Who Really Benefits from Tourism?

EQUATIONS critique on tourism development

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Tourism is a highly resource centric and resource heavy industry that banks on the availability of land, water and natural resources for providing the tourist experience. Unregulated tourism and diversion of natural resources for meeting tourism demands has caused negative impacts on the environment. Inevitably, local communities that are dependent for their livelihoods on commonly shared natural resources also experience hardships from depletion of the commons.

The case of the Himalayan Ski Village Resort in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh gives a glimpse into the nature of communities’ struggles against tourism led privatisation of commons.

“The $300 million Himalayan Ski Village project financed by Alfred Ford, the great-grandson of the US automaker, Henry Ford was stopped by local communities and Him Niti Campaign, a local group. The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project included the construction of hotels, restaurants, cafes, entertainment and shopping areas, as well as apartments and villas in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. Initially the project’s built up area was spread over 133 acres and required 6000 acres of pristine forests and mountain areas for skiing activities, making a storage house and support base (for heli pad and gas station) near Beas River (the area has not reduced as per the report of the High powered committee – it is at 93.1 ha or 223 acres). The developers had proposed to divert 14.7 Ha of forest land for the project. Local communities’ organizations and NGOs opposed the project due to the following reasons. Its requirements for large scale deforestation and increased risk of floods and siltation in dams and farms downstream; impact on flow of natural resources like medicinal herbs, fodder, fuel wood to the villages located down the slopes, disrupt rights and livelihoods of nomadic communities by taking away their grazing rights in high altitude pastures, pollution of water sources and decreased water availability in rivers, streams due to artificial snow making. These rivers and streams are the primary source of water for drinking and irrigation for local communities and pollution would render them unusable for agriculture and drinking purposes.

In June 2007, Jan Jagran Evam Vikas Samiti (JJVS) and a local hotelier filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the High Court of Himachal Pradesh. In April 2008, the High Court disposed off the PILs saying that they were satisfied with the state government’s action of constituting a six-member High Powered Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Tourism) to look into various aspects relating to setting up of Himalayan Ski Village\(^2\). According to a media report in December 2008, the high powered government committee was slated to do spot inspection and record resident views early January 2009.\(^3\) However local groups boycotted this as they were not provided basic documents related to the project – a demand they have been making for years now. A public consultation was then held in June 2009 on the Ski Village project by a State level review committee. During the consultation representatives of people, Mahila Mandal and Panchayats rejected the project in one voice.

The Committee noted the non-acceptability of the project by the local community, who are the main stakeholders and that even until October 2009 HSV had not carried out an environmental impact assessment and. It was further noted by the Committee, “that tourism is an economic activity, so it
becomes necessary to spread its benefits to the community when we plan or develop... Development has to be in a manner that keeps in mind the well being of local people as well as the environment... Community participation is a must to develop and decentralise the development sector effectively... Such projects on the basis of single proposal received by the Government of Himachal Pradesh because of the non-acceptability and non-participation remains a non-starter".

Due to land acquisition and displacement of local communities for construction of big hotel projects, communities have lost access to natural resources and therefore their livelihoods. Massive investment into tourism, takes over common property resources that are used for sustenance and livelihoods by local communities, at times through benami transactions. In the case of the Himalayan Ski Village project, the State Government of Himachal Pradesh led by the Planning Commission changed its land policy under Section 118, Himachal Pradesh Land Reforms Act to attract private investments in tourism sector. Section 118 restricts purchase and sale of property by non-Himachalis (non residents of the state). HSV enjoyed an exemption from the provisions of Section 118.

The above example shows how tourism is increasingly encroaching on public commons in the guise of development. Moreover the State, a mere trustee of these public resources, is found to facilitate acquisition of common property resources for private use and profit. Tourism depends on variety of economic, social, physical resources, often in competition with needs of local communities. Communities' resources for sustenance like agricultural land, common property resources (CPR) are diverted for exclusive use of tourism. Common property resources - beaches, natural streams & water bodies, forests, bugiyals (grazing lands) in the mountain valleys, which were once accessible to local communities, are increasingly getting converted into private spaces. Hence communities lose their power of ownership, regulation and control over common property resources.

Water is diverted to meet commercial needs of tourism enterprises like hotels, resorts, amusement and water parks, golf courses etc. The demand for water by the tourism industry in most instances has meant less water for nearby farmers, villages and households. For example, in Goa:

The local population of villages of Cansaulim – Arossim – Cuelim’s monthly consumption of water was 19440 cu.m of water. In comparison, Hotel Heritage consumed 5012.70 cum while Park Hyatt consumed 36217 cum, almost double the requirement of the three villages. The development of tourist facilities like golf courses has resulted in pollution and depletion of ground water resources for surrounding communities. An average 18-hole golf course requires at least 525,000 gallons of water a day - enough to supply the irrigation needs of a 100 farmers.

Ecotourism is the new magic mantra endorsed by the tourism industry giants, travel - trade associations and governments. Ecotourism’s promotion as a market-based conservation mechanism has seen areas rich in biodiversity including protected areas and national parks being opened for tourism.

In the name of ecotourism, mainstream tourism that is devoid of environmental sustainability, equity in benefit-sharing with indigenous and local communities is being pushed into various eco-fragile areas. The potential of ecotourism to conserve biodiversity has been contested. These areas have been conserved by indigenous and local communities who have inhabited them for centuries are now being displaced in the name of conservation. Increasingly tourism is being allowed a backdoor entry into the very regions that were set aside by laws of conservation, without significant concern of its conflicts with conservation goals and impacts on ecology and communities dependent on these natural resources for sustenance.
The tourism industry is allowed to operate with subsidies and incentives in protected and other ecologically sensitive areas without adhering to stringent environmental or social impact assessments.

A number of resorts are coming up outside the boundary of national parks. To promote ecotourism, the Chhattisgarh Forest Department has constructed a luxurious ‘eco-resort’ in a forest adjacent to the Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary, Chhattisgarh.

The Mohda eco-resort is located on forest land and on the banks of a lake, both being common property resources. The land belongs to the Chhattisgarh Forest Development Corporation but the resort has been handed over to Chhattisgarh Tourism Board (CTB) for running and management. The project can be legally challenged for the diversion of forest land for commercial purposes under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and for its transfer to private parties. The CTB is considering the property for privatisation. Using PPP (public-private partnership) the CTB will create infrastructure and hand them over to private players to operate. The private players will accrue benefits and the State will be benefited from the collection of taxes. The common property resources of forest and water-source, which could have been used by the local people, have now been segregated for the exclusive use and enjoyment of tourists. The resort also violates the recommendations of Indian Board for Wildlife in 2002 for declaration of land falling within the 10 km of boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries as eco-fragile zone under section 3 (v) of Environment Protection Act. The development of tourism establishments on periphery also hinders movement of wildlife for food & water. The wildlife in turn starts entering human habitations which increases the possibility of human-animal conflict.

These conflicts have led to damage to property and loss to human and animal lives. The lack of consultation with local Panchayats when tourism projects are prepared by governments violates the Constitutional provisions of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1972. Panchayats as institutions of local self government have the power to decide the kind of development they would like in their regions and to plan and implement schemes for socio-economic development. The role of the Panchayats is thus reduced to a mere formality as they are only consulted after all clearances have been granted and a no objection certificate is required. At this stage, the Panchayats do not refuse, since all other clearances are granted.

**Privatisation of the Coasts and Lakes**

Privatisation of common areas and natural resources has also been witnessed in coastal areas. Local communities are denied access to beaches as portions of it are fenced by resorts for the exclusive use of their guests, even though beaches are CPRs that support traditional livelihoods of many coastal communities. A few examples are discussed below.

The Master Plan for the Samukha Beach Area project envisaged as a leisure cum business destination was prepared in the year 2008, to be developed over 3000 acres near Puri at a cost of approximately Rs. 3500 crores. 934.36 acres of land for the 1st phase of development has already been acquired while 600 acres for 2nd phase is expected soon. This land will be leased to developers for a period of 70 years. Orissa Tourism Development Corporation is the project implementation agency while the Industrial Development Corporation Orissa is the agency for land acquisition. Infrastructure for water & power supply up to the project site & access road to the site is provided by the government.

Phase 1 will include development of luxury hotels, 18 hole golf course, convention centre, spa with wellness centre, urban entertainment, sports facilities, crafts museum and theme gardens. Phase 2 will include airstrips & helipads, amusement & theme parks like Disneyland, another 18 hole golf course with golf resort, river & sea sports facilities and 2 star or above hotels for medium range tourists.
7 villages which border the 3000 acres will be affected by the project. The potential impacts of the project include:

**Economic:** A large part of the land acquired for the 1st phase is ceiling surplus land, which should have been distributed to the landless people in adjoining villages. However, the state government held on to this land now plans to lease it to the companies for tourism development. Further, some tracts of land to be acquired in the 2nd phase are those owned by the Mutts, which are politically influential. These lands were also identified as ceiling surplus land, but the Mutts had refused to hand it over and the case is under litigation. This is the main reason that land acquisition for 2nd phase has hit a roadblock.

The majority of the villagers in the 7 villages comprise of dalit and landless communities. Agricultural labour is one of the only livelihood options. If the project comes up ground water level, which is already low would be affected, in turn affecting the agriculture of the region. Currently, people are under the impression that the project would increase livelihood options for them. However, the project that is being planned is high-end and would require very specialised staff that will be brought in from outside, with the local communities the low end and menial jobs.

**Social and Cultural:** A key element is the creation of a tourism village. Sippasalubary is to be promoted for rural/village tourism. This will have social and cultural implications. With minimum interaction between the tourist and the villagers, it will become a place for voyeuristic pleasure and a commoditisation of cultural practices. Women, children and youth will be among the first to face the negative impacts of such tourism.

‘Communities’ access, rights and control over natural resources will be impacted. Vegetation in the vicinity is a source of Non-Forest Timber Produce for the people. They either consume it or sell in the market, which augments existing incomes. The project will wipe out this rich vegetation, thus taking away both an important source of nourishment as well as income from the people.

**Environmental:** No EIA has been conducted for this project and therefore, there is limited understanding of the potential environmental impacts that the project would cause, therefore leaving no option for mitigation either. Past examples of tourism shows that sand dunes, coastal vegetation, coral reefs will be destroyed. These are important natural elements that protect the coasts from disasters like tsunamis, thus making the local communities vulnerable to the vagaries of nature.

**Governance:** A significant lapse is that the Gram Sabhas have not been consulted before the planning and implementation of the project. This is a gross violation of the Panchyati Raj Act and the constitution of the country. The project is being planned under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode, which further complicates the location of the Gram Sabha and the Panchayats as there is no space for communities in the PPP framework. Adding to this is the fact that there is no regulation that has been planned for in the project document. Therefore private companies with profit as their motive will proceed to exploit the natural resources and the people.

Goa, a popular place visited by many tourists is also the place where communities have been protesting for many years against privatisation of commons by tourism. A Writ Petition was filed in the Goa High Court against the developers of Heritage Village Club Resort on Arossim beach in Cansaulim for undertaking permanent construction, restricting public access to the beach, putting up barbed wire fences, flattening of sand dunes for construction, discharge of solid wastes and effluent directly into the sea without treatment. The construction violates the CRZ Notification, 1991 that prohibits any permanent constructions in the No Development Zone (upto 200 metres). The Heritage Village Club Resort had
constructed beyond and within 200 metres of the high tide line. The resort has not left adequate space for access to the beach as prescribed in the CRZ notification. Contrary to the prescribed 20 metres only 10 metres has been left for public access to the beach10.

The local fisherfolk of Velaghar-Shiroda in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra evoked the Coastal Regulation Zone notification, 1991 to protest against tourism development. The Sindhudurg district was marked for tourism development by the Sharad Pawar government. The local community is against the land acquisition and eviction notices served by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation on behalf of the Taj group of hotels, which plans to build a five star hotel and beach resort with aqua sports11.

On 4th November 2008, the Karnataka High Court questioned the practise of conversion of lakes which are public commons for private use. The Lake Development Authority (LDA) of Bangalore, constituted in 2002 for protection of the lakes, leased out three lakes in Bangalore (Agaram lake, Nagawara and Hebbal Lake) to private companies for developing and maintaining them for a period of 15 years. The Hebbal lake was leased out to M/s East India Hotels (EIH) Ltd, the parent company of Oberoi Group of Hotels. Media reports have highlighted that the Oberoi’s had proposed to fence the lake and charge an entry fee of Rs. 20, construct a floating restaurant, cafeteria and hotel in front of the Hebbal lake12 thus blocking public access and curtailing traditional and customary rights of communities. A show cause notice issued by the Forest Department observed that the EIH had removed the entire water and aquatic vegetation unscientifically in June 2007, destroying the habitat of aquatic birds and wildlife in violation of Section 51 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 197213. The construction of amusement parks and other recreational facilities on the water body violates the purpose of conservation and preservation 14. This commercialisation of a public resource in the name of conservation was opposed by local groups as the privatisation was likely to have detrimental socio-economic and ecological impacts. The interim order of Karnataka High Court on 4th November 2008 restricted lake privatisation and directed that efforts be made protect these lakes and made accessible to the common man15.

Conclusion

Throughout the world tourism is being promoted for achieving development and India is no exception. But the question arises, for who is this development and who does it benefit and at what cost? As tourism is pushed into various spaces for poverty alleviation, conservation and sustainable development, rarely has tourism been able to achieve these. On the contrary tourism has alienated people from their rights over common property resources and has thus caused conflicts.

Tourism’s claims of conservation and benefits to local communities have not materialised. Instead the route charted by tourism follows a privatisation of public and common property resources. Prioritising tourism development at the cost of people’s rights is unacceptable and unjustified.

Endnotes

1 Updated version of an earlier paper published in March 2010
2 Him Niti Campaign, Himachal Pradesh, JVS, EQUATIONS (2008), ‘Impacts of the proposed Himalayan Ski-Village Project in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh’
4 (2009) Report on Review / examination of the project Himalayan Ski Village in Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh, submitted by a Committee constituted by the State Govt on Directions of the Hon’ble High Court, H.P Page 66-84
5 Not in any specific name, false transactions.
6 The Planning Commission of India in 2005 brought out the Himachal Pradesh Development Report, which carried a critical analysis of the tourism sector in the state. It states that the Himachal Tourism Department is pursuing a tourism policy sans
action and overselling the already saturated Shimla-Kullu-Manali circuit. The concern for pressures on infrastructure was not so much about the stress on local resources but more for the fact that the State was not tapping into other potential tourism spots to increase tourism’s contribution to the State’s economy. One of the recommendations in the Report was to achieve this objective through reform of the tourism sector by changing the Land Policy Himachal Pradesh to attract private investments; particularly section 118 of the HP Land Reforms Act.

8 Ibid 7, pg 10.
10 EQUATIONS (2008), ‘Coastal regulation in India --Why do we need a new notification?’, Pg 12.
11 Ibid 10, Pg 11.
Since the later part of the 1990s, International Finance Institutions (IFIs) have been gaining ground in India. They have been finding it easy to operate in an environment where an ad hoc attitude ruled the roost, and where a deregulated and fully liberalised tourism economy had erased spaces for local communities to raise their voices. In 1997, four member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) agreed to the formation of a sub group termed the South Asian Growth Quadrangle. Cooperation was focused on sustainable utilization of natural resources (water and energy), trade and investment, transportation and tourism. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) vigorously pushed subregional economic cooperation in South Asia modelled after what it had done in Greater Mekong Subregion. Despite serious criticism of projects that are planned away from the public gaze and without community participation, the push for IFI-advised tourism development continues.

Implementation Problems in the 1990s

The 1990s saw a sudden spurt in IFI presence in tourism. But there were problems associated with tourism development projects funded by the IFIs, as highlighted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). The CAG Audit report on Union Government (Civil) for the year ending March 31, 1999 reported that Ministry of Tourism released funds for 158 tourism infrastructure projects during the period 1992-1997 under the scheme titled “Development of Tourism Infrastructure”. The scheme was aimed at ensuring comfortable and moderate accommodation to tourists at reasonable rates by way of constructing hospitality facilities such as tourist bungalows, complexes, lodges, reception centres, way-side amenities, etc. Central assistance was provided to state governments on a cost-sharing basis. The state governments were generally expected to meet the cost of land identified for the project with other ancillary facilities such as electricity, water supply and approach road; while the central ministry was expected to meet the cost of construction, including internal electrification, water supply and sanitary fittings etc.

119 out of these 158 projects were not completed as of June 1999. Test checks of accounts had shown that in respect of 67 projects, delay in implementation of 14 months to 65 months was attributed to non-availability of land, change in the designs/estimates, late award of the work, non-availability of clearance from other organizations, projects not being commercially viable, and disputes with executing agencies. This exposed the completely lackadaisical attitude and tearing hurry with which the Union Ministry had continued approving proposals submitted by state governments without ascertaining critical factors. Many of the commissioned projects were not being used for tourism promotion and were non-operational.

The CAG recommended that “Tourism Ministry should review the incomplete projects to ensure their completion urgently and also
review the working of the completed projects along with impact assessment on tourism”. The scheme needed to be re-tailored in the light of shortcomings noticed in its implementation. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) believed that tourism promotion, instead of being viewed as a source of revenue, deserved consideration as a tool of national integration, employment generation and above all a possible means of building global goodwill and better understanding of India and its composite culture and great heritage. Considering the poor infrastructure ratings given by the tourists, general decline in tourism, paltry budgetary allocation for tourism, lack of effective partnership between Ministry and the private operators and the trade, PAC hoped that all the issues would be addressed adequately and progressive policy enunciation made in the new National Tourism Policy at the earliest.

However, against the backdrop of scathing criticism voiced in the performance audit, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Tourism should have stressed studying the social and ecological impacts of tourism. The criticism had also pointed at the utter lack of regulatory regime at the Ministry of Tourism, which should have been reviewed thoroughly.

Towards Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

India’s 9th Plan (1997-2002) and 10th Plan (2002-2007) documents had arguments to more than quintuple the financing of tourism related infrastructure. If we include the plan allocation to states, the figure touched an equivalent of US$814.448 million. Clearly, if planners were to integrate concerns from auditors, they would have also underlined a need to ensure accountability, introduce robust regulatory mechanisms and not merely increased involvement of international and bilateral finance and private sector participation for the sector. N K Singh’s contribution to a symposium on reorienting India’s policy on tourism underlined that “out of 1,310 tourism projects undertaken in 10th Plan, 740 projects remained incomplete”. Despite the changing rhetoric that started to employ terms like cultural tourism, pro-poor tourism, exploring heritage etc., there still remain bottlenecks.

IL&FS Infrastructure Development Corporation broad projections in the year 2007 suggested that over the next twenty years India is required to invest Rs 229,657.79 crores (US$ 50.6 billion). To meet these enormous funding requirements, they propose the Public Private Partnership (PPP) route. The allocation to Union Ministry of Tourism in 11th Plan (2007-2012) stood at an equivalent of US$ 912.89 million. Significant upscaling to the plan was seen when for the 12th plan the Ministry asked the Planning Commission for an allocation amounting to four and a half times the size of the allocation in the previous plan. Where will the money come from to finance such an enormous increase in allocations?

IFI-funded Subregional Tourism Infrastructure

The first decade of this century has been marked by IFIs paving the way for South Asian nations under the rubric of developing subregional tourism infrastructure projects modelled after the Mekong Subregional Tourism model as well as pushing IFI assisted “inclusive” infrastructure development projects in the region. Although regional economic cooperation alliances have existed (e.g. SAARC), ADB has prioritized sub-regional cooperation and integration for development, by projecting the hinterland and borderland as “gateways”. But many see beneath this rhetoric traces of the “growth triangle or quadrangle” or “sub-regional economic zone” concept that a few lead economies of the region had toyed with in the late 1980s and early 90s at the behest of ADB and other donor agencies. The success factors of these triangles or quadrangles were the presence of a highly developed and well endowed city/area that has run out of land and labour, a surrounding area plentiful in land and labour, and a political desire to reduce the visible and invisible distance between the two. ADB documents claim that the rationale for supporting sub-regional cooperation rests on two factors - to permit countries to respond collectively to common trans-boundary problems and secondly improving access to expertise, trade, investment,
information and technology. There is also a claim that a sub-regional cooperation strategy can advance poverty reduction by freeing up trade and transactions, improving regulatory environments, increasing competitiveness and enabling countries to meet their trade liberalisation commitments.⁷

Since stand-alone tourism projects were found to be extremely difficult to execute efficiently on account of the cross-sectoral nature of tourism coupled with complex institutional frameworks, IFIs couched them under the rubric of being a sub-component in biodiversity conservation projects (for example a project in Sikkim funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency - JICA) or infrastructure and transport projects. One of the important criteria set down by IFIs like ADB for approving sector specific lending is the institutional capacity of the borrowing country and implementing agency to formulate comprehensive and long term sector development plans and execute projects that might be funded with a vision to achieve them. Till now the strategy has been first to fund technical assistance and rope in a consultant agency to formulate such a sector development plan which may subsequently lead to projects that can be funded.

**Poor Community Participation**

Projects are planned away from the public gaze and without substantial participation of organisations that work with local communities in analysing the social and ecological impacts of tourism.⁸ In India, local communities have time and again opposed these projects. For example, the opposition from local communities to ADB financed “inclusive tourism infrastructure development project” related works in the vicinity of Pong Dam in Himachal Pradesh and alternative suggestions put forth by them clearly underline the fact that until a very late stage, community participation is not actively sought despite the lip service and rhetoric employed in published reports by international financial institutions and central and state governments receiving external aid for tourism development. Even the criticism voiced by CAG in the course of performance audits of public sector undertakings in tourism and the failure of governance and due diligence pointed out therein gets ignored by governments.

For example, in the context of the ADB’s South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Tourism Development Plan (TDP), the time overruns that were pointed out in the CAG audit became the sole concern of the Government of India which was then fore-grounded to push for an increased consultative role granted to the private sector. Those very State Tourism Development Corporations (STDCs) that have come under criticism in the performance audit of their functioning have recently announced plans to develop tourism infrastructure through PPP mode.

This trend clearly points to a need to engage with the public and constitutional audit institution and to build campaigns taking up failure of governance issues. Civil society also needs to explore campaign and advocacy spaces with Public Accounts Committees of state assemblies that are empowered to follow up on the performance audits, while at the same time developing social audit campaigns as a follow up on constitutional audit agency’s performance audit reports. CAG offices at the level of state and centre do come under the purview of the Right to Information Act and community groups as well as civil society organisations can seek relevant information following upon missing details in CAG’s performance audit reports on STDCs.

**Integration vs. Restriction: Whose line is it anyway?**

In the case of sub-regional development plans, quite naturally, the focus is on bringing down restrictions to regional and sub-regional integration even to the detriment of the interests of local communities. For example, in the context of the north eastern region in India, an important idea that has been repeatedly expressed in the SASEC Tourism Development Plan and echoed by government ministries and tourism promoters has been the relaxation of the Restricted Area Permit (RAP), Protected Area Permit (PAP)
and Inner Line Permit (ILP) rules that apply to some portion of North East India. In its section on issues and constraints for subregional tourism, the Tourism Development Plan makes specific mention of the ILP and PAP required for outsiders to the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and parts of Nagaland. Although many constitutional offices, such as Governor of Manipur in his speech before assembly and groups such as the Diaspora community from the North East at a recent Pravasi Bharatiya Sammelan (a conference of diaspora Indians), have voiced such sentiments, there are also local community groups, such as Mizos and indigenous communities in Arunachal Pradesh, who have vehemently protested against such proposals. Despite criticism of this suggestion, the Government of India decided to lift the Protected Area Permit in three north-eastern states - Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram - with effect from January 2011 for an initial period of one year.

