social equity.

Therefore it can be said that even though many ‘doors have been opened’ already, conscious support from the industry will enable women in the hotel industry to ‘walk through’ all of them.

Endnotes:
* This research was primarily by Kerstin Dahmen who interned with EQUATIONS (May-July 2009) and supervised by Ananya Dasgupta. Research support from S Vidya, Surabhi Singh and Rosemary Viswanath


2. Security Council Resolution 1325 was passed unanimously on 31 October 2000. Resolution (S/RES/1325) is the first resolution ever passed by the Security Council that specifically addresses the impact of war on women, and women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325.html Data retrieved in May 2010

3. Gender and Tourism : Women’s Employment and Participation in Tourism, Summary of UNED –UK’s Project report


6. Ibid

7. See Research Challenges and Limitations.

8. The researcher was German and spoke fluent English, but does not know Kannada or any other Indian language.


10. Ibid


17. Ibid

18. Ibid


23. Article 39(d) of the Constitution of India.


25. For details view the Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishment Act, 1961. Source: http://164.100.80.70/acts/ACTS%20E/163e.pdf


31. Ibid


33. Ibid, page 18

34. Ibid page 23

35. Ibid Page 24


38. According to Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, it applies to every establishment being a factory, mine or plantation [including any such establishment belonging to Government and to every establishment wherein persons are employed for the exhibition of
equestrian, acrobatic and other performances] with more than 10 employees. The State Government can with the approval of the Central Government, after giving not less than two months' notice in the official Gazette, declare that all or any of the provisions of this Act shall apply also to any other establishment or class of establishments, industrial, commercial, agricultural or otherwise.

According to Section 5 of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 every woman shall be entitled to, and her employer shall be liable for, the payment of maternity benefit at the rate of the average daily wage for the six weeks immediately following the day of delivery. The maximum period for which any woman shall be entitled to maternity benefit shall be twelve weeks, that is to say, six weeks up to and including the day of her delivery and six weeks immediately following that day.


42. Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers, Ministry of Women and Child Development. Source: http://wcd.nic.in/RajivGandhiCrecheScheme.pdf


57. 1997(7) SCC.323


60. Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe categories are population groupings that are explicitly recognized by the Constitution of India.

61. Male general manager of a budget hotel.

62. Male HR manager of a four-star hotel.

63. If an employee works break shifts, he/she is only required during the busy hours, for example the hours of breakfast, lunch and dinner in a restaurant. Thus, the working hours expand throughout the day even though it is only an eight-hour workday.

64. Female executive with a 2 and a half year-old child and six years in the industry.

65. Female assistant with a 3 and a half year-old child and three years in the industry.


67. Female executive with a 10 year-old child and 10 years in the industry.

68. To gain an understanding of this, it needs to be considered that the experiences of trainees are not equivalent to the experiences of employees. The first reason might be that they joined the hotel for a period of only six months, and therefore were unable to get a long-term inside view of working in hotels. Secondly, they probably always kept the status of trainee and thus were not perceived as equal, and finally yet importantly, they visited all the departments in the hotel, including the kitchen. Since none of the employees interviewed held a kitchen position, the trainees’ statements about the work climate in this department cannot be compared with the opinion of any employee. Therefore, we can rely only on the students’ experiences considering the kitchen department.

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Reports, Documents, Papers and Studies


Tourism, gender and equitable development, Dr. T T Sreekumar, www.twnside.org.sg/title2/resurgence/207-208/cover5.doc


Handbook of Law, Women and Employment, Surinder Mediratta, Oxford University Press.


The Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2005

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Bare Act)

The Employees’ State Insurance Act 1948 (Bare Act)

Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (Bare Act)


The Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2005

Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishment Act, 1961 (Bare Act)
Tourism has always had a link with women. Mass tourism claims that it employs more women than men and women are often seen as the face of tourism, quite literally, as they appear in travel brochures as the ubiquitous image of warmth, welcome and hospitality.

When understanding tourism growth in natural resource rich areas we have been particularly interested in understanding how the growth of tourism engaged, impacted, helped or hindered women. To what extent did tourism actually provide opportunities for empowerment? To what extent did it change stereotypes and gender injustices? Were women able to break the shackles of religious or social prescriptions related to their role and relative power by engaging in tourism as compared to more traditional roles and settings? What was the nature of women’s participation in tourism? To what extent did they influence decision making and the nature of tourism? Did they gain – economically, socially, and politically? Have they been able to challenge patriarchal structures and demand equal participation and benefits from tourism? How did tourism impact their lives? What are their concerns & dilemmas and in what ways have they engaged or wish to engage with tourism?

To explore these questions, we have attempted to gather together and amplify the voices of women in different spaces which we heard in the course of our interactions with communities engaging with tourism.

To do this we present case studies of nature based (and in most cases community based) tourism and examined it through a gendered lens. The observations and insights are derived from more general contexts and were not specific to research addressing gender issues.

Mountain Shepherds Initiative, Uttarakhand:

Mountain Shepherds Initiative (MSI) is a community owned and operated ecotourism initiative based in Uttarakhand. It attempts to engage with the local communities and their youth to harness the potential of tourism in the larger interest of the local community. The initiative is a result of the long struggle of communities in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve for control over land, forests and natural resources. MSI works with vision of developing a model for tourism that is sustainable and defined by the local and indigenous communities residing in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. The MSI has trained local youth in mountaineering and trekking, instructions and mountain search and rescue for taking tourists groups on expedition. Another tourism component of MSI is the homestays that they provide to tourists in collaboration with local communities in areas like Lata and Tolma.

“The Mountain Shepherds story begins in Lata, a village situated in the Niti Valley. The people of the Niti Valley belong to an Indo-Tibetan ethnic group known as the Bhotiya. Those in the Niti Valley belong to the Marchha and Tolcha groups and have traditionally gained a livelihood as transhumant shepherds, traders, or farmers. In the 1970s, Bhotiya communities were at the forefront of the famous Chipko movement that saw village women led by Gaura Devi to save their forests. From 1998 to the present, they have persisted in their efforts to regain access rights to the Nanda Devi National Park. With the creation of Uttarakhand state and its emphasis on the tourism sector, this movement gave birth to the Nanda Devi Campaign in Lata village. Sparked by the urgent need to ensure local control of the tourist trade, the campaign issued the progressive 2001 Nanda Devi Biodiversity Conservation and Eco Tourism Declaration to guide its future. In 2003, the Indian government made a major revision to the park rules that had strictly governed the Nanda
Devi protected area for over twenty years. A partial reopening began allowing 500 visitors to enter a small segment of the park’s core zone every year, although the peak itself would remain off limits.”

MSI was formerly inaugurated in 2006 in the vicinity of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. It is located both in the context of a wider social and environmental struggle. A 2006 Inaugural Women’s Trek marked their first foray into the tourism business, attempting the challenging task of establishing a community-owned operation in keeping with its aspirations for a future without human exploitation and environmental degradation.”

Women’s participation in the tourism initiative of MSI is largely prescribed by social norms - the roles that women are allowed to participate in are decided by the community first and then their family. Therefore women’s participation in tourism is not only gendered but also decided primarily by the family and community and this is accepted by women. The participation of girls in tourism is at a very nascent stage in Lata village, and it is too early to say if this will enhance women’s participation in decision making within the family and the community in the future. Though girls are being trained in mountaineering it has not meant that families are sending their daughters on regular expeditions. The family and community has clearly different norms about what ways the daughters participate in tourism as compared to the freer hand that sons have to decide if they would like to be involved in the tourism project of the MSI.

Apart from their traditional roles of carers within the family and thus caring for the visitors, this community based initiative also relies on women’s traditional skills in carpet weaving. Thus traditional knowledge and skills are the basis for including women into the tourism loop. Most tourism initiatives often end up employing women in areas where they need least additional training and can leverage on socially prescribed or traditional knowledge and skills such as care giving. In the MSI case, on the contrary though women are not primarily involved in looking after the guests since the youth trained by the MSI cater to the tourists, the payment for using the homestays by tourists is handed over to the landlady (i.e the women). With a range of Rs. 150- 250 per day in Tolma and Lata respectively going to women directly it is a positive move that acknowledges their contribution (for the use of the place as well as the labour in keeping it clean and providing bedding for tourists). To some extent it also recognises the time intensive nature of women’s work who being involved in agricultural activities are less likely to have the time to engage with tourists.

Women are also involved in the production of souvenirs during the winter months. They produce smaller hand woven mats for yoga or meditation purposes. Tourism provides a market for their produce and thus an alternate income particularly to those households that are not providing homestays or involved in any other ways in tourism. It is an attempt to provide tourists with local souvenirs; relying on their traditional knowledge of weaving and knitting and by enhancing their skills through the introduction of vegetable dyes.

The MSI being community based has a stronger element of community support when compared to many other tourism initiatives that are introduced without much local participation.

The greater participation of men in tourism activities such as trekking and mountaineering which includes working as instructors, search and rescue volunteers, cooks and guide for tourists groups has also meant a diversion of responsibilities in agriculture work earlier handled by men to women. The women are loaded with the usual household responsibilities and in addition because the men are away, the entire load of caring for children, collection of fuel wood, fodder and water take them in the hilly terrain.

Further more, the peak harvesting season is also the main tourism season and this has resulted in men being away for tourism linked activities leaving the women to shoulder a greater (physical) workload at this time. It is interesting that this incursion of women into men’s traditional (gendered) areas is not objected by the community, but they are more unwilling to “allow” the women to engage in activity which is more externally-oriented.
Sunil Kainthola who coordinates MSI in Dehradun shared a story of one of the MSI youth Raju whose mother told him in a “friendly” manner: “You have taken my husband with you, you have also taken away my two sons into tourism. Now it will rain any moment. Our grain will get spoilt unless we harvest it. Then what will we eat? There is no one to work with me – so now you come with me to the village and work with me.”

Thus women’s additional load directly and indirectly because of tourism ends up fetching them very little direct economic benefit – in the form of additional earnings– but loads them with additional work – all of which is neither measured, valued nor compensated for in economic terms.

From another perspective given the exploitative nature of tourism with respect to the commodification of women and abuse, the community at Lata has taken into account the risks that women are likely to face when tourism makes inroads into their spaces. The community (both men and women) who decide the norms then become the buffer to decide which roles it would like to see its women in, given their knowledge and skills. The Bhotiya women were at the leadership of the Chipko movement in asserting their rights to natural resources. Whether this assertion has translated to their choice of ways of income generation is not very clear or evident yet. Some families have allowed the daughters to be trained in mountaineering and related courses but tourism led business activities is new for the communities and may also explains the absence of women in business activities.

With the MSI core competence and product being adventure tourism in the Himalayas the organisation has greater involvement of boys and less of girls. In certain areas like Uttarakashi women like Bachendri Pal⁴ are role models for women taking up training in mountaineering and instructorship. While girls are being encouraged to train in becoming instructors it is a physically demanding role and this aspect seems to draw more boys. Beginning with training provided by the forest department in 2004 and that provided by MSI in 2006, girls have gone on three treks since 2006 with exclusive women’s groups as well as in mixed groups (of boys and girls) with tourists.

MSI has also taken a firm stand on guiding the community about the roles where women may have opportunity but increased vulnerability to exploitation by tourists. It has created a space for discussing about what roles women would be comfortable in taking up rather than just going by the demand of the tourism industry which can be exploitative when unchecked. The opportunity to train girls in mountaineering was a step forward, but the decision was that girls would accompany women only groups. This was seen as a via media between the complexity of developing spaces for women to participate in tourism, recognising the risks in terms of sexual harassment they may face from male tourists while accompanying them on treks and balancing this risk, with the desire to build their capacity for leadership and management roles that have not been socially encouraged so far. In the future MSI foresees the participation of women in souvenirs, exclusive as well as mixed trekking groups, as instructors after they complete their Method of Instruction and in managerial roles.

Andamans and Nicobar Islands:
The Andaman & Nicobar Islands (A&NI) are a group of picturesque islands and islets lying along a long and narrow arc in the south-eastern part of the Bay of Bengal. While relatively isolated until the early twentieth century, these islands of breathtaking natural beauty gained slowly in popularity as a tourist destination. As in many other parts of the country, tourism has been identified a priority sector for development in the Islands, particularly the Andamans. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands harbour a rich biodiversity with high endemicity, making them an internationally acknowledged hotspot for biodiversity. Large areas of coral reefs, which hold significance as the last pristine reefs in the Indian Ocean, lie outside protected areas, with very little protection efforts going into them. The mangroves are also known for their diversity of various marine organisms. Over the years, the swampy areas in lowland evergreen forests have been almost totally destroyed by conversion to agriculture and open swamps have also been drained in a number of places, making this an increasingly rare habitat. It is clear that any further ecological degradation will have an adverse impact not only on the unique biodiversity of its fragile coastal ecosystems but also on coastal fisheries and tourism.
The Andaman Islands are home to four indigenous tribes: The Great Andamanese; the Onge, who inhabit the Little Andaman Island; the Sentinelese, who have long inhabited North Sentinel Island and the Jarawas, in the interior and west coast of South and Middle Andaman. During the British colonisation, house sites and agricultural lands were allotted to “convicts” who had been jailed at the Cellular Jail. In 1925, around 45 Karen families from Burma were brought to clear the forest. Between 1947 and 1971, as part of a policy move of the Indian Government to meet labour requirements in the Islands, people from then East Pakistan, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bihar were settled in the Islands. Post 1970s, the A&NI have seen an unplanned influx of people from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, whereby the annual growth rate of this influx has far exceeded the average decadal growth of population in the Islands (approximately 4.8% p.a.). Settlement and thoughtless “civilisation” attempts have lead to the decimation of the original tribal people and they are confined to reserves with uneasy relationships with the settlers. Among those who came in, the diverse profile and stakeholding has led to some tensions raising the issue ‘who belongs to the Islands and who does not’.

While the islands have witnessed a steady growth in tourist numbers along with the steady push of the A&NI administration to being the tourists back to the islands post Tsunami in 2004 has led to an increase in the number of proposals for intensive tourism development particularly in the Andaman Islands. This includes huge investment in infrastructure, improved connectivity and concessions on LTC for domestic tourists. However, these plans, like earlier ones, are not based on how tourism operates in and impacts the Islands, and do not consider whether ground realities support the assumptions that these plans are based on.

In 2008 EQUATIONS along with partner organisations undertook a comprehensive research study to examine the status of tourism, its existing and likely impacts and the likely impacts of proposed tourism development plans.5

While the level of tourism activity in the Andamans is high, women are involved in comparatively low profile jobs like running petty shops for selling fish and fruit. Men constitute the majority of the workforce in tourism establishments 89.3% are male and only 10.7% is female.6 Thus women in general have lower employment opportunities even within tourism much like in other sectors.

Tourism has affected the lives of the women in the Islands, whether they are associated with it directly or not. One success story is of three women – Rajni Ika, Pandiamma and Kanti Tirku – who got together as members of a self-help group to start an eatery in Havelock Island in December 2006. They are in contact with the guides in Port Blair who refer tourists to their eatery. They make a profit of Rs 12,000 a month which is shared between the three of them. The usual problems of the island, such as acute shortage of water and rising prices of vegetables need to be dealt with, but they are happy with the change in their lives that tourism has brought in.

However, the tale is not all good for other women on Havelock Island. Nirmala Rao is a widow who works as a daily wage worker. For her, tourism is an added burden to her daily problems. Because of increased tourism activity she finds the prices of travelling by autorickshaw (a three wheeler) have risen tremendously. During the peak tourist season boat tickets to Port Blair are hard to come by. Concerns are voiced by women about rising land prices and the disillusionment of the youth. Arathi Roy, a housewife of Havelock says, “The government has brought us here (as settlers). Now they are allowing foreigners to get land here. In the future the government may sell out on us”. She also fears that children and youth will imitate foreigners in behavior and mode of dress. The level of education of the youth tends to be low. While tourism is the only sector on the Islands that increases opportunities, by opening up jobs like taxi driving and guides, she also raises an alarm by drawing attention towards the increasing habit of drinking alcohol, with easy availability in the Islands. “Prostitution could be a serious problem in the future”, she fears.
Endogenous Tourism Project:

The Endogenous Tourism Project-Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP) is a joint project of Government of India-Ministry of Tourism and United Nations Development Programme (GoI-UNDP) to support the rural tourism initiatives of the GoI which would serve to create sustainable livelihood opportunities among low income communities living in rural areas through the setting up of alternative models of tourism. The GoI-UNDP Project Document clearly locates this project in context of development and social justice, ethics, sustainable human development, elimination of poverty, addressing inequalities and inequities. Thus a unique feature and indeed core principle of the ETP is to examine and take further the links between tourism and development.