Developing Enclaves

One of the main programmes suggested in the SASEC Tourism Development Plan is the Key Area Programme. A total of 33 projects have been suggested for the implementation around the key areas. Earlier experiences of such strategies (e.g. Special Tourism Areas proposed in the 1992 Tourism Policy) have turned places like Bekal in Kerala, Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, Puri in Orissa and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra into enclaves of investment, exploitation and isolation from their surroundings. These have left natural resources exploited, communities displaced and destinations spent. Despite these and other criticisms voiced repeatedly ever since the SASEC Tourism Development Plan was published, neither ADB nor state and central bureaucracy appear to have pondered over these concerns. The push for IFI advised tourism development continues. The new strategy announced by Union Tourism Minister Subodh Kant Sahay in 2011 lays stress on developing Special Tourism Parks on the lines of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) where projects would be implemented in a PPP mode.

What does the Future look like?

Along with negative impacts on spaces for people’s participation and governance, resulting in the dilution of safeguards, it is important to see these developments in the context of the global economic process which have resulted in the liberalisation and deregulation of our economy. The influence of IFIs on national economic policies has been consistently increasing. The latest trend is the introduction of PPPs in a formal way and the pressure on the state to institutionalise this model of development.

In India, it is the ADB which has been playing an important role in influencing and formulating PPP related policies. As a result of this, the Department of Economic Affairs, within the Ministry of Finance has announced a draft PPP Policy, 2011. The draft National Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation & Resettlement Bill, 2011 also mentions and makes special provisions for PPP projects. In the context of tourism, this needs to be the next level of investigation and action.

Endnotes

1 Published in a positioning paper titled Beyond Greening: Reflections on Tourism in the Rio-Process by EED, June 2012
2 The South Asian Growth Quadrangle consists of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the North eastern states of India (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim)
3 The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India audits all receipts and expenditure of the Government of India and the state governments, including those of bodies and authorities substantially financed by the government.
4 CAG’s Audit findings can be downloaded from www.cag.gov.in/reports/civil/2000_book2/chapter18.pdf
5 Excerpts from CAG Activity Report 2001-‘02, Chapter 5.
7 IL&FS IDC is the infrastructural wing of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd. (IL&FS)
8 Asian Development Bank, Annual Report, 2004
Forests, Communities and the “Green India Mission”: Promises and Failures of Ecotourism

By Equations

Market-based conservation schemes seek to mobilise and channel private sector contributions for the sake of environmental conservation and to resolve various environmental problems. They are actively propagated as an innovative approach “[t]o attract private contributions, introduce sustainable resource management practices compatible with the Rio Conventions’ objectives and principles, and contribute to the development of economic opportunities in poor, rural areas of the world” (Paquin/Mayrand, 2005). These schemes are promoted by a large variety of governmental and non-governmental actors as a possible new and innovative way to finance the conservation of forests and other ecosystems. In India, ecotourism is one such scheme being promoted because it speaks the language of conservation.

Tourism is a sector that is built and relies on natural capital (both human and ecological) and this makes issues of sustainability very critical. Globally, the new interest in tourism environment interrelations is particularly notable with rising concerns about the links between tourism and climate change. In this context, an interesting trend is evident when notions of sustainability lead to class dimensions of tourism. Under the banner of sustainability, policy makers clamour for “high-value low-volume” tourists. This is a recurrent theme in several tourism policy and planning documents in India. This suggests a form of neo-colonialism disguised as green, as it defines those who deserve to travel solely by their ability to spend.

India’s National Action Plan on Climate Change

The Government of India announced its first ever National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in June 2008 to identify measures and steps to advance climate change-related actions in its domestic sphere. Eight National Missions in the areas of solar energy, enhanced energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, sustainable habitat, water, the Himalayan ecosystem, increasing forest cover and strategic knowledge for climate change were incorporated under the Plan by the Prime Minister’s Council on Climate Change, reflecting India’s vision and domestic strategies for sustainable development and the steps it must take to realize it.

According to the NAPCC, the Green India Mission (GIM), being one of the eight National Missions, was launched to enhance eco-system services, including carbon sinks, to be called Green India. “The Mission on Green India will be taken up on degraded forest land through direct action by communities, organized through Joint Forest Management Committees and guided by the department of forest in state governments”, the NAPCC document stated. The Mission has two focused objectives – increasing forest cover and density as a whole of the country and conserving biodiversity and recommended implementation of the already announced Greening India Programme.

The Green India Mission document envisages tourism as offering an alternative livelihood to communities dependent on natural resources in coastal ecosystems like mangroves and in forests. The implications
of this are many. Today, community-driven tourism initiatives are still playing a marginal role and do not receive the impetus they need from the Government through schemes and incentives. In the absence of this communities will not be able to compete with big operators with the capacity to acquire large tracts of land and convert them into private forests which are then promoted as tourism products in themselves. In fact, it is not mere schemes that are needed to ensure that tourism is community driven. What is needed is a change in the way ecotourism is envisaged – where communities are central to the venture and not merely profits of large tour operators and income for the nation. Furthermore, starting a tourism enterprise might not even be in the interests of the community and the state would need to recognise and respect this. Existing tourism development does not involve the Local Self Governance Institutions (LSGIs) in its decision making process, planning and implementation. All the ministries’ plans and schemes should factor in a mechanism to get approval of the LSGIs before a tourism project is initiated. Apart from mega projects, this should hold true even to hotels, lodges, resorts and other infrastructure to be developed in villages in eco-sensitive areas. Given the strict laws regarding forest and coastal governance in the country, the impacts on local communities reach much greater proportions.

Further, indigenous practices of forest conservation will be lost to market-based conservation mechanisms. The GIM talks of not only increasing the forest cover through the usual afforestation programme and plantations, but emphasizes improving the quality of forest cover in 4.9 million ha of forest and non-forest areas representing diversity in forest density, tenure and ownership. This includes 1.5 million ha of moderately dense forest, 3 million ha of open forests and 0.4 million ha of grasslands. The eco-restoration of degraded open forests with a target area double that of the moderately dense forest cover will have more profound impact on the forest communities. The majority of the forest people in India today have shifted to or are being expelled to these open forests which are of less intrinsic value considered uneconomic (Lahiri, 2009). Forest communities extract fuel wood, fodder, and small timber from these forests and graze their cattle. GIM targets these areas for large scale afforestation programmes with fast growing native species and closure to grazing on rotational basis thereby preparing the ground for displacing the forest communities from these last forest areas, so depriving them of their habitat and livelihood options.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) has emphasized improving the quality of forest cover and restoration of eco-systems while remaining silent on the continued deforestation through mining, indiscriminate industrialization, mega infrastructure projects and the active promotion of wildlife tourism in forest areas in the name of ecotourism.

Green India Mission represents an institutional mechanism to promote India’s REDD+ ambitions. REDD+ “has specifically opened the possibilities for the country to expect compensation for its pro-conservation approach and sustainable management of forests resulting in even further increase of forest cover and thereby its forest carbon stocks.” (MoEF, 2010). The MoEF is unscrupulous in openly declaring that forest certification system will “enable unbridled access to ethical trading and market arenas with price premiums.” It does not matter whether the same forests and resources belong to the forest communities.

**Ecotourism and Community Development**

Ecotourism is increasingly being seen as a driver for the eradication of poverty through economic development of communities. Impacts of ecotourism are seen in its multiplier effects, ability to create livelihood alternatives, governance and land use patterns. Ecotourism is also believed to create an enabling environment for conservation as well as generating a monetary resource base for conservation. Conservation education for tourists is also seen as an important outcome of ecotourism. Ecotourism in forest areas is primarily located in or around protected areas and areas identified as Critical Wildlife
Habitats including Critical Tiger Habitats, which has resulted in opposing interests and conflict between the adivasis, the state and other actors.

Over the past eight to ten years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of ecotourism enterprises at well established existing destinations. Further, newer destinations have also emerged. Today, it appears that ecotourism is at its peak and it is important that there be extensive debates to understand the implications of ecotourism and to facilitate the positive impacts while mitigating its negative impacts. For ecotourism to be sustainable, the following process needs to be followed:

- Ensure prior informed participation of all stakeholders
- Ensure equal, effective and active participation of all stakeholders at all stages in ecotourism projects
- Acknowledge adivasis'/other forest dwellers'/local communities' right to say “no” to tourism
- Development – to be fully informed, effective and active participants in the development of tourism activities within their communities, lands and territories
- Promote processes for adivasis/other forest dwellers/local communities to control and maintain their resources, culture and rights.

Ecotourism and Conservation

Tourism may generate funds for conservation related activities. However, estimating the costs of regeneration and the sources of funds received by the State Forest Department is a difficult task. Identifying and segregating different cost components is a challenge since administrative costs overlap various activities including conservation and management. Fundamentally, the issue here is to examine whether income generated from ecotourism activities goes back to the Forest Department. Currently, all earnings from forests (Non Timber Forest Products – NTFP, timber, entry fees, etc.) go into a common pool wherein all non-plan income of the state is parked, from where allocations for different expenses are made. There is no way to ensure that the incomes from tourism are ploughed back to the Forest Department for regeneration work. Therefore, the only directly traceable benefit is salaries people receive when they are employed at tourism sites. This creates a rupture in the idea that ecotourism can be used as an income generation method for forest conservation. Madhya Pradesh is the only state where each national park has created a fund into which money collected through gate receipts feeds.

It has been found that almost 70 percent of income from wildlife tourism is from the fees collected at the entry gate, which means the larger the number of tourists, the greater the earnings of the Forest Department. This is in complete opposition to the concept of ecotourism. Additionally, the large sunk cost of tourism infrastructure developed at the sites becomes redundant since many tourists prefer day visits to overnight stays (Swaminathan/Purushothaman, 2000).

One of the aspirations for ecotourism is conservation education of the tourists. However, not much has been done by way of actualising this potential. A part of the conservation education is to also recognise the role that local communities have historically played in the conservation of the country’s natural resources and the continued struggle to do this in the light of a fast developing nation. This will instil respect for local communities in the tourists and will change the perspective with which they are viewed. The change in the mind set of tourists towards local communities would also positively influence their behaviour vis-à-vis local communities, which today is oppressive, patronising and condescending.
The mainstream notion of conservation overlooks and does not acknowledge the role that is played by adivasis and other forest dwelling communities in conserving the forests as well as the diversity. Forms of conservation are also very often indigenous in nature and are tied with the religious and spiritual beliefs of communities. Some of the conservation practices that have been recorded are the existence of sacred groves, “navai”, a harvest festival in Western Madhya Pradesh, during which the “gayana” is performed. The “gayana” chronicles the evolution of humankind. It is an oral tradition teaching the future generation their past and possibly indicating their future by describing the symbiotic relationship that exists between man and nature and the importance of this relationship for sustenance. This instils in the younger generations a respect for nature while also teaching them about their rights to the forest.

**Ecotourism, Employment and Livelihoods**

The forests, in the form of protected areas, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, are the main tourism product in ecotourism. The creation of these areas has caused land alienation and displacement in large numbers. This change in land use pattern and land dispossession, lack of access to forest resources has led to social injustices like loss of dignity and livelihoods of the adivasis and other forest dwellers. Therefore, in stark contrast to the claim that ecotourism furthers community development, it in fact bases itself on a paradigm of forest conservation and protection, which has taken away the existing livelihoods of people.

It is true that tourism development generates employment opportunities for local communities. However, the lodge or jeep owners are usually not from the region. They are more often than not from nearby cities/towns and sometimes from as far away places like New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. The income thus generated from tourism is taken away from the region and into the bigger cities. There is also the issue of self-determination here. People who used to own land have, due to poverty, been forced to sell out to the companies and become employed as guides and drivers if lucky, but usually end up working as security guards, gardeners, waiters at the restaurant, etc. Therefore, the mere generation of employment, though an often repeated argument, is highly overestimated as it does not counter the disempowerment and lack of dignified life that the adivasis experience.

Today, community-driven tourism initiatives are still playing a marginal role and do not receive the impetus they need from the government through schemes and incentives. In the absence of this communities will not be able to compete with big operators with the capacity to acquire large tracts of land and convert them into private forests, which are then promoted as tourism products in themselves. In fact, it is not mere schemes that are needed to ensure that tourism is community driven. What is needed is a change in the way ecotourism is envisaged – where communities are central to the venture and not merely profits of large tour operators and income for the nation. Furthermore, starting a tourism enterprise might not even be in the interests of the community and the state would need to recognise and respect this.

Ecotourism needs to go beyond community welfare to being community-centred if it wants to achieve its goal of conservation and community development. In the context of livelihoods, ecotourism can only generate employment and for communities it is employment at the lower end of the hierarchical corporate ladder. There is a very important contradiction and difference between livelihood and employment.

Livelihood is a much broader sociological term rooted in the concept of social justice where culture and identity form its basis and is dependent upon the landscape and ecology. It is connected with community and property rights indicating dignity, control, empowerment and sustainability apart from income generation.
Employment on the other hand is an economic term denoting work done and money earned. It is individualistic, governed by a set of rules between two individuals/entities where capital dominates and is irrespective of any location/landscape/ecology and pays for labour that produces and reproduces for consumption for another and does not consider the issue of sustainability.

**Community Involvement**

The role of community involvement maybe spread over a broad spectrum from minimal tokenistic involvement of the community to community-based ecotourism. Along this spectrum are several levels of community involvement:

- **Tokenism** – employing members of the community as drivers, tour guides etc.
- **Informing** – where communities are informed about the ecotourism development being planned and are involved through employment in the ecotourism activities
- **Consulting** – where the communities are consulted with but where the aspirations of the community might or might not be addressed. In this instance the community would have the space to influence decisions while not being a formal part of the decision making process
- **Collaborating** – where communities are seen as equal partners in the ecotourism development planned and are formally part of the decision making process. The community would then have control over the impacts as well as the benefits of ecotourism.
- **Ownership** – where the community owns the enterprise, which becomes the capital of the community. Where the pace, nature, forms, stakeholders are all decided by the communities and all others involved are supporters of the enterprise.

Studies show that unless there has been either proactive response by the community or intervention by an outside agency, most ecotourism developments see the following impacts which need to be taken into account while planning for any ecotourism programme:

- The nature of ecotourism activities are similar across almost all ecotourism sites. Clearly the activities do not take into account the cultural and social specificities of communities in the region. Neither do they take into the account the special skills that each of the communities has in terms of conservation.
- Displacement of adivasis from protected areas, which are then later promoted as ecotourism destinations.
- Objectification of adivasis by the government in their promotional material and literature, the tourism industry and by the tourists in the way they see the adivasis.
- Very often ecotourism activities impinge on resources that are otherwise used by the adivasis for livelihood, health and other purposes making them self-reliant and selfsufficient.
- Construction of tourism infrastructure like roads, accommodation structures like permanent tents, cottages etc. further damage the environment and also are a threat to the adivasis.
- The use of AC tents and other construction material result in increased energy consumption, where the resorts have captive generation of electricity, while very often the villages nearby have not yet been electrified/see frequent power cuts.
- Carrying capacity/limits of acceptable change are very often not taken into consideration while planning ecotourism initiatives.
• Solid waste produced due to tourism initiatives is not properly managed impacting both the environment as well as the people.

Legislation for Ecotourism in Forest Areas in India

India’s forests are governed by a series of acts, policies, regulations and guidelines. However, there seems to be little application of these in the context of tourism. While only the guidelines for the declaration of Eco Sensitive Zones talk of specific guidelines for tourism, from some of the sections like Section 4 (2) (f) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, the boundaries for the operation of tourism enterprises can be deduced. In protected areas, reserve areas and areas declared as critical wildlife habitat, local governance is almost non-existent as all decisions regarding the villages are taken by the Forest Department.

The (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on June 2, 2011 lay out a detailed set of framework guidelines on the selection, planning, development, implementation and monitoring of ecotourism in India. Recognising however, that India’s wildlife landscapes are diverse, these guidelines should be necessarily broad, with specific State Ecotourism Strategies to be developed by the concerned State Governments, and Ecotourism Plans to be developed by the concerned authorities mandatorily taking into account these guidelines. The following core values should be central to the guidelines: people-centred, accountable, democratic/participatory/equitable and nonexploitative, which mandatorily will have to be reflected in the state ecotourism strategies. Roles and responsibilities should be enumerated for different stakeholders: State Governments, Protected Area management, tourist facilities/tour operators, local communities, temple boards and general public. Types of tourism activities allowable should also be enumerated.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 has not been considered while formulating the draft guidelines. It needs to be ensured that the final guidelines will guarantee that the provisions of this key Act are upheld in the context of the governance and regulation of tourism and rights of forest dwelling communities.

What Needs To Be Done

It is important that forests not be seen merely as providing ecosystem services alone but as an ecosystem which comprises of the people living in and around the forests including their historical relationship with the forests, the flora and fauna. By turning ecosystems into tourism products, they are also made vulnerable to the market (demand and supply). This is done without taking into consideration the communities living in these areas who have for centuries been the custodians of the resources and who have a symbiotic relationship with them. Further, the life-cycle of the ecosystems themselves is not considered while planning for tourism development in these fragile spaces.

Ecotourism, when practiced correctly, has the scope to link to a wider constituency and build conservation support while raising awareness about the worth and fragility of such ecosystems in the public at large. It also promotes the non-consumptive use of wilderness areas, for the benefit of local communities living in and around, and dependent on these fragile landscapes. The first benefit from ecotourism must go to the local people, and in the long-run, capacitybuilding should be carried out to forge a sustainable partnership between the forest department, tourism department, tourism professionals and local communities. The long term goal is for communities to own the ecotourism enterprises through active participation in their governance.
It is important to promote ecotourism with the strictest of regulations. While the Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued draft guidelines, it is important that these are finalised after taking into account the responses from the communities and civil society organisations. Finally, there is a dire need for a revised policy on ecotourism, the responsibility for which should lie with the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

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Large parts of this paper are drawn from “Green India Mission: India’s REDD+ Action Plan to disempower and evict forest communities from their own homelands” by Souparna Lahiri and “Forests, Communities And Ecotourism” by Swathi Seshadri. www.equitabletourism.org

Endnotes

1 For example, in his note on Incentive Measures to the 11th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity states that “market creation has often proved to be an effective means for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity”.
2 REDD = Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, see www.un-redd.org
3 The word adivasi literally means ‘indigenous people’ or ‘original inhabitants’.
4 See “In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley (Studies in Social Ecology and Environmental History) by Amita Baviskar, Oxford University Press, 2005
Tourism and Water Rights

November 2012

Water is a natural resource which unfortunately has been taken for granted, a visual of a water body gives an impression of a vast, never ending repository of natural resource. However what needs to be kept in mind is that freshwater comprises only 2.5% of the total volume of water on earth, additionally, 70% of this freshwater is in the form of ice and permanent snow cover in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Less than 1% of the entire freshwater is available for human consumption – to sustain life for a colossal population of 7 billion people. The consequences of an unregulated pattern of consumption of water will be predominantly felt by those communities who are dependant on natural resources for their livelihoods. These communities, over the years have evolved efficient natural resource management mechanisms. However, the needs and the access of these communities to the natural resources are being sidelined when developmental projects come up which most often undermine the sustainable management practises.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) claims that natural resources are the foundation by which rural poor can overcome poverty. This however gets challenged by another school of thought being endorsed by policy makers that tourism is a effective means to overcome poverty. As a driver for development, the tourism industry is being promoted as a one of the key tools to achieve the millennium development goal of eradicating extreme poverty. At the G20 in 2012, “the role of travel and tourism as a
vehicle for job creation, economic growth and development” was recognised and the parties committed
to “work towards developing travel facilitation initiatives in support of job creation, quality work, poverty
reduction and global growth” (G20 Declaration 2012).3

However, the issues which are not addressed at the policy level is the resource intensive nature of the
tourism industry and severe implications of the activities the industry has on the communities living in
the vicinity of these developments.

Tourism is a resource centric and a resource heavy industry. To meet the tourists demands, communities’
dependant on commonly shared natural resources are severely affected. As tourism grows, the competition
for resources between the tourism facilities and the local communities increases.

Today, water is one of the most central resource consumed by the tourism industry. The ideal “holiday
experience” with its luxury services places a high demand for water. Conservative estimates by a study
on water equity in the tourism industry reveals that small scale tourist facilities require 573 litres of water/
per room/ per day as compared to luxury facilities which require 1,335 litres/ per room/ per day in Goa.4

**Tourism’s Water Footprint**

The tourism product is an assemblage of travel, accommodation and other services, which depend upon
people, place, culture, and environmental resources, including water.5 The high pattern of consumption
of the tourists has been established in a few studies. According to UNESCO, an average 18-hole golf
course can consume up to 2.3 million litres of water a day.6 When on vacation, tourists are known
to consume more water than what they normally do, for instance in Benaulim, Goa a five-star resort
consumes 1785 litres of water per guest per day while a neighbouring resident consumes just 14 litres
of water per day.7 Water scarcity in a region does not imply that the tourism industry will function any
differently, as it continues to offer its tourists unlimited water for multiple swimming pools, lush green
lawns, landscaped gardens with exotic species and golf courses – while the basic water requirements
of neighbouring communities are often not met.

It is when tourism begins to claim an inequitable share of the resources that it becomes unsustainable and
its benefits of economic upliftment are negated with a community’s alienation from the natural resources.

While the tourism industry to some extent is conscious of its water footprint, they take on a vainglorious
approach – initiatives adopted usually are water conservation measures within the hotels. Despite adopting
conservation measures such as water recycling, awareness initiatives for the tourists and water treatment
units, the hotels continue to consume more or else the same volume. A more widespread approach
taking into consideration the access to the neighbouring communities is rarely seen.

Privatisation of water resources is another aspect that needs to be considered. It has been observed in
coastal areas that stretches of the beaches are securely guarded by security hired by the hotels to keep
community and general tourist at bay so as to offer privacy to their guests. The communities lose the
power of local ownership and control over the water body in time.

Cidade de Goa a five star hotel in Dona Paula, Goa has encroached upon a public beach which was
privatised and accessed only by the hotel staff and the tourists for years. In 2010, the Supreme Court
ordered the demolition of all structures which obstructed public access to the beach. This section was
subsequently regularized by the Goa’s Chief Minister8 so as to prevent the hotel from incurring a loss
and by regularising the irregular. This example illustrates how power differentials in a region dictate the
access to natural resources where sometimes, big corporations have controlled the access to natural resources in direct violation of existing laws.

Vembanad Lake, the largest lake in Kerala became one of the prime tourist destinations with a large number of tourists, foreign and domestic, visiting the place during the Nehru Trophy Boat race. Tourism flourished drawing tourists because of the calmness and beauty of the lake. The unregulated infrastructure developments around the lake began to interfere with community’s rights over the natural resources – when local people were forbidden from fishing and collecting shells and speedboats damaging the fishing nets. Boat rides with tourists’ and their prying cameras also violated the privacy of women. The lake was a space for women to take a bath, wash utensils or just a space to gather and spend sometime together. This was lost with the incursion of these developments. In time, the numbers of houseboats increased on the lake as there was a greater demand for rooms but a restriction to build more on the land and therefore a natural extension to the lake by the resort owners further closed in on the community.

Another area which has seen a rise in tourism is around protected areas – wildlife tourism. In these fragile ecosystems the communities were initially the force protecting the natural resources, however, the conservation laws in our country have pushed the local people to the periphery of these areas. The inroads made by the tourism industry has seen mushrooming of resorts and hotels around protected areas, offering large farmhouse type getaways in the wilderness. However demands of the high end tourists who visit these facilities has led to the development of swimming pools, air conditioning, spas and dipping pools at these resorts.

A high-end resort built on indigenous peoples farm land along the Banjar river, in Madhya Pradesh have created a water body within their premises by pumping the water from the Banjar river to fill this water body. Even in years when the monsoon has failed, and the levels of water are low in the river the facility continues pumping, reducing and polluting the water upon which the local communities were dependant for their daily needs. It is ironic how the areas which are being protected subject an additional stress on the natural resources and biodiversity to cater to the needs of the tourist.

When a high end resort put up tents at the river’s edge, with the core area of the Kanha National Park at the opposite bank, villagers were of the opinion that they could not continue their daily river based activities (bathing, washing buffaloes) for fear of “disturbing” the tourists.

Water Rights in India

The basic human right to “pollution free water” and the right of “access to safe drinking water” has been derived from Article 21, the Right to Life, of the Indian Constitution. Initially addressing pollution of water bodies, the Supreme Court and several high courts have issued verdicts which recognises the access to drinking water as a fundamental right in India. It is extremely important to strengthen the Fundamental Right to Water with “equitable access and supply” of water to the communities, to dissuade developmental drivers from resorting to unsustainable consumption of and inequitable access to water.

The 73rd Constitutional amendment allowed for devolution of administrative and political powers to the States to recognise Panchayats as institutions of local self governance. This allowed for decentralised governance and management of natural resources. Though there are legal provisions to govern the community conserved resources, it must be implemented through building of social capital, processes and systems. Guidelines defining the access and supply of water to the industry stakeholders and the communities need to be adopted.
Tourism and Water Rights

Unfortunately, as seen in the Goa beach case study above, the power differentials result in the big corporations over-consuming the resource resulting in significant reduction in access and supply of water to the local communities. Though there are laws which punish and even call for shutting down of industries when the basic rights of a community is violated, the notion that tourism can improve a local economy has blinded the governing bodies against the numerous violations.

While tourism development can offer jobs to the members of the local communities, the access to their basic livelihood needs may be hard hit when the resorts / hotels snatch away their basic rights. The situation becomes only worse when the State which is supposed to be the guardian of natural resources, endorse and protect tourism establishments which exploit these resources.

**Responsible Tourism**

The idea of Responsible tourism which is gaining ground in India and on the agenda of discussions and conferences organised by the tourism industry (some of whom may have been the very ones responsible for the privatisation of these resources!).

For tourism to deliver on its promises the needs and aspirations of the local communities should be taken into account.

Drawing from the Global Sustainable Criteria, the Ministry of Tourism, India has finalised the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (ISTC), for accommodation service providers and tour operators. The criteria recognises the importance of measuring an accommodation provider’s water consumption and indicating the source of the water. Additionally, it also warns against “jeopardizing the provision of basic services such as water, to the neighbouring communities”.

The negative impacts of tourism have almost always been felt by the local communities residing in the area – the same communities whose livelihood – according to the UNWTO – should benefit from the array of opportunities the tourism industry offers. The need of the hour is to institute a process which entails equitable sharing of water between the communities and the tourism industry; the necessity to enforce existing laws and develop laws which condemn exploitation of natural resources that is extremely high.

**The Way Forward – Democratic Governance**

The kind of tourism we witness today destroys the ethos of equity and democracy. Water allocation and access cannot be governed by corporations ignoring what is practised for centuries. The ineffective role of governments to regulate capacity in tourism destinations has forced the communities to struggle for their basic water needs, enforcing existing laws and decentralisation of power to local governing bodies for democratisation in decision making has to be adopted.

Tourism industry must be held accountable to those communities whose access to water and its quality has been severely compromised by them. The power balance needs to shift to the sustainable use and access to natural resources and in favour of rights f local communities over the “imperatives” of tourism.

**Endnotes**

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Tourism expansion in Odisha within the context of a study on Chilika Trends and Impacts

2012

Context

According to a recent estimate by the IMF (International Monetary Fund), India is growing at 9.4% and they say it is well on its path to be a super-power soon. Taking this as an indicator, the state of affairs in the country should also be both growing and glowing. There should be a remarkable increase in all the human development indices. Then, how come the country has slipped even further from 128 in 2008 to 134 in 2011 in the human development report released recently by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)? Where is the growth taking place? Who are the ones benefiting from this kind of growth? Why is it not reaching the people on the ground? These are few questions that have remained unanswered by the State even when it does not cease to boast about development and progress. Post - liberalisation phase has seen massive selling out of national treasure and pride for generating revenue. As industrialisation was given a push, tactics to woo the tourists did not fall behind. Tourism in India was given a new dimension with the introduction of National Tourism Policy in 2002 – in order to develop tourism in India in a systematic manner, ‘position it as a major engine of economic growth and to harness its direct and multiplier effects for employment and poverty eradication in an environmentally sustainable manner.’

<table>
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<th>Salient Features of National Tourism Policy, 2002</th>
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<td>- position tourism as a major engine of economic growth</td>
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<td>- harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and providing impetus for rural tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>- position India as a global brand to take advantage of the burgeoning global travel trade and the vast untapped potential of India as a destination</td>
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<tr>
<td>- create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on India’s unique civilization, heritage and culture in partnerships with states, private sectors and other agencies</td>
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*Source: [http://tourism.gov.in/policy](http://tourism.gov.in/policy)*

In the eleventh five year plan (2007-2012), the Ministry of Tourism has planned to emphasise on creating world class infrastructure to satisfy the new market demands and bring India within the ambit of an important tourist destination in the world. Large capital has been allocated for various projects to promote tourism throughout the country. Ecotourism is one of the important areas that is being promoted as massive infrastructure development is carried out in the identified areas.

In the effort to portray India as a world class country and a future super power, one wonders where all the planning and investments are going. The country remains to be in the news for its increasing percentage of deaths due to malnutrition, hunger, poor health care, unemployment and so on. The tourism policy
2002 talks about creating employment for people in the rural areas yet one is not able to see any progress on that front as people on the ground still remain to be despondent and in misery.

Toeing the lines of the centre, the state of Odisha is making all efforts to pose itself as one of the most significant tourist destination in the country. Being the first state in India to declare ‘tourism’ as an industry in 1986, Odisha offers a variety of attractions for tourism development. The department of tourism and culture has been in the forefront in marketing and promoting Odisha as a tourist destination by highlighting various features of the state such as ancient monuments, beaches, forest and wildlife, adivasi heartland, Chilika lagoon, hot springs and so on. At the core is to increase the tourist traffic and there is an emphasis on developing and promoting tourist centres in the state. Keeping in line with the centre’s agenda, Odisha tourism department is focusing on both infrastructure development and massive publicity strategies. There is also a push for public-private partnership as more and more private houses are invited to invest. Some of the major activities undertaken by the department recently are:

- Formulating a new tourism policy with an emphasis on encouraging private sector participation
- Puri and Chilika being developed as special tourism areas – essentially meaning to invest more and introduce new and alien concepts, and
- Increasing participation in various tourism festival organized in other countries

Tourism development is taken at an equal footing with mining and industrial development by the government of Odisha as it opens its doors for private investors to develop areas. A concept like Team Odisha with the Chief Minister at its chair is given a shape to attract investments to promote industrialization and investment as vehicles towards economic growth. Team Odisha ‘provides the necessary synergies and convergence of all government efforts to ensure Odisha’s position at the vanguard of economic and social prosperity’\(^2\). Odisha has been witnessing perils of the free market economy rather more prominently than many other states in India. Several projects are promoted in resource-rich areas in Chilika, Puri, Rayagada, Sundergarh, Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, and Balangir. While on the one hand its rich mineral resources are sold out to both domestic and international corporations, the areas where these minerals are located are promoted as hot tourist spots – almost creating a contrasting image of greed and mindless planning. It is really interesting to see how the state is promoting two contrasting ideas – one that talks about earning revenue by keeping the resources intact thereby attracting the tourists and the other attempts to destroy the resources by bringing in mega mining, dam and other projects which unsettle not only the ecosystem but also displaces people and deprives them of their life and livelihood options. What an irony the state is in! It noteworthy here that communities living in these tourism hot spots are mostly treated as commodities rather than partners in the endeavour.

**The Idea of a Research**

It is in the above-mentioned context, the following research ideas were generated and carried out:

- Studying the trends in tourism development in Odisha – what was it earlier – what have been the shifts since declaration of it as an ‘industry’. Understanding tourism policy / any legislation that maybe in place brought in to boost expansion of tourism in the state. Has the state come up with any Ecotourism Policy? Has there been push towards opening up of more and more ecosystems for ecotourism. Change in any other laws that may favour tourism – for e.g. land
- Study the impacts of tourism project in Chilika - ecotourism development in an eco-fragile area, impact on environment, on the life of the communities, their rights, establishment of tourism mechanism such as Chilika Development Authority (CDA) to boost ecotourism
With reference to the case study on Chilika, the following aspects were looked at:

- Whether tourism practices have been facilitating or debilitating in nature vis-à-vis the traditional socio-economic and cultural practices of local communities
- Nature and form of tourism developments that are getting pushed in the area – size, investment, ownership.
- Tourism impacts – positive / negative – economic, environment, social, cultural, institutional – especially on women, children, indigenous people, marginalised communities
- Violation of rights – access to resources, conflict
- The kind of land (revenue, forest, community, agricultural) and resources that are getting acquired by the state and are then being given for expansion of tourism.
- The nature and extent of participation of local communities in deciding if or not tourism and related practices should be allowed in their respective areas and who should manage them.
- With respect to the case study in eco-sensitive area: Important to look into the role forest department is playing in regulating tourism practices in these areas? Is there any change of role of the Forest Department in Odisha?
- The role of women – tracking the changing trends in socio-cultural practices of communities coming under tourism areas with specific focus on their impacts on the space, identities, and existential behaviour of the women.

Methodology

A combination of secondary and primary research was adopted to carry out the research. The secondary research involved extensive study of the national tourism policies, programs and their ramifications on the state and state-specific tourism policies, programs and trends; views and analysis on trends of tourism in Odisha.

The field research included a visit to the state of Odisha to five areas viz., Sipakuda & Banamalipur, Mirzapur, Satpada, Manglajodi, Chitrapur and Balugaon of Chilika Lagoon spanning over three districts in Odisha. Meetings with officials from relevant departments and CDA, community representatives, representatives of peoples’ movements in Chilika, representatives of NGOs and journalists were held. Appropriate tools were developed to maximize the interactions with a cross-section of people and entities.

Findings

Trends in Tourism Development in Odisha

Tourism in Odisha is still guided by a tourism policy formulated in 1997 based on Orissa Industrial Policy. It was aimed at encouraging investments from the private sector in various tourism activities. Tourism in the state is seen as a revenue generation model as most of its activities revolve around that central idea. With the change in Industrial Policy in 2001 in Odisha and the centre adopting a new National Tourism Policy in 2002, the tourism policy is being revised in Odisha. However, the state of Odisha is yet to finalise its new tourism policy despite the tourism minister making announcements many times in the past. According to the Director, Department of Tourism (DoT) in Odisha, ‘the Odisha tourism policy has become obsolete and the new one is yet to be finalized.’ The draft policy is now prepared for a decade between 2010 and 2020.
Government of Odisha has prepared master plans at different times to ensure planned development in the tourism sector. Some of them include:

- Master plan on Chilika Lake was prepared by Town & Country Planning Organisation in late 70s.
- A comprehensive master plan for the State of Odisha was prepared by India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) in the late 70s.
- 10-year Perspective Master Plan for Odisha (1992-2002) was prepared by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).
- Comprehensive Master Plan on Buddhist Circuit of Odisha comprising Ratnagiri – Lalitgiri & Udayagiri was prepared by TCS and A.F. Ferguson in mid 90s.

As is evident from the list, there’s an emphasis on bringing in private firms and entities to develop master plans for the state. This is also to ensure that the tourism sector continues to function as an industry although parallel processes had been started by the state itself to promote different tourist sites as eco-sites. The draft tourism policy emphasizes on safe tourism which according to the Director, DoT means, “adequate police provision and adequate police stands.” This reflects the mindset of a police state.

On the basis of the guidelines given in the National Tourism Policy, the DoT under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture prepared a perspective plan in 2002 for 20 years. This perspective plan was made with financial help from Department for International Development (DFID) and was initially given to Price Waterhouse Coopers and later ORG-MARG completed the task. Involvement of private entities for a state plan can be an indication of where it is heading. The 20 year perspective plan has three phases carved out as short term (2002-2007), medium term (2007-2012) and long term (2012-2022).

Among others, ecotourism is one of the main areas in the plan considering the vast natural assets available. The perspective plan outlines only some features of ecotourism with references to ecotourism policies from other states.

On the ecotourism aspect, the perspective plan lays out the following:

- It recognizes the definition of ecotourism as given by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), “tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specified object of studying, admiring and enjoying the serenity and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both of the past or the present) found in these areas.
- New tourism projects should not bring about any impairment to the environment. Hence, due cognizance be given to the environmental aspects and proposes that environment impact assessment should be made an integral part of all forthcoming projects.
- Eleven activities have been suggested to be performed for eco development and maintenance of natural assets. Suggestions are made for preservation of endangered species and other forest products.

Ironically, the plan contradicts its own description of ecotourism while planning activities on Chilika and in other places. For example, it has prescribed various activities on Chilika such as water sports, boat cruise and so on which will essentially disturb the natural ecosystem. It is not understood how these two contrasting ideas can work.
According to the Director, DoT, Odisha, ecotourism means using natural resources such as the national parks, wildlife areas and water bodies and that there are two ways to implement ecotourism:

- The Ministry of Tourism carries out ecotourism projects through DoT
- The State Department of Environment and Forests has its own projects

The perspective plan emphases on developing and improving infrastructure facilities in and around the tourist places. In the report, it however does not specify how the local communities will benefit from all the projects and plans once implemented except, making some passing reference employment generation in some areas. History has shown that the local people are alienated not only from their traditional and often sustainable resource base but are also not provided any support for sustenance. In many places, such projects have rendered the local people helpless as they have left the place in search of a living. Otherwise, self-reliant socio-economic base is turned into a laboratory of development ideas by destroying the local communities in different ways.

Since tourism is recognized as an industry, all the government land acquired for tourism is automatically considered as industrial activities. The perspective plan too prescribes that the Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation of Odisha (IIDCO) will be the nodal agency for acquisition of land for tourism projects in the case of involvement of private entrepreneurs. Industries will be allotted land for tourism projects by the collectors and the revenue authorities of the district in which the project is located.

It is the DoT that implements the tourism projects and Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) , established in 1979, is the executive arm of the department. DoT’s initiatives on ecotourism so far have been around community participation in plantation and beautifying the project areas. The plantation programs are carried out extensively by introducing alien species such as eucalyptus that colonises the area. According to the DoT, ecotourism has to hinge on local peoples’ participation in operational and maintenance works, projects must be set up in tandem with nature and there should be regulation and not restriction for the visitors to visit the area. This description of ecotourism sounds perfect but in reality, it seems to be far away from it as huge tourism development projects are going ahead involving massive land acquisition and displacement of people from their homes and livelihoods. For example, Shamuka – the one stop destination beach project spot, developed along the lines of Las Vegas, involves acquisition of 976 acres of land for the project and another 2500 acres of contiguous land for other facilities such as golf resorts, shopping malls, business centres and so on. Abiding by the plan laid out in the perspective plan, all this land is given to the private developers by the district collector. In return, the DoT has given 50 crores towards compensation for the people who have lost their land. The director DoT says that no one is forcibly removed from the area – a line that the state government of Odisha has been sticking to in many other projects to paint a clean image for itself. He further says that the project has to ensure that at least 70% of the low and middle rung personnel are local people – this is again something which has remained only on paper for decades and seldom implemented. The area where the project is coming up is fertile land where people have lived for centuries and is also a rich coconut producing area. The entire local economy is at threat in the need to cater to tourists.

Impacts of tourism project/s in Chilika and people - efficacies of mechanisms such as CDA and ecotourism: Chilika, India’s largest brackish water lake spanning over 1100 sq. Km (71 km long and 32 km wide), is one of the most significant tourist spots in Odisha and India. Home to rare species of birds, fish, Irrawaddy dolphins, the lake is an ecosystem in itself. It is a declared sanctuary area under the Wildlife Protection Act and designated as a Ramsar site in 1981. It is spread over in three districts viz., Puri, Khurda and Ganjam.
As a tourist spot, Chilika offers the following:
- A large expanse of blue water lagoon
- Nalabana bird sanctuary
- Dolphins
- Kalijai temple
- Islands inside the lake – Parikuda and Malud
- Nirmal Jhar

The lake was a source for livelihood for more than 2 lakh people through fishing and tourism which has been affected severely for various reasons over the years. (This is discussed later in this section).

The lake has been facing unprecedented threats from growing pollution, commercialized aquaculture and, high siltation. In the early 90’s, there was a serious worry that the lake was dying due to the closing of its mouth and an urgent need for reviving it was sought. Dangers due to the negative effect on level of salinity in the water were looming large on the lives of the species including the dolphins and impact on the livelihoods of fisher folks who depend on the massive water body. Although it was claimed that the siltation was causing all the problems, there’s very little steps taken to stop the commercialization of shrimp and prawn farming mostly by the non-fisher folk and by private companies. There seemed to be no checks and balances in place to put a stop to this which was feeding into creation of siltation in the lake. The threat to the lake was so serious that Chilika was listed as a Ramsar site in danger (the Montreux Record) in 1993.

There were many factors that led to the damage to the lake and the ecosystem around it. One of them was the Odisha government adopting the lease system, which differed for fisher folk and non fisher folk. The lease policy of the government brought in non-fishing people who used damaging methods to catch fish for quick and more returns. According to Sharmistha Pattnaik, “the pursuit of economic class interests has degenerated the lake environment and society. Conflicts in Chilika are the result of various factors such as modernization, economic competition between socially differentiated segments of society, social inequality and other allied causes”6. This dire state of the lake was taken up seriously by the state and it is said that the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) played an important role in reviving it. Official views suggest that the lake was brought back to life by opening a new mouth and adopting various scientific strategies and it is claimed that the local people have sighed a sense of relief as their livelihood source could be protected. However, this view is refuted by the people as they say that opening a new mouth was not as necessary as stopping the rapid commercialization of aquatic species which unsettled the natural revival process of the lake. The commercial activities have not only threatened the lake, it pushed the local fisher folks away from their traditional livelihood activities. The nexus between the state and business groups were so strong that it silenced the resistance of local people against this. The firing in the midnight of 29th May 1999 is still afresh in peoples’ memory in the area where they lost five of their activists – who were protesting against the commercial activities. “Overexploitation of fishery sources, shrinkage of capture fishing potential, large scale conversion of leased out fishing sources into shrimp culture gheries (bamboo embankments), large scale encroachments are a part of this intensive shrimp culture. It has been alleged that the intensive shrimp culture gheries have created a lot of environmental problems, for example: blockage in the water channels and creeks inside lake Chilika; fall in the salinity and depth of water in the lake, increase in emergence of landmass; degradation of the eco-system and environment of the lake, etc. are some of the major ecological problems that the Lake is facing”6.
The new mouth was opened in 2001 to facilitate the maintenance of a required salinity balance. Official data shows a remarkable increase in fisheries and fish production. However, the local people have a different story to tell. According to traditional fisher folks at Mirzapur village in Puri district, the opening of the mouth has proved disastrous for them as catching fish has become very difficult. They now have to go 30 km into the sea (as the fish has also changed its natural path and gone into the sea) to catch fish, which takes them about 15 days to go and come back. There is no catch available otherwise and it becomes extremely unviable for them to continue this arduous task on a regular basis. This has essentially led to many of them changing their traditional profession and migrating to other areas for work. This is the story across the area where the traditional fisher folks have shifted to non-traditional source of earning a living. In this desperate situation, there is an increased usage of zero and nylon nets with very small mesh size to be able to catch the smallest fish – a practice the traditional fisher folks would never adopt.

All along, the local people have seen the interference of commercial activities on the lake as the most crucial reason for the dying of the lake - an issue which needs to be addressed immediately. Instead, the government through the CDA came up with the idea of opening a new mouth endangering the livelihoods of the locals as mentioned above. In almost all the places, people resisted against opening a new mouth as they could foresee an ensuing damage. For example, there was resistance to the opening of the new mouth with the leadership of Shivaji Pattnaik of the CPI in Sipakuda-Banamalipur area but the momentum got diffused as some influential people from the two villages changed sides at the instance from other political parties who were supporting the idea. CDA involved a private company from Chennai called Temba Company to carry out the work of opening the mouth. All the workers came from outside whereas the local people remained mute spectators to a life-changing act by the state. Very little efforts have been made to remove the commercial encroachments as the gheries can be seen in abundance in the whole area in Balugaon - Barkul. The people say that any amount of government visits to inspect the area has not resulted in removing them. It is true that there have been complaints made about the gheries (Bamboo Embankment) and inspections have been made by the government teams. But typically, during the inspection visits, the gheries are lowered in the water so that the boats on which the inspection teams travel can have a safe passage to prove that there are no gheries in the lake. And they again come up once the team leaves the area.

The entire area is full of gheries – they are in such huge numbers that there is no clear patch available to even do fishing – yet the administration is unable to see this day-light robbery. The local people in Chandraput village said that it is not possible to even catch fish to eat let alone sell them and earn a living. A self-reliant fishing community is now longing to even have some fish to eat – at times they have to buy stale fish to consume. Such is the irony of development!

A person from Chandraput village, situated next to the huge infrastructure of CDA in Balugaon wonders how the administration is not able to catch the guilty when the truth is that the gheries are put up by people from outside right under the watchful eyes of the administration. All the departments are party to the commercial activities, he exclaims – the police, the revenue, the forest department, the district administration – all working together. He pointed to tender bamboo being used to make the gheri, yet, when a villager tries to get a piece of bamboo for his household use, he is not allowed by the forest department. Then how come bamboo in such huge quantity is used without any hindrance from the same forest department? Isn’t it the nexus that is at its best? He further goes on and asks if the CDA is set up to protect the lake? If so, why is it that the CDA has not raised a voice against the gheries!
Otherwise a huge village, Chandraput looks deserted as its people have gone out in search of work. On an average, around 400/450 girls can be seen at Balugaon crossing, standing on the lookout for some wage work – some are lucky while many come back to an empty home. This has been the case for past 5-6 years now. Prior to this, the village used to have a self-sustaining economy drawn from fishing. This is the story of each fishing village across the lake.

No amount of complaints to CDA has yielded any results. People have asked them about where the bamboo is coming from to set up the gherries. The CDA chief gives assurance to respond but it never comes. The gloomy situation is described by the villagers when they said that whatever is being planned is for those who are on the high echelons of the society.

The threat is not only to the livelihoods of the fisherfolk but also to the ecological safety of birds, dolphins and other species. The reasons are also attributed to the increasing tourism activities on the lake. The concept of ecotourism is implemented in and around the area and many steps have been taken towards it. For example, small landing centres (jetties) have been built in seven villages9 to facilitate boating of the tourists and supposedly to increase the local economy of people. Five of the seven villages where jetties have been constructed were visited during the study to understand the impacts of the intervention. It was found that the areas have been undergoing a lot of tension as the local people feel that the jetties have created a rift between them as only a handful of people benefit from it. A few cases are presented below:

### Case Study 1 - Sipakuda & Banamalipur (twin-village)

This is a nondescript village along the Chilika Lake with approximately 150 families traditionally dependent on fishing. There is very little agricultural land available where mostly cashew nut cultivation is done. In 2000, when the CDA decided to open a new mouth to the sea in Chilika it marked the turning point in peoples’ lives. The fish catch was reduced drastically having a crippling impact on the local economy as the new mouth also changed the natural path that the fish used to follow. People started going out for work – many of them migrated to faraway places like Mumbai and Chennai.