While the ETP project was aimed at the economic objective of making livelihoods sustainable and employment generation through community based actions, it also aimed at empowerment of women, marginalised communities and youth, as well as gender equality through a convergence between the economic and social issues. EQUATIONS was commissioned in 2008 to review the ETP in an attempt to garner in a participative manner the experiences and learning of this large scale and ambitious effort. We highlight in the section below aspects that relate to the role and impacts on women.

When tourism is introduced into rural communities with the aim of social and community empowerment, it is often assumed that communities are homogenous in an economic and social sense. Our study of the community based tourism projects in several rural sites found that when tourism aims for empowerment by involving women in strong patriarchal societies it creates social tensions between the two sexes. When women take on a greater role in tourism activities and begin to demand a greater role in decision making in these traditional and conservative societies, it challenges the “superior” role that patriarchy assigned to men.

Patriarchal norms, caste and gender are central to define the nature of participation of women in tourism. These social norms define whether women can actually take up roles of influence and decision making, even if these roles are architectured into the project.

Hodka, near the astoundingly beautiful and stark Rann of Kutch (a cold Desert) in Gujarat, is an extremely conservative community where the women lived in pardaa in the hamlets. When the model of tourism that the community could engage in was first debated, the idea of homestays was strongly resisted by the communities. They did not want the tourists to come to stay in their village. The community decided that their engagement with tourism would be in the form of a resort outside the boundaries of their hamlet – which ensured a kind of containment of the dangers of tourism, along with a desire to reap its benefits!

Their norms were not only about women and clearly were about preserving strongly held cultural norms – many of which were also deeply patriarchal. They also felt that tourists should not be scantily dressed in shorts. Consuming alcohol was forbidden in their society and so they didn’t want the visitors to come and have alcohol and expose their younger generation to this habit.

While Hodka has many elements of a successful foray into tourism women who were initially a part of the Hodka Paryatan Samiti left this Village Tourism Committee (VTC) - due to social taboos and pressures resulting in the management of the Shaam-e-Sarhad resort being completely male. There is an institutional framework within the ETP that seeks to address gender issues by challenging existing power structures, but the social structures proved too hard to break through. The strong resistance by the men towards the participation of women in any of the decision making forums in Hodka was evident. Although a group of women are involved in the plastering and designing on the walls of the resort, women, largely have been denied access to any decision making body.

In Raghurajpur, near Puri-Orissa, a temple and crafts village, the Raghurajpur Heritage & Tourism Committee (RHTC – village tourism committee) is completely devoid of women. When the sub-committees were formed, women were not even consulted. They were conspicuously absent in all
the sub committees except for one, the sanitation committee! Despite the presence of a women’s group in the village it is not represented in the RHTC.

Similarly at Lachen in Sikkim there was a lack of participation of women in decision making structures and process related to the project. This is also due to the fact that under the Dzumsa (form of local self governing body) structure the scope for participation and decision making of women is generally low. In contrast, in Chitrakote, Chhattisgarh, tribal dominated area women have a leadership role to play in the implementation of the ETP. Here there was a special effort by the implementing agency to build capacity, empower women and to mobilise their participation in the functioning of the Village Tourism Committee.

Often women’s contribution to family income is seen as marginal and their work as unskilled. Thus even in tourism though women are involved in skilled tasks like craft production, they continue to be seen as unskilled while men’s contribution is considered skilled owing to the gendered perception of men as bread winners of the family. In Raghurajpur for instance women contribute equally in the production of the crafts like Pattachitra (traditional Orissa paintings on palm leaves) which is the main and often only source of livelihood to many in the village. The women do all the labour intensive ground work but the men are perceived to have the skills to do the finer aspects of the craft. In reality the women are no less creative in their artistic excellence, but this is not acknowledged.

Women are not a homogenous group within a community. Access to tourism activities and benefits is defined also by the social hierarchy of caste (which is invariably linked to class). Caste and class act as gatekeepers allowing certain sections of women within community to participate while excluding others. E.g. in Naggar (Himachal Pradesh), the VTC’s bias towards upper caste women does not go unnoticed. When the community was asked to choose three members from each ward, they have invariably chosen women from the more affluent upper caste families believing they would be in a better position to represent and understand the implementation of the project. However decisions by upper caste women do not necessarily take into account the voices or interests of lower caste women and often caste affiliations play a stronger role than the sympathy for common concerns as women. An examination of the norms for membership in the Village Tourism Committees that have been evolved by the communities often tilts the balance in favour of certain dominant communities over marginalized sections. Since backward castes themselves are not allowed easy access to decision making positions within the VTCs by upper castes even within these tourism committees the situation is similar in the case of women from backward castes.

In Chitrakote a major conflict emerged on the issue of the construction of shops near the waterfall site. The objective was to sell handicrafts and food to the tourists and thereby promote the products of the craftsmen and women trained under the project and local cuisine also promoted under it. The Panchayat and the local administration jointly decided to provide 5 acres of government land out of an 11-acre plot where the annual local festival takes place. It also started building shops near the waterfall on the government land. Some vested interest groups came together and demolished the nearly completed beautiful structures. To date no legal or police action has been taken against the perpetrators and they have not been brought to book.

The very nature of tourism is that it requires infrastructure skills, capital and linkages to engage successfully – and in the limited space available women from lower and backward caste have a double handicap of gender and caste and are usually out of the reckoning. Unless carefully planned and designed it seems very unlikely particularly in rural setting in India that social and gender inequities can be addressed in any significant way through tourism projects.

**Conclusion:**
These initial case studies point to the opportunities that women have in carefully designed tourism projects to carve out more meaningful roles and wield greater influence. But much depends on the context of socio-cultural norms of patriarchy and caste to determine the extent to which they can
benefit. The need to address these issues through systematic awareness building of tourism policy makers, planners and implementers, as well as local communities is critical.

Endnotes:


1. EQUATIONS field notes to Uttarakhand – villages Lata and Tolma, September 2008

2. In the 1970s, an organized resistance to the destruction of forests spread throughout India and came to be known as the Chipko movement. The name of the movement comes from the word ‘embrace’, as the villagers hugged the trees, and prevented the contractors’ from felling them. The first Chipko action took place spontaneously in April 1973 in the village of Mandal in the upper Alakananda valley and over the next five years spread to many districts of the Himalayas in Uttar Pradesh. It was sparked off by the government’s decision to allot a plot of forest area in the Alaknanda valley to a sports goods company. This angered the villagers because their similar demand to use wood for making agricultural tools had been earlier denied. With encouragement from a local NGO, Dasoli Gram Swarajya Sangh, under the leadership of an activist, Chandi Prasad Bhatt and women of the area, went into the forest and formed a circle around the trees preventing the men from cutting them down. In March 1974, women from Lata, Reni and other nearby villages led by the elderly Gaura Devi protested against men that had come to clear cut local forests. The Chipko protests in Uttar Pradesh achieved a major victory in 1980 with a 15-year ban on green felling in the Himalayan forests of that state by the order of Mrs Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. Since then, the movement has spread to many states in the country. (http://healthy-india.org/saveearth6.asp)


4. Bachendri Pal was the first Indian woman on top of Everest in 1984. She was born in 1954, in a village named Nakuri in Garhwal. She shared with her parents her desire to become a professional mountaineer. The family was “devastated,” as for them, her relatives and local people, the most suitable job for a woman was teaching, not mountaineering. However, Bachendri did not budge from her determination. She joined the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM). She was declared the best student and was considered as “Everest material”. She currently runs a training camp at Tata Steel Adventure Foundation. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bachendri_Pal)


6. Ibid, pg 126

7. EQUATIONS (September 2008), Review Report on Sustainability In Tourism: A Rural Tourism Model, UNDP, New Delhi

8. Ibid pg 3

9. Ibid pg 49-62

10. Purdah or Pardaa (literally meaning ‘curtain’) is the practice of preventing women from being seen by men. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pardah

11. EQUATIONS (September 2008), Review Report on Sustainability In Tourism: A Rural Tourism Model, UNDP, New Delhi, pg 44
Too many women in too many countries speak the same language of silence.

My grandmother was always silent -
always aggrieved —
only her husband had the cosmic right
(or so it was said) to speak and be heard.

They say it is different now
(after all, I am always vocal
and my grandmother thinks I talk too much).

But sometimes, I wonder.
When a woman gives her love,
as most women do, generously —
it is accepted.

When a woman shares her thoughts,
as some women do, graciously —
it is allowed.

When a woman fights for power,
as all women would like to,
quietly or loudly,
it is questioned.

And yet, there must be freedom -
if we are to speak.
And yes, there must be power —
if we are to be heard.

And when we have both (freedom and power),
let us not be misunderstood.

We seek only to give words
to those who cannot speak
(too many women in too many countries).

I seek only to forget the sorrows
of my grandmother’s silence.

By Anasuya Sengupta, Poet, Feminist and Activist
1. Introduction:
India’s richly diverse cultures, cuisines, and geography attract thousands of visitors annually, both domestic and foreign. The tourism industry is portrayed as one of the catalysts of development. Tourism consumes a variety of economic, social and physical resources, and also has environmental, social and economic impacts on local communities many of them extremely negative. Accompanying the growth of tourism has been a concomitant exploitation of natural resources and local people for the benefit of the industry. This paper examines the impact of the growth of tourism on Indian women, especially with regard to HIV/AIDS, based on secondary information sources in the public domain.

2. Women and Tourism in India:
Tourism has had a long and contested relationship with women. According to the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) the economic size of the tourism industry, its rate of growth, and its innovation and diversity can potentially empower women. However, the industry is as gendered as any other.

In most states, with increased privatisation, governments and the tourism industry are in the process of acquiring land, water bodies and forests to promote new hotels, resorts, adventure and wildlife tourism. Public commons such as beaches, waterfronts and forests are also being acquired, often without the consent of local communities and local self-governing institutions (e.g. the Panchayats). The tourism industry privatises these common resources and then grants access to locals at a price. These developments have displaced local communities, alienated them from traditional ways of life and forced them into other often more exploitative forms of livelihood.

Food production has also been adversely affected; this has increased the workload of women, children and the old in the community, who are generally entrusted with the duty of collecting the water and fodder required by the family. Local women have been hit hard by these changes, as they have almost no formal training or education. Hitherto self-reliant agricultural economies have become tourist-dependent units. In Kerala, losing the land has made traditional lifestyles untenable. Many women who used to earn their livelihoods in traditional agricultural production or fish vendoing have been forced to look for alternatives in the hospitality industry, as a result of the industry’s encroachment on local land and natural resources.

Tourism’s claims to be a massive employer of women also disputable. Men dominate the formal tourism sector, while most of the women working in the tourism industry are in the informal sector. Work for women in the tourism industry is mostly on a contractual basis and often has no minimum wage protection, legal benefits, social security, or mechanisms to redress grievances. There is a significant horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market in tourism. As in many other social spheres, women are largely absent from positions of decision-making. Consequently, employment opportunities for women tend to be in areas with lower social status in which they may be objectified, e.g. service provision (home stays, ayurvedic massage centres). In Kumarakom, young girls who used to work in paddy fields are now hired as young, beautiful, decorative icons holding traditional trays with lamps and flowers to welcome guests to hotels. Today, they feel that they will lose this opportunity if they go out to work in the sun, and are willing to sacrifice their traditional work for this seasonal job. Also the girls are happy to shift as it is hard work working in the fields for lower returns.

The tourism sector is also inherently seasonal, with a high labour turnover. Hotels in developing countries record a high fluctuation in their workforce. Seasonal tourism entails the seasonal arrival of migrants at tourist hubs, where they frequently end up in unknown environments with non-existent social networks. Most of them are in ill-paid positions that depend more on how presentable they are than on skills or training. Turning to commercial sex work in order to supplement incomes is not uncommon. This has been the case in Kerala, where it is observed that massage parlours are often a front for commercial sexual establishments.
Women in tourism are eroticised and discriminated against; one outcome of this has been the rise of sex tourism. Marketing strategies used by tour operators and agencies sexually objectify women in tourist destinations by portraying them as exotic, erotic and sexually available. These efforts reinforce notions of male virility, power and dominance, as well as conceptions of local women as submissive and passive.\(^8\)

In India, women’s status depends on a complex interplay of socio-cultural beliefs (dominantly patriarchy), access to income and education, and macro-level government policies. When all of these elements – alienation from traditional livelihoods and resources, patterns of employment, and socioeconomic status – come together it makes the position of women in tourism precarious indeed.

2.1 What is Sex Tourism?

“Sex Tourism” is defined by the UNWTO as trips organised from within the tourism sector or from outside this sector but using its structures and networks, with the primary purpose of effecting a commercial sexual relationship by tourists with residents of that destination. It is travelling for commercial sexual relationship or to engage in other sexual activity.\(^9\) Increasingly sex tourism involves non-residents particularly those trafficked for the purposes of sex tourism or migrants who are vulnerable and are exploited for sex tourism.

Tourism offers an environment conducive to the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of women. A key element is the anonymity and security of the perpetrators of sexual acts that the role of tourists provides. Stories from Nepal, Thailand or Sri Lanka link the influx of tourists with the demand for new commodities for entertainment as well as the expansion of sex tourism under the aegis of adventure tourism.\(^10\)

Governments avoid highlighting the evils associated with sex tourism, such as exploitation of local women and the spread of HIV/AIDS, as this might decrease overall tourist footfall and revenue. Consequently, tourists are virtually free from restraint and scrutiny; local governments and law enforcement agencies are all too willing to overlook illegal activities. The internet contributes to the growth of sex tourism by serving as a convenient channel through which potential sex tourists can gain access to information (e.g. where and how to find prostitutes, including child prostitutes, and at what prices).\(^11\) Today, sex tours can be booked online before the tourist even visits the country in question.

Rising tourist figures, ineffective/non-existent regulation in destination countries, lenient attitudes on the part of law enforcers towards tourists, and greater connectivity and anonymity spur the sex tourism trade on. A direct consequence of the expansion of sex tourism is the increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.\(^12\)

2.2 Sex Tourism in India:

In India, more and more women and children are being pushed into the sex trade\(^13\) with the numbers estimated to be around 3 million. India has “emerged as a source destination and transit country for human trafficking”.\(^14\) The flourishing sex trade is by traffickers who bring people in from other states and countries. The final destination for the vast majority of victims is the sex trade in its various manifestations, including commercial sexual exploitation, pornography and child sexual abuse. Trafficked women and children come from economically and socially vulnerable groups, and live in fear of pimps, clients and the police. They lack information, support systems and negotiation skills to protect themselves from AIDS by avoiding unsafe sex. Violence, disease and malnourishment are common features of their living conditions.\(^15\)

Goa, a popular tourist destination, is a case in point. A major trafficking site, commercial sex work in Goa has undergone a sea change with the “closing down” of the Baina red-light district in 2004.\(^16\) With this, the sex trade spilled over into the rest of the state, including massage parlours, hotels, lodges and rented rooms all over Goa. Frequenters of these massage parlours and hotels are significantly tourists, both domestic and foreign. The fallout of the demolition of Baina includes a reduction in the safety and welfare of sex workers. No longer within the confines of the brothels, they are more subject to rape by clients, and it is harder to reach them with HIV prevention information.
Sex tourism is present in other tourist hotspots too. In 2005 a female employee at an ayurvedic massage parlour in Kerala was allegedly set on fire after refusing sexual services to clients. Reports of increased “sex tourism” is also linked to the growth and popularity of houseboat tourism. Houseboats have worsened the situation, because they are relatively immune from police raids.

There is a complex interplay between sex tourism, poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS; as the most common cause for the spread of AIDS in India is unsafe sexual contact. This is a problem that needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency.

3. HIV/AIDS in India:
HIV or Human Immunodeficiency Virus is a virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS. AIDS is a condition that progressively weakens the immune system, leaving the body susceptible to infections and tumours. HIV is transmitted via several routes, including unprotected penetrative (vaginal/anal) and oral sex with an infected person. It is estimated that around 2.3 million Indians are currently living with HIV with an adult HIV prevalence rate of 0.34%. Women account for around one million people living with HIV/AIDS, or 39% of HIV infections.