In 2004, the CDA decided to build a jetty (boat landing area) in seven villages10 - as a part of their tourism development strategy, in the guise of facilitating livelihoods for people from tourism – and Sipakuda was one of them. Already devastated by the opening up of the new mouth, people in the area resisted this new plan by the Authority. However, the resistance could not sustain due to various vested interest groups influencing the minds of people in the area where a set of people started demanding for jetties in the area. It was at a time when people in the village did not even know what a jetty meant. And, finally the CDA managed to go ahead with the setting up of the Jetty in Sipakuda in 2004.

According to an active member of the Baba Chaubar Dev Motor Boat Association, the jetty was set up in Sipakuda with the objective of promoting ecotourism as well as helping people to earn through tourism activities. This act of CDA has changed the entire landscape of the village. Now, on a regular day, hundreds of vehicles from Puri with tourists throng the village as it became easier for the tourists to see the dolphins here and not travel for another 7 kms to Satpada for the same. Sipakuda has lines of restaurants selling aerated drinks and exotic food like chilli chicken, tandoori chicken, mutton biryani and so on. Didn’t we hear that the CDA was implementing an ecotourism project in the area?

The Baba Chaubar Dev Motor Boat Association was set up at the panchayat level – there are 11 villages in the panchayat and Sipakuda is one of them. There are 225 members in the association and each member owns a boat. In fact, a boat owner is a member of the association and thus is a beneficiary to
all the facilities provided under tourism. So how does this benefit the rest of the villagers? Pat comes to the reply from the association that there are people engaged in running the restaurants and working as guides on the boat adding employment to another 100 odd people from the entire panchayat. What happens to the rest – on an average there are 5000 people in a panchayat.

There are 225 boats operating in Sipakuda jetty area and all the boats have diesel machines – the crude oil is getting into the water and one can see a layer of oil on the water. Used juice cans, beer bottles and chips packets are thrown into the water although there are garbage bins but kept in not so convenient places. According to the Association members, the dolphins are more affected by the noise that these boats create and not so much by the oil spill. But what about the fish catch – no one is bothered as most of them are not dependent on fishing. They inform that, the CDA had organized a seminar with scientists to explore the production of noise-less boats.

Economics of a boat - One boat with 8 seater is booked at Rs.1000/- and a boat gets its turn once in three days on an average. Around Rs. 500/- is saved from the earning. It costs around Rs.90,000/- and at least a week to make a boat. So naturally, this is a costly affair and only those who are wealthy can afford to own a boat thus benefitting from the ecotourism project implemented in the area. A typical trip involves dolphin watching and on the way back tourists are taken to the sea mouth and a sand patch where the tourists can rest for a while – there are small shops selling coconut water, chaat items, fried prawns, beer and soft drinks. These shops are opened by people who are either members of the association and/or those close to the association members.

There is involvement of NGOs in the sphere of developing mangroves, decorating the boats, refurbishing the boat seats, putting up signboards and so on. For example, a Rayagada based NGO called PREPARE has given Rs. 10 lakh to the association to improve the boat facilities, and has invested in creating a mangrove on 11 hectares of land. This led the wildlife department to create a mangrove on 88 hectares of land in collaboration with the forest department. The mangroves have attracted the birds and is considered a boost for tourism activities.

There is infrastructure development in the village by the CDA such as the community centre and the tourist centre. In addition to this, the government has sanctioned Rs. 49 lakh to develop these two villages for tourism purposes such as building parking areas, recreation hall, toilet complex, and approach road. The association will be handling the implementation of all these plans – road, parking, toilet etc. The revenue collected from these things will be used to maintain the facilities. The Motor Boat Association people believe that these efforts will help the local people to become more advanced and forward looking.

It is doubtful if this is a shared view of the people in these villages as the village still looks desolate with many of them being out on work.

During the visit to the village in March 2010, there was massive tension between few villages and that had led to a complete halt of all tourism related activities. This village wore a desolate look where all the boats were parked or being repaired and people were not clear how long it will take to sort out the matter. There were legal cases against people of the villages and no one was ready to explain what exactly was the matter. One left the village wondering what was the understanding that people and government agencies had of ecotourism as what was being implemented was a far cry from the stated principles. Perhaps this is a question that needs to be asked by the people in the area more and more.
Case Study 2 – Mirzapur

This village with 166 families used to live on fishing till the opening up of the new mouth snatched their traditional livelihood practices. According to the people in the area, rare variety of fish used to be caught and traders used to come to buy them in high prices. However, with a drastic change in lives, the people migrated to cities for a living. Resistance to the new mouth opening died down as the CDA explained to them that it will in fact yield more fish catch – an explanation that people now repent. It belied their traditional wisdom about the movements of fish in the lake and sea.

In 2007, the jetty was built by the CDA promising livelihoods to the people in four villages through ecotourism activities – Mirzapur, Raipur, Parvatipur and Padampur11. Three of these four villages used to live on fish catch traditionally – Padampur is a non-fishing village. The common understanding of the ecotourism in the area is dolphin watching, mangroves and bird watching. The CDA facilitated the formation of Bhabakundaleshwar Nav Bihar Ecotourism Centre in Mirzapur that essentially works with the CDA, Forest, Wildlife and Tourism Departments. The number of boats operating from this jetty has risen from 40 to 155 in the past three years. Those who have money are able to own a boat. There are other employment options such as boat drivers, vending of pearl, green coconut, and small shops and eateries.

Opinions are divided among people about the ecotourism activities. While one set of people, mainly the ones who own the boat and vehicle drivers12 who bring the tourists from Puri feel that this is a great thing to have happened, there are people in the village who mourn the fact that the entire area has become sandy and thus no chance of fish coming to the area even if the mouth is closed now. They expressed a sense of pride of being their own master and now the ecotourism activities have led people to be employees of someone – a fact not appreciated by many in the area. According to a conservative estimate by the village elders, people from around 12 villages lost a vibrant economic source when the new mouth was opened. In fact a resistance is again brewing as the CDA is planning to open another mouth. In past few years, after a mouth was opened, another opening has been created due to pressure which the local people say is the natural way the sea behaves. Seeing this, the CDA has plans to open another mouth – to which the local people are resisting strongly. People do not see any benefit from these kinds of activities.

Take for example, Mirzapur village. There are 166 households in the village – about 80 of them have boats thereby benefiting from the ecotourism activities. Some people are dependent on fishing who have to go 30kms into sea. They come back home after 15 days – the earning from such activities are hardly sufficient. The rest are dependent on migrating sometime going as far away as Chennai for work. They come back once every 5/6 months. Otherwise, a self-reliant and cohesive community has to now struggle to survive. What is the use of such plans that is not meant for the entire village and that does not involve and benefit each member of the community – ask the villagers? Certainly, this has created a rift among the villagers and this is one of the central reasons behind these projects closing down in many places. People in this village informed that five13 out of seven areas where jetties and ecotourism projects were implemented by the CDA are already closed due to internal conflicts among the communities. Those involved with CDA fear that they may also face the same fate.

The community is in a vulnerable state as a minor wave carries the danger of washing the entire area. People from the area have informed the authorities but, it has heeded any response from the state that is so blindly trying to implement plans developed in far away cities.
There are plans of home-stay tourism by CDA, Tourism Department, Forest Department, NABARD, and NGOs like the Bishop Church. There is no financial support as such for the ecotourism centre but Bishop Church is talking to NABARD for a loan to have fibre boats. A fibre coating in the boat will increase the longevity of the boat, said the people. NGOs like PREPARE are helping in planting mangroves and the government departments are taking keen interests in implementing social forestry programmes. One can see exotic plants in the area though people are not even aware about the ill effects of plants such as the eucalyptus. Those involved in the ecotourism centre are making a desperate attempt to mobilize people to support the tourism activities in the area so that their livelihood base remains secure and they do not have to close down like in five other places.

There is a committee of 155 members in Bhabakundaleshwar Nav Bihar ecotourism Centre. The primary requisite to be part of the organization is to own a boat. In the committee there is not a single woman member. It has been a conscious decision to not let the women be a part of the committee as there is a strong belief that a woman needs to earn a living only when her husband dies. It’s against the culture of the area to allow women to work for others. This argument is rather strange in a community where both women and men used to work together to sustain their lives. A typical fishing community has their roles marked out for work that the men and women are expected to do to sustain the fish-based economy. All the 155 members are boat owners and visibly well-connected with the government officials and influential NGOs.

It seems women were given training on entrepreneurial activities but are not provided with any opportunity to practice the learning. There are NGOs working in the area who have formed SHGs and they are provided training on different things. But certainly, there is no involvement of women in the entire process of ecotourism in the area. The organization is not meant for all the people in the village. Half of the village people do not come in the ambit of the organization.

Case Study 3 – Manglajodi

Manglajodi, a village of 8 sahis (clusters) has about 8000 voters. The main source of living in the area had been from fishing. But with the shrinking of Chilika due to siltation and water table going down, it became difficult for people to eke out a living from fishing. Generally, the villages along the lake do not have much agricultural land. With the shrinking of local economy, the people started migrating out of the area for work. The area is also a destination of migratory birds in large numbers and bird poaching by people was rare. But with the traditional livelihood reducing, around 12 families from Behara sahi adopted it as a source of their earning. Behera Sahi has around 320 families and many of them were engaged in this trade. On an average 150 birds, mostly migratory in nature were killed per day and sold at Rs.50/- to Rs100/- per bird. Bureaucrats, influential people and traders used to buy them as they are great delicacies. The members of these families have the state of art trap that kill a bird without fail.

Things started changing for these 12 families around 1995 when an NGO called the Wild Orissa formed a bird protection committee (Sri Sri Mahabir Pakshi Suraksha Samiti) and made these people its core members. It was around the same time the CDA also started taking initiatives on tourism development in the area. These 12 people were given the training to guard the birds, keep a record of migratory birds, and catch anyone if engaged in poaching. As a part of the tourism development, the CDA set up a visitor centre in the area, built a watch tower for the tourists to see the birds, gave binoculars and books apart from motivating the 12 member team to become true conservationists. Help also poured in from outside – eg. Kalpavriksh, another NGO has been invited by CDA to provide them training on conservation, thereby also documenting the process of ecotourism in the area. Earlier poachers are now known as guides in the area.
These members have a high regard for Wild Odisha, for its efforts in transforming them. They continue to receive support from the organization and in 2009, they supported 7 members with a monthly salary of Rs. 2000/- for a year. It has also provided them with dresses, torch, cycle to the samiti members.

According to samiti members, they are now protectors and this life is much better than the earlier one. Earlier they used to live as criminals. Now their family members especially their children are relieved that their fathers are not doing anything illegal. They now lead a routine life that includes going on patrolling, looking after the tourists during the season, and fishing for their living. They have three five member teams that go for patrolling and their routes in the channel are all marked out by them.

Team 1- 3am -10am  
Team 2- 5am-2pm  
Team 3 – 3pm – 6pm

Members take turns to be in the team. This is done by 26 members of the samiti including 12 core members. During the patrolling, they also keep an eye to spot new birds. Even in the dead of the night they are able to locate birds on the basis of the bird calls.

During the season, they take the tourists through the channel for bird watching. One four-seater boat is charged for Rs. 600/- for a three hour trip spanning across 6 kms. Out of this Rs.600/- earned, the guide is given Rs.100/-, Rs. 100/- goes to the committee and the boat owner gets Rs.400/-. Usually, the tourist season is between December and February. From March till November, they live on fishing that fetches them Rs.50-Rs.60 per day and it is the difficult period to sustain.

These protectors catch poachers while on patrol. They get support from the Forest Department but also feel that the department does not do any work except the census. For that too, they depend on them.

With 26 members in the samiti, their responsibility is divided among patrolling, tourist management and guarding. But the samiti has been facing severe problems since February 2010 and this detracted the tourists from coming to the area affecting the earning of the members dependent on tourism massively.

While, the situation may have changed for better for these families, the tourism activities have not really reached the rest of the villagers. And this could be visible from the fact that there is grave tension within the communities. It seems the village had an organization formed by the youth of the area called Maa Kalijai Jubaka Sangha for past 20 years but it was not very active. So when the bird protection committee was formed in 1995, the earlier group lost whatever little significance it had and with no attempt to integrate the people either from NGO side or from CDA. The tension was mounting and it reached a high point when the president of the bird protection committee was caught by the Forest Department while poaching and sent to jail. He is out on bail but was removed from the post of the president of the committee.

The Bird Protection committee had got the Biju Pattnaik Award. The President changed the signatories to the account and tried withdrawing money for his personal use. When the core team learnt about it, they went to the bank and stopped it. The other members of the community want to benefit from the prize money and other tourist activities happening in the area by trying to prove that the bird protection committee is an invalid one. They have lodged a complaint to this effect and since the bird protection
Tourism expansion in Odisha within the context of a study on Chilika Trends and Impacts

committee is not a registered body and has a limited support of the community, they are finding it difficult to wade through this tough time. Meanwhile, 5 of the 12 core members have also changed sides. There are cases and counter cases against people from both sides. There has been expenses to the tune of Rs.30,000/- due to this plus the loss due to lack of tourists in the area.

There are other tensions in the area as well – various NGOs are now trying to establish themselves there are big plans to develop tourism in the area. Ostensibly, there is tension brewing between two NGOs now – Wild Odisha and Centre for Professional Social Workers (CPSW) and it is believed that CPSW has got a huge project on ecotourism in the area.

There is absolutely no participation of women in any of the activities of tourism. In fact the bird protection committee is unable to visualize if there could be any role for the women and believe that they are not affected and thus need not be involved.

So, while Manglajodi is talked about for transforming bird poachers to become bird protectors, it is indeed an irony that this ‘significant’ and may be noble effort has created a much larger rift among the villagers. And till this is resolved and an all-inclusive plan is chalked out, one cannot really call this an ecotourism project. And it is time CDA and NGOs understand the significance of keeping the community cohesive.

Tourism in the Chilika area has had more adverse impacts than for the better, allege the local people. There is a clear divide seen between those who are benefiting and those who are not only - not benefiting but have also lost their traditional livelihood options of fishing and related activities. There is a tremendous increase in usage of motor boats often endangering the water species, plastics as one can see the urban city dwellers leaving behind the garbage, mushrooming of hotels and restaurants all over the area often painting a contrasting picture of ecotourism. It is easier to get a plate of Biryani and a can of Pepsi instead of fresh green coconut water and mouth watering delicacies of Odisha. One wonders which part of it what is promoted is ecotourism?

The state of Odisha has been facing unprecedented impacts, almost rushing to become a super power. Its policies and programs for Chilika lake has endangered the fragile ecosystem and pushing people dependent on the lake to the brink of poverty. Many studies have been done to show the perils of ‘development’ of the lake and its surroundings.

The Movement – Chilika Bachao Andolan

As mentioned earlier, people have resisted from time to time against the damaging approach of the state and massive commercialization of the lake. The peoples’ movement in Chilika gained momentum in the early 1990’s when people got organized to protest against the Rs. 15 crores Chilika Aquatic Farm project threatening about 600 hectares of land. There were other events prior to this such as developing Nalabana forest as a bird sanctuary in the 1980’s (it was not so earlier) to attract the tourists – obstructing the local people from accessing the forests for their livelihoods. The Chilika Bachao Andolan (CBA) gained tremendous momentum as they found strong supporters in the youth in different cities including the state capital, Bhubaneswar. A strong local organization added with solidarity from the youth took the movement to a new height as the leaders of CBA strengthened their struggle on the ground. There was support from all over the country as more and more people learnt about the ecological disaster that the lake would witness due to wrong policies and programmes by the government. The movement became part of a national platform called the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) that provided ideological and other support to the local movement. They gave a number of petitions to the government to withdraw
the project and free Chilika lake from commercial activities and protect the local peoples’ livelihood and environment. The environmental fallout of the project and other damaging initiatives by the state was highlighted. The CBA was successful in stopping the project but the commercial activities did not cease to exist. Strong backing from the state apparatus helped the mushrooming of commercial practices that went unabated.

It was in May 1999, the CBA held a press meet in Bhubaneswar and gave an ultimatum to the government to remove the prawn culture units and gheries from the area. When the state did not listen, the Chilika Matsyajeevi Mahasangha decided to go ahead and break the gheries. It was on 29th May 1999 when members of the Mahasangha went into the lake at night and broke around 4000 gheries. At midnight the police came to Sorana village and arrested 50-60 people. One woman from the Mahasangha, stopped the police with a big pipe. There was heavy police deployment in the dead of the night. In the beginning, police let people gather at one place and then the Superintendent of Police (SP) ordered teargas and firing at people. This unleashing of police power on people left five of them dead (four men and a woman who had dared to stop the police) and many more implicated with false cases.

This barbaric incident did not deter the people from agitating and protesting against the anti-people programs on Chilika. The movement is going on although the Mahasangha went through bad phases organizationally as many of its members got into commercial activities due to lack of any other alternatives to survive. The rifts within the organization weakened the momentum but the undying spirit of the movement continues till now. There are 145 revenue villages which are with the Mahasangha and they have been organizing protest actions from time to time. It continues to raise the core issues of peoples’ right over the natural resource and Chilika is a natural resource on which thousands of people depend and it must be respected. As Harekrishna Debnath, the late leader of NFF had said, ‘fishing for livelihood’ is different from ‘fishing for food’. He said, ‘fishing for food (i.e. for personal consumption) by anybody living by the side of water bodies is acceptable. But, professional harvesting of natural fishing resources by the non-fishermen will be opposed’.15

Developing Chilika through CDA

Chilika Development Authority (CDA), was set up in 1992 to restore the lake from dying and protection of the resources attached to the lake. It was set up under Forest and Environment Department of Government of Odisha with an objective for conservation of ecology of Chilika lagoon and to bring about an all round development in and around the lagoon which calls for multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary development activities. The broad objectives of CDA are:

- To protect the Lake ecosystem with all its genetic diversity
- To execute various multidimensional developmental activities either itself or through some other agency to enhance the economic condition of the community
- To survey, plan and prepare the project proposal for integrated resource management for all round development in and around the lake
- To cooperate and collaborate with other institutions of the states, national and international institutions for all round development of the lake
- To establish management information system for the lake
- To promote long term multidisciplinary research, prepare environment status report and establish education centre for the lake
Public participation was one of the most significant components to be included in all its activities. With the Chief Minister of the state as its Chairperson, CDA was aimed to bridge the inter-departmental gaps by bringing them together. The departments such as the wildlife, forest and environment, revenue and so on were brought within the ambit of CDA to protect the lake. The Chief Executive of CDA maintains that CDA was set up at a time when Chilika was drowning and people dependent on it were losing their source of living and migrating in large numbers in search of work.

One of the first moves of CDA was to institute a series of scientific research involving agencies like the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa and the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), Pune to carry out detailed studies on the causes of shrinking of the lake and possible ways to save it. The reports and suggestions from these institutions became the basis for CDA’s work. The aim was to remove Chilika from the Montreux record (is a register of wetland sites on the list of wetlands of international importance where changes of ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human)and CDA did whatever necessary to achieve that goal.

It was removed from the Montreux record in 2001 and received the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award – a recognition CDA badly needed for its survival perhaps. On the basis of a recommendation from CWPRS, a new mouth was opened, which is still considered as a bane by the local community as it destroyed their livelihood base completely. The local wisdom says that the new mouth affected the characteristics of the lake and the biodiversity attached to it. Around 22 villages were directly impacted due to this step by the CDA. However, the CDA claims that it’s the most important step made towards reviving the lake from drowning. Although a lot has been talked about peoples’ participation in CDA’s work, the case studies presented earlier in the report gives the impression that some people benefited whereas large number of people were rendered helpless.

According to the CDA, opening the new mouth has helped in alleviating poverty from the area – a claim that needs to be examined rather closely. The expression of community members as discussed earlier presents a different picture.

Apart from maintaining the salinity level of the lake and restoring the lake, the CDA also had the responsibility of protecting it from the increasing commercial activities in it. There were increasing aquaculture activities by the private firms that had endangered the local communities’ economy. While CDA promised to arrest the activities, till date it has not done anything substantial to help the local population. The local people feel that the CDA is party to the illegal activities taking place in the area as it is not doing anything to stop it. The entire area near the CDA office in Balugaon is covered with gheries by the private firms – it is not possible that the CDA is unaware about it – it is a fact that the CDA is unable to break the nexus between the state-corporate-mafia and it is unlikely that the CDA will ever be able to do it considering the fact that the state is so liberal about the corporations investing in the state.

Inspired by NGOs in some areas, the CDA has carried out afforestation work but most of the species planted are exotic in nature and the local people are not even aware about the negative impacts that trees like the eucalyptus can cause. However, the CDA claims that the suggestion to plant exotic plants was made by the people in the area – whereas people in the area are ignorant about it. The CDA has clearly done it at the behest of Forest Department with absolutely no consultation with the local people. The CDA believes that these plants will help in producing fuelwood and fodder that is extremely useful to the local community. There are various other aspects that the CDA is supposedly engaged with but it could not be ascertained on the ground for the lack of contacts and leads – moreover as most of the areas where CDA is active were gripped with internal conflicts.
According to the scientists engaged in the research work in Balugaon centre, the fish population has increased and peoples’ claim that there is not much fish available is all wrong. They attribute the shortage to the increase in human population. They also put the blame on people not following simple principles of fishing such as no fishing during the monsoon months, not using small nets and so on. It is an irony that the fishing communities that survived on fishing for generations are told how to do scientific fishing. Using of small nets by people is a result of a desperate attempt to catch some fish to earn although they too know that small nets are not good. So, unless and until the autonomy of local communities over the lake is restored, such wrong practices will flourish in the days to come.

Prawn population has increased in last two years although it had reduced prior to that, according to an official at CDA, Balugaon. The reason could be that the old mouth was not providing enough food for the fish and prawns. There is an exchange of more water with the ocean due to the new mouth plus the food is also more.

The huge infrastructure of CDA on the banks of the Lake is an indication of how an agency set up to protect the lake can be endangering it with its own activities. People say that the guest house of CDA in Balugaon has been built by filling up part of the lake with sand and mud. A guest house that celebrates the presence of all the high ranking people in the government and politics as and when they feel like taking a break from their ‘busy’ lives. All this right next to villages where people find it difficult to manage two meals a day.

The involvement of women in any of the activities of ecotourism could not be found although in some of the literature, it is said that the CDA has mobilized training for women in SHGs formed by NGOs in some of the areas.

**Conclusion and Possibilities**

In a state where the local and indigenous communities are facing the danger of extinction due to massive resource grab, the state capital is making an effort to woo the tourists by painting the walls with tribal art, organizing adivasi mela with pomp where adivasis are made to sit as if they are exhibits and ‘cultured’ people come to take a glimpse of them—presenting a situation of magic realism. There are huge billboards boasting about multinational companies bringing happiness and prosperity through mining and establishing steel plants, building mega dams – wonder where all that prosperity will land! The tourism department is still struggling to finalize a tourism policy for a decade now although the indications do not promise much for really enhancing the local system of livelihoods and culture. Plans are afoot for huge infrastructural development on sensitive areas like the coasts, rich biodiversity areas and the river beds. There is certainly some benefits of tourism for some people but who are these people and why has it not reached most that it is meant for – these are questions that need to find answers as the tourism is further developed and more investments come in.

Creating a Las Vegas in Puri may be a dream for some – but at what cost? What will happen to the communities who will not only loose their living base but also the identity? Declaring part of Chilika as dolphin sanctuary may bring in revenues for the state, but what will happen to people dependent on the lake as they will be debarred from accessing it? Thankfully, this idea has not gone further due to resistance of people against it in Satapada in 2005.

Although a lot is claimed to have happened on ecotourism around Chilika Lake where the local communities have benefited and the lake has regained its character, the ground reality reflects a worrisome picture. The efforts of the state must be for everyone and not just for a handful of people.
For example, the conservation of nature process in Manglajodi must be all inclusive to sustain it for long rather than working with only 12 people and concentrating all activities around them – facilitating a conflicting situation within a community.

Setting up of jetties in seven places may have attracted the tourists, but the motorized boats and absolutely mindless increase in the number of boats will ultimately have its adverse impacts on the lake and its biodiversity. That apart, the garbage dumping in the lake during the tourist season will have a debilitating impact on the health of the lake. It may be more useful to have a much more inclusive process for the ecotourism projects – which may be time consuming to implement but a necessity. Ecotourism concepts must go beyond just setting up of jetties, dolphin watching, bird watching and mangrove development. While these may be required to attract the tourists, the more important thing is to ensure a sustained livelihood source for the local communities in totality. Commercial aquaculture continues unabated destroying the lives of local economy and forcing the local people to adopt some of these practices to earn a living. As long as CDA and the state is not able to dismantle the gheries, there is little hope of protecting the biodiversity of the lake. However, even this is inadequate, no matter how mechanized gheri demolition equipments are, it won’t bring any substantial change unless there is a clear stand by the state on the corporate investments and the nexus between corporate-state-mafia is broken.

It may be futile to base the tourism development and more so an ecotourism plan on huge loans from global entities. Rather, the local wisdom to develop and protect the lake and other natural reserves must be encouraged and support can be sought based on the demands of the local communities and not on the basis of only scientific data and analysis. Very often local needs and scientific predictions / analysis do not match and if not acknowledged can lead to devastating implications.

Much greater participation of people in the envisioning process cannot replace anything else for development of ecotourism in the state.

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7 According to a report in the Fisheries Department, the fisheries production has gone up from an average minimum level of 1,600 metric tons over the 10 years before the opening of the sea mouth, to 11,877 metric tons in 2001-02, and upto 13,260 in 2004-05.
8 The inspection visits incur huge costs and many times a pleasure trip for the administration people. Each boat costs Rs.13,000/- and there is at least 8-9 boats that go out on a typical inspection trip. The teams usually have a fun trip into the lake – feast on rare birds and fish and come back. So one knows why the gheries are not visible to the eyes of the administration.
9 The villages are Satapada, Sipakuda, Mirzapur, Gabakunda, Barkul, Rambha, and Balugaon.
10 Balugaon, Barkul, Rambha, Sipakuda, Mirzapur, Gabakunda & Satapada
11 There are 166 in Mirzapur, 123 in Raipur, 34 in Parvatipur, 16 in Padampur families. Padampur village has mostly Scheduled caste population.
12 The vehicle drivers who bring the tourists from outside spoke in favor of CDA and its efforts as if they’re from the village. It took some time to figure out their vested interests during that two-hour discussion with them. This shows the involvement of different kinds of vested interest groups to run the show.
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Women, Work and Tourism: Toiling without Rights

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One of the major trends in tourism is the continuous reiteration of tourism as a vehicle for women empowerment, mainly through employment generation. However, there is ignorance about the gender-blind framework embedded in the employment opportunities offered by tourism. In this context, the paper highlights an overwhelming influence of patriarchy on tourism. Further, the paper raises questions on if tourism offers a space for women to choose the employment opportunities or force them to opt as a survival strategy? Core to the issues is not only ensuring better working condition in the sector but the need to examine the claim made by the tourism industry as one of the major employer of women within the right-based framework.

Context

One of the major trends in tourism is the continuous reiteration of tourism as a vehicle for women empowerment, mainly through employment generation. The UN World Tourism Organisation dedicated World Tourism Day 2007, to women, “Tourism Opens Doors for Women” and followed it with its Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010 highlighting tourism’s role in empowering women politically and economically. In the Indian context, the National Tourism Policy, 2002 identifies rural tourism and ecotourism as a means to poverty reduction, creating new skills and enhancing participation of women in tourism. However, there is ignorance about the gender-blind framework embedded in the employment opportunities offered by tourism.

Notional Integration

In the context of the formal sector, experience on the ground shows that the lens adopted in tourism focuses only on notional integration of women and not on actual integration. For real integration to take place, gender hierarchies embedded in social structure need to be challenged. Instead, points of engagement with tourism including economic spaces has strengthened the existing hierarchical societal structures. Sexual division of labour seen within homes (like cooking, cleaning, care giving) are replicated in the kind of opportunities open to women in the hospitality sector of the tourism industry.

Opportunities offered by tourism are characterized with glass-ceiling that prevent women to access jobs at higher position. Wage disparity, lack of support for working mothers in form of crèches / day care facilities, lack of flexible timings, lack of safety measures to ensure women’s right to work etc. are the common features associated with women working in tourism industry.

Since tourism is seasonal in nature, and women are employed at the lower rungs of the labour market, their services are not required during lean season. This leads to insecurity of employment. Further, the contractual nature of their employment, deprives them from many benefits that a full time employee enjoys like medical benefits, insurance and bonus. Feminisation and informalisation of these jobs strengthens stereotyped role of women wherein they are seen as passive and compliant work force who will accept exploitative work conditions I without questioning violation of their rights. Nature of work like late working
hours, serving alcohol (which is a social taboo) and dress codes (which objectify the woman’s body) contribute to women working in a high risk environment. Further, high value placed to satisfy customers, privileges their needs over those of the employees. Very often this results in employee complaints either being summarily dismissed or tokenistically addressed.

**Invisible Labour Force:** Women working in informal sector such as street vendors, artisans, sex workers, are not even recognized by the tourism industry. Women involved in these kinds of work are treated as encroachers causing frequent evictions. This also emerges from the perspective that street vendors and sex workers are criminal, therefore violating their right to access public spaces, right to livelihood and also breach their Right to Life.

Street vending represents the largest category of informal work occupying women. Women tend to opt for small businesses like selling trinkets, lamps, food items, etc. which does not require much capital and also provide flexible timing to meet their dual responsibilities. Street vendors face unique kinds of livelihood risks because of the legal, physical, and socio-cultural environment in which they work. They face constant eviction threats, fines and harassment by traffic policemen. This is aggravated at tourism sites where more emphasis is laid on beautification to attract high-end tourists. The prevailing notion of beautification does not have space for street vendors who use pushcart or sheets to display their goods, pursue tourists to buy the goods, serve various need of tourists in informal ways and make the place chaotic.

Compared to men, women street vendors are more likely to operate in insecure or illegal spaces, trade in less lucrative goods, generate a lower volume of trade, and work as commission agents or employees of other vendors. As a result, they tend to earn less than men vendors. Since street vending is not much profitable source of earning, in few places like Puri, good number of men have taken loans in their wife’s name due to mushrooming of micro-finance services. Street vendors have poor social protection and their working conditions on the streets expose them to a variety of safety and health issues. The lack of toilets has an adverse effect on women’s health and many suffer from urinary tract infections and kidney ailments.

In general, street vendors’ unions / associations are formed at very few places including in tourism destinations. In case of existing unions/associations, there is negligible membership and participation of women. Therefore, voices of women street vendors remain unheard in these unions/associations. Bhowmik (2005) in his article says that “...the male vendors are more visible as they sell greater varieties of goods – clothes, fruits, household items etc. Most of the food vendors are male. The level of unionisation is higher among them and they are thus able to protect themselves better than the women vendors. Women vendors are mainly small vendors and are hardly unionised. These factors add to their invisibility.”

Non recognition of street vending at tourism site is clear in the National Urban Street Vendor Policy (2009). Tourism sites are not included in the definition of public areas. To ensure gender focus in the Town Vending Committee, which is a decision-making space, the policy state to establish TVC with at least one third of representatives of women in categories of street vendors. However, in view of the negligible participation of women vendors in existing street vendors’ organisations, it is difficult to say if they will be able to influence the decisions in their favor. Thirdly, demonstrating financial accountability will actually exclude women street vendors who come from poor background and are many a time burdened with the loans to run the business or to meet family needs.
Souvenir industry also offers opportunities for women artisans but the issue of women influencing the market in their own interest remains in question. By and large, women artisans are seen as shadow workers and not as actual workers. Getting access to market, increasing cost of raw materials capital and credit are few major challenges faced by them. For e.g. there is minimal increase in the cost of lac bangles but cost of lac has increased over the years. High cost of renting spaces in tourism destinations has pushed women to opt for an interior location in the market place as the front ones are captured by private players. Dual responsibilities of women artisans have affected their capacity to earn maximum profit. Ghumar Mahila Swayam Sewa Samiti and Grameen Blue Art Pottery Samiti (men’s group) is formed by Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) near Jaipur to promote blue pottery work. Due to their domestic responsibilities, they find it difficult to spend long hours and produce the products at large scale. Therefore, in case of large scale orders, they take support of Of men’s group and in turn, share the profit with them.

Initiatives taken to promote women artisans focus more on production level and do not take into consideration women artisan specific needs like linkages to the market and access to credit. For e.g., Jaipur Rugs Foundation aims to empower women carpet weavers to establish collective enterprises by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities. In practice, however, the women weavers are mostly employed on piece-rate basis to weave the carpets in their homes. Designing and marketing of the products are done by the JRF team. There is no doubt that the initiative supports women to earn their livelihood using their skills, but it raises an important question if it is leading towards building entrepreneur skills? Another example is TRIFED who is involved in improving the production and marketing skills of artisans involved in blue pottery work. The training programmes conducted by them These initiatives need to be supported by other social interventions, which will allow for women to gain physical mobility so that she access markets in her immediate vicinity as well as participate in festivals/exhibitions elsewhere, which are also opportunities to network and find further avenues to sell their products.

On seeing the linkage with tourism sector, the Ministry of Textile has taken initiatives to promote handicraft and handloom products through various development schemes such as Baba Sahab Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas yojna, Design & Technology up-gradation scheme, Marketing Support & Services Scheme, Human Resources Development Scheme, Handicrafts Artisan comprehensive Welfare Scheme and Research & Development Scheme. However, complicated procedures of availing the schemes and reluctant attitude of government officials including bank officials are major challenge faced by artisans from every craft. Lack of awareness about the schemes and the procedure, limited physical mobility and dual responsibilities affects women’s access to the schemes.

To protect the interest of artisans, Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act 1985 aims to reserve the articles for exclusive production by handlooms. Lack of awareness, lack of proper mechanism to implement the Act and lack of proper mechanism to differentiate the products made by handlooms and powerlooms are major impediments in this regard. Current proposal to change the definition of Handloom by including any loom, other than powerloom; on which, at least one process for weaving requires manual intervention or human energy for production is not accepted by weavers. It will allow indirect use of power which will serve the interest of factory owners and not the weavers. Another one is Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999 (GI Act) which is an indication of identified goods showing its link with the place of origin. The Act has the potential to retain the authenticity of the products which is a major concern at tourism destinations. It is seen that market is captured by artefacts made in other states and not by the local artisans. This has affected the development of local artefacts. Since the focus is more on earning revenue through serving business interest and not the interest of local artisans, only those handicrafts are being promoted which has demand
in the market. However, implementation of GI Act remains in question. There is lack of awareness about the Act. Further, the Act is silent about monitoring the infringement of GIs which means the producers are suppose to monitor false uses of their GIs on their own. This is a very cost effective measure is not an affordable option for artisans.

There is a demand for sexual services at many tourism destinations, which are being serviced by masseurs, sex workers and very often street vendors. Since the entire operation of providing these services is clandestine in nature, women involved in offering these services also remain hidden and unrecognised. There is no question of them raising their voices against harassment from customers, police and local goons. Tourism is the season which attracts many sex workers to the destination, though at the cost of their well-being. Police and local goons see them as a source of earning extra money. The same applies to the massage parlors where situation is even worse. Women working in these spaces are perceived as ‘available’ to satisfy every whim and fantasy of the clients and not as someone skilled with the art of healing. It is also true that these parlours are often used a smokescreen for trafficking. However, when raids take place, the police do not use their judgement in separating the spurious ones from the genuine parlours. This often works as a deterrent for genuine healers to take up this work.

Often, to curb trafficking and prostitution, massage parlours are not given permission by state authorities. This in turn encourages massage parlors being run in covert ways to meet the demand at tourism destinations. This not only exposes the women working in these parlours to exploitative situations, but also raises question on women’s right to life with dignity. It is ironic that on the one hand, there is no recognition of sex workers and masseurs, but at the same time, there is significant sexual objectification of women in tourism industry encouraging sex tourism.

**Conclusion**

Patriarchy has an overwhelming influence on tourism. Women’s bodies and lives are seen through this perspective and the work assigned to them is a manifestation of this. Tourism in urban areas is being promoted claiming to empower women with little awareness of social, cultural and political barriers faced by women at tourism destinations. Mere tokenistic engagement of women in the tourism industry is mistakenly perceived as women’s empowerment. The process of including women is often disconnected with the fact that their participation in domestic and public spaces is inter-woven with social and cultural norms. These norms demand sensitively designed interventions made at every level to promote women participation in tourism.

**Endnotes**

We believe that participation of local communities in tourism is a matter of right rather than an act of benevolence on the part of the industry. This paper offers the political framework within which we seek community involvement in tourism and propose different levels of community engagement along a progressive spectrum, which is inspired by the understanding of people’s participation.

The need for community involvement in tourism, or any other developmental sector within the country, is not a matter that needs debate. The Constitution of India in Article 40 in the Directive Principles of State Policy, states “Organisation of village panchayats The State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government”. Therefore participation of people in decision making on development issues is a right. The subsequent changes made to the Constitution through the 73rd and 74th amendment further strengthen this provision.

Arriving at this strong position and practice of communities leading their development has its moorings in endeavours made by the British administration right from the 1880s. Prior to this, traditional self-governance systems have been practised in rural India, but with the trappings of caste, class, gender and ethnic hierarchies disallowing true participation of all residents within the jurisdiction of the said panchayat.

A series of efforts through the Mayo Resolution on Decentralisation, 1870; Lord Rippon’s resolution, 1882; Report of the Royal Commission on Decentralization, 1907; the Government of India Resolution, 1915 and the Montague Chelmsford Report, 1918 were made by the British to promote self-rule in the country. Post-independence, it was after the recommendations of the Balwantray Mehta Committee Report, 1958 was accepted and actioned that the 3-tier system of self-governance as we know it today was institutionalised. (Baxi & Galanter, n.d.)

Self-governance is imagined as the space where direct democracy operates, rather than only through elections. Arguments made for self-governance have ranged from the belief that local institutions are political and therefore capable of true and genuine participation, that it is important for these institutions to be informed by local interests and knowledge; and to ensure decentralised decision making, since it is believed that centralised decisions are unable to address specific needs of local communities. (Jayal, Prakash, & Sharma, 2006)

Impediments to this seemingly near perfect system of self-governance are manifold – social hierarchies, inadequate devolution of decision making and financial powers and the creation of parallel decision making bodes ranging from overarching institutions like development authorities to village level committees like the Joint Forest Management Committee in forest areas are some of the key reasons for goals of self-governance to be subverted.
In more recent times, creation of Special Economic Zones, mega projects spanning several states like the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) have led to key developmental decisions to not only be taken away from the self-governance institutions but have handed over this task to special purpose vehicles, which are very often private/semi-private entities. Therefore for the past 20 years and actively for the last 10 years we see a systematic shift to corporatising of decision making.

In tourism, this takes on new meaning, given that the sector is dominated by private enterprise. Tourism is led by the private sector which comprises of accommodation units like hotels and resorts and tour operators. Therefore the role of the State in tourism is limited to policy making, promotion and infrastructure development, wherein policy making is heavily skewed towards the interests of the private sector. The State does not view regulation as an important role to be played either by the Ministry of Tourism nor by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj through devolution of tourism related decision making powers to the panchayats.

The only clearances required of tourism projects, either private or state owned, are those linked to getting permissions like is required to run any business, with at best, environmental clearances being required to be sought. Most panchayats feel that they have a rubber-stamp role of issuing a No Objection Certificate (NOC), after the private enterprise having already receiving all approvals from the relevant state/national level body.

With neither the administration nor the panchayats watching out for tourism development, the sector is an open playground for the industry to do as it desires, with next to no accountability to the people living in and around tourism destinations and regarding the distribution of burden and benefits of tourism.

While the struggle with the State to bring in tourism within the purview of panchayats is an on-going one, a simultaneous effort to make the tourism industry more accountable to people most impacted by tourism in and around the destinations through eliciting their participation is an important engagement.

**Levels of Community Participation in Tourism**

As a framework to understand true participation of communities in tourism development vis-a-vis the private sector, a spectrum of community involvement in tourism has been arrived at. This frame has been adapted from Roger Hart’s ladder of participation. (Hart, 1992)

**Spectrum of Community Involvement in Tourism**

- Ownership
- Collaborating
- Consulting
- Informing
- Tokenism
Levels of Involvement | Role Played by Communities
--- | ---
Tokenism | Employing members of the community as drivers, tour guides etc.
Informing | Where communities are informed about the tourism development being planned and are involved through employment in the tourism activities.
Consulting | Where the communities are consulted with but where the aspirations of the community might or might not be addressed. In this instance the community would have the space to influence decisions while not being a formal part of the decision making process.
Collaborating | Where communities are seen as equal partners in the ecotourism development planned and are formally part of the decision making process. The community would then have control over the impacts as well as the benefits of tourism.
Ownership | Where the community owns the enterprise, which becomes the capital of the community. Where the pace, nature, forms, stakeholders are all decided by the communities and all others involved are supporters of the enterprise.

The above framework is not comprised of clear cut categories, rather it is continuum that the private enterprise finds itself located on. The higher up in community engagement, the larger are the areas of mutual interest and the greater is the role of the communities in decision making and control of the positive and negative fall outs of tourism.

In the next section are case studies offered as examples of the different levels of community involvement in tourism.

**Tokenism**

Wildlife tourism: The creation of Protected Areas has increased the wildlife population causing increase in people-animal conflict. Yet communities cannot take any measures to protect themselves against this conflict since that would necessitate confronting the forest department, which more often than not would translate into physical harm of the communities and its resources.

The sale of land to tourism projects is not a sustainable option for communities since these monies dry up rather fast and leave no other source of income in their hands. Until now the only livelihood option that has been opened up for communities is their employment in the campuses of the establishments in the tourism industry, which translates to the fact that communities who were once land owners and practitioners of agriculture, with diverse cultural and social histories have become homogenous cheap labour in the tourism industry.

**Informing and Consulting: Jungle Lodges and Resorts (JLR) (EQUATIONS, 2013)**

Jungle Lodges and Resorts Ltd. was formed in the year 1980 as a private Limited Company in the joint sector between the Government of Karnataka and M/s. Tiger Tops (I) Pvt. Ltd. Tiger Tops withdrew their participation completely in the year 1987 by selling their entire shares to the Government of Karnataka. Since then JLR is fully owned by the Government of Karnataka the present share capital of the company is 91.75 lakhs.
Today JLR promotes itself as a responsible ecotourism company with 16 properties located in Karnataka’s prime natural destinations. Each of these lodges are based on one of the following themes: wildlife, nature, adventure, angling, beaches. The accommodation offered are either tented cottages or log huts, cuisine is local and offers only outdoor activities. There are no indoor activities like a gymnasium in keeping with the concept of ecotourism. The company has approximately 19 resorts across Karnataka primarily in forest areas and some along the coast.

The objective of JLR is to promote ecotourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, and various outdoor activities like trekking, camping, white water rafting, fishing, that are non-consumptive components of ecotourism and in general help in environmental conservation.

**Human Resources**: Except for the lodge manager, hiring of staff is not centralised and happens at the lodge level. Typically, on joining JLR, most staff work for 2 - 3 years as daily wage earners and are then taken on a contract basis. These contracts are renewed annually. Promotion from daily wage to contract staff depends upon:

a. The number of years worked at JLR
b. Performance of the staff as observed by the lodge manager

Hiring of staff from nearby villages and the outreach is the linkage that JLR has with the communities. There are few more linkages with the Panchayat as relevant taxes are paid. Also when there are any grievances regarding the lodge, it is usually the Panchayat who approaches the lodge Manager for resolution as in the case of conflicts.

However, there is definitely an informal relationship that exists between the lodges and the local communities. People from the nearby villages who want to see the lodge are encouraged to do so. There is a transparency in the JLR lodges which does not exist in the other high-end ones, which are much like gated communities. While setting up a lodge, JLR does not consult the communities nor are they informed. However, when the construction starts, the people automatically get to know about the coming up of the lodge. Subsequently, relationship between the lodge and the community is forged with many of the construction workers coming from the village. They are then retained to work as staff once the property is ready. Once hired, all staff at all levels have opportunities to upgrade their skills and be promoted to the next level in the hierarchy. Therefore, there are examples where a person from the village who started work in JLR as a security guard is today a lodge manager in one of the properties.

**Supply Chain**: There is no written procurement policy for JLR. However, the understanding is that most of the non-perishable goods are purchased at the Metro, a wholesale outlet in Bangalore. This way the middleman is avoided and costs can be competent. Eggs, meat, vegetables and milk are procured locally.

**Collaborating – Himalayan Homestays (EQUATIONS, 2009 a)**

Himalayan Homestays is an initiative of the Snow Leopard Conservancy-India Trust (SLC-IT) (www.snowleopardconservancy.org) to conserve snow leopards in its prime habitat and to generate benefits and opportunities for local communities through tourism while protecting their rich natural and cultural heritage for future generations. The communities at many of the villages of Hemis, Sham and Zanskar region have been provided opportunity to develop homestays to get an additional source of income to compensate the livestock that have been killed by predatory animals.
The SLC-IT was established in 2000 to promote community based conservation of the snow leopard and its prey and habitats and support community development. The initiative of Himalayan Homestays was an outcome of discussions SLC-IT had with the villagers of Hemis National Park in a year to reduce the livestock loss of the villagers owing to the snow leopard attacks. The villagers were losing 12% of their livestock annually attributable to this cause. Increasing losses and resulting economic hardship increased local community resentment against the snow leopard. This resulted in retribution killings by local people thus threatening the survival of this endangered species as well as other predators.

The Himalayan Homestays were first established at the Hemis National Park in 2002. Within the Hemis National Park, which consists of twelve hamlets & villages, homestays were first set up in Rumbak, an important snow leopard habitat, with visitors coming through tour operators in Leh. Subsequently, the homestay programme was expanded to other villages in National park as well as other regions. Since only a few households could benefit from homestays, SLC-IT also went in for training for the youth as nature guides. The guides were trained so that they are also available to accompany the visitors / trekkers. Other initiatives are that of the parachute cafes which was started by the Leh Nutrition Project (LNP) and has been roped into the tourism initiative by SCL-IT. Some families who were already weaving in winters are able to sell their produce through the homestays, the parachute cafes and more recently through an outlet in Leh. For those who were unable to be involved in any of the above mentioned initiatives, community solar showers were set up for those trekkers who were only passing by and not staying at the village.