India’s first cases of HIV were diagnosed among sex workers in Chennai in 1986. Most of these initial cases had occurred through sexual transmission, and it was noted that contact with foreign visitors had played a role in initial infections among sex workers. Following this, infection rates soared throughout the 1990s, by which time it was clear that HIV had spread to the general population. Today, despite being originally associated with sex workers and truck drivers, the epidemic affects all sectors of Indian society, including those classified as “low-risk” (e.g. housewives, wealthy members of society).

3.1 Women and AIDS in India:
Women as a social group are susceptible to AIDS for a variety of reasons, both biological and socio-economic. India has a long history of discrimination against its women, especially those from poorer, marginalised groups. Women have lower social status than men; accordingly, their health, education and welfare are not prioritised. Gender discrimination means that many girls are pushed into marriage before they complete their education. Coupled with poverty and restricted mobility, this curtails access to health services. Traditional gender roles confer little freedom and few decision-making powers upon women; therefore, even if they do have the correct information about AIDS, it is difficult if not impossible for them to negotiate behaviour change (such as condom usage and other forms of protected sex) with their husbands/partners. As a result, many married monogamous women are infected by their husbands who have multiple sexual partners, including sex workers.

Additionally, research suggests that an increase in HIV prevalence among women is related to intimate partner violence. In India, there is a prevailing culture of violence against women as a means of controlling them. Domestic abuse, rape, incest, assault and violence constitute risk factors that could expose women to HIV/AIDS. Finally, female physiology makes women more susceptible to HIV infection in any given heterosexual encounter. All of these factors are compounded in the case of sex workers.

3.2 Sex Tourism and AIDS:
Several factors are involved in the interplay between sex tourism and the spread of AIDS.

First, the atmosphere at most tourist destinations is conducive to carefree, uninhibited tourist behaviour. This can translate into risky sexual behaviour: many tourists are single, unaccompanied travellers who are temporarily away from home, family and regular sexual partners. Groups of young, single people travelling together are also likely to engage in sex while on holiday. An anonymous traveller is free from the societal norms that govern their behaviour back home. Loss of inhibition makes tourists more sexually adventurous, and they tend to underestimate the risks of engaging in unsafe sex. Another type of risky holiday behaviour is drug consumption, including alcohol consumption, which correlates with unsafe sexual behaviour.

Second, sex workers have little access to health-related information and even lesser to healthcare.
For instance, because of the thrust of AIDS prevention campaigns on vaginal sex, the very real dangers of anal and (to a lesser extent) oral sex is ignored. Misinformation is rife: some sex workers believe that they can tell whether a client has AIDS purely on the basis of physical appearance. What little knowledge sex workers do possess is often difficult to act on. For instance, many sex workers in Chennai are unable to carry condoms with them while soliciting. This is because soliciting is illegal, and being caught with condoms would amount to sufficient evidence for the police to charge them. Additionally, clients frequently refuse to use condoms and threaten to take their business elsewhere. For all these reasons, condom usage by sex workers and clients is erratic, at best. One study indicates that in Mysore, a popular tourist hub, only 20% of sex workers had always used condoms with commercial clients one month prior to the study.

Third is the manner in which tourist destinations are advertised. Destinations are often portrayed as having feminine characteristics; tourism promotional efforts invite (male) visitors to “explore” and “discover” wild, virgin lands. Communications take on sexual undertones; many images feature women’s attractive bodies as part of the landscape to be enjoyed by visitors. The exotic appeal of the land is inextricably linked with the sexual appeal of the local women. In this context of sexualised relations between male visitors (mostly) and female locals, sex is more likely, including unsafe sex.

The final crucial factor in the connection between AIDS and sex tourism is the poverty and marginalisation of local women. With the growth of tourism, local men and women have been displaced and alienated from traditional sources of income. This has led them to seek employment elsewhere, often within the tourist industry. Also men and women from other parts of the country have migrated to tourist hubs seeking work. The nature of their work means that these women, who have no local social support networks, come into contact with strangers on a daily basis. These strangers can include both locals and tourists (Indian and foreign). Social alienation and isolation makes women vulnerable to sexual advances by locals and tourists. Low income and general low status drive many into the commercial sex trade.

All these factors make it easy for the HIV/AIDS virus to spread unchecked among sex workers and clients at tourist destinations. Crucially, transmission is not exclusively from tourists to locals or from locals to tourists, but also from tourist regions to other parts of the country. Popular tourist centre Mysore in South India illustrates the link between sex tourism and AIDS. Sex workers in Mysore are heavily affected by the AIDS epidemic. Around 26% of them are living with HIV. This is unsurprising, given that only 14% (20%) of sex workers in the city use condoms consistently with clients, and 91% never use condoms during sex with their regular partners. In comparison, 80-90% of sex workers in Tamil Nadu state report condom use, which correlates with a relatively low HIV prevalence of 9%.

“The Social Assessment study commissioned for the NACP – III found tribals especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because of their sexual networking patterns, migration both into and out of their habitats, poor penetration of media and low level of awareness and lack of availability of health services in general and HIV/AIDs related services in particular. The study also found out that tourism, mining, displacement and other external influences increasing lured tribal women/girls into commercial sex work/trafficking.”

Trends in media reports also indicate the alarming nexus between the growth of current forms of tourism and the increase in HIV-AIDS. The annexure is a compilation of media articles making this link evident. The HIV/AIDS threat is clearly a grave one at tourist hotspots. Any policy seeking to resolve this complex situation must take into consideration these various elements.

4. Estimates of HIV Burden in India:

The total number of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) in India in 2007 is estimated to be 2.31 million (1.8 – 2.9 million). Females constitute around 39% of the burden (0.9 million). The highest number of PLHA is in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Maharashtra, with nearly half-a-million PLHA each. Besides Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, West Bengal, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are estimated to have higher burden of the epidemic with greater than 0.1 million PLHA in each of these states. The four South Indian states
contribute 60% of all PLHA in the country and along with West Bengal, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, they contribute 80% of PLHA in India. Though Manipur and Nagaland have the highest HIV prevalence in the country, due to small population size, the estimated number of PLHA in these two states is less than 25,000. The states of Kerala, Bihar and Rajasthan have more than 50,000 PLHA each though the HIV prevalence in these states is low.

The corresponding India Tourism Statistics for 2007 provides the percentage shares and ranks of various States/UTs in domestic and foreign tourist visits during 2007. The top 5 States in domestic tourist visits in 2007 were Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Rajasthan, with their respective shares being 24.3%, 22.1%, 13.3%, 7.2% and 4.9%. These 5 States accounted for about 72.0% of the total domestic tourist visits in the country. In respect of foreign tourist visits in 2007, the top 5 States/UTs were Delhi (15.3%), Maharashtra (14.6%), Tamil Nadu (13.3%) Uttar Pradesh (11.3%) and Rajasthan (10.6%), with the total share of these States/UTs being 65.1%. This trend has remained more or less unchanged in subsequent years.

Juxtaposing the HIV/AIDS figures of 2007 with that of the tourism statistics of 2007, many of the states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh with high number of PLHA are also the states that were front runners in receiving domestic and foreign tourists in the country. The only exception is Rajasthan. Though it had received quite high share of both domestic and foreign tourists, the HIV prevalence in the state is relatively low. Further study needs to be done to understand the inter-linkage between HIV/AIDS and tourism and to what extent is tourism responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS. With the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India and North Eastern Council putting emphasis on expanding tourism in the North Eastern Region there is cause for concern as these are also regions of high prevalence of HIV spread mostly through drug use and injectibles as well as sexual intercourse. Tourism policies need to take this reality into account.

5. Government Policy and Legislation:
How has the government responded to the challenge of HIV? In terms of infrastructure and institutional framework, in 1992 the government set up NACO (the National AIDS Control Organisation), to oversee the policy formation, prevention work and control programmes relating to HIV and AIDS. It also created autonomous, decentralised State AIDS Prevention and Control Societies (SACS) in 25 states and 7 union territories. Their functions include the provision of medical and public health services; provision of communication and social sector services; and administration, planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, finance and procurement.

5.1 HIV/AIDS and the Law:
The Fundamental Rights embodied in the Indian Constitution act as a guarantee that all Indian citizens enjoy rights such as equality before the law, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion, and the right to constitutional remedies for the protection of civil rights. In reality, however, the country still staggers under inequality practiced through untouchability, discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, gender and also for certain diseases like leprosy and Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome epidemic (AIDS).

In 2008, the Commission on AIDS in Asia released the report entitled - “Redefining AIDS in Asia”, a research on the epidemiological and economic dimensions of the HIV epidemic in Asia. While recognizing that discrimination and rights violations of marginalised groups are widespread, the Commission endorsed the rights based model that protects rights of people living with and at risk of HIV. It recommends “focused and scaled up interventions towards unprotected commercial sex, unprotected sex between men and the sharing of contaminated needles and syringes”, validating targeted interventions with most at risk populations under that National AIDS Control Programme in India.

The website of NACO states that it does not matter if an individual is affected or infected by HIV. “There
can be no valid or effective response to HIV/AIDS without respect for the human rights, fundamental freedom and the dignity of human beings.42

According to NACO, the three of the most important rights in the HIV scenario include:

- Right to informed consent
- Right to confidentiality and
- Right against discrimination

**Right to Informed Consent:**
The implications of HIV are very different from most other illnesses. The fear, stigma and discrimination that coexists with the HIV epidemic has raised several legal and ethical issues; testing for HIV and treatment for persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) being a key concern. Testing for HIV requires specific and informed consent of the person being tested and any research on data of HIV positive people. The principle of consent is based on the fundamental principle of autonomy of an individual, which has been recognised within the meaning of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Unlike countries like United Kingdom, USA, Canada and Australia, in India the concept of consent is not fully developed and references may be made to the principles laid down in the Indian Contract Act and the Indian Penal Code.

**Right to Confidentiality:**
A person has the right to keep information on HIV status confidential. The maintenance of confidentiality of an individual’s health status is one of the cornerstones of rights-based legal and public health responses to HIV/AIDS universally. The right to confidentiality rests on principles of autonomy and respect for privacy i.e. every person has the right to a sphere of activity and personal information that is exclusive to her/him and that s/he has the right to disclose as s/he pleases. This has been viewed as crucial in encouraging those most at risk to come forward for HIV testing, counselling and treatment.

Policies around the world, including India’s National AIDS Prevention and Control Policy, have come to recognise the protection of confidentiality as vital in their response to the epidemic. Though Indian Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to life and liberty, which has been interpreted to include the right to privacy, there has not been a clear statutory enunciation of confidentiality in India.

**Right against Discrimination:**
The right to be treated equally is a fundamental right whether it’s something as simple as using a public well or something more serious like denial of housing. One can seek remedy in a court of law if one is tested for HIV without informed consent, or the person’s confidentiality is breached, or any of the rights are violated.

**5.2 Legislative and Policy Developments:**
According to the Lawyers Collective HIV/AIDS Unit (LCHAU) the last two decades of HIV/AIDS programming has witnessed disruptions in efforts to prevent and control HIV among core groups. There has been discrimination against PLHAs in health, employment, education and families. The existing legal remedies have been ineffective and limited access to life saving drugs for people infected with HIV.

There has been growing demand for defined legal rights and duties to address the AIDS epidemic and the importance of an appropriate legal response. With many policy responses being shaped based on the debate about public health versus individual rights, the demand has been for a specific legislation that defines the legal rights and duties of those infected by HIV/AIDS and right of treatment for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

LCHAU was requested by Shri. Kapil Sibal, Member of Parliament and the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) to prepare a draft legislation on HIV/AIDS to be presented to the Parliament in April 2003. This initiative received commitment from the Indian government. The drafting of the Bill by LCHAU witnessed nationwide consultations by involving the learning from representatives of the various sectors that are impacted by the epidemic. The consultation feedback that LCHAU received
through various processes held at national and state level was then filtered and incorporated in the Draft Legislation. The Draft Bill was submitted to NACO in August 2005.

In October 2008, the Law Ministry, returned the Bill to NACO with changes. In its version, the Law Ministry deleted provisions like Access to Treatment and Risk Reduction, which form the core of the National AIDS Control Programme. Chapters on Discrimination, Confidentiality and Special Provisions for Women and Children were changed, undermining legal protection for people infected and affected by HIV. The Law Ministry has introduced measures termed as draconian by people working on the issue. The measures included mandatory testing, tracing and isolation of people infected or at risk of HIV and AIDS. Such measures are serious threat to the rights based model that the original Bill is premised upon. Such measures have over the years failed to prevent the spread of the disease. The National Coalition of HIV/AIDS, launched protests across the country opposing the proposals of the Law Ministry. The continuing demand is to retain the bill in its original form.

5.3 Important Developments through Judicial Pronouncements:

After seven long years of wait, in the writ petition challenging the constitutional validity of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the High Court of Delhi in 2009 held that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) violates Articles 21, 14, and 15 of the Constitution of India “insofar as it criminalizes consensual sexual acts between adults in private”. In Naz Foundation (India) Trust v. Government of NCT, Delhi and Others Writ Petition (Civil) No. 7455 of 2001 (Naz Foundation), the petitioners had argued that Section 377 is violative of the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights of men who have sex with men (MSM) including the right to life and liberty, health and privacy (Article 21), right to equality (Articles 14), the right not to be discriminated on the grounds of sex (Article 15), the right to freedom of expression (Article 19). Evident in both the petitioner’s argument and the Court’s judgment is Section 377’s deleterious effect on HIV/AIDS intervention and prevention in India. The Union of India’s position on this issue was internally inconsistent. The Minister of Home Affairs argued that the impugned provision was necessary for effective treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, while both the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) submitted affidavits that supported the petitioner’s contention to the contrary.

A landmark anti-discrimination case in the Bombay High Court that affirmed the rights of PLHAs in the workplace was MX v ZY AIR 1997 Bom 406 where MX, a casual labourer, was tested for HIV by his employer, ZY, a public sector corporation, prior to being regularised into a permanent position. MX tested positive for HIV, and though otherwise fit, was rejected from being regularised, and his contract was terminated. MX filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court, arguing that the company’s rules (mandatory HIV testing and denial of employment to positive people) and actions violated Articles 14 (Equality before the law), 16 (Equality of opportunity) and 21 (Right to life and personal liberty) of the Indian Constitution. The court ruled that:

- A government/public sector employer cannot deny employment or terminate the service of an HIV-positive employee solely because of their HIV-positive status, and any act of discrimination towards an employee on the basis of their HIV-positive status is a violation of Fundamental Rights.
- The services of HIV-positive employees can only be terminated if they pose a substantial risk of transmission to their co-employees or are unfit or unable to perform the essential functions of their job. Determining whether a person is unfit or incapable of performing their job must be made on the facts of each specific case by conducting an individual enquiry (beyond a mere diagnostic test).
- The court also held that an HIV-positive person can suppress their identity and use a pseudonym in the course of court proceedings in order to protect themselves from further discrimination.
Again in 2002 in the case Mr. Badan Singh v. Union of India & Anr44 the Delhi High Court held that a person living with HIV cannot be denied opportunity of employment merely on ground of his HIV+ status.

In July 2008, the Supreme Court dismissed the Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by the State of Andhra Pradesh (AP), against an order of the AP High Court directing the State to appoint an HIV positive Reserve Police Constable, as a stipendiary cadet Trainee Sub-Inspector. This affirms the right to employment of people living with HIV (PLHA) in jobs that require high fitness standards.45

In October 2008 the Supreme Court passed interim directions in the matter of Sankalp Rehabilitation Trust v. Union of India46 which brought to the attention of the court incidents of discrimination in public hospitals. On the direction of the Supreme Court a ‘19 point recommendation’ was formulated in conjunction with NACO (for the government), PLHA networks and the Lawyers Collective HIV/AIDS Unit. The directions seek to broadly ensure the right of PLHIV to universal access to healthcare.

5.4 The Interdepartmental Agreements in Dealing with the Epidemic:
According to the NACO website,47 there is an action plan to mainstream HIV/AIDS into a number of line departments and ministries. Following are details of such plans with regard to the Tourism ministry:

Altogether 31 Union ministries of the Government of India have mainstreamed HIV/AIDS prevention in their day-to-day functioning. Each of them has one dedicated HIV/AIDS unit with at least one focal person from staff. All have developed a situation assessment report and five-year HIV/AIDS action plan covering critical elements, including:

- Internal budgetary allocation for implementing HIV/AIDS action plan.
- Plan for HIV/AIDS unit.
- Identification of comparative advantage to the Department/Ministry in introducing the preventive interventions, and entry points for HIV interventions in the Ministry/Department’s work.
- Rights-based workplace policy: training and sensitisation of internal staff as a first step.
- Workplace interventions for care, support and treatment, including provision of commodities and services for HIV/AIDS infected or affected.
- Ongoing monitoring and feedback: reporting of core indicators to the National Council on AIDS.