In order to ensure that all homestay families in the village have the opportunity to benefit from the tourists who come to the village on a trek or for staying in the homestays, a system of rotation has been introduced. Communities are encouraged to decide the best way of involving all homestay providers in a given tourist season. As a result, in some villages, the communities have appointed a point person who keeps track of the household whose turn it is to receive the visitors. So when the tourists come with a voucher of Himalayan Homestays, they are directed to the homestay provider whose turn it is to receive the tourists. This is followed in Rumbak. In villages like Ulley in the Sham region, the rotation system has not worked well either due to inadequate cooperation within the village in a few cases or the distances between homestays is large and problems caused by exhausted tourists who refuse to go to the homestays whose turn it is to receive visitors.

**Challenges**

Though homestay programme have raised the standard of living of the families providing homestays it has also been the cause for conflicts within the community due to dysfunctional or partially functional rotational systems.

With an increase in engagement with tourists, the community has become more commercial. Sometimes they expect the local people / students to pay the same amount as the tourists for stay.

One question is whether the communities will become overly dependent on tourism. The fear that new alternatives are taking over the main tradition is not unfounded. With tourism gaining more popularity as a means of livelihood it may substitute the traditional agro pastoralism.

**Impact**

Income of families involved in tourism has doubled. Since 10% of the money earned goes to a Village Conservation Fund, this is an additional fund used to maintain camping sites, which is also a money earner for the village.
In terms of environment impacts, the communities have now developed a more positive attitude towards conservation since it is the wild animals which is bringing more and more visitors to the villages. In 2009, there were 100 homestays, 15 cafes (80 households), 35 trained guides, 16 families (baths, pack horses). This is a significant number of people being able to benefit from tourism.

The income earned from the homestays and the conservation fund is also being used to pay the premium for insuring their livestock against predator attacks under a community run insurance scheme. In Ulley it has also become possible with this income to pay an honorarium to people from the community who volunteer to take the animals to the pastures and stay there during the entire summers looking after the livestock while they graze in the open pastures. These volunteers are also selected on a rotational basis from families who are non homestay providers and paid Rs. 150 per day for two months. The programme has enabled the villagers to send their children to better schools. The women say that they now have cash in hand; they don’t have to ask their husbands. Also the money from tourism has helped buy household supplies like cooking oil and gas and to upgrade home furnishing like pillows, mattresses and bed sheets. This has increased the decision making powers of women in economic matters within the household.

Ownership – Mountain Shepherd’s Initiative (EQUATIONS, 2009b)

In the fall of 2006, the Mountain Shepherds Initiative (MSI), a community owned and operated ecotourism venture, was formerly inaugurated in the vicinity of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (NDBR) in Uttarakhand. The Mountain Shepherds Initiative was born out of the social struggle of the Chipko (early 1970s) and Jhapto Cheeno (late 1990s) movements and more recent efforts by the Nanda Devi Campaign - to reclaim peoples land and forest rights.

In May 2001, the state government, with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) commissioned the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) to determine the feasibility of reopening the park to limited tourism activity.

In response to this development, the Bhotiya community came together to form the Nanda Devi Campaign in Lata village. On October 14, 2001, the community members of Niti Valley issued the progressive Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism Declaration to guide its future endeavours and held a workshop elaborating their community-based ecotourism proposals. The focus of the initiative has been to build capacities of the youth, to develop a product line and marketing. Today MSI is a private community owned enterprise. The following are some of the impacts on the community:

**Economic Impacts:**

Community members from the villages are involved in the enterprise. The capacity building of youth has resulted in the reduction of migration to cities. Further, backward and forward linkages have been made, where some homes offer homestays, others provide the food and yet others make the souvenirs which are purchased by the tourists.

**Social Impacts:**

One of the founding principles of MSI is to establish a community-owned operation without human exploitation and environmental degradation. This has resulted in an ethos where the youth who are the guides treat the tourists as equals rather than in a hierarchical manner, which is very much the culture in mainstream private tour ventures.
Conservation:

A large part of the Nanda Devi Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism Declaration of October 14, 2001 focuses on biodiversity conservation. All ecotourism activities are conducted such that there is no harm to the environment and that the diversity of the region is maintained.

This case study is an example of how the community seeing the impending tourism development in the region, took charge and therefore have evolved as a community based and owned ecotourism initiative.

Conclusion

While the State has a duty to protect its citizens from the vagaries of the market, it is important that the tourism industry also takes it upon itself to be accountable in their core work. Corporate Social Responsibility is being seen as the means to this. However, what needs to be upheld is Corporate Accountability, which has been defined by the Friends of the Earth as “Corporate accountability can be defined as the ability of those affected by a corporation to control that corporation’s operations”. (Friends of the Earth, 2005)

One way of doing this is for corporations to recognise and acknowledge that the local communities and their culture need to be respected while promoting tourism and that they are the primary holders of resources that the industry uses in the selling of a tourist experience.

The State through inclusion in policies and creation of appropriate regulatory mechanisms should ensure that communities are involved at the deepest levels in tourism development.

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Introduction

As in the global scenario, pro-poor tourism is the latest in tourism models/ concepts that has gained importance in the Indian space. This has also come across strongly in the Report of the Working Group on Tourism formed for the 12th Five Year Planning (2012 – 2017). The government continues to view tourism from the perspective of its claims that current models of tourism contribute to socio-economic development through employment generation, entrepreneurship, infrastructure development and revenue earnings. This has also been the overarching discussion in the entire industry. The trend at the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) level is towards larger revenue generating projects. This is in tune with the national economic policy – big is beautiful – which reflects in the design of tourism circuits.

Domestic tourism continues to be paid lesser emphasis in the policy space and official mind set with all attention continuing to be paid to the relatively smaller pie of international tourists and the chasing of world class standards which usually mean more five and seven star hotels and large airports. The 19th Commonwealth Games that took place in Delhi in October 2010 were an example of the nexus between mega-sport events, tourism, and notions of development leading to corruption scandals that shook the nation.

Tourism and conflict continues to be of concern. Conflict zones such as the North East Region are being opened up for tourism with the dilution of permits for foreigners and Indians with no substantive solutions or mediations of the root causes of the conflict. This trend is evident even in central India where armed conflict between state and extreme left outfits is commonplace, yet tourism brochures and plans are in denial of these political and humanitarian realities.

Social and Cultural Issues in Tourism

Alienation of social and cultural realities from tourism development has led to gross violation of human rights. Forced land acquisition, displacement of communities, loss of dignity and traditional source of livelihood, alienation of communities, lack of accessibility to public spaces are quite evident. There are different groups in society who engage with tourism each in a unique way and who therefore are also the first to be impacted by the industry.

Women: There has been a focus on economic empowerment of women through tourism. It is noticed that the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Textiles and international bodies like UNWTO and UN Women have highlighted economic gains for women in their respective initiatives. At national level, National Resource Centre for Women has been set up as a main body servicing national and state mission authorities to act as a central repository for knowledge, information and data related to gender issues. Similarly, UNWTO and UN Women has launched Tourism and Gender Portal with aim to provide global forum for exchanging information and ideas.
Some of the major issues around women in tourism is their objectification in the context of tribal tours, situation of women artisans and sexual exploitation. There is a trend to promote tribal tours by using women’s images in promotional materials. Commoditisation of culture has led to culture being taken out of its context and relegating cultural practices to mere tourism products. Strategic marketing of handicraft products by the government and businessmen community have captured the market at tourism sites marginalising artisans. It has further alienated women artisans who have poor accessibility to market and credit.

Increasing rate of violence against women is frequently reported in media and substantiated by data collected by sources like National Crime Bureau Record. Exploitation through sex tourism & prostitution continues. To advise on issues relating to trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, Government of India has set up a Central Advisory Committee.

Children: In 2009, the MoT at long last acknowledged the negative impacts of tourism on children and initiated steps to protect them. However there are no mechanisms to monitor these processes and their implementation. Sexual exploitation of children at tourism destinations has been highlighted and acknowledged by the State. MoT in 2010 launched an initiative on ‘Safe and Honourable Tourism’ as a step towards evolving a Code of Conduct for all tourism service providers in India. As part of this initiative various sensitizations workshop were held across India to increase awareness of the issue of protection of children in tourism and the implementation of the S&H Code thought stringent mechanisms are nit yet in place to ensure effective implementation of the Code.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act has come into force from April 1, 2010. According to the Act, the right to education will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Though there was hope that the Indian government would take this issue seriously and use it as a tool to eradicate child labour, in reality the situation of children has not changed much. Many states across the country have not notified the rules due to which funds have not be earmarked for the implementation of the Act leaving many children not attending schools and going to work.

During 2010, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India initiated a review of the 1974 National Policy for Children and continued to work on its periodic national report for United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The growing links between tourism and the abuse of children in the form of child sexual abuse, trafficking, prostitution, pornography and child labour have been established in all these reviews. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) constituted a committee to draft a Bill “The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Bill, 2011” towards ensuring protection of children from exploitation.

The National Advisory Council (NAC) has recommended that the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act be amended in sync with the Right to Education (RTE) Act, promising free and compulsory education for children aged between 6 and 14 years and another amendment that children till the age of 18 should not be employed for hazardous tasks. In January 2012 Ministry of Labour and Employment government has proposed to ban all forms of child labour systems, including hazardous and non-hazardous categories. In this regard an amendment to Child Labour Prohibition Act was proposed to be made. Child labour in tourism continue and is an area that needs to worked on.
According to a report released by Childline India, the number of cases of child trafficking, abuse, labour and begging increased during 2011 as compared to 2010. The State of the World’s Children Report 2012 released by UNICEF finds the majority of the children of the world are working, live in slums and face imminent eviction or are already living on the streets.

**Youth:** Young people have always been looked at as ‘latent’ energy which needs to be channelised for the greater common good. Neither youth nor tourism policies address the issue of youth in tourism despite the fact that they form a significant part of the workforce. (Youth are not given importance enough to merit even an enumeration in tourism statistics). At best youth are seen as an unemployment problem, this being reflected in the number of schemes brought by Ministry of Tourism to build employment skills among youth but their role in shaping tourism is entirely overlooked. How youth contribute to the atmosphere of a tourism destination and how the identity of youth is impacted due to tourism development will surely be a minefield if explored.

**Sexuality Minorities:** The fight of the sexuality minority community to be accepted by society is an age old. They have made inroads in areas of voters ids cards, being part of PDS schemes, receiving support from the government for medical reasons, etc. However for a significant number of the sexuality minority community begging and sex work at tourism sites are realities, a source of their livelihood. The inter-relations between sexuality minority community and tourism needs to be understood more in depth and we plan to work on this along with network partners.

**Adivasis:** For the adivasis while PESA and the FRA are positives instances where their rights, way of governance, culture has been recognised there is however much concern expressed on the onslaught that the adivasis are facing from different segments. Adivasis are being massively displaced from their land and prohibited from accessing it and from the collection of minor forest produce that they are dependant on. This loss of access to land has had its worse impact on women. While on the one hand this has led to the loss of access to and traditional knowledge, on the other, shortages caused by larger economic forces have pushed the adivasi community from its subsistence-farming character into becoming impoverished labour - providers.

In tourism, the adivasis and their culture is being objectified. One of the most disturbing issues of tourism highlighted in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was that of the human safaris. The area where the Jarawa tribes live has not been opened up for tourism. However, an important road cuts through this area, which the tour operators have taken advantage of. Buses stop to ‘see’ the Jarawa people and food and money are offered in exchange of a dance. After constant reports of this in the media, the Supreme Court has directed the administration to take stringent measures. Odisha is another state that has been promoting tribal tours.

**Dalits:** The Ministry of Tourism has not been known for its comprehensive planning and this is evident in the announcement of the Clean India Campaign in 2011. The caste system, which is perpetuated by birth and very often based on occupations is at the root of the understanding of cleanliness and hygiene of the Indian society. Without demolishing the caste system, no amount of “awareness” and advertisements will be successful in bringing attitudinal and behaviour change in the country. Tourism perpetuates caste occupations in hotels and resorts rather than opposing the set norms of social hierarchy.

**Urban Excluded:** Among Census 2011’s more striking findings is that for the first time since 1921, urban India added more to it’s population than rural India. Writing in The Hindu, P Sainath classifies this as distress migration, arising due to the collapse of millions of livelihoods in agriculture and it’s related
occupations. While there is this mass exodus happening from the villages to towns and cities, there is no employment data available to suggest that these migrants get absorbed in decent work places. Many of these migrants settle in slums. Addition of such huge numbers there is are significant demands on natural resources such as land and water. Affordable housing becomes out of reach for most of the migrant communities.

Another dimension is of the ‘Beautification’ drives by policy makers that force these communities out of view of the tourist. The policy makers and the tourism industry view the urban poor, street vendors, beggars, slum dwellers and homeless people as being inconsistent with their vision for tourism, and incompatible in their plans for tourist sites. We only need to think back to the Commonwealth Games 2010 in New Delhi, where in the quest to transform Delhi into a ‘world-class city’, the Delhi Government decided to hide the Capital’s slums behind bamboo screens.

**Economic Issues in Tourism**

In the present era of capitalistic globalisation, tourism has increasingly gained headway in the economy of India. Both globally and nationally, it is a sector being facilitated through various economic policies and agreements, especially in the developing countries, as its share in a country’s GDP increases. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) along with World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has urged world leaders, including that of India, to join hands with them and leaders from the other countries to position travel and tourism higher on the global agenda. The theme of UNCTAD XIII, Development-Centered Globalization: Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Growth and Development, focuses on how the global economy can spread its benefits more inclusively and sustainably, creating jobs and raising living standards for poor people and nations. Currently ranking among the top three export sectors for nearly half of the world’s least developed countries (LDCs), tourism has emerged as one of the economic sectors best able to address these concerns. It is claimed that with tourism growth rates in developing countries currently outperforming those in developed countries, tourism today is one of the most promising and viable options for global development.

In India, the 12th 5 year Plan saw a budget hike of Rs. 87.66 crores for tourism, bringing it to Rs.1297.66 for 2013-2014, for creating facilities on construction of Budget Accommodation, wayside amenities, Tourist Reception Centres, Refurbishment of Monuments, Special Tourism Projects, Adventure and Sports facilities, Sound and Light Shows, illuminations of monuments, providing for improvement in solid waste management and sewerage management improvement of surroundings, procurement of equipments directly related to Tourism and Rural Tourism projects etc. This provision also relates to the Large Revenue Generating projects, generating revenue through levy of fees or user charges like Tourist Trains, cruise vessels, Cruise terminals, Convention Centre, Golf Courses etc. and creation of land bank for hotels to provide the hotel accommodation in the country by purchasing land and build hotels through public private partnerships.

Such leaps in budgets had been made considering that the Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism increased by 9.5 per cent to Rs 6,089 crores and Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) went up by 3.2 per cent time between May 2012 and May 2013, along with almost double the increase in domestic tourists.

In line with such heavy tourist and foreign exchange, has been the granting of various plans for infrastructure development in the sector. Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India has intended to develop 35 integrated circuits in public private partnership (PPP) mode in all states and 20 tourism parks and 70 rural tourism clusters during the 12th Five Year Plan. MoT has appointed a national level
consultant to identify four tourism circuits in each state, excluding the North Eastern states and two in each union territory for integrated development of tourism circuits during the 12th Five-Year Plan period. In fact, the MoT recently cleared 45 projects and has allocated a total of Rs 110 crore for development of tourism infrastructure and circuits in Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab.

India is touted to be one of the fastest growing economies in the near future as the mass of economic activity shifts from the US and Europe to Asia entrusting greater responsibility on India in the new global economic world order. The Indian economy is predicted to double in size in the next seven, certainly by 2020. India’s gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 8.5% in 2010-11, which laid a good base for growth in the following years, which is why India assumes a critical role in G-20 and has a crucial role to play in driving investment, trade and consumption to push growth in the world economy. In collaboration with various global partners, India has thus pushed economic development in different sectors, both nationally and globally, tourism and allied industries being the key in many of the agreements. The India-Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has opened up a host of business opportunities for Indian industry, especially in the construction sector in Asean region in construction-related activities such as construction of agricultural buildings, bridges, canal, roads and highways, sports facilities and water-treatment plants. Various bilateral agreements with Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Mexico, Israel, etc have seen many tourism initiatives.

Naturally, a lot of the infrastructure building in India is now happening through FDIs and PPPs. To attract more Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), the UPA government simplified the guidelines of investment and came out with the revised rules in April, 2013. With such FDI friendly environment, various countries have invested in tourism and related infrastructure in the recent times. For example, India is set to benefit from the famed Japanese bullet train technology, with Tokyo in May 2013 pledging to invest heavily in building high speed railway systems in the country. Hotel and Tourism sector is declared as high priority sector and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) upto 100%, under the automatic route is permitted in ‘Hotels & Tourism Sector’, subject to applicable laws/regulations, security and other conditionalties. In a country where incentives for SEZs continue to increase, the space for foreign investment in tourism widens exponentially. Investments in industry to build infrastructure has also had large implications in tourism growth, as only a portion of the land acquired is used for industrial purposes, leaving enough space for tourism related infrastructure to develop. The Delhi-Mumbai Corridor (DMIC) an Indo-Japan industrial initiative has large swathes of land dedicated to tourism activities. Buoyed by rapid progress of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) project has begun preparatory work on two more industrial corridors between Bangalore and Chennai and Bangalore and Mumbai.

The potential of tourism is being realised as it has been a sector that has been growing even during an economic slow-down. The falling rupee may have hit the budget of Indian tourists. But on the flip side, leisure travellers from abroad are evincing more interest in India as hotel stay has become cheaper. India tops the list when it comes to getting the best value at hotel room rates domestically, as in terms of the average price paid on a hotel room, Indians found the best value at home at Rs 4,715 followed by the Portuguese on Rs 4,846 and the Spanish on Rs 5,009.

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT), at present, has identified 53 Mega Destinations/Circuits for development in the country, including Maharashtra and Goa, in consultation with the concerned State Governments/Union Territories (UTs) on the basis of footfalls and their future tourism potential. Out of the 53 identified projects, 35 have already been sanctioned.
MoT has further sanctioned 169 rural tourism sites in 28 states/Union Territories. The scheme of Rural tourism was started by the Ministry in 2002-03 with the objective of showcasing rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages, which have core competence in art and craft, handloom, and textiles as also an asset base in the natural environment. The intention is to benefit the local community economically and socially as well as enable interaction between tourists and local population for a mutually enriching experience. The promotion of village tourism is also aimed at generating revenue for the rural communities through tourist visitations. Various other programmes by the Ministry has been launched to promote different aspects of Tourism, be it “Incredible Tiffin” Campaign to promote local cuisine in tourist places or introducing the Clean India Campaign to ensure cleanliness in tourist areas, from creating programmes like “Hunar se Rozgar Tak” to ensure the growing industry have the required skilled personnel to improvement of tourist facilities by collaboration between IRCTC and ITDC. The Government aims at creating 77.5 million jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector by 2016 by adopting a “pro-poor” approach to the development of the sector in the 12th five year Plan. As tourism in India cuts across numerous departments’ jurisdiction, to attain any level of co-ordinated development, the need for common action was felt. So much so, that in order to resolve inter-ministerial issues involving tourism, an Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCCTS) has been constituted including the Member Secretary, Planning Commission, Chairman, Railway Board, Secretaries from the Ministries of Home, Defence, External Affairs, Road Transport & Highways, Civil Aviation, Rural Development, Environment & Forest, Urban Development and Secretaries from the Departments of Revenue, Expenditure, School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Labour and Employment and Ministry of Culture.

Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) “statistics” and the economics of tourism – continue to lack any solid analysis – e.g. employment analysis / local multiplier effects and contribution to development paradigms. To assist investment of private capital, apart from tax and duty concessions governments are diluting regulatory frameworks and government policies are calling for creation of “Land Banks” for private investments. Change in land use patterns because of tourism is in fact likely to lead to serious water scarcity and food security issues. These policies are encouraging governments to make land and natural resources available at desirable locations in low prices to private entrepreneurs and corporations. This has severely impacted the local communities dependent on natural resources, especially indigenous people, dalits, and women.

Tourism is not only viewed as a growth engine but also an export growth engine and employment generator. According to the Economic Survey 2011-12 presented in Lok Sabha, the sector has capacity to create large-scale employment both direct and indirect, for diverse sections in society, from the most specialized to unskilled workforce. Claims are that it provides 6-7 per cent of the world’s total jobs directly and millions more indirectly through the multiplier effect as per the UN’s World Tourism Organization. Since tourism does not fall under a single heading in India’s National Accounts Statistics, its contribution has to be estimated. Its contribution to GDP and employment in 2007-08 was 5.92 per cent respectively as per Tourist Satellite Account data. In fact, the Ministry believes that tourism should be a political agenda to push economic development.

With tourism, railways, roadways, aviation industries have also been bolstered. To promote rail tourism, four special tourist trains called “Janam Bhoomi Gaurav” will be launched to connect important historical and educational places. Domestic and International flights have become cheaper to facilitate tourist movement in recent years, with some domestic airlines even having “sale” of tickets at minimum prices to catalyse mass movement of people.
However, pushing tourism in the name of economic development does not come without its share of pitfalls. The first argument of employment generation is fraught with nation-wide examples of how either the local livelihoods are being compromised, working conditions in the formal sector being too frigid and labour being informalised and gendered. The hospitality and aviation sectors are witnessing the highest attrition rates among employees, making retention of critical manpower resources a key challenge. The accelerating loss of biodiversity in the Western Ghats is affecting the lives and livelihoods of people in the area, to which tourism is a great contributing factor. A large portion of the labour in tourism is of informal nature, with no social benefits or security nets. Though only street vendors have been recognised and provided for in legislation, there is an ever-growing mass of informal labour that is waiting to be addressed as beneficiaries of tourism too. The large tourism initiatives that claim to develop economies are missing the very vital link of working in tandem with the needs and aspirations of the local communities in tourist areas, which in India happen to be a colossal number of people. Largely a top-down system, voices of people and carrying capacity concerns are being put on the back-burner. Existing socio-political structures of caste, class, gender perpetrate the ill-effects of such large-scale tourism investments and plans.

Environmental Issues in Tourism

In the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) the trend of rapid change in legislations – on the coasts, islands, with respect to forests, environmental impacts, ecological sensitive areas – has left us with no time to evaluate the deeper and systemic implications of these rapid shifts. However a silver lining is the concerns of the community and that of local governance needing to play a more active role in deciding on the nature and form of tourism development for their region that is reflected in the ecotourism guidelines for tiger reserves.

There is a systematic move by the Government to increase the land under forest cover. This is being done in many covert ways by increasing the core areas and by demarcating area around tiger reserves as buffer zones, declaring corridors, private forests, ecologically sensitive areas, banning agriculture, keeping lands fallow, etc. In some instances the Forest Departments are only ensuring settlement of individual rights of the adivasis under the FRA and neglecting the claims for community rights as then whatever remains belongs to the FD. These moves are leading to dispossessing and displacing people of their lands, limiting and denying access to resources, and impacting their culture and identity.

Tourism continues to make inroads into areas ecologically fragile areas which are rich in natural resources. Ecotourism is increasingly being seen as a driver for the eradication of poverty through economic development of communities. Ecotourism in forest areas are primarily located in or around protected areas, which has resulted in opposing interests and conflict between the adivasis, the state and other actors. The recently developed ecotourism guidelines are to be adopted and acted upon by the State Governments. With the recent developments on ecotourism, the government and tourism industry, are attempting to establish tourism’s contribution to conservation and community participation. Among these are also a handful of community based initiatives.

Limits of Acceptable Change as a tool to assess carrying capacity of tourism development in ecosensitive destinations needs to be adopted as against the currently advocated model of Carrying Capacity calculated as the number of vehicles which can enter the gated animal reserves. We recognize the need to undertake a pilot project to demonstrate the merits of LAC over carrying capacity. Mass tourism sites in eco-fragile regions such as pilgrim sites and mountain regions (hill stations) are being considered to apply this concept.
Tourism Trends in India

The need for protection of the coastal ecology and livelihoods of local communities from industrial activities in coastal areas continues even today. A continuing trend is the violation of the CRZ notification by the tourism industry along the coast. There is a need to follow up on our existing laws to discourage such practice. The Island Protection Zone (IPZ) notification applicable to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, does not even consider tourism as a sector that needs stringent regulation especially as the Islands are looking at tourism to boost their economy.

A recent trend is the promotion of seaplane tourism in coastal ecosystems. The impacts of seaplane tourism on the ecosystems and communities are as yet unknown, and considering that this form of tourism is being vehemently pushed in fragile area by the state governments, there is a need for regulation. Also keeping on our radar, are the riverfront developments around the country and its implications both on the communities as well as local ecology.

Climate change remains a non-issue for Ministry of Tourism and the tourism industry. There is a greater push for more greenfield airports, air-strips in remote areas, sea planes for increased connectivity between islands. Tourism is also being impacted by the effects of climate change, for e.g the erosion of coastlines The Ministry and tourism industry need to be seriously challenged on this important issue.

Institutional Issues in Tourism

For tourism to be democratic, governance mechanisms at tourism destinations necessarily need to be facilitative of community participation. Positive initiatives have taken to devolve powers to Gram Sabhas under various legislations which include Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, PESA, Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (Forest Rights Act - FRA). But conservationists and wildlife experts oppose this on the grounds that granting rights to forest communities will cause disturbances to ecosystems.

However, the trend that seems to be emerging in key tourism destinations, is the creation of special vehicles for the management of the tourism sites through Development Authorities, thereby creating parallel structures of governance which are stronger and vested with more power and authority than the panchayats/Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). This also leads to a dilution of regulatory frameworks that might already be in existence.

In general, there is a tendency to discuss the socio-economic issues more in context of rural India as compared to urban India. Concerns are raised over functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and several initiatives like capacity building and training programme, Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY), proposal of Model Panchayat and Gram Swaraj Act and clear provisions on Accounts & Audit including Social Audit & Ombudsman & Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA). This is not the same in case of urban local bodies. Role of urban local bodies in tourism remains unexplored.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been exploring the option of outsourcing the training programmes to suitable private organisations. As a first step in this direction of outsourcing, the Ministry has published a Reference Guide for Outsourcing PRI Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) related activities. Currently, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Jharkhand, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have engaged the services of Service Providing Agencies (SPAs) for undertaking various CB&T activities.

The national level plan for improving the functioning of PRIs has been chalked out in the Roadmap for Panchayati Raj (2011-2017). The Roadmap logically delineates the issues and specific action plans within the larger governance framework for creating an effective Panchayati Raj structure.
It is important that the rights of the Local Self Governance Institutions (LSGIs) assert their right to play a key role in tourism development decision-making.

Tourism being multidisciplinary and one that is impacted by legislations and policies linked to several allied industries and sectors like child, women, youth, Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe (SC & ST), sexuality minority, company, aviation, land, labour, environment, ensuring that these laws take into consideration aspects of tourism is important. If this is not done, the specific applicability of the law to tourism may be watered down especially in the context of the presence of Development Authorities as mentioned above.

**Alternate Forms of Tourism**

Pro-poor tourism is the latest in tourism models/concepts that has gained importance in the Indian space in last few years. Report of the Working Group on Tourism formed for the 12 th five Year Planning (2012–2017) process, where Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Chairman of the Working Group in the foreword of the Report said, “The Approach Paper of the 12th Five Year Plan prepared by the Planning Commission highlights the need to adopt “pro-poor tourism” for increasing net benefits to the poor and ensuring that tourism growth contributes to poverty reduction.....” The Annual Report of the MoT for the year 2012-13 also states that the role of Government in tourism development has been redefined from a regulator to a catalyst. Following the working strategy for the 12th five year plan, the Ministry has adopted a ‘pro-poor tourism’ approach aiming towards poverty reduction. The government therefore continues to view tourism from the perspective of its claims that current models of tourism contribute to socio-economic development through employment generation, entrepreneurship, infrastructure development and revenue earnings. Following pro poor approach, Community Based Tourism (CBT) has been gaining ground over the years. Different and innovative forms of CBT are emerging with varying levels of community involvement. There is a need to assess these different forms and arrive at sustainable models, with true and not tokenistic community involvement. As CBT means ownership of the tourism enterprise with the communities, this would mean that policy would need to be aligned towards this, which is not the case today. The government has identified Community Based Tourism (CBT) as a way of ensuring participation, however principles of CBT which are community ownership, control and as a decision maker have not been internalised.

**Ministry of Tourism**

**Schemes**

Reiterating the claim of tourism as a sector for employment generation, another issue that sought the attention of the tourism sector is a huge gap in demand and supply of skilled human resources. To address the gap, the Ministry has adopted multipronged strategy which includes strengthening and expanding the institutional infrastructure such as Institutes of Hotel Management (IHM) and Food Craft Institutes (FCI) in States for training and education. Skill Testing and Certification programme for existing service providers and Hunar Se Rozgar Tak and Earn While You Learn are other initiatives taken by the Ministry in this regard. More trade/training areas like drivers, golf caddies, stone mason, security guards and tourist facilitators were added under the ‘Hunar se Rozgar’ scheme. To expand the scope, prisoners, physically challenged persons (people with hearing and speech impairments), heritage walk escorts, nature guides have also been brought under the ambit of these programmes.

**Regulation**

To promote sustainable tourism practices for tour operators and hospitality sector, the MoT has come out with the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI). As per the guideline, the hotels including those in and around eco-fragile areas are required to include various eco-friendly measures. However, the guidelines lack legal enforceability, therefore, remain at the willingness of the hotels.
**Marketing and Promotion**

Year 2012 saw important shift in the strategy to promote tourism in India from destination focus to consumer needs of finding the destination or product of their desire in India. The MoT launched two new campaigns: an International Campaign called ‘Find What You Seek’ and a Domestic Campaign called ‘Go Beyond’ at the “World Travel Market 2012” in London. In 2013-14, an aggressive approach has been adopted to promote India as a year-round destination among global inbound source markets. The sector has seen a 9.5% hike in the budget allocation which is Rs.1,282 crore for 2012-13, of which Rs. 348.20 crore has been assigned for the ‘Incredible India’ campaign to showcase India’s major holiday destinations. Making publicity and promotional programmes product specific, country specific and destination specific, appointing India Tourism Representative Offices abroad, promoting cruise, adventure, medical & wellness, golf, polo, Meetings Incentives Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) and film tourism as niche products of the industry are among the few major initiatives taken by the MoT. In addition, to facilitate resolution of inter-ministerial issues involved in the development of tourism, an Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of the country.
Gujarat Tourism Trends

July 2014

Over the past few years, tourism has received a push by the Gujarat government which has resulted in the opening up of tourism across the state. Currently religious, heritage, business and wildlife are the key types of tourism. The state plans to expand in areas of spiritual, well being, sun and beach, sports- water and adventure sports, nature, urban and rural, cruises, theme parks, meetings and conferences and golf tourism. Based on these new forms of tourism, business opportunities have been detailed for large scale investments. During the Vibrant Gujarat conclave in 2013, investment commitments amounted to $243 billion by way of 8,663 memoranda of understanding, with an employment generation potential of 2.62 million. In tourism just within the large sector there were 247 companies who have indicated their interest to invest in the state. This is apart from the other investments in areas of transportation (civil aviation, ports and roads).

The table below shows the tourist arrivals both domestic and foreign into Gujarat which has been on an increase over the past decade. While the percentage share of domestic tourist arrivals continues to remain steady, there has been a steady increase in foreign tourist arrivals to the state. Business and religion are the main motivations for domestic tourists travelling to Gujarat.

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<th>Domestic Tourist Arrivals</th>
<th>Foreign Tourist Arrivals</th>
<th>Total Tourist Arrivals</th>
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This increase has been attributed to the intensive promotional campaigns such as Khushboo Gujarat Ki which are backed by big budget spends. Since 2009, there has been a fivefold increase in its budget for tourism promotion. The tourism department had allocated just Rs 10 crore for promotional activities before this campaign kicked off in October 2010 and they plan to spend Rs 55 crore by March 2013 (which is double of what Madhya Pradesh has as its budget for tourism promotion). To attract tourists through internet and mobile services, TCGL has decided to have 24X7 call centre, a mobile application and GIS mapping of tourist destinations which helps tourists to get information about the destination, facilities and hotels as well as arrange taxi services and online bookings. TCGL has signed MoUs with various travel trade associations (TAAI, TAFI, IATO, ADTOI, ATOA) as well as with other states (Rajasthan, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, and North Eastern states) for joint promotions. MoUs with countries such as Sri Lanka for promoting the Buddhist sites of Gujarat.

The big budgets are not just on the promotional aspect but is seen in Gujarat’s Annual Plan outlay for year 2013-14 which has been fixed at Rs 59,000 crore. The total plan outlay for tourism with a stress on pilgrimage places is Rs 650 crore. Key development planned include the Rs 46 crore for comprehensive
development of Chanod-Karanali, Utkanethswar, Galateshwar, Kaleshwari, Kedar (Mahi Sagar) as a part of the development of spiritual tourism, Rs 100 crore to provide infrastructural facilities and other related works at places of pilgrimage for devotees, Rs 20 crore for development of Saputara, Rs 25 crore for development of Gopnath, Porbandar, Dumas, Sikka, Tithal and Nargol under coastal tourism and beach development, Rs 81 crore to develop Velavadar, Enjal Bajana, Kilad Mahal, Ukai Dam, Kadana Dam, Dharoi Dam as well as Polo of Vijaynagar keeping in view ecotourism and dam sites, Rs 15 crore to develop way-side basic amenities, Rs 15 crore for Light and Sound shows, Rs 10 crore for maintaining cleanliness and sanitation at tourist spots and Rs 15 crore to develop a musical garden at Aajwa Dam on a PPP basis. Apart from this Rs 500 crore has been kept aside for the development of Statue of Unity project. The centre too has allocate Rs 200 cr for this project.

The thrust of tourism in Gujarat in the coming years is clearly going to be on coastal tourism and religious tourism while the other forms of tourism will be developed in smaller / niche pockets across the state. There is also going to be the likelihood of greater private investments. While there is attention being paid to the development and expansion of infrastructure for tourism as well as on tourism promotion, there seems to no mention for the planning and regulation as well as mitigating the negative impacts of tourism that people living in and around tourism destinations are faced with. One also questions the reason for this attention as tourism’s contribution to the state GDP was just 2% in 2006-07.

Policy:

Between the eight tourism hubs that have been created by Gujarat Tourism (Ahmedabad Metro, Ahmedabad Rural (North Gujarat), Surat (South Gujarat), Vadodara (Central Gujarat), Rajkot, Junagadh & Jamnagar (Saurashtra) and Bhuj (Kutch)) and 4 key circuits (in Kheda district [Dakor – Utkanethswar – Fagvel – Champaner – Pavagadh]; Junagadh District [Gir – Somnath – Ahmedpur Mandvi]; Bahucharaji – Patan – Siddhpur – Ahmedabad and Buddhist Circuit of Bhavnagar – Rajkot – Junagadh) identified in an interim report of IL&FS submitted to MoT in 2012 for comprehensive development the entire state is now being seen as a playground for the development of tourism. Questions on how were these circuits identified, when and who were a part of these deliberations, were people living in and around tourism destinations consulted, what background studies were conducted and were impacts of current tourism development assessed prior to formation of these circuits? While these questions remain unanswered, development of tourism must continue!

The Government has set up Gujarat State Aviation Company to build infrastructure and provide trained manpower for civil aviation sector. In 2010-11 the state has proposed to invest Rs.9 crore which included constructing airport terminals, air strips, hangars, flying and gliding clubs and aero sports facilities. Luan Airways and Ventura, two private airlines have been roped in for connectivity within state. The government has also proposed to reserve 10% of its funds for building roads to boost infrastructure at tourist spots. After every 100 km of roads, the department plans wayside amenities, parking facilities, refreshments centres and hotels.

Fairs and festivals promoted by DoT such as the International Kite festival, Rann Utsav, Navratri, festivals in Modhera, Patan, Somnath, Dwarka, Lothal, Dholavira and Kutch form a major attraction. World class golf courses are being planned in Ahmedabad and Vadodara. As an industrialised state, MICE tourism is also growing.

It was stated that the land under the possession of TCGL which is not being used should be returned to the revenue department. However to counter this move, the Tourism Secretary has called for innovating mega tourism projects to whom land will be given at a concessional price.
Private corporations have been actively lobbying the government for a larger role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of tourism activities. While the government has consulted with private sector players and invited their representatives on planning boards and policy initiatives there is a major thrust toward formalising this relationship and legitimising it through the prevalence of Public Private Partnerships or PPP, which now feature in most tourism polices. However the socio-cultural, environmental and economic impact of tourism PPPs on local communities is seldom assessed. Like many state and across sectors, Gujarat too is taking the PPPs route for development of tourism infrastructure. Themes for development identified are coastal tourism (Pirotan Island, Ahmedpur, Nargol, Lothal), religious tourism (Ambaji, Dwarka, Koteshwar-Narayan Sarovar), Heritage tourism (Balasinor, Champaner/ Pavagadh), Ecotourism (Idar, Vijaynagar), hill tourism (Saputara) and Leisure and Business (Gandhinagar). The government also plans to privatise 30 state owned tourism enterprises.

Among these the development along the 1600 km coastline for tourism is receiving significant attention. In 2010, a booklet released by the Gujarat Ecology Commission, pointed towards the gross mismanagement of numerous beaches – lack of basic infrastructure, no provision for drinking water, changing rooms and toilets, no dustbins and no workforce for maintaining cleanliness. This seems to have been the trigger for the Gujarat state submitting in 2012, a project for coastal tourism which then got a boost when the Planning Commission approved a Rs.1,200 crore special grant to develop 16 beaches. The project includes levelling 3-4 km stretch of each beach, landscaping, benches, kiosks, toilets, lighting and caravan facilities are planned to develop to promote tourism. 80 proposals worth 18000 crore have been received for building resorts along the beaches Suvali will be first to be developed and it alone is pegged to attract investments of Rs.5,000 crore. The Tourism Department has also launched a project of Rs 20-crore to interconnect three lakes on the Bet Dwarka island and to spend Rs 50 crore to develop facilities at Dwarka. With the kind of development planned, one wonders if there will be the adherence to environmental laws. Simple aspects of levelling and landscaping of beaches should not have been proposed. Also with the development of beaches through the PPP mode, there is a fear of loss of access to the sea and other common property resources by coastal people whose life and livelihoods are dependant on them.

Running parallel to the development of coastal tourism is the river front development which finds mention in the state tourism policy. The Sabarmati river front development in Ahmedabad by Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Ltd is one such example which is shown as an urban regeneration and environmental improvement initiative but in reality today is an area empty of life which previously existed and thrived. It is now visited by tourists who understand little of its history and context and citizens who are able to pay for an evening on the banks of a river. Another contentious project is the 182-metre-tall Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s “Statue of Unity”, which is projected as the pride of the nation, and a significant step in the development of education, health and tourism in the tribal community of the region. This project is facing stiff resistance from the adivasis living in more than 70 villages around the site near the Narmada dam to the government’s proposal to acquire land for the development of the area for tourism purposes. Based on an RTI application to SSNNL, the Statue of Unity does not require an environmental clearance to be obtained!! While the former project in the name of ‘beautification’ drives for the tourists has forced the urban poor, street vendors, beggars, slum dwellers and homeless people out of view their view the latter the name of unity (whether one can question if it truly exists) is going to displace hundreds of adivasi families.

To celebrate 75 years of the Dandi march, a project has been announced to develop the 376 km Ahmedabad-Dandi route into the ‘Heritage Road and Corridor’. The Government of Gujarat has come up with a policy to train, assist and equip people from the local community to facilitate homestays in
rural/remote areas for both domestic and foreign tourists. For this a homestay scheme was planned to be launched. The department also in consideration of tax breaks, assistance for equipping the rooms, training to host the visitors to places like Mandvi beach, Dhordo desert in Kutch and Dwarka. These homestays will also be made as a part of packages by the operators. Within these two areas their is a scope for people in the destinations to be involved in – however one would need to see how this translates on the ground.

The department plans on focusing on developing ecotourism by putting up of solar panels along the Narmada canals. The traditional eco-friendly houses of Kutch will be available for the special packages during Christmas and new year celebration. However key components of ecotourism which is conservation, benefit to local community and education seem to be missing from the planning for ecotourism.

Gujarat Government is expedited its work on preservation of ancient Buddhist Caves and sites which is being excavated by ASI. There is also a plan to erect a cultural wall to display relics of the Buddhist monastery and a proposal to develop Devnimori, Taranga and Vadangar as an integrated Buddhist Circuit. Ministry of Tourism has announced an allocation of 150 crore for a mega tourism project at the Kabirwad on the bank of the Narmada. Mahaparipath, a project focused to develop Sufi tourism circuits on the lines of Buddhist and Jain circuits has been allocated an additional Rs.50 crores. Gujarat and Thailand have planned a tie up as 60000 tourists from Thailand visit India every year, to set up a Buddhist Tourism Circuit. This tie up will also explore possibilities of starting a Vishnu circuit. There is an agreement to start air services between Ahmedabad and Bangkok. This meet was an outcome of the Thai companies interest in partnering Gujarat in its housing and infrastructure projects, including industrial corridor project of Delhi-Mumbai.

The DMIC Trust has approved projects with an investment of Rs. 1,20,000 crores from Central, State Governments and the private sectors. Gujarat is expected to benefit as more than 60% of total investment is likely to be in the state. The construction of a new rail line from Bhimnath to Dholera in the Special Investment Region is planned. Apart from this an international Airport in Ahmedabad – Dholera Investment Region is also proposed as well as a six-lane access controlled highway is proposed to be developed between Ahmedabad and Dholera. The contribution of the State Government will be in the form of land. The Dholera SIR is poised to develop over 50,000 hectares which would be the largest planned industrial area in the world. The contribution of the State Government will be in the form of land, which may lead to large scale acquisition (displacement).

On the environmental front, the State plans to set up a regulatory body for wetlands and lakes in order to ensure conservation. The Gujarat Forest Department has proposed a separate lion reserve in the Bhavnagar area after nearly 53 lions were spotted. Last year the Supreme Court directed the Gujarat government to send some of the Asiatic lions to Madhya Pradesh’s Kuno-Palpur wildlife sanctuary. There was resistance to this move by the state as it was felt that Gujarat’s would lose its USP / tag as the home to Asiatic lion (a regressive step when its comes to tourism promotion).

The Central government has declared that eco-sensitive zones in a five-km radius around Gir, Purna, Vansda, Narayan Sarovar which are important National parks be set up. The new guidelines ban construction, mining, industrial activities and regulate tourism activities in these areas. The Forest & Environment department has banned setting up new hotels within the radius of two kilometre of the Sasan Gir Wildlife Sanctuary. This is aimed at the giving Asiatic lions free access and protect their natural corridor. However existing hotels and the farmhouses would not be affected by this new regulation. Apparently, after the advertisements featuring Amitabh Bachchan, people have started investing in land, which has
forced the state forest department to come up with these regulations. A programme to train about 1,000 guides under the Kaushalya Vardhan scheme has been initiated by the tourism department when it was found that there is a shortage of trained guides, where the beat guards often double up as guides.

A high-level committee that reviewed the Adani port and special economic zone projects states that mangrove forests spread across 75 acres were destroyed, several creeks blocked and statutory procedures circumvented for obtaining clearances for building India’s largest private port. The committee was formed following complaints from local fishermen and farmers’ organisations that the Mundra port and the SEZ cost several people in coastal Gujarat their livelihood and destruction of the coastal ecology.

In the early 1990s the forests were destroyed by the State government’s policy of clear-felling forests and making way for plantations. The Mundhiari community decided to take on forest protection to regenerate the forests forming the Mundhiari Sahayogi Van Vikas Mandli. The process was not easy as reactions from the forest department were initially unsupportive, even hostile. Two decades later large patches of forests have regenerated. Today, they protects 432 hectares, and neighbouring Haathipagla and Narvaniya about 482 hectares and 700 hectares respectively. Though the Forest Department has given them a certificate in honour of their outstanding work, it provides the community with no funds for protection. However overall Gujarat fares poorly (ranked 12th) in issuing forest land rights to the adivasi population. Of the total claims received by Gujarat government, 1,82,869 claims were made by individuals, while 8,723 were collective claims. The government approved 38,176 individual claims and 1,608 collective claims, while rejecting the remaining 1,51,808 claims.

If one where to look at the multitude of indexes that indicate development – whether it is the Human Development Index, the Multidimensional Poverty Index or the Composite Development Index, in all of the Gujarat ranks 9th among 20 major states. With there being indications of large scale investments in the coming years in tourism, one then wonders who will benefit from this development. Until now the benefits of tourism have not percolated to the marginalized sections of society. Can tourism transform this trend? One doubts when the very nature of tourism which is being planned and developed is devoid of the voices of people living in and around tourism destinations. Do they not have a say in how tourism should be developed? What are their realities, what are their challenges and aspirations? In a drive to push for the development of tourism the human face of tourism seems to have been lost.
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EQUATIONS Analysis and Comments on the Tourism Sections of the WGEEP Report

5th July, 2012

To

The Ministry of Environment and Forests,
Government of India, (RE Division), Room No. 539,
Parayavaran Bhavan, CGO complex, Lothi Road,
New Delhi – 110003.

Dear Dr. Amit Love and Dr. G.V. Subrahmanyam,

Greetings from EQUATIONS!

EQUATIONS was invited by the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) to submit a paper on “Tourism in the forest areas of Western Ghats”. We submitted this paper to the WGEEP in January 2011.

In the paper, we had made detailed recommendations on the way forward for tourism in the Western Ghats, under the categories of –

- Developing a clear vision and strategies for tourism, conservation and community rights and Participation
- Regulation, policy, guidelines and institutions’
- Ensuring sustainability in tourism

We are disappointed to note that tourism has not been given much space in the WGEEP report, and the social, cultural, economic and environmental negative impacts of tourism have not been adequately acknowledged.

We summarise our key comments and recommendations below:

1. The WGEEP itself has as one of its mandates the proposal for a Western Ghats Ecology Authority. Such a move may be well intentioned but can have many negative (and unintended) consequences that have to be cautioned against. Development authorities have been known to transfer powers from Local Self Governing Institutions (LSGIs) that have been bestowed on them by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

2. The report needs to focus on the growth of tourism, its impacts and the related regulations. Tourism Impact Assessment (TIA) for developing a clear vision and strategies for tourism, conservation and community rights with participation of the local communities to ensure sustainability in tourism, must be made mandatory.

3. Ecotourism is promoted in the context of conservation, community benefit and conservation education. EQUATIONS believes that tourism does not directly contribute to conservation due to the extractive and consumption oriented nature of mass tourism. At best tourism has the potential to raise resources for conservation through collection of fees through gate receipts and that too only in reserve forests. EQUATIONS recommends that the provisions of the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism in and around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) may be taken into account.

4. One of the aspirations for ecotourism is conservation education of the tourists. EQUATIONS reiterates this very valuable potential for the contribution of ecotourism to conservation. However, it also notes, that not much has been done by way of actualising this potential. A part of the conservation education, is to also recognise the role that local communities have historically played in the conservation of the country’s natural resources and the continued struggle to do this in the light of a fast developing nation. This will inculcate respect for local communities in the tourists and will change the perspective with which they are
viewed. The change in the mindset of tourists and the tourism industry towards local communities would also positively influence their behaviour vis-à-vis local communities, which today is oppressive, patronising and condescending.