In these activities and interventions of various ministries, NACO, State AIDS Control Societies and technical experts provide all support for setting up the HIV unit, developing reporting lines within department, reports, training/sensitising staff and developing workplace policy.

NACO maps and identifies priority organisations/government ministries that have direct or indirect relevance to the HIV and AIDS response (e.g. direct relevance - Railways, Steel as large employers; indirect relevance – Labour Ministry, Police Department for the statutory support they can provide to HIV/AIDS programmes). NACO has identified 13 focus government ministries, but these can vary according to the mapping in each state. All 13 union ministries have to achieve the objective of HIV prevention and control, and contribute to this by integrating HIV into their larger mission.

5.5 Ministry of Tourism:48
The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the formulation of national policies and programmes on tourism. The activities of its HIV cell as recommended by NACO are:

- Advocacy with representatives of hotel federations/2,141 hotel owners and ancillary industry.
- Incorporation of HIV/AIDS in the training programmes conducted by National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) and Institutes of Hotel Management.
- Workplace policies of all major establishments in this sector-Directorate General of Tourism,
20 India tourism offices within the country, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM).

- HIV messages on hoardings erected at all major Destination Development Projects (64), 20 rural tourism circuits.
- IEC⁴⁹ stalls at tourist fairs.
- Free space for installation of CVMs and IEC material at ITDC hotels and duty-free shops.
- Establishing condom vending machines (CVMs) at suitable wayside amenities, tourist arrival centres, reception centres and interpretation centres in the identified tourist circuits. These could be organised by the State AIDS Control Societies in coordination with the State Tourism Departments.
- An HIV/AIDS workplace programme for Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) and the Hotel Association of India (HAI).
- Encouraging the industry bodies to provide condoms, information about HIV in hotel rooms

However the Ministry of Tourism’s latest annual report and website indicates that these responsibilities do not seem to be on its radar, and that its focus seems to be the unfettered promotion of tourism. Whether the HIV cell even exists is not clear.

5.5.1 Implications of Government Policy:
The thrust of the programme detailed above by NACO is on information provision, as well as increasing access to condoms. These interventions are primarily targeted at tourists and relatively educated industry employees (e.g. those who come from accredited hospitality and management institutes) and must be seen as only the first step in starting to address this issue.

Sex workers, because of the stigmatised nature of their activities, have traditionally had restricted access to information as well as to healthcare services.⁵⁰ As mentioned earlier, pimps sometimes prevent sex workers from carrying condoms so that the police may not use that as evidence of brothel-keeping.⁵¹ Sex workers cannot rely on clients, who may refuse to use condoms and threaten to go to others who will agree to condom-free sex. Taking all these factors into consideration, it is evident that simply providing IEC stalls at tourist fairs and condom vending machines at tourist arrival centres is not going to benefit these women. Also, it is quite rare to see such stalls and machines anyway! The tourism industry attracts many relatively unqualified workers, including poor migrants and displaced people. Migrants, in fact, constitute a large section of the workforce.⁵² Inadequate methods of information provision (such as those proposed by the government) are unlikely to reach these low-status workers; yet it is migrant women who are most likely to enter the commercial sex trade in order to supplement low incomes.

Rupa Chinai, a writer with the Women’s International Perspective (a global source for women’s perspectives on news and world developments), suggests that marginalised people from low socioeconomic groups suffer disproportionately from AIDS.⁵³ Poorer people, once identified as HIV positive, reach AIDS and premature death much more rapidly than do members of other social groups. Chinai highlights the plight of commercial sex workers: ignorance coupled with unsanitary living conditions and little/no access to healthcare services makes brothels a breeding ground for AIDS. Sex workers also have little access to adequate nourishment, which Chinai suggests is vital to better health and longevity for HIV positive persons.

The invisibility of women in policy is endemic. The mainstreaming of gender in policy and funding has been on the agenda now for at least two decades, but despite persistent efforts of women’s groups and other civil society actors, results have been thin on the ground. The government has a duty to reach vulnerable groups, as there is clearly a link between poverty, marginalisation, disempowerment and vulnerability to HIV. It must formulate broad-ranging initiatives that reach those who have been dispossessed of land and livelihood, and denied
basic rights to food and education as a result of macro-economic pro-tourism government policies. Equally, the government must improve their access to incomes, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, and basic health services (thereby improving their general health). Unfortunately, these considerations do not figure in national HIV policy. The Tourism Section of the 11th Five Year Plan makes no mention of Tourism and HIV/AIDS and EQUATIONS critique of the plan points to this lacuna.

6. Recommendations:
The first step would be the Ministry of Tourism and state tourism departments to acknowledge the nexus between tourism and AIDS. With this, the Ministry of Tourism and the state tourism departments should work together to put in place defined and clear mechanisms to deal with the issue-building up the necessary support system and preventive mechanisms.

Poverty is the primary driver of sex work at tourist destinations. Many women employed by the tourist industry are underpaid. The UNWTO has recognised that the industry offers low pay and poor working conditions, with little or no job security for populations such as women and young people. The onus, therefore, is on the government to create what the ILO labels “decent work” for all, involving fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards; employment and income opportunities; social protection and social security; and social dialogue and tripartism. Macro-level policies need to be formulated that give Indian women access to better education, better employment opportunities and better living conditions. Low social status is inextricably linked to female poverty in India, the tourist industry being no exception. Gender discrimination must be weeded out in order to make this a more women-friendly space.

Thus policy prescriptions that merely emphasise safe sex and condom usage is more the first step and even a quick fix. A more systemic approach to policy is critical. Secondly, overemphasising condom usage neglects factors such as poverty that drive the sex trade. Efforts must be made to improve living and working conditions for poor women at tourist destinations, thereby restricting the numbers of women who find their way into the sex trade.

The tourism industry must improve working conditions for its employees, especially women. Minimum wage protection for all workers must be introduced, with remuneration that is enough for employees to subsist on. Women in the workforce should be encouraged to organise and campaign for better working conditions. Disadvantaged members of the workforce (women, indigenous people etc) must be given opportunities for training and skill development if they are to progress to higher-status work. All these measures, if properly implemented, will give women a sense of security and control over their lives, thereby curbing the numbers who join the sex trade.

The industry has a responsibility to actively discourage sexual contact between guests and employees/locals. Establishments such as hotels and bars need to both protect their employees from sexual harassment and proposition, as well as prevent them from actively seeking clients.

A useful starting point for a more responsible tourism industry might be the introduction of HIV/AIDS programmes for the workplace, as well as sector-specific regulatory mechanisms & codes of conduct. For instance, in the 1990s, the UNWTO, travel businesses, and the children’s rights organisation ECPAT developed the international Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism; today hundreds of businesses and associations in more than 23 countries have committed to it. Similar concrete standards of behaviour for tourist establishments must be set in consultation on HIV/AIDS and Tourism.

Both government and the tourist industry need to be responsible regarding destination promotion. The focus must be taken away from a sexualised image of women. Concerted efforts must be made to crack down on websites images and language used in tourist brochures that promote or appear to promote women as a sexual object. The obligation not to promote sex tourism is mentioned in the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics as well.
Policy level wide-ranging initiatives must reach the entire community, instead of superficial schemes that only provide information to certain segments of the population. High-risk groups must be reached - this means reaching sex workers, clients and migrant populations.

Public awareness of the need to regulate tourism must increase. Within the public domain, there should be a focus on the many negative impacts of tourism. The role of a vigilant press cannot be overemphasised; the alternative media (including productions of NGOs and civil society groups) play a particularly important part. Civil society groups, governments and law enforcement officials need to take cognisance of the problem of violence against women at tourist destinations. The public and the government must be sensitised to the need for change in approach to expansion of tourism at any cost.

Annexure:
Media Reports on the links between Tourism and HIV/AIDS in India and neighboring regions.

1. Andhra Pradesh

_Tirupati-Tirumala hills grapple with rising AIDS cases._ Shwetal Rai / CNN-IBN / 21st June 2008

Hyderabad: There has been a steep rise in the number of HIV/AIDS cases in one of India’s holiest Hindu pilgrimage sites, the Tirupati-Tirumala hills. Andhra Pradesh AIDS Control Society has found out that over 200 commercial sex workers operate in the area.

“We have come across this information through unofficial sources that there is commercial sex activity even in Tirumala. There are about 200-300 sex workers there,” Project Director, AP AIDS Control Society, K Chandravadan said. The discovery reveals that sex workers clandestinely operate in about 15 secluded spots in the hills.

Chittoor — another district known for its pilgrimage sites — has also been identified as a high-risk zone. Incidentally, smoking, drinking and non-vegetarian food are banned in the Tirupati-Tirumala hills. The temple authorities, however, have denied the findings.

“I disagree with the media reports. There are thousands of employees here who are sincere and dedicated. There is no scope for such scandals. We would never allow it,” Executive Officer, Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam, KV Ramanachary defended.

While the temple authorities are now in damage control mode, news of rampant prostitution has shocked devotees.

_Mega rally on AIDS awareness organized_
http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/02stories/2008120252530300.htm

Tirupati: The United Nations’ AIDS theme ‘Lead, empower, deliver’ was conveyed loud and clear to the public in the form of awareness campaigns, technical sessions and rallies in the city on Monday in connection with ‘World AIDS Day’. The Medical and Health Department conducted a mega awareness rally from SV High School. Speaking after flagging off the rally, SVIMS Director G. Subramanyam revealed that 14,248 of the 1.12 lakh persons tested till October-end in the district were found to be HIV-positive. Similarly, almost 2,000 of the 1.14 lakh pregnant women tested positive. Some 2,538 patients were undergoing Anti-Retroviral Therapy at the ART centre in Ruia Hospital and the figure included 1,368 men, 1,027 women, four transgender persons, 73 boys and 66 girls.

Additional DM&HO (AIDS and Leprosy) S. Nazeeruddin elaborated the activities of the care and rehabilitation centres at Yerpedu and Arogyavaram and the ‘Drop-in centre’ at Chittoor. He lauded the progressive thinking HIV+ persons for identifying fellow PLHAs (People Living with HIV/AIDS) and forming a group called Network Chittoor Positive People (NCP+).

Chittoor correspondent adds: The society should be compassionate towards those suffering from AIDS and not belittle them, Collector M. Ravi Chandra said as he flagged off a rally organised in connection with the World AIDS Day. [H]e cautioned people to be careful about AIDS and urged people to be sympathetic towards those affected.
Hyderabad: The incidence of HIV/AIDS is on the rise in tribal areas with an ever increasing number of women turning into commercial sex workers — a fallout of the expansion or rather, the invasion, of tourism and mining industries. According to a study conducted by the Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS) in 10 Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) areas in the State, about 1,973 of 67,500 tribals tested positive to HIV, as did 167 of 29,500 pregnant women.

“These tribals came to government hospitals and primary health centres (PHCs) voluntarily. We suspect there could be more number of affected tribals,” said APSACS project director RV Chandravadan. The study found that tourism, mining, consequent displacement and migration are the main factors that are forcing tribal women into commercial sex. Permissive sexual practices or polygamy among tribal communities and trafficking of tribal girls apart from unavailability of medical services are also being viewed as reasons for the spread of AIDS.

Officials also say that tribal girls are getting accustomed to posh-lifestyle and becoming sex workers to meet their needs. “We found that tribals are ignorant of HIV/AIDS. We are making efforts to educate them through a novel programme called ‘Giri Suraksha’. Awareness will be created among tribals through ‘kalajathas’ performed by trained tribals and education in tribal languages like Gondh,” said Chandravadan.

The Giri Suraksha project is a two-year action plan being launched by APSACS in association with the Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute (TCRTI) from June 15. The project will be funded by the Central Government and implemented at a cost of Rs 2.6 crore. The APSACS will use the services of traditional healers or unqualified practitioners to spread awareness on HIV/AIDS among tribals. A separate cell will be established in the Tribal Welfare department to take stock of programmes on a regular basis. The officials are also toying with the idea of promotion of use of condoms, especially among women, by distributing them through self-help groups and the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) outlets.

2. Pondicherry

Tourist Guards to Spread Awareness of HIV/AIDS. The Hindu – Online Edition / 19th September 2009

“Those who have direct interface with people should spread the message”

Puducherry: The Pondicherry AIDS Control Society (PACS) has roped in tourist guards and employees of the Tourism Department for spreading awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention.

A workshop on HIV/AIDS was conducted for the first of three batches of tourist guards, employees of the department and those of hotels run by the department on Friday. Forty persons attended it.

Alerting people

Inaugurating the workshop, Director of Tourism Mathew Samuel said that the first line of people of the department had been asked to alert and advises people on HIV/AIDS prevention. Those who had direct interface with people should spread the message.

Project Director of PACS Gilbert Fernandez said that information on the basic concept of HIV/AIDS, prevention, facilities available for testing and measures taken by PACS to control HIV/AIDS were imparted to the participants.

“The tourist guards and staff meet many persons from various parts of the world. They can impart information regarding HIV/AIDS prevention in case they find any person with deviant behaviour,” he said. PACS had conducted similar workshops for prisoners. Around 700 anganwadi workers were also trained. Welfare Inspectors and officers of the Social Welfare Department, Department of Women
and Child Development and Adi Dravidar Welfare Department will also be trained.

3. Goa

Goa AIDS body, hotels in pact for awareness
Business Standard / Panaji / 23rd February 2006

The hospitality industry in Goa, the Goa State AIDS Control Society (GSACS) has joined hands with International Labour Organisation (ILO) to spread awareness about HIV/ AIDS among workers in the hospitality sector.

“There is a crucial connection between the spread of AIDS and the tourism industry. It is necessary that the tourism industry reach out and spread awareness about it,” said U K Vohra, health secretary of the state.

He said the state is recognised as a prime tourist destination worldwide and there is an urgent need to educate people in the hospitality sector. Goa receives over 25 lakh tourists, both domestic and international, every year. Besides, there are more than 18,000 small and big hotel establishments across the state.

Over 15,000 people are working in the hospitality industry in the state, who are vulnerable to the dreaded disease, according to HIV/ AIDS expert Afsar Mohd, national project director of ILO. “This is an extraordinary problem and it needs extraordinary attention,” he added.

Deputy Chief Minister Wilfred de Souza said there is a need to promote responsible tourism. “We need to protect the industry from this disease through various HIV/ AIDS prevention programmes. We should also see that Goa remains a tourist destination without the threat of HIV/ AIDS,” said de Souza, who is also the tourism minister.

According to Charles Bonifacio, president of Travel and Tourism Association, all hotels should start organising HIV/ AIDS prevention programmes to educate their staff members.

The expanding red light district An open Pandora’s box
TNN, Jun 10, 2009, 04.35am IST

From massage parlours to fishing trawlers, highways to starred hotels, migrants to Goan girls, after the tearing down of Baina’s red light area, trafficking in Goa has undergone a sea change, reports Preetu Nair:

- In the last three raids on massage parlours in Porvorim, Mapusa and Arpora, police rescued four Goans. The girls had joined the parlours for “better pay” and “a better future”.

- Sudha, 16, a school dropout from Sanvordem wanted fancy mobiles, money to spend on clothes, food and friends. Traffickers would lure her with the promise of a mobile phone every night for several months. She was later rescued from a hotel in Margao and the traffickers arrested.

- Three young girls - Kannadiga, Manipuri and Goan were recently rescued from a massage parlour in Vagator. They were lured with the promise of “good money” and “promotion” after a year. The promotion included training in beauty treatment and a near doubling of salary to between Rs 8,000 and Rs 10,000.

Five years after bulldozers razed Baina’s red light area in the state’s port town of Vasco, the mode and form of trafficking has changed.

Baina’s dingy rooms have given way to fancy cubicles in massage parlours and air-conditioned rooms in starred hotels. Taxi drivers and motorcycle pilots as contact points have made way for waiters, chai boys and beach hawkers. The modus operandi too has adapted to the needs of the solicitors and the solicited.

Perhaps the biggest change, however, point out police and NGO sources, are the finding of local girls among those rescued.

“Goan girls are being lured, often by Goan women, with the promise of easy money and the belief that they can lead a comfortable life with less
hardwork,” says Auda Viegas, president, Bailancho Ekvott and member of the State Protective Home that looks after rescued trafficking victims.

With the contact point shifting from the cramped lanes in Baina to just about everywhere: beaches, parlours, hotels, lodges, bars, restaurants, streets, markets, even fishing trawlers, the modus operandi nowadays is to pre-arrange a meeting point for the customer and the girl. Alternatively, women are also sent to certain areas to directly solicit, finds a study by Baina-based NGO, Arz.

The 2007-08 study, whose findings will be released soon, focused on Goa’s prostitution phenomenon after the demolition of Baina and the closure of dance bars in Mumbai. Information was collected by talking to sex workers, pimps, legislators, government authorities, hoteliers etc. The study reports that nowadays, it is not uncommon to find girls, including foreigners, soliciting on beaches, bars, restaurants, shacks and even at tourist bazaars.

Another common meeting point are night clubs where couple entry is the rule. Some girls solicit around major crossroads, traffic circles, junctions, gardens and bus stands. In Margao, Colva and other parts of Salcete taluka, women are seen soliciting on the roads, municipal garden and bus stands. Most are migrants settled in Goa, reports the study.

“After the demolition in Baina, prostitution has spread all over the state,” says Dr Pramod Salgaonkar, chairperson, Goa State Commission for Women. “While middle-budget prostitution is flourishing in the tourist belt in the form of massage parlours, prostitution along highways, hotels and houses is also on the increase,” she adds.

Arun Pandey of Arz, says, “The Baina demolition has led to an escalation in highway prostitution, prostitution in isolated places like jungles and prostitution in vehicles (private four wheelers).”

“There is an increased vulnerability of women and children in prostitution to forced sex acts and rapes. Clients would not be able to film prostituted women and children or have group sex in a brothel. Now this is possible,” he adds.

Goa police’s public information officer SP AV Deshpande calls it “old wine in a new bottle”. “The business is the same. But girls are now better educated and pimps are using the latest technology to operate and attract high paying clients. The business has become more sophisticated.” Moreover, new destination points for trafficking in Goa and in neighboring states have developed, he says.

As for local girls entering the trade, Dr Pramod Salgaonkar shrugs off the matter, “There are few Goan girls who are misguided and pushed into prostitution. But the number is minuscule.”

Auda Viegas, emphasizes, “We have to get out of denial mode and accept that in the changing scenario our Goan girls are also being lured into commercial sex work and in most cases by Goan women. It’s the lure of easy money and a false belief that it’s an easy life.”

(Names of trafficked victims changed)

**The supply chain**

**Air**
Upper class commercial sex workers and their clients prefer to fly into Goa. Prior to meeting, customers choose from photos shown on mobile phones by agents. The agent then makes the deal with the girl and the amount charged can go up to Rs 1 lakh per night. A part of the payment is made in advance and is immediately verified at the nearest ATM. One-way air fare is paid by the middle man who can earn as much as Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 in one deal. Hotels are avoided and girls are taken to bungalows or flats.

**Train**
Girls brought into Goa by train, mostly alight at Thivim and Vasco stations from where they are picked up and taken to flats. They are supplied as per demand.

**Bus**
Girls brought into Goa by bus get down at Mapusa, Panaji, Margao, Ponda or Bicholim bus terminii. They are then taken to other destinations by pimps.
**Private vehicles**
While trafficking via private vehicles, a “manager” accompanies the girls who are then handed over to the relevant person in Goa. The manager gets “good luck” money—a cash incentive that can go up to Rs 5,000 per girl. The girls are received at specific places, mostly in Mapusa and Panaji.

In such deals, the girls are taken on a “contract” basis of about Rs 25,000 for 15 days. Each girl has to entertain 8 to 12 customers per day. If a customer complains, the girl faces a financial “penalty” of up to Rs 5,000 or more.

- Information from study: Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Goa’ by Baina-based NGO, ARZ

**Massage parlours**
Place: Mostly in the coastal belt

Operate from: Stalls erected behind beach shacks, hotels, lodges and rented houses. While some are high-class massage/beauty parlours, others operate from dingy rooms. There are registered as well as unregistered parlours that traffic. A security guard at most places facilitates entry into the parlour.

CSWs: From Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nepal. Of late, Goan girls have also been found working in such parlours.

Customers: Domestic, foreign tourists, even local youngsters have been found visiting those located in Bardez taluka.

**Rented Rooms**
Place: CSWs are kept in rented rooms and houses in villages.

CSWs: Predominantly from Maharashtra (mainly Mumbai, Pune and Sawantwadi), Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nepal. Young, smart, modern, fashionable and Hindi-speaking girls are preferred.

Modus operandi: The girls are accommodated at the hotel or in a nearby rented house. After agents fix a deal with customers, the girls are made available. Those put up in rented premises are contacted over their mobiles and picked up from their residences.

Agents in hotels and lodges also contact girls who openly solicit in markets and beaches. On receiving the details, the girl proceeds to the hotel/lodge.

In another variant, in Bardez taluka rooms are rented to girls on an hourly basis.

Some hotel managers also have contacts with CSWs from other states in order to meet demand. If the girl does not have money to travel, she is instructed to board a particular bus where the ticket is paid for directly at the travel agency by the hotel manager. She disembarks at the said destination and is taken directly to the hotel.

Customers: Domestic and foreign tourists

**Modus operandi:** Customers do not approach massage/beauty parlours directly. They are solicited by mostly young boys. After soliciting, the customers (either alone or in groups of 2-4) are brought to the parlour via private or commercial vehicles. In a majority of cases, vans are used to transport the solicited customers.

Price: Varies from Rs 2,500 to Rs 25,000

- Information from study: Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Goa’ by Baina-based NGO, ARZ

**Hotels & lodges**
Place: Almost everywhere in Goa

CSWs: Predominantly from Maharashtra (mainly Mumbai, Pune and Sawantwadi), Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nepal. Young, smart, modern, fashionable and Hindi-speaking girls are preferred.

Modus operandi: The girls are accommodated at the hotel or in a nearby rented house. After agents fix a deal with customers, the girls are made available. Those put up in rented premises are contacted over their mobiles and picked up from their residences.

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Customers: Domestic and foreign tourists
**Fishing trawlers**  
Place: Fishing jetties and nearby market areas. Though entry into fishing jetties is restricted, the girls are permitted.

CSWs: Mostly from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Modus operandi: Soliciting is done by the CSW herself. The room is often a trawler anchored a distance away from the jetty.

Though cash is paid, in many cases the girl gets fish or prawns which she later sells.

Customers: Migrants from Kerala, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, who work on contract basis with trawler owners.

**Brothels**  
Place: Baina, Vasco

Modus operandi: Customers are solicited by motorcycle pilots and taxi drivers at bus stands, railway stations, markets, gardens and brought to Baina beach.

Here, a deal is made with the madam’ (brothel owner) and once finalized the girl is sent with the customer to a nearby, pre-determined room.

The amount paid is shared by the pimp, room owner, madam and the CSW. At times, the CSW is forced to solicit customers herself.

**Isolated places**  
Place: Prime areas include the KTC bus stand, Municipal garden, Railway bridge and railway station in Vasco city. Also Sada, Bogda, the Japanese garden, Kharewada, Birla, Ziai Nagar, Verna industrial estate, Kelsim and Thane and Cortalim.

CSWs: Mostly those displaced after the demolition of the red light area in Baina.

Modus operandi: CSWs solicit customers on the roads and take them to nearby hotels, lodges or thickly forested areas.

**Highways**  
Place: Highways passing through some of the state’s interior talukas. Mostly in highly industrial and mining areas.

CSWs: Mostly from migrant populations settled in slums or rented houses.

Modus operandi: CSWs solicit at different locations along the highways. The customer is taken to a room or the girl travels to another location in the latter’s vehicle.

Customers: Mostly truck drivers and helpers.

4. **Himachal Pradesh**

**Tourism Boom makes Himachalis Vulnerable to AIDS.**  
Pratibha Chauhan, Tribune News Service / Shimla / 7th December 2004  

A booming tourism industry may be the top priority of the state government but with over 88,000 high risk population in the state as per the mapping done to assess the vulnerability to AIDS, stringent steps will have to be undertaken to contain the spread of the killer disease.

Almost 88,036 persons in the state have been found to be vulnerable to the killer disease AIDS in a survey conducted by the ORG Centre for Social Research. The survey was done to assess the high-risk population so that effective strategies could be evolved for target intervention projects. The survey covered all rural and urban areas in all districts barring Lahaul Spiti.

A recent report had alerted that though Himachal fell in the category of low prevalence state but with a spurt in the tourist inflow, it was highly vulnerable to the disease. One of the main reasons being attributed to such a huge high risk population in a tiny state like Himachal is the growing tourism industry which beckons people from every section and part of the country.

A startling factor, which has come to light in the survey, is the presence of large number of non-brothel based commercial sex workers operating through mobile network. The number of such
female sex workers has been found to be the highest in Shimla and Kullu, as the two places are the most popular tourist centres. These commercial sex workers are not confined to any geographical boundary as they have high inter-city and inter-state mobility.

The other vulnerable group includes truckers (33,303), migrant workers (52,298) and very small numbers of intravenous drug users and gays.

The largest concentration of high-risk behaviour group of truckers has been found in the districts of Bilaspur, Solan, Mandi and Kangra. The maximum number of migrant work force has been found in districts of Kullu, Shimla and Solan, mainly because of the orchards and vegetable farming.

5. Neighboring Regions

Resurgent tourism growth sparks female HIV/AIDS infections. E Turbo News / 02nd Feb 2008

After the reeling effects of a 11 year old civil conflict which nearly saw the death of Nepal’s tourism industry, the country in 2008 is quickly surging back to become the world’s number one adventure tourism destination with a robust cumulative 33% growth rate compared to last year, a 24% increase in air arrivals in January 2008, and a multitude of services offered to the tourists. Along with the new tourist figures, the rate of Nepalese women lured into the commercial sex trade has also increased four fold with a mushrooming of massage parlors, upscale smoking and sex-entertainment bars, haute cuisine restaurants and mushrooming comfort lodges in Thamel, Freak Street and the Durbar Marg areas which all have one common aim—cash in on the sex tourism fueled by the easy availability of surplus foreign currency due to Nepal’s burgeoning tourism figures.

Nepal’s enduring Hindu-Buddhist charm of alluring myths and mysticisms still exist. However they only seem to be providing a cover up to the hidden realities of a rising HIV/AIDS threat involving female commercial sex workers who are increasingly attracted by the new tourism boom in Nepal.

In the past two years, the majority of foreign tourists coming to Nepal were from Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, US, and neighboring Asian countries such as India, China, Thailand, South Korea and Japan which continue supplying a younger crowd willing to try out new adventure tourism ‘experiments’. Foreign tourists pay between US$ 8-10 for a typical massage session in Kathmandu, which is relatively cheap compared to Thailand or the Philippines although the risks of catching HIV/AIDS through unsafe sexual practice are quite high.

Sarala is one of those girls who works in a massage parlor in Thamel, Her name might be typically Nepalese sounding and there might be hundreds of Saralas around in Thamel, but her life is a bit estranged, one mired in absolute poverty, dejection and with no way out except to work in a forced occupation catering to hundreds of sex tourism clients each month. Sarala’s parents came to Kathmandu around 1999 from Surkhet, about 350 kilometers west, displaced by the civil conflict, and having to resort to staying with different relatives in the absence of a proper family, job, and housing, all which are vital to daily subsistence survival in Kathmandu.

Sarala was lured into the lucrative commercial sex business in Thamel by her own aunt, who was also working in a nearby Thamel restaurant as a waitress and was contacted by a middleman who offered to pay her US$ 50 for arranging the deal. Sarala at first hesitated in knowing what she was getting into, but due to the poverty in the family, and the sheer need for sustaining her parents, brothers and sisters livelihood, resorted to this lowly form of work. Sarala recently went to an HIV/AIDS Voluntary Counseling and Testing Center indirectly operated by an American INGO, and after routine testing, was certified as being HIV/AIDS free. However, she is not sure how long she will stay that way, since she comes into contact with four to seven clients daily, most of whom who choose to have unprotected sex.

Nepal makes annually between US$ 450 to US$ 600 million through adventure and pleasure tourism. The sparring 4 x 4 luxury sports vehicles dotting Kathmandu’s over congested, honking traffic lanes testify to that income generation. The
tourists who visit Kathmandu on average spend five and a half days while those going to the more exotic Himalayan trekking routes spend up to three weeks. Many massage parlor girls have also recently graduated on to become trekking escorts thus further spiraling the HIV/AIDS infection chain. There are also an increasing number of Nepalese female trekking guides, well educated professional women with proper trail experience who command between US$ 200-300 a week for their services in a good season.

Many of them come from the traditional Sherpa, Rai, Gurung and other ethnic populations along the trails that used to be the number one recruitment source for various mountaineering expeditions, which these days increasingly recruit Kathmandu based TAAN certified guides. The women trekking guides do not work the same way as the female trekking escorts, but are equally tempted to cater to their varying clients needs based on the amount they are paid.

HIV/AIDS has quickly become an unwanted guest in Nepal’s booming tourist market and the Nepal Government is still studying the effects than the causal factors. The Nepal Government has not so far attempted to study the hidden implications of the increased feminization of the HIV/AIDS rates in Nepal’s booming tourism sector. After all it is understaffed and government officials cater only to the big money spenders which comes by way of hefty commissions in renewing the licenses of the 300 or so local and international trekking and adventure tourism companies that have made Nepal their permanent base, some even operating under international tax loopholes and not giving a ear to the environmental regulations that usually regulate the existence of such companies in the US, the UK, Japan or Australia.

According to Nepalnews.com, Nepal’s number one e-gateway portal which also hosts the majority of Nepal’s top newspapers, e-tourism links, TV and business channels, in 2008 compared to a year earlier, the number of tourists from India declined by 12.2 percent and from Sri Lanka by 12.5 percent. However, there was an upward surge in tourism figures from other countries within South Asia by up to 7 percent. From Europe and the US it was 33.1% and 34.3% respectively, from China 96.8 percent, South Korea 5.1 percent, Thailand 23.2%, and Malaysia 12.1%. The Korean market, thanks largely to the introduction of direct flights by Korean Air to Kathmandu contributed to nearly 15.3 percent of the total market. European markets too have shown positive growth mainly from France 78.5 percent, Germany 4.5 percent, Spain 28.5 percent, and Netherlands 36.5 %. The international tourists are also spending more on average US$ 850 per week staying longer and enjoying Kathmandu’s sights and sounds more given the city’s quick cosmopolitan turn around in the past two decades. Western tourism entrepreneurs are also showing increased consumer confidence towards Nepal as a long term easy profit destination. The other advantage of course is the comforting existence of China and India, the world’s two largest growing economies, straddling the Nepalese borders north and south, and offering sponge like economic booster doses whenever the Nepalese government faces budget expenditure shortfalls. The country’s political situation is in total chaos with the promises of a Constituent Assembly poll which has already been deferred thrice and the resulting cat and dog fight between the seven major parties politicians all topped up with a lame duck septuagenarian prime minister who is ill and bed ridden most of the times. There is hardly any HIV/AIDS mainstreaming thinking among Nepal’s politicians let alone understanding of the deep rooted social discrimination against Nepalese women which harbors the HIV infections.

For the majority of the tourists who cannot afford the luxury of staying in Nepal’s exotically famed Soaltee Holiday Crowne Plaza, Yak and Yeti or that old legendary party venue of yesteryears, the Hotel de l’ Annapurna, Thamel is a cheaper alternative accommodation way point. Thamel is also described as the craziest and most affordable per square kilometer adventure fun destination in the entire world, according to the Lonely Planet guide.

Thamel incidentally, is where young girls like Sarala work and spend their days and weeks toiling for a simple income for their family working as massage parlor girls. A varying number of Thamel tourists are prey to the commercial sex tourism entrepreneurs from around the world who have made Kathmandu their new customer baiting spot. Everything
is affordable in Kathmandu, everything can be arranged, and everything is accessible whether it is a Kathmandu green hash stick, Korean gin seng tea laced with drugs, or alternatively the world’s best six layered San Francisco pizza containing the wildest Himalayan herbs imaginable!

According to Jose, who declines to identify his country of origin, and how long he has been in Thamel, there are big bucks to be made in the sex tourism industry in Nepal. Girls can be procured for as little as US$ 60 a month and clients charged up to US$ 100 per night. Getting a work permit in Nepal is cake, immigration is bribable. He displays a cell phone which reads like a “who’s who?” off all the pimps around Thamel, the lower class, Freak Street areas, and one can guess, the rest of Nepal. Jose usually mixes around with the elite tourists in Durbar Marg, offering them free beers in exchange for a discreet card which has only a few local cell numbers, but appear all too enticing for those visiting Nepal, not to ignore for the sheer heck of it in having a night out with a local woman. Sarala’s story might be unknown to them, but this is where the sad connection starts unfurling, evident in the feminization of HIV/AIDS figures for Nepal, the innocent tourist out spot where the vanquished Nepali commercial sex workers all females, are exploited to the full monetarily and physically.

Walking through Thamel is like walking through a gizmo of snakes and ladders, dodging the drug dealers, the crazy bicyclists who might grab your bag if you are not careful, fellow obnoxious travelers, some high on hashish, the street magicians and snake charmers all rolled into one, the miracle astrologer forecasting your good Karma behind and your bad days ahead unless you bought off him a US$ 50 amulet, and the road side flute player enticing you with a Bob Dylan tune. Amidst this Eastern charm mixed with Western adventurism, reminiscent of a temple scene in Seven Years in Tibet, Thamel has within its hidden gullies anywhere between 200-350 massage parlors and sex joints.

Thamel area itself is only around two square kilometers but it could take you at least a week to discover it properly. Tourists did not deny visiting these hidden massage parlors ten years back, but in coming back to Kathmandu for the umpteenth time. They are now alarmed to see Nepali commercial sex traders and their foreign counterparts openly boasting their connections with young petite Nepalese women wearing flashy saris, enticing the tourists from second floor windows at every street corner, along with others working in the mushrooming cabin restaurant business meant for Nepalis and foreigners alike (akin to a sleazy Patpong joint from Thailand). Thamel also abounds with nude dance clubs, a wide array of curio shops, drug packers, and exotic restaurants that serve some of the world’s most authentic haute cuisine assortments. The Thamel Tourism Board founded by leading Thamel tourism entrepreneurs Karna Shakya and Yogendra Shakya from the famed Kathamndu Guest House, and Tejendra Shrestha, a major restaurant chain owner, is now converted into the Thamel Tourism Development Council, which only recently introduced a new ban on vehicular traffic plying along its narrow gully roads. However this has allowed unfettered human traffic to replace it. This is good news for the Thamel entrepreneurs because more humans mean more business, more customers too for the massage parlor joints, according to Jose.

Thamel indeed serves as the capital of Nepal’s commercial sex tourism. Every year nearly 6,000 Nepalese women are lured into Nepal’s commercial sex industry here, thereby slowly entering the rest of Kathmandu, Nepal and rest of the world. If the girl’s Karma is good, as Sarala reckons, she might even marry a foreign husband and be able to leave the Nepalese misery and poverty behind for good. However, most operating within the Nepali commercial sex trade are part of a global racket that also includes cross-border human traffickers working across many Asian borders, often forcing the girls into dangerous, dirty and unwanted jobs.

Additionally every year 8,000 to 10,000 Nepalese women are innocently enticed into the Indian commercial sex market with the promise of jobs and later on forced into commercial sex occupation in Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and New Delhi. These Nepalese women hardly get any income, their life is one of bondage and servitude to one of the numerous Indian havelis (brothel houses), their names are changed and soon they will lose their cultural identity as well. The families too are left
behind in total hopelessness and anxiety, the only remaining legacy being hope that they will come back one day soon.

And, besides, another 40,000 Nepalese women are going abroad by air each year mostly filling unskilled labor quotas in South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Palestine and Jordan as house maids and female domestic workers. Nepal’s labor market in certain destinations such as the UAE, Qatar, Malaysia and South Korea are now legalized, thus somewhat helping to stem the flow of unskilled, illegal workers, but this does not stop the flow of globally trafficked Nepalese women lured into commercial sex work elsewhere.

Many of these Nepalese girls are quickly exploited on the job, and the average money they repatriate back home every month is only around US$ 300-350, which is still a large sum of money in Nepal, one of the poorest countries in the world. Sarala only wishes that she could be one of them going abroad to work, on a huge jet airplane, instead of leading this abject life in Nepal where she has to toil day and night selling her body for her family’s survival. A massage parlor girl in Nepal makes through her bonded labor only around one twentieth the actual amounts the business owner makes in hiring her, which is not enough for her family to survive. Many like Sarala thus have to take side employment as cabin restaurant attendants, bar singers, dancers and dish washers in other neighboring tea stalls.

The Nepal Government does not seem to have sufficient regulations to control the burgeoning commercial sex tourism in Thamel and other sprouting locations around Kathmandu. The police officers often are in cahoots with the commercial sex operators charging hefty commissions to turn their heads the other way round. Many media stories have appeared in Nepal and the American media on this nexus between some corrupt Nepalese police officials and the commercial sex tourism operators, but at the moment, no one is able to do anything in the absence of a legitimate national government in Nepal.

In fact, the entire 28 kilometer Ring Road around Kathmandu is surrounded by sleazy cabin restaurants and sex joints full of young innocent girls like Sarala enticed into commercial sex work in the promise of better work. There is a known strong nexus and interchange in the placement of the girls working in Thamel and those operating around the periphery of Kathmandu, since the business operators usually happen to be running half a dozen massage parlors within the valley at any given time, constantly shifting their base of operations. This, in turn, leads to an unchecked migration of HIV/AIDS carriers spreading infections further among the younger, vulnerable population aged between 19-39 years.

In the past 15 years, the American government through USAID has been doing notable work, leading an aggressive drive against HIV/AIDS spread in Nepal. America in fact is the lead donor country trying to stop the further spread of HIV/AIDS in Nepal and has been seriously investigating the plight of sex workers and also trying to educate clients on the concept of safer sex and possible abstinence.

Although HIV/AIDS in the general population is low in Nepal, estimated at less than 0.7 percent of the general population, it poses a concentric threat in Thamel (as much as 18% among commercial sex workers) making it imperative that stronger behavior change interventions be introduced rapidly. The Nepal Government, as early as 1992, introduced the first medium-term plan for AIDS prevention and control which was implemented with gusto, but lacked the built-in multi sector linkages such as the tourism growth connection. In fact, screening blood samples, surveillance, generation of sentinel information and data, education and communication materials development for the general public and high risk groups were all initiated with American funding in the past decade. But this has not helped blot out a high risk of infection, the orderly distribution and promotion of condoms, case treatment of STIs, counseling those at risk and those already infected with HIV, and spreading the gospel of HIV/AIDS prevention among the general youth population which seems to be a bit careless in the use of condoms.

Nevertheless, despite these global obstacles created by the surge of Nepalese tourism, the American government through USAID has been
working with its European partners and the UN trying to prevent the trafficking of Nepalese women to India, fostering local capacity building among Nepalese NGOs, promoting safe condom use, and increasing the capacity of locally run community based organizations to tackle the problem head-on. However, in Thamel there are increasing numbers of injecting drug users, and seasonal and long term migrant women who also come for some extra money which makes it difficult to deny the long term inter linkages between HIV/AIDS and how it affects now grown-up women such as Sarala who have seen it all first hand, and would choose to lead a different life. Some of Sarala’s best friends have died due to AIDS related illnesses.

According to Nepal’s health experts, this all makes it a difficult and complex task in further reducing the feminization of HIV/ AIDS in Nepal due to the increasing number of sex tourism operators from the Asian region who finds Thamel in Kathmandu valley too attractive to simply ignore for their flourishing business. The big question is: when will the Nepal Government wake up to the threat of HIV/AIDS threatening its women population as a result of the tourism boom, before it gets too late.

Endnotes:

* The research on this paper has had several people contributing to it. Cynthia Stephen, Independent Researcher, Writer and Policy Analyst wrote the initial draft. S Vidya and Ananya Dasgupta of EQUATIONS and Shirin Bhandari interning with EQUATIONS worked on it subsequently to bring it to this version.


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24. NACO (http://www.nacoonline.org/Quick_Links/Women/)


27. AIDS Brief for Sectoral Planners & Managers Tourism Sector, funded by USAID (http://www.ispusida.org.mz/por/content/download/586/2965/file/Hiv-aids_4_Tourism_Sector.pdf)


29. AIDS Brief for Sectoral Planners & Managers Tourism Sector, funded by USAID (http://www.ispusida.org.mz/por/content/download/586/2965/file/Hiv-aids_4_Tourism_Sector.pdf)


32. Avert Society (http://www.avert.org/hiv-india.htm)

33. Special Meeting of Women Ministers of Culture, Reykjavik 2005 (http://womenministers.government.is/Programme/hr/3269)

34. 5th UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics, March-April 2009 (http://www.unwto.org/statistics/bali/findings_statement.pdf)

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36. Ibid


38. Table 5.1, India Tourism Statistics 2007, Government of India, Ministry of Tourism, Market Research Division (http://tourism.gov.in/)


40. For this section the researcher has depended on the research undertaken by National AIDS Control Organisation (http://www.nacoonline.org/Quick_Links/Know_Your_Rights/) and HIV/AIDS unit of Lawyers Collective (http://www.lawyerscollective.org/hiv-aids/activities/advocacy/issues-consent)

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46. [W.P. (C) No. 512 of 1999]

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51. Ibid

52. 5th UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics, March-April 2009 (http://www.unwto.org/statistics/bali/findings_statement.pdf)


57. The Code of Conduct (http://www.thecode.org/index.php?page=1_1)

58. UNWTO (http://www.unwto.org/code_ethics/pdf/languages/Codigo20Etico20Ing.pdf)
Safe and Honourable Tourism:

To leverage the burgeoning global travel and trade and in keeping with the Indian tourism industry’s objective of positioning India as a global tourism brand, the Ministry of Tourism has strategically outlined in its policy the central principle of, ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ (Guest is God). In stating this, is evident the commitment of Indian tourism to ensure that every tourist in India is physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated, culturally enriched and spiritually elevated.

To meet this objective and at the core of the National tourism policy of 2002 is outlined the seven pillars of tourism, Swagat (Welcome), Soochana (Information), Suvidha (Facilitation), Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Cooperation), Samrachanam (Infrastructure Development) and Safai (cleanliness).

‘Safe and Honourable Tourism’ aims to strengthen the critical pillar of ‘Suraksha’ (Safety) and ensure that Indian tourism follows international standards of safe tourism practices, applicable for both tourists and local residents i.e local people and communities who may be impacted by tourism in some way. Its central objective is to ensure that tourism activities are undertaken, integrating the need to protect the dignity, safety and the right to freedom from exploitation of all tourists and local residents involved in or impacted by tourism. In today’s scenario, following safety guidelines is not just about adhering to the provisions of the seven pillars but also implies good business. As the demand from travellers for safe and secure tourism services increases, this code will assist signatories to build capacities among their services chains and personnel so as to be able to respond to this demand.

Specific Objectives:

This code is a guideline of conduct to enable the Indian travel and tourism industry to:

1. Encourage tourism activities to be undertaken with respect for basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourists and local residents i.e people and communities who may be impacted by tourism in some way.

2. Aid the prevention of prostitution, sex tourism and forms of sexual exploitations like assaults and molestations in tourism to safeguard the safety of persons, in particular women and children.

3. To enhance prevention of activities like forced or involuntary drug use, manipulated and incorrect information, cultural and social intolerance which could increase vulnerability to crime.

Applicability:

This code of conduct shall be applicable to all the owners, suppliers, contractors, employees of the travel and tour sector including hotels, restaurants, lodges, guest houses, tour agents, entertainment establishments etc. In addition it shall be applicable to service providers like event management organizations, entertainment providers, transport operators like taxis, buses, tour guides and other services or agencies associated with the tourism sector. This is not a legally binding instrument but a set of guidelines for the tourism industry. In addition to these guidelines, included in this code are key messages that signatories are encouraged to use.

Guidelines for the Tourism Industry:

1. Information & Training of Personnel:
   • Management will take up measures to build awareness and train staff on the guidelines of this code and appropriate legal provisions to enhance vigilance and to ensure that personnel
act in a manner that promotes the safety of tourists, local residents and their own staff.

- All hotels and tour operators shall train and maintain two persons as focal points to ensure that all safety norms and guidelines of this code are adhered to. The officers shall provide correct information to tourists, like information on Child lines- 1098, Women Help lines- 1091, local police helpline 100 and also act as a liaison officer with agencies such as the local police station, immigration authorities, civil society partners working in this area, child and women welfare committees etc.

- In case of an incidence of exploitation, personnel shall be sensitized to report correct information to the appropriate authorities act in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, other agencies providing care and support and take necessary action to protect the interests of the individual whose rights are violated.

- Organizations will promote awareness on the code among service providers affiliated to their business such as vendors, contractors, taxi drivers, tour guides, event management companies etc.

- In case of misconduct by a staff member or personnel of a service provider, signatories of the code will commit themselves to act in an unbiased manner, reporting the incidence to appropriate authorities and protecting the interests of the individual whose rights are violated.

- Identified victims shall not be treated as criminals. They should be identified as persons in need of care, protection and should be provided with legal, medical, psycho-social and any other assistance without delay.

2. **Public Awareness and Guest Notification:**
   - Messages of intolerance to any form of exploitation must be made evident in appropriate places visible to guests/clients, employees and other visitors. Guests and clients must also be provided information through the company’s website, brochures, tickets, bills, in-room/in-flight communication etc on issues related to commercial sexual exploitation such as sex tourism, prostitution, pornography, forms of sexual assaults, molestations and key messages elaborated in this code.

- In order to enhance tolerance for social and cultural norms, signatories of this code must take action to provide information available to their best knowledge on local social and cultural beliefs and norms. Knowledge and tolerance for different social and cultural norms will allow tourists to dress, conduct themselves and respect local beliefs helping them to adjust and thereby reducing the vulnerabilities they might face as foreigners to a particular destination.

- Signatories of the code are encouraged to assist tourists with guidance on safety tips applicable to the specific city/place like places to visit, timings for visits, right dressing and precautions against moving alone, and against accepting eatables and favors from unknown persons etc. Guests and clients shall be cautioned against solicitations from touts, non-regulated tourism operators and encouraged to consult the website of the Tourism Ministry and other authorized websites.

- Signatories will ensure that a clause is included in registration papers seeking commitment of the tourist to act in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of local residents and also to conduct themselves in a manner that shall aid the tourist’s own protection against exploitation.

3. **Regulated use of Premises and Official Equipment:**
   - Management/owners are encouraged to prohibit usage of the organization’s premises for use or abuse of illicit substances, sexual violations and of company equipment for viewing, storage, distribution, promotion or use of material which could increase vulnerability to exploitations of the nature mentioned in this code.

- Individuals under the permitted age shall not be allowed permission in to restricted areas like bars and pubs.
• Tourism service providers shall verify and maintain a record of details pertaining to tourists, personnel and service providers like address, contact details etc and also commit themselves to maintaining confidentiality.

• Internet usage that promotes, seeks any contacts for sex tourism and other sexual services, for search of pornographic material and/or to solicit the sale and purchase of illicit substances shall be prohibited.

4. Ethical Business Practices and Marketing:
• Management/owners shall ensure that all contracts with business partners, suppliers and franchise agreements bear a clause seeking commitment to provisions of the ‘Code of conduct for Safe and Honorable Tourism’ in their businesses.

• Any tourism enterprise or service provider found to act in a manner that undermines the safety of persons outlined in this code may be blacklisted.

• Sexually explicit images or concepts/images that may compromise the safety of individuals shall not be used for marketing purposes. An unambiguous company policy shall be set up to ensure that marketing and advertising does not support the promotion of sexual exploitation or promotion of sexually explicit images.

• Signatories are encouraged to patronize vendors and service providers who are committed to adhering to the provisions of this code.

5. Implementation and Monitoring:
• All signatories are required to maintain an annual report on ‘Code of conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism’ and submit it to a designated authority.

• Management/owners shall report on:
  • Training and capacity building initiatives carried out for personnel/ staff.
  • Means adopted to raise awareness on safety among guests, personnel and service providers.

KEY MESSAGES FOR AWARENESS BUILDING AND DISSEMINATION-

Enhancing Safety and Security of all Tourists:
• All signatories of the code are committed to act in a manner that protects the dignity and freedom against exploitation of persons especially women and children and facilitate prevention of incidences of sexual molestation, harassment of their guests and provide assistance in case of an untoward incident.

• In case of exploitation please call the Child line-1098, Women Help lines- 1091 and/or contact relevant authorities like the police or travel and tour operators.

• Like in many places in the rest of the world tourists are encouraged to follow some basic and practical safety tips such as to remain with a group or meet new people in public places, not to accept items from persons whom they have befriended recently, be wary of unexpected, unknown persons coming to their hotel room, never open the door to unsolicited room service or maintenance people etc.

• Tourists are encouraged to understand local social, cultural norms and beliefs and are encouraged to conduct themselves in a manner that respects these beliefs.

• Tourists must always take the advice of more than one person when seeking information on places to visit, shopping places, local customs, beliefs and norms and remain vigilant on accepting completed documents. Tourists are encouraged to seek information from Government of India recognized information centers and visit the Ministry of Tourism’s websites.

• Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, Section 2 (c) - Indecent representation of women means the depiction
in any manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigrating a woman or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals.

- Kidnapping or abducting in order to subject person to grievous hurt, slavery, etc. is an offence under Section 367 of the Indian Penal Code.

- Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty is an offence under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code.

- Punishment for rape offences shall not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years as the case may be, according to Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code.

Enhancing Safety of Local People:

- People across the world dress, eat and live differently and follow different values and norms. Tourists are encouraged to respect the local people and must commit themselves to acting in adherence to local laws.

- Signatories to the code maintain zero tolerance to acts of sexual exploitations, including commercial sexual exploitation like prostitution, sex tourism and trafficking of persons for it.

- Many tourists believe that they are protected by anonymity and thus laws are more easily violated. Any guest, staff, partner linked to this agency found to be indulging in exploitations outlined in this code or supporting it shall be reported to an appropriate authority.

- A few alarming trends that have emerged in recent years are sexual exploitation through sex tourism, paedophilia, prostitution in pilgrim towns and other tourist destinations, cross border trafficking.\(^1\)

- According to studies conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, there are 3 million commercial sex workers in India, of which an estimated 40% are children.

- Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. It involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation is irrelevant irrespective of age.\(^2\)

- Sexual relationship with a child amounts to rape according to the Indian Penal Code and is punishable with imprisonment of minimum 7 years which can even be extended to life imprisonment.

- Acquiring or inducing any person (irrespective of age or sex) for prostitution or causing a person to be taken for prostitution is an offence under Section 5 of Immoral Traffic Prevention Act 1956 and with a punishment of 3-7 years.

- It is a myth that sexual intercourse with a virgin or a minor will cure STI or prevent HIV. It only spreads the disease further.

- Abetment to crime amounts to committing the crime itself.

- Victims of exploitation are not criminals. They are persons in need of care, protection, legal, medical and psychological assistance.

- Under section 7 of Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956, letting out a hotel or any part there off for prostitution is an offence for which the license of the hotel can be suspended.

- Publishing or transmitting or causing to be published or transmitted, material in any electronic form which depicts children engaged in sexually explicit act or induces children to online relationship with one or more children for and on sexually explicit act is an offence under section 67(b) of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008.
Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act- Engaging in the production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, warehousing, concealment, use or consumption, import inter-state, export inter-state, import into India, export from India or transhipment, of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances is an offence except for scientific and medical reasons. Punishment for the offence may imply imprisonment, fine or both.

Handling or letting out any premises for the carrying on of any of the above mentioned activities in an offence under the NDPS act.

According to the National Security Act, 1980, the Central Government or the state Government has the power to act against any person with a view to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of India, the relations of India with foreign powers or the security of India.

The Foreigners (Amendment) Act, 2004 - If a foreigner to the country acts in violations of the conditions of the valid visa issued to him for his entry and stay in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine. If he has entered in to a bond then his bond shall be fortified.

Endnotes:
Opening Doors is not Enough
Equality, Equity and Empowerment is What Women Seek in Tourism

This is a joint statement by Alternatives (Goa), Council for Social Justice and Peace (Goa), Sakhi Resource Centre for Women (Kerala) and EQUATIONS, 2007

On World Tourism Day the UNWTO claimed that “Tourism Opens Doors for Women”. Challenging this claim, we call upon governments, policy makers, industry, civil society and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to engage in more systemic ways with the challenge of women’s empowerment in tourism. Perhaps it is time for the UNWTO to declare Tourism’s Decade for Women’s Rights and Empowerment as a move towards opening the doors to a more just and equitable world for women and men. This is a joint statement by Alternatives (Goa), Council for Social Justice and Peace (Goa), Sakhi Resource Centre for Women (Kerala) and us. This group is organising on World Tourism Day a series of round tables in Kerala and Goa on the theme of Women and Tourism

“When I decided to launch my small tourism business – a small guest house in Goa - I was deceived by what I saw around me. I saw how huge concessions were given to the 5-star hotel-whether of Indian or foreign origin and land and credit at subsidized rates. Access roads, electricity, water supplies, garbage disposal etc were all made easy for them. The government invested in their needs and demands. On the contrary, we the small entrepreneurs had to cope with virtually impossible travails if we started out on a business. My story perhaps illustrates how the system works against the small entrepreneur and weighs heavily in favour of big business. Now I ask – “Is small entrepreneurship welcome or is it not?” - Geraldine Fernandes, a local entrepreneur who runs a small guest house in Benaulim, Goa, India, questioning whether Tourism has in fact Opened Doors for Women.

The World Tourism Organisation, in choosing the theme of women and tourism for the year 2007, has focused its attention on this issue for the first time since 1980 – a welcome move indeed! “Tourism is a sector of the economy that not only employs significant numbers of women, but provides enormous opportunities for their advancement” states Secretary General Francesco Frangialli, in his customary message on World Tourism Day - 27 September 2007.

The Secretary General’s statement has focused on the potential for women to gain from tourism through employment. Tourism does indeed employ many women. But as experiences like those of Geraldine highlight, the odds against women benefiting are extremely high. The UNWTO must go beyond a position of approbation and look at tourism’s record thus far, both in the empowerment of women and in the exploitation of women. This is essential if there is a serious intent, as we hope there is, in the UNWTO and indeed the tourism industry world wide, to go beyond the rhetoric of women’s empowerment, towards serious engagement and committed action.

The UN, Women’s Empowerment and MDGs:
The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice. These are essential to build a sustainable, just, secure and developed society. For decades now, through vibrant movements and political struggles, women have challenged existing gender relations and patriarchal systems to reframe the development dialogue. They have placed issues of violence, race, caste and other forms of discrimination that hit women the hardest; and the need for equality and human rights of women - including social, economic, political, legal, sexual and reproductive rights at the center-stage of this struggle.
Global processes from Rio, Copenhagen, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing to Durban, particularly the CEDAW (Convention for Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women), the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and its subsequent Beijing Platform for Action, have set out critical concerns and strategic action points. Decades later, the battle for equality, to challenge the status quo, to demand action on women's key concerns, to mobilize civil society in both the global North and South, and to push for a global reordering of the world's resources continues with the same intensity but leaving one with little sense of progress on substantive issues. There has been enormous frustration at the lack of government commitment and accountability to both development goals in general and gender equality commitments in particular.

In one way, the emergence of the MDGs marks the success of global women's movements and broader civil society, which had made the creation of time-bound targets and indicators a key demand for measuring progress on development and rights commitments. However it is accompaniment by a concern that the MDGs have met the letter of civil society demands for accountability, but not the spirit. They seek to solve critical problems with measurable targets, without adequately addressing the roots of these problems. Many gender advocates argue that despite being an important tool to measure progress, the MDGs are a far too narrow set of indicators and targets. Their watering down of a human rights framework is another serious matter of concern. The UNWTO Secretary General's statement that seems to simplistically equate women's employment to women's empowerment is a reflection of the dangers of such a watering down.

**The Doors that Tourism can and should open for Women:**

What is the role that tourism has played and can play in this important struggle for equality, equity and empowerment that involves half the world? We have argued that international, national and state level policies on tourism do state a general commitment to women’s empowerment but rarely go beyond that to understand and evolve specific measures. Policies and budgets have the potential both to perpetuate gender bias and blindness, and to transform them. Gender disaggregated data, gender-sensitive policies and indicators are essential to building up a picture of the nature and extent of gender inequality. We need to understand the way institutions with their gendered rules work and we need to develop the political will, processes and tools to challenge and change them. Gender audits and gender budgeting are tools that could be employed meaningfully - particularly at community levels. These in turn will impact women’s political participation and decision making in the forms of tourism, impacts of tourism, models of tourism and pace of tourism in their communities. It is time tourism recognized women’s agency and heard their voices in its development.

Tourism does provide a range of activities where women can participate and also creates opportunities for entrepreneurship development in tourist destinations. Global data on numbers of women and men working in tourism related professions suggests that the organised tourism sector is a particularly important sector where 46% of the workforce is women (in general 30-40% of the workforce is women) (ILO 2007). Of the data available for the years between 1988 and 2005, it appears that there has been a broad increase in the participation of women in the tourism industry at a global level.

However apart from the larger overall presence in the industry, which has grown exponentially, many other factors sadly follow the trend of the overall labour market and women do not seem to benefit and be empowered particularly from tourism. As in many other sectors, there is a significant horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market in tourism. Vertically, the typical “gender pyramid” is prevalent in the tourism sector - lower levels and occupations with few career development opportunities being dominated by women and key managerial positions being dominated by men.

In India women in the organised sector in tourism are relegated to relatively low skill and low paying or stereotypical jobs like housekeeping, front-desk and reception, catering and laundry services. They face very high risks of sexual harassment and
exploitation and are discouraged from forming
unions or associations to consolidate their strength
and influence. The proportion of women’s to men’s
wages is less. Women feature significantly more
in part time and/or temporary employment and
are typically paid less than men for the same work
done.

In the developing world 60% of women who work
(in non-agricultural work) are in the informal
sector. Much of this is linked directly and indirectly
to tourism. The role of women in informal tourism
settings such as running home-stay facilities,
restaurants and shacks, crafts and handicrafts,
handloom, small shops and street vending is
significant. But these roles and activities that
women perform in tourism are treated as invisible
or taken for granted. The need to acknowledge
the important economic contribution of women
and ensure for them, access to credit, capacity
building and enhanced skills, access to the market,
encouragement to form unions, associations and
cooporatives to increase their bargaining power
and to ensure that their safety health and social
security needs are met is critical.

Community-based tourism initiatives, particular
of local women’s groups and co-operatives, are
an important way by which women can control
and benefit from tourism. There are numerous
examples where women and women’s groups
have started income-generating activities on their
own which then feed into or become part of the
formal tourism sector. These activities help to
create financial independence for local women
and motivate them to develop necessary skills and
improve their education.

It is also important to note that when tourism
displaces people from traditional livelihoods or
worse still physically displaces them, the worst
affected are women who are engaged in the bulk
of ancillary occupations like tobacco cultivation,
coconut harvesting, fish sorting and processing
which are jeopardized through such displacement.
It becomes the prerogative of governments and the
industry to ensure that rather than displace them,
tourism should build and bolster supplementary
livelihood options that women can choose from.

**Some Doors that Need to Close – Exploitation of
Women in Tourism:**

There is a direct correlation between the depletion
of natural resources and increased burden on
women in daily work in any region of the world.
When tourism restricts community access to or
contributes to the depletion of natural resources,
it is the women not only as homemakers, but also
as community members who suffer the most.
Women’s access to and control over forest produce
and water come into sharp conflict when tourism
usurps these very resources needed to fulfill their
life and livelihood needs. The daily burden on women
of finding water for the household or firewood
for cooking is oftentimes doubled or tripled. The
links between tourism and climate change will
unfortunately add to the burden women already
bear.

When tourism makes products of culture, it tends
to commodify women in particular – although both
men and women are impacted by the insensitive
selling of culture. With sex tourism being the
most negative and prominent example, there is
a significant amount of sexual objectification of
women working in the tourism industry. Women
are expected to dress in an “attractive” manner, to
look beautiful (i.e. slim, young, and pretty) and to
“play along” with sexual harassment by customers.
Stereotypical and sexist images of women are
often part of tourism promotion in brochures and
advertisements. Friendly, smiling and pliant women
fitting certain standards of attractiveness, attired
in traditional costumes, waiting to submissively
serve the customer’s every wish is the typical
portrayal of women in tourism material. We ask
that the international community and UNWTO draw
attention to the way women are represented in the
selling of tourism by addressing this in the code of
ethics.

The tourism industry and stewards of tourism
development face many serious social and human
challenges in the years ahead. The growing links
between migration - both voluntary and forced -
and tourism needs to take into account the gender
dimensions of this global phenomenon. HIV/AIDS not
only is driven by gender inequality but entrenches
it. Tourism is increasingly seen to have a role in this
entrenchment in its links to trafficking, prostitution and sex tourism. Poverty, and in particular urban poverty, which threatens to be an issue of growing magnitude has deep roots in gender injustice. Tourism often wipes out the existence and means of livelihood of the urban poor in an overt manner while continuing to depend covertly on cheap labour and exploitative relationships in order to flourish. The trend of development of tourism in conflict zones and the consequent impacts it has on women who are already battling for survival is another matter of serious concern. Disasters and epidemics have an uneasy relationship with tourism – but gender dimensions are rarely integrated into assistance and reconstruction efforts with the focus being largely on the safety of tourists and revival of tourism infrastructure.

We call upon governments, policy makers, industry, civil society and the UNWTO to engage in more systemic ways with the challenge of women’s empowerment in tourism. Perhaps it is time for the UNWTO to declare Tourism’s Decade for Women’s Rights and Empowerment as a move towards opening the doors to a more just and equitable world for women and men.
Introduction:
Tourism is one of the world’s largest and fastest growing industries. In many countries it acts as an engine for development through foreign exchange earnings and the creation of direct and indirect employment. Tourism contributes 5% of the world’s GDP and 7% of jobs worldwide. It accounts for 6% of the world’s exports and 30% of the world’s exports in services. In developing countries, tourism generates 45% of the total exports in services. Research shows the different ways in which tourism can contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction and community development. However, less attention has been paid to the unequal ways in which the benefits of tourism are distributed between men and women, particularly in the developing world. Tourism presents both opportunities and challenges for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010 is a first attempt to develop a quantitative framework for monitoring the status of women working in tourism across the globe. Its focus is on tourism in developing regions.

The objectives of the report were to: i) establish a set of indicators and an indicator framework that could be used to monitor the performance of tourism as a tool for women’s empowerment; and ii) to use the indicators to assess the extent to which tourism is advancing the needs of women in the developing world. The overarching vision for the Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010 is to promote women’s empowerment and protect women’s rights through better tourism work. The report is structured around five thematic areas: employment, entrepreneurship, education, leadership, and community. The results are derived primarily from analysis of ILO’s Laborsta database and sorted by developing world regions: the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

The report also includes a selection of case studies which highlight success stories in tourism across the world. This summary presents some of the main findings of the report by theme and by region and offers some preliminary recommendations for stakeholder consideration.

Context:
Tourism presents a wide range of income generation opportunities for women in both formal and informal employment. Tourism jobs are often flexible and can be carried out at various different locations such as the workplace, community, and household. Additionally, tourism creates a wide range of opportunities for women through the complex value chains it creates in the destination economy.

There are also known to be challenges facing women in tourism. Women are often concentrated in low status, low paid and precarious jobs in the tourism industry. Gender stereotyping and discrimination mean that women mainly tend to perform jobs such as cooking, cleaning and hospitality. Much tourism employment is seasonal and fluctuates according to the volatile nature of the industry. In some destinations links have been found between tourism and the sex industry which could make women more vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

If a strong gender perspective is integrated into planning and implementation processes, tourism can be harnessed as a vehicle for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment at the household, community, national and global level. At the same time, greater gender equality will contribute to the overall quality of the tourist experience, with a considerable impact on profitability and quality across all aspects of the industry.

Key Findings:
Although much information is still missing, the results of this initial survey suggest that tourism is
worth investing in; it has the potential to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women in developing regions. Tourism provides better opportunities for women’s participation in the workforce, women’s entrepreneurship, and women’s leadership than other sectors of the economy. Women in tourism are still underpaid, under-utilized, under-educated, and underrepresented; but tourism offers pathways to success.

- Women make up a large proportion of the formal tourism workforce.
- Women are well represented in service and clerical level jobs but poorly represented at professional levels.
- Women in tourism are typically earning 10% to 15% less than their male counterparts.
- The tourism sector has almost twice as many women employers as other sectors.
- One in five tourism ministers worldwide are women.
- Women make up a much higher proportion of own-account workers in tourism than in other sectors.
- A large amount of unpaid work is being carried out by women in family tourism businesses.

Notwithstanding these results, there is still much to explore and analyze. For example, how do women’s pay levels differ between tourism jobs; how do women’s hours in tourism compare with men’s; and how to define and measure women’s unpaid work in family tourism businesses?

**Employment:**
In general, women are well represented in formal tourism employment. However, women are more likely than men to be working at a clerical, level are less likely than men to reach professional-level tourism employment, and as a result, their average take-home pay is lower than men’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Service workers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>49.4</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average*</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In order to show an average, a region needed to have data for at least 10% of countries included.
Source: ILO Laborsta Database.
This shows us that women’s employment in the tourism industry is concentrated in the service and clerical sector. These figures vary by region, with a high proportion of women working in the clerical sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, within these categories there is no information on what specific jobs women and men are carrying out and whether or not these conform to gender stereotypes. In terms of the professional level, the average is similar for all regions for which data is available. This phenomenon is particularly evident in Latin America, where women’s participation in the professional level jobs is almost half of that at the service and clerical level. However, in general, although women’s participation in this sector is not high, there does seem to be some potential for women to reach management positions within the industry.

**Entrepreneurship:**
Tourism offers significant opportunities for women to run their own businesses. Women are almost twice as likely to be employers in the tourism industry than in other sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>In general</th>
<th>In hotel and restaurant sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>21.95</td>
<td>36.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For this indicator, data were available for 40 out of 172 countries. In order to show an average, a region needed to have data for at least 10% of the countries included. Source: ILO Laborsta Database.

Latin America has the highest proportion of women employers in tourism, more than double the proportion in other sectors. In Nicaragua and Panama more than 70% of employers are women compared to just over 20% in other sectors. This pattern is followed to a lesser extent in all regions covered by the study. Again, the data for Asia vary substantially. While in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand more than half of tourism businesses are run by women, in Pakistan, Iran, and the Maldives there were virtually none. This demonstrates that tourism has a strong potential for promoting women’s own businesses.

**Education:**
Although there is very little data on the level of education of women working in the tourism industry, international data on education suggests that the proportion of women graduates in all fields is increasing. There is still a shortage of women teaching at tertiary level, however, and there are proportionally fewer women service graduates than in other fields.

Table 4 shows the ways in which women’s participation in higher education varies by region. Within regions some countries have particularly high levels of women services graduates, such as Philippines (82.1%), Cayman Islands (80%), and Honduras (78%). In contrast in Qatar only 9% of services graduates were women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>All tertiary graduates</th>
<th>All services graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data for the indicator on graduates in services were available for 88 out of the 172 countries included in the research. The data are most complete in Latin America and Asia. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Database.

**Leadership:**
Tourism offers women opportunities for global leadership. Women hold more ministerial positions in tourism than in any other field. Nevertheless, only
one in five tourism board (NTAs) CEOs are women, and only one in four tourism industry associations have a woman chair.

In March 2010, 21% percent of countries had a women tourism minister compared to 17% of ministerial positions in general. The highest proportion of women tourism ministers is in Africa, where one third of all tourism ministers are women. In African countries, the post of tourism minister is almost twice as likely to be held by a woman than other ministerial posts. In contrast, just 6% of tourism ministers in the Caribbean and 15% in Asia are women.

Analysis of tourist boards shows just over 20% are run by women. The Caribbean was the region with the most women tourist board CEOs (35%). In seven out of the 23 Caribbean countries, the chairperson of the tourism board is a woman. Tourism associations are slightly more like to have a women chair. Twenty-three percent of tourism associations had women chairs.

**Community:**
The formal and informal opportunities tourism provides women can have a significant impact on poverty reduction in rural communities. The proportion of women “own-account workers” is much higher in tourism than in other sectors across all regions. The report also found that women are contributing a substantial amount of unpaid labour to home-based tourism businesses as “contributing family workers”. Unpaid family workers are vulnerable to exploitation. This is one of the key areas to address in promoting gender equality in tourism.

Table 5 shows how women’s own account or self employed activity in tourism varies by region. The highest proportion is in Latin America, where large contrasts can be seen between tourism and other sectors. In Nicaragua, for example, women occupy 40% of own-account jobs overall but 92% in tourism. In Bolivia, the figures are 44% and 95% respectively. Several African countries have high proportions of female tourism self-employed workers: 71% in Botswana and 65% in Zimbabwe 65%. The country with the lowest level is Syria, at 2%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>In general</th>
<th>In hotel and restaurant sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>33.25</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data on own-account workers in the H&R sector were only available for 39 out of 172 countries.
Source: ILO Laborsta Database.

It also appears that women are contributing a large amount of unpaid work to family tourism enterprises. As Table 6 shows, the proportion of contributing family workers that are women is considerably higher in tourism than in other industries, with the exception of Asia. In the Caribbean, for example, 84% of contributing family work is provided by women, compared to 51% in other sectors. These figures are troubling for a gender analysis of the tourism industry. While women’s work in family tourism enterprises clearly contributes to community development, if this work is unpaid it is subsidizing a large proportion of community-based tourism but makes little contribution to women’s empowerment.
Table 6 Women as Contributing Family Workers in the H&R Sector, By Region*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>In general</th>
<th>In hotel and restaurant sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Average</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data were available for only 34 out of 172 countries. Data are most complete for Asia. Source: ILO Laborsta Database.

Regional Variations:
Some key trends by region in terms of women’s participation in tourism in the five different aspects covered by the report can be highlighted as follows:

- In the Caribbean, women make up a high proportion of both employees and own account workers. However, the number of women in tourism ministerial positions is low.

- Similarly in Latin America, the participation of women in the tourism industry is high, but there are low levels of representation of women in tourism leadership.

- There are a high proportion of women in tourism ministerial positions in Africa (one third of the total) and a high number of women employees and own-account workers. However, the proportion of women graduates in services is low.

- Asia has the highest proportion of women at the professional level in tourism. In terms of overall participation in employment and own account work, this is high in South East Asian countries and very low in the Middle East.

- In Oceania, there are no women in tourism ministerial positions at the current time.

Future Challenges and Recommendations:
The report makes a series of recommendations based on the areas of critical concern for promoting women’s empowerment in tourism, which are summarized as follows:

Main Recommendations by Theme: Employment:
Increase awareness of the important economic role that women play in the tourism industry. Strengthen legal protection for women in tourism employment; such protections include minimum wage regulations and equal pay laws. Improve maternity leave requirements, flexible hours, work-from-home options, and arrangements for childcare.

Entrepreneurship:
Facilitate women’s tourism entrepreneurship by ensuring women’s access to credit, land and property as well as providing appropriate training and resources to support women’s enterprises.

Education:
Promote women’s participation in tourism education and training and improve the educational level of women already working in different areas of the industry through a targeted and strategic program of action.

Leadership:
Support women’s tourism leadership at all levels: public sector, private sector, and community management by establishing leadership programs at the national level and in large and small-scale tourism enterprises.

Community:
Ensure that women’s contribution to community development is properly recognized and rewarded by taking into account women’s unpaid work and by monitoring tourism activities carried out in the household and in the community.
Main Recommendations for Stakeholders:

Private Sector:
Promote gender equality and women’s empowerment as fundamental components of Corporate Social Responsibility activities, in line with the Global Compact-UN Women’s Women’s Empowerment Principles.

Public Sector including Tourism Policy-makers:
Take proactive steps to mainstream gender in tourism policy, planning, and operations.

International Organizations and Civil Society:
Call on governments, the international community, civil society organizations and the private sector to protect women’s rights in tourism and to monitor progress in the empowerment of women through tourism. Collaborate with UNWTO-UN Women to develop programs and projects dedicated to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment through tourism.

In order to assess how effective policy actions are in improving the situation of women in tourism, it is important to re-evaluate these indicators at least every three years. This year’s baseline will provide a yardstick against which to evaluate future results.

Case Studies:
Women occupy a significant position in the tourism industry worldwide. The capacity of tourism to empower women socially, politically, and economically is particularly relevant in developing regions where women may face the greatest hardships and inequalities. This report highlights the important role that tourism plays in challenging cultural stereotypes, empowering women politically and economically, and providing income-generating opportunities for women. The case studies below demonstrate the potential of tourism to stimulate domestic business opportunities, to provide opportunities for technical assistance, and to help women recover from times of crisis.

Case Study A: Mulala Cultural Tourism Enterprise, Arusha, Tanzania – By Mary Lwoga (text edited)

Eight women in the Mulala village of Tanzania have united to form the Agape Women’s Group, a co-operative working within the framework of the Mulala Cultural Tourism Enterprise, an enterprise established with the joint support of the Tanzania Tourist Board and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) with the aim of creating tourism activities that benefit local populations, alleviate poverty and offer a tourism experience to complement conventional safaris. Upon arrival, tourists are warmly welcomed by the women of Mulala, led by Mama Anna Pallangyo (Head and Co-ordinator of the Tourism Enterprise). They are encouraged to visit Mt. Meru Forest Reserve and take tours designed to showcase local cheese-making, dairy keeping, gardening and farming activities, bread-making, tailoring or coffee growing. Not only does the program directly benefit the eight families of the Women’s Group, but the entire 2,500 strong Mulala community has gained by it. Every tourist makes a contribution to the Village Development Fund, which is used to improve school buildings, the local dispensary and in other community development projects. Thanks to their good contacts in the tourism sector, the Agape Women’s Group has also managed to establish business linkages with tourist lodges in the area for the supply of homemade cheese. This has become another important income source for the members of the women’s group, as well as for other farmers in the village, from which the women’s group purchases milk to produce cheese.

Factors Influencing Success and Lessons Learned:
- Local women entrepreneurs like Mama Anna took the initiative and drove this Cultural Tourism Program towards success.
- Women were supported and encouraged to participate in the project from its inception.
- Training in business skills, pricing, linking to markets and record keeping was provided to all the project participants, ensuring they were equipped with the information necessary to benefit from tourism.
Case Study B: Three Pioneering Nepali Sisters
~ By Kristie Drucza (text edited)

In response to the demand for women guides in an otherwise male-dominated sector in the Himalayas, the three Chhetri sisters founded the Three Sisters Adventure and Trekking Company in 1994 to provide a women-only trekking option for tourists. Five years later, they registered Empowering Women Nepal (EWN) as an NGO.

The Nepali company trains local women as guides and porters, while offering them ‘empowerment training’ to help them cope with discrimination. In this deeply patriarchal society, restrictions on women’s mobility render most single women housebound and most married women unemployable. Nevertheless, over the last decade, EWN has trained and motivated over 800 Nepali women to enter the tourism industry. The sisters currently employ one hundred women in their trekking company, who earn an average of 120,000 rupees per year (US$ 1,709) once they become experienced guides.

Overcoming local scepticism through sheer determination, a clear vision of their mission, and the support of their family, the sisters have managed to break down several entrenched gender stereotypes. As one sister, Lucy Chhetri puts it: ‘We have demonstrated that women are mentally, physically and emotionally as strong as men’. Due largely to their efforts, women now make up between five and ten percent of guides and porters in Nepal, offering tourists greater choice and advancing the empowerment and economic status of Nepali women.

Factors Influencing Success and Lessons Learned:

- Family support for and between women greatly bolsters their confidence determination, and ability to succeed.

- Women’s potential to succeed in tourism often goes unrealized, not due to the lack of potential, but rather due to the lack of opportunities.

- Questioning restrictive traditional gender roles by male community members can support women’s freedom to pursue entrepreneurial initiatives in the tourism sector.

Case Study C: Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador ~ By Aldo Salvador and Ana Garcia Pando (text edited)

Three years ago, eleven women in Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos, became bakers and business partners in the “Pearls of the Pacific” when the Association of Cruise Operator Companies in Galapagos (ASOGAL) decided increase the corporate social responsibility activities of their members by expanding their local supply chain.

With thousands of tourists to cater for, ASOGAL came to consider a bakery as a good business concept, in light of the high cost of importing frozen bread from the continent and the difficulty of time-consuming baking in cramped on-board kitchens. With a zero-interest US$ 30,000 from ASOGAL, an initial investment from the Andean Financial Corporation (CAF), and the support of the Association, UNWTO ST-EP technicians and a hired accounting and entrepreneurial consultant firm from Quito, eleven local women embarked on this project.

In spite of initial misgivings, overwhelming pressure at home and the intense displeasure of their husbands, three of the women continued with the business venture. Learning how to tailor their product to satisfy foreign tourists, deal with their clients, and negotiate with (mostly male) logistics officers in charge of supplies, earning the admiration of their husbands and seen sales rise from a mere US$ 200 a month to over US$ 6,000. Making financial decisions, solving problems, assuming risks and responsibilities, repaying their loans and discussing refinancing has enabled these women to lose their initial inhibitions and discover instead their enormous capacity for endurance. As they put it, “We now run our business and our own lives”.

151
Factors Influencing Success and Lessons Learned:

- Entrepreneurship empowered these women economically, boosted their self-esteem and helped them earn the respect and admiration of their spouses.

The global report has been several years in the making. At the ITB in Berlin in 2008, UNWTO unveiled an action plan to “empower women through tourism”. Actions included in the plan were to establish a multi-stakeholder taskforce, to put in place a data collection system, and to initiate the UNWTO and UN Women Joint Triennial Global Report on Women in Tourism.

**Endnotes:**

* The Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010, on which this document is based, was commissioned in 2009 by UNWTO and UNIFEM (now UN Women) and was carried out by Dr. Louise Twining-Ward. This Preliminary Findings document was produced by UNWTO and UN Women in collaboration with Dr. Lucy Ferguson.

1. UNWTO statistics

2. The majority of the data in the report is drawn from the ILO Laborsta Database. Tourism in the ILO is considered as the hotel, catering and tourism (HCT) sector. However, the Laborsta Database only includes statistics on the ‘Hotel and Restaurant’ category, so this is used throughout the report. We acknowledge that this does not cover the full range of tourism and tourism-related activities and that more data is needed. The data consulted for this report spans the period 1999-2008. Where available the most recent data has been used.

3. The breakdown primarily reflects the UN’s geoscheme of geographical regions. However, for the purposes of this report Northern America has been excluded and the Caribbean is included as a sub-region due to its status as one of the most tourism-dependent regions in the world.

4. Although this is a very important issue for the analysis of women in tourism, it is beyond the remit of the current report. For research and analysis on the link between tourism and sex tourism, see

5. Data for the equal participation of women in the workforce were available for 101 out of the 172 countries included in the research (59%). For this indicator, data were available for 40 out of 172 countries (24%). In 2001, the ILO reported that 90% of hotel and restaurant employees worldwide were women. See: International Labour Office (2001), ‘Human resources development, employment and globalization in the hotel, catering and tourism sector’, Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resources Development, Employment and Globalization in the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Sector, ILO, Geneva.


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Mariama is the author of Trading Stories: Experiences with Gender and Trade (co-edited with Marilyn Carr, 2010), co-author, Gender and Trade Action Guide: A Training Resource (2007), author, Gender Issues in the Multilateral Trading System (2003) and Gender and Climate Change Financing – An Introduction (forthcoming 2011). Since 2009 she also worked as a consultant & trainer on gender and climate change (finance) with the Global Gender and Climate Alliance and authored the chapter/module on Gender and Climate Change Finance for the GGCA Training Manual, Gender and Climate Change (2009). Ms Williams is a member of the International Working Group on Gender, Macroeconomics and International Trade (IWG-GEM). She has served on many international committees and Boards of repute related to the WTO, UNIFEM, AWID, UNDP etc. She is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Sweden. She can be contacted at williams@southcentre.org
Tracing the Maze – a dossier on women and tourism is an attempt to highlight critical areas of concern related to emerging trends and issues of women’s engagement with tourism, the gendered process of tourism development and explore these issues at the policy level as well.

EQUATIONS is a research, campaigning and policy advocacy organisation working on tourism and development issues in India since 1985. Our work focuses on the economic, social, political, cultural and institutional impacts of tourism particularly in terms of rights and benefits to local communities. Supporting grassroots struggles against unsustainable tourism development and practices, it calls for policies that ensure equitable, democratic and non-exploitative forms of tourism development.