5. The Panchayats need to engage in the design and implementation of tourism more directly. The ability of local communities through grama sabhas to engage with the representatives and negotiate power structures and dynamics is a crucial factor for tourism to be more reflective of their aspirations and interests and take cognizance of their rights and responsibilities. Their capacities for the same also need to be built.

We sincerely hope that you see our recommendations as an attempt to make tourism in the Western Ghats democratic, just and sustainable.

Hard copies of this letter and our comments are also sent to the Ministry

We look forward to meaningful and definitive action from your Ministry.

Yours sincerely,
Rosemary Viswanath
Director

Copy to:
1. Madhav Gadgil, Chairman, WGEEP
2. Rajen Habib Khwaja, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
3. Dr. Tishyarakshit Chatterjee, Secretary, MoEF

Enclosures:
1. EQUATIONS comments on tourism sections of the WGEEP report
2. EQUATIONS comments on the overall WGEEP report
Tourism in Forest Areas of Western Ghats (Equations Recommendations) January 2011

Equations acknowledges that WGEEP report has included proposed regulations on tourism and important viewpoints related to the issues and definition on ecotourism propounded by IUCN. These do not cover various issues and impacts of tourism in the Western Ghats region. The information and the issues covered/focused are inadequate.

Tourism, like all other sectors in the service industry is not immune to social and cultural hierarchies. Given the broad spectrum of stakeholders, very often their benefits are also in competition and at loggerheads with each other. (Mapping Issues and Challenges of Ecotourism, Equations December 2011) The panel needs to focus on the nature of activities that will be allowed. It is also very important to have public consultations and to review and refine the scope to the conservation and planning activities related to Western Ghats. The model do’s and don’ts are not educative nor will help in transformation. They merely state what behaviours are allowed or not allowed. The focus should inculcate ecology plans with wide range of consultations and with a deeper respect for nature, people and their cultures. (EQUATIONS analysis of (draft) guidelines for ecotourism in and around protected areas issued by MoEF, June 2011 - 2.5 local communities- public/visitors suggestions page 36)

Challenges/ Areas of Concern

Ecotourism and Conservation

As is widely acknowledged ecotourism is promoted in the context of conservation, community benefit and conservation education. EQUATIONS recognises the fact that tourism does not directly contribute to conservation due to the extractive nature of tourism. At best, tourism has the potential to raise resources for conservation through collection of fees through gate receipts and that too only in reserve forests. Preliminary studies show that tourism generates minimal contribution to conservation in forest areas. However, it is felt that there is insufficient knowledge about the role that tourism plays in conservation in the forests, coasts and hills and mountains. EQUATIONS recommends that the provisions of the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism in and around Protected Areas issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) may be taken into account.

Conservation Education and Education for Sustainability

One of the aspirations for ecotourism is conservation education of the tourists. EQUATIONS reiterates this very valuable potential for the contribution of ecotourism to conservation. However, it also notes, that not much has been done by way of actualising this potential. A part of the conservation education, is to also
recognise the role that local communities have historically played in the conservation of the country's natural resources and the continued struggle to do this in the light of a fast developing nation. This will instil respect for local communities in the tourists and will change the perspective with which they are viewed. The change in the mindset of tourists towards local communities would also positively influence their behaviour vis-à-vis local communities, which today is oppressive, patronising and condescending.

Ecotourism and Community Benefit

Community benefit may take several forms, some of these being, employment, taxes collected by the Panchayat, infrastructure development like electricity and water.

1. Mandate of the panel has not included Tourism related regulations, impacts or impact assessment.
2. The mandate does not focus on Indigenous people/tribal communities in the Western Ghats.
3. The mandate does not focus on the working/implementation and roles expected from Governments laws, legislation and policies relating to forests, land and indigenous communities and focuses only on establishment of Western Ghats Ecology Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. (Reference- WGEFP Report Part 1)

(Mapping Issues And Challenges Of Ecotourism- EQUATIONS December 2011)

Tourism is complex and has social, cultural, economic, environmental and political implications for both the tourism destination as well as the country. The pilgrim sites, hill stations, National Parks and protected areas of the Western Ghats have been popular tourist destinations. In recent years, the growth of India’s consumer class, combined with increasing access to private and public transport, has led to a rash of growth in tourism of all kinds and in tourism linked infrastructures. The trend towards resource intensive mega tourism projects - Lavasa, Ambey Valley, amusement parks, golf courses is even more alarming. (Tourism In Forest Areas- Equations January 2011 Section IV: Recommendations).

Ecotourism when practised correctly, is an important economic activity. It has the scope to link to a wider constituency and build conservation support while raising awareness about the worth and fragility of such ecosystems in the public at large. It also promotes the non-consumptive use of wilderness areas, for the benefit of the local communities living in and around, and dependent on these fragile landscape. (Equations analysis of (draft) guidelines for ecotourism in and around protected areas issued by MoEF, June 2011)

Problems include the clearances of natural vegetation for hotels and tourist facilities, increased pressure on water and electricity resources and fuel wood, pollution from vehicles, noise, overcrowding, poor waste management and litter.

These are serious concerns, due to the fragility and ecological importance of the forests, rivers and scrubland in the region. The character of many of these destinations have changed, from a tranquil place for relaxing and appreciating nature, to becoming commercialized and polluted and spent destinations. Few people want to limit the growth of tourism in the region but most business owners and government planner favour the continued growth of mass tourism and little efforts has been made towards community involvement and benefit as we well as sustainable and responsible forms of tourism. (Tourism In Forest Areas- Equations January 2011 Section IV: Recommendations)

Measures and Mitigation/Improvement has very relevant points but also mentions that certain areas would be no-go areas. This is not very specific. What kind of area and for whom? If there are local communities,
Does it apply to the local communities in that area as well?  
(WGEEP Report Part 1 Page-41)

The recommendations given below, give detailed information about the various areas that need to be included and also focus on the importance of tourism regulation needed in the Western Ghats region.

(The following Recommendations was proposed by Equations in the paper submitted to the WGEEP, ‘Tourism in the Forest areas of Western Ghats’, January 2011)

Our recommendations fall into three categories:

- a. Developing a clear vision and strategies for tourism, conservation and community rights and participation
- b. Regulation, policy, guidelines and institutions
- c. Ensuring sustainability in tourism

A: Developing a Clear Vision and Strategies for Tourism, Conservation and Community Rights and Participation

There is an urgent need to shift priorities in the vision of tourism from merely increasing tourist numbers, number of multiple category hotels/resorts and infrastructure to addressing critical issues such as sustainability. The tourism industry is not, and cannot, be the standard-bearer of conservation stewardship. Ways and means to transfer this to local communities need to be worked out with the state playing a facilitative and regulatory role. Several national and international guidelines could be referred to wherein attempts by communities to arrive at the vision and principles of tourism development are reflected in the form of charters and codes. There are inspiring examples of people’s charters on tourism from other states of India.

We recommend that the Ministry Of Tourism (MoT) takes the lead to support and detailed and participatory visioning and strategical exercise that lays out general guidelines for tourism in the whole Western Ghats region, takes into account the perspectives and needs of different stakeholders and allows varying and even conflicting interests to come into play. A comprehensive board tourism vision and guidelines document for the Western Ghats should be the final out come of this process, which can be used as a guideline for states to form their ecotourism/tourism policy in the Western Ghats region.

This comprehensive visioning and strategic planning exercise should be prioritised and privileged as a critical step prior to announcing/approving any further policy/scheme given that the adverse impacts of unplanned and unregulated tourism on the Western Ghats are evident.

Policy to consider the aspects of conservation of the rich natural heritage and biodiversity, protect and respect the socio-cultural heritage and rights of indigenous people, responsibility in tourism, people concertedness and equity in the way tourism is envisioned; governance and coordination between states and forest departments, strengthening role of local elected governing bodies in tourism, building capacities and skill of people to participate and to engage in tourism.

To supplement such strategic exercises, partnering with the MoEF, NGO, academic institutions etc for detailed technical studies to be undertaken an carrying capacity and tourism impact assessment (not only Environmental Impact Assessment) and/or limits of acceptable change.
B: Regulation, Policy and Institutions

Nature-based tourism potentially can generate public support for conservation but adds to existing challenges of managing PAs and eco sensitive areas already facing pressure. This is particularly true for the Western Ghats where 80% of the tourists are domestic. Based on the trends of increased tourism and opening up of more and more areas, as well as the damage that unregulated tourism has caused, there is an urgent need for establishing and enforcing regulations to manage tourists, resource use, and land use change around PAs and other ecologically fragile areas in the Western Ghats.

The opening up of more and more areas within the Western Ghats for tourism is an aspect that calls for serious relook and stringent regulation, since research points to the fact that current form of tourism in the Western Ghats do not create links between tourist numbers, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable local benefits. The states and their respective Tourism Departments along with the Forest Departments and the Tribal Affairs Departments must ensure a regulator role in addition to being a facilitator of tourism.

Managing and minimising negative impacts (environmental, socio-cultural and economic) are the most important factor in ensuring sustainability. Also, the focus and resources spent on opening new tourists destinations should be shifted towards making existing tourism destinations sustainable. Most tourism destinations in the Western Ghats flout a general understanding on carrying capacity. There is hardly any tourism planning that consider these parameters. Managing tourism destinations is an important part of controlling tourism impacts. Destination management includes land use planning, permits and zoning controls, environment and other regulations, community initiatives, and a host of other techniques to shape the development and daily operation of tourism-related activities. Tourism plans (both perspective plans and management plans) need to be laid down and made open to consultation before any expansion of tourism is considered.

Another important regulatory role is balancing between local residents’ needs, conservation needs and the needs of tourism – particularly to access to resources, services and facilities.

Existing laws and policy, in whatever shape, needs to be implemented rigorously. Tourism establishments should be 10 km away from the periphery of forest areas, especially Protected Areas. Migratory routes should be prohibited for occupation by tourism establishments. Research to determine the number of resorts the parks and the local communities can sustain without damage. Mega projects and resource intensive tourism projects should be scrutinised particularly carefully.

The issue of establishing the Western Ghats Ecological Authority or Conservation Authority is a complex one because of the nature of these Authorities being top down and allowing very little genuine space for multiple interests and peoples voices. One of the mandates of the WGEEP is to take a call on the declaration of ESAs. As indicated in the main paper, while tourism is seen as a significant cause for rapid destruction of fragile ecosystems, and in fact has been the principle reason why Matheran and Mahabaleshwar - Panchgani in the Western Ghats were given ESA status, the process of declaring a place as an ESA requires nuance. The political factors and interests (particularly pro-tourism expansion interests) become the key reason why many of the committee and regulations are paid no heed to. Therefore merely declaring a region as an ESA is not enough and the various interests need to be negotiated in the process and continually thereafter.

Tourism infrastructure, particularly accommodation, should be encouraged to be eco-friendly, with careful use of locally available materials. Incentives for the same need to be given in the form of subsidies and further scientific research in this field should be encouraged for innovations. At the same time, the use of
local material must be regulated to ensure that these are not being consumed unsustainable. If awareness schemes have little impact on monitoring, the prospect of stringent regulation should be resorted to.

Renewable energy methods, such as solar/ biogas/ biomass systems should be encouraged. Natural topography of the land to allow water catchment basins and soil conservation systems should be preserved. If there are none, then the architect and landscape planner should create water catchment and soil conservation methods.

Regional criteria as to how tourist facilities can become more sustainable need to be created. Establish indicators through a multi-stakeholder process to investigate the use of tax break, subsidies, and reward schemes from the Government to support resorts in their endeavour to become more sustainable.

While regulating the growing number of tourism establishments, subsidies to small and medium enterprises in tourism, on investments in environmental management systems like solar, water harvesting, sewage and solid waste management may be considered.

The forest departments should consider taking steps such as closing certain over-visited protected areas for rejuvenation; regular monitoring and checking repeatedly for signs of damage.

The issue of growing number of pilgrim “tourists” requires special attention. The need for special regulations that would be sensitive to faith based responses as well as put in place practical guidelines and facilities that cater to burgeoning numbers are essential. But this needs to be negotiated carefully between the different government departments and temple boards in relation to issue like the devastation of fragile areas, the provision of facilities. This is critical to avert both human and ecological disasters.

A reliable base of information is required to be developed on which tourism plans are made and implemented. Registration of establishments and collection of data from tourism establishments to corroborate official data must be done. A system for regular collection, publishing and analysis of tourism statistics needs to be put in place. This should include critical indicators like revenues from tourism, number of people directly and indirectly employed in the sector, occupancy rates in accommodation units and profits of tourist business.

Bridging gaps in information through local research as well as secondary research to put together the big picture. Undertake collaborative & participatory rapid impact assessments (RIA) as a first round. Tourism impact assessments, assessment of the number of tourists into the various destinations carrying capacity studies and a scientific approach needs to be undertaken before setting up any establishment rather than just demand vs. supply principle.

Capacity building and facilitating the emergence of community based institutions to assess tourism impacts at local level (to monitor, manage and regulate impacts) will help in systematically documenting the tourism impacts at the local site level, establish community based methodologies for studying tourism impacts and provide the base to develop regulatory and management measures. Development of tools to assess tourism impacts and sustainability of these assessment tools in the long term with an emphasis on local assessment and ownership. As these are through participatory methodologies, it will ensure ownership, establish meaningful relationships and build capacity of local communities to take forward the activities into the future.
Training of guides to ensure compliance by them and tourists is important. Educating tourists on safaris and adventure tourism activities like trekking should be mandatory so as to avoid conflicts with the wild animals and also regulate environmental and noise pollution. Interpretation centres could also be located outside the park premises. Tourism Operators and Forest Departments need in particular to make special efforts to increase public awareness on not to look out for sighting of tigers and other large mammals as the sole purpose of wildlife tourism. Night time movement of tourists should be regulated and monitored in and around protected areas to avoid disturbance to wildlife.

Strengthening role of local governing bodies and peoples participation in tourism is the other pressing need. There is a rush to open up new tourism destinations while the existing destinations are in shambles due to the absence of an effective management and democratic decision-making systems.

The Panchayats need to engage in the design and implementation of tourism more directly. The ability of local communities through grama sabhas to engage with the representatives and negotiate power structures and dynamics is a crucial factor for tourism to be more reflective of their aspirations and interests and take cognizance of their rights and responsibilities. Their capacities for the same also need to be built.

Other local institutions such as Eco Development Committees and Village Forest Councils should also play an increasing role in management of tourist destinations in forest areas. Regulations must take into account the fact that JFM Committees/ VSS-VFC/EDC are under the control of Forest Departments with little evidence of a broader democratic process of direction setting and decision-making.

Land acquisition for tourism resorts needs to be studied and monitored and the Panchayats need to have a say in allotment of revenue land for tourism purposes. Imposing a moratorium on further expansion of tourism till such time when the vision, strategies and policymaking steps are taken, is necessary.

Consultation between the tourism industry and local communities, organizations and institutions is essential if they are to work alongside each other and resolve potential conflicts of interest.

Improved communication between tourist facilities, NGOs, forest department and other stakeholders and the education of all stakeholders as to the importance of sustainable and responsible tourism.

C: Ensuring Sustainability in Tourism

Tourism promotion in Western Ghats should target tourists both domestic and foreign who meet the criteria of being sensitive to the ecological fragility, respect the socio-cultural context and willing to contribute to the local economy, such that those coming to visit realise that they are privileged to be visitors. Tourism infrastructure, marketing and policies need to consistently aligned to such a positioning. The manner in which the Western Ghats are promoted, facilities on offer, regulations in place and their enforcement and visitor awareness must gear itself to wean out tourists who do not appreciate these core aspects of the Western Ghats.

Environmental Impacts

- The tourism industry in the Western Ghats needs to be moved to sound environmental practices. The conservation and sustainable use of resources – natural, social and cultural is crucial and makes long-term business sense.
- Using resources sustainably. Only specific species of wood that can be grown on property for use/consumption should be allowed. All new developments to use sustainably harvested local
materials (where possible) during construction and maintenance. All new developments to use ecologically friendly technologies & materials, incorporate the use of sustainable architecture (e.g. light/air flow) to reduce energy consumption, minimise pollution (incl. Noise & light)

- Water usage by tourism establishments is a serious problem. A strategy for water conservation and water management systems needs to be prepared. Engage in water harvesting and recycling. Engage in recycling/treatment practices of water, encourage use of environmentally friendly chemicals and biodegradable soaps/detergents. To meet shortage of water for local consumption, in accordance with building byelaws, rainwater harvesting and recycling of water should be ensured for all establishments especially for tourism establishments.

- A waste management and garbage disposal strategies for tourism intensive areas needs to be worked out. Segregation of wastes and recycling are important options, and also the safe transportation of the waste to notified areas with recycling plants. The zero waste concept may also be adopted. A ban on polythene bags and plastic should be affected immediately and implemented in true spirit along with spreading of awareness.

- Encourage tourist facilities to work with product importers/sellers to reduce level of packaging and to increase recycling.

- Treatment of sewage must be made mandatory for all establishments.

- Reduction of over-consumption and waste avoids the costs of restoring long-term environmental damage.

- Ensure tourist facilities set targets/goals towards the reduction of energy, water and waste, increase use of renewable energy sources, install ‘smart’ valves and shower heads regulate water flow, reduce overflow and release water only when required; install duel flush or low flow toilets; fix leaks and maintain regularly, CFL lighting, no air-conditioners must be the norm.

- Promoting native vegetation growth especially those that will encourage wildlife, stop the planting of exotic species, reduce or remove fencing from the property.

- Only manually powered or sail boats should be used in the various water bodies for tourism purposes and motor/speed boats should be avoided, restricting it to rescue operations.

- Widening of roads and developing other related infrastructure to boost tourism and increase access to more interior destinations in the Western Ghats should be carried out only after sound research on pros and cons and proper public consultations.

**Socio-Cultural Impacts**

With the privileging of tourism social impacts of displacement, changing social structures, acculturation, loss of traditional livelihoods and cultural practices are visible. Regulation and monitoring of tourist activities in the forests needs to be done and punitive action should be taken against both tourists and locals who are engaged in alcohol abuse, drug abuse or sexual exploitation.

- Tourism Operators need in particular to make special efforts to not be commutative about adivasi culture in the form of showcasing tribal dance in tourism establishments. More sensitive and dignified forms of engagement with authentic tribal culture should be explored.

- Greater involvement of local communities in the tourism sector not only benefits them and the environment in general but also improves the quality of the tourism experience. Some activities could be the increased use of local labour, ensuring local economy multipliers, encourage local village visits by tourists in consultation with local people, develop a guide licensing system for local people, consult local people when trekking routes are established, using local knowledge. Also, be sensitive to cultural and religious practices such as local deities, sacred groves.
Economic Impacts

Tourism in the Western Ghats needs to support a wide range of local economic activities, and takes environmental costs/values into account in its economics and pricing. There are many stakeholders and sections of the government and industry who hope that tourism will become one of the pillars of the development in many interior regions in the Western Ghats. A more sound economic analysis of the current and likely economic impact of tourism, and taking cognizance of the high degrees of vulnerability is necessary before such views are nurtured.

- The states and Panchayats can, through appropriate policy measures and taxes, ensure that benefits accruing from growth in tourism are equitably distributed in the Western Ghats, both regionally and across sections of people.
- Considering that the degree of local benefit derived from tourism activities has strong links to the ownership pattern, the states and the local self-governing institutions (LSGIs) should consciously take steps to improve local entrepreneurship and ownership and development of sustainable eco-cultural sensitive forms of tourism. This can be achieved through speedy access to soft loans and credit for those locals, who are keen on venturing into the tourism, but do not have collateral.
- Another important measure for the states to consider would be the creative use of information technology like website and the internet to ensure that small operations get visibility and are able to attract tourists. Interpretation centres and facilities for online booking would help smaller community owned tourism establishments to run tourism business more effectively.
- Support the making and selling of sustainably produced traditional handicrafts and other produce and increase the quality of local produce, so that more can be sourced locally. To ensure strong backward and forward linkages, the states, in consultation with institutions of local self governance, could identify those raw materials that are available locally in sufficient measure, over and above the regular requirements of the local communities, and encourage their use by tourism businesses like resorts, hotels and home stays. The states and Panchayats could consider making local sourcing of some raw material mandatory. Tourist facilities to consciously increase percentage of goods and services sourced locally.
- Encourage positive attitude towards local people learning skills and support the investment in in-house training so local employees can progress to more highly skilled jobs.
- Building capacities and skills to engage in tourism. Areas where capacity building of local community could be enhanced are in the management of tourism enterprises and destinations, tourist-community interface, business and entrepreneurial skills, handicrafts and running micro-enterprises. Capacity building and training opportunities, especially to be trained as naturalists, guides, conservationists with language skills need to be provided by the Department of Tourism and the industry, to the local community, especially youth and women.

Education, Awareness and Sensitisation about Sustainable Practices

- Personnel, who are engaged as guides as well as establishments and operators in contact with tourists need to be trained on aspects of Western Ghats’ ecology, indigenous peoples, local communities and also the rich cultural heritage of the many communities that have inhabited Western Ghats. Education of both the local population and tourists about the fragility of the Western Ghats and the urgent need to comply on use of plastics, consumption of natural resources and energy, waste and litter, noise pollution, the kind of facilities and service they demand, general tourist behaviour etc. is also important.
• The interpretation centre needs to be made an integral part of the tourism activity in Western Ghats with tourists encouraged to make it as part of their tourist itinerary. There is a need to produce more quality, innovative and creative awareness and education material.

• The Department of Environment & Forests may also consider organising more nature camps and awareness campaigns for various groups ranging from school and college students, local community peoples, tourists and others.

• Marketing that provides tourists information that increases respect for the natural, social and cultural environments of the area.

• Staff training should be provided which integrates sustainable tourism into work practices. Engage in visitor education through sign-age, guidebooks, investing in trained guides. Ensure visitor briefing on social & ecological impacts, rules/regulations (park & tourist facility) and safety issues. Encourage tourist facilities to inform guests as to what they are trying to achieve (i.e. steps towards responsible and sustainable tourism).

The following legislation, policies and guidelines should be followed when the Ministry and State Departments promote ecotourism (EQUATIONS analysis of (draft) guidelines for ecotourism in and around protected areas issued by MoEF June 2011)

1. Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
2. Forest Conservation Act, 1980
3. Environmental Protection Act, 1986
4. Panchayat Raj Act, 73rd amendment
5. Panchayats (Extension to the scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
7. National Tourism Policy, 2002
8. Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
10. Directives of the Supreme court
11. Coastal Regulation Zones
12. Other central and state legislation and policies with respect to the North East, Western Ghats, Lower Himalayas, Upper Himalayas and the Shivaliks.

The Western Ghats are our country’s unique natural and cultural heritage. There are pockets where local communities and organisations, committed forest officials and conscientious industry players are taking good initiatives in tourism, but these are few and far between. Unplanned, thoughtless and unregulated tourism development in the Western Ghats is threatening to put this heritage at serious risk. It is high time that the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, in the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the local communities residing in the rich ecosystem, took bold and decisive steps and demonstrated leadership to prevent this from happening.

We recommend that the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) takes the lead to support a detailed and participatory visioning and strategising exercise that lays out general guidelines for tourism in the whole Western Ghats region, takes into account the perspectives and needs of different stakeholders and allows varying and even conflicting interests to come into play.
A comprehensive broad tourism vision and guidelines document for the Western Ghats should be the final outcome of this process, which can be used as a guideline for the states to form their ecotourism/tourism policy in the Western Ghats region.

Subsumed in ecotourism is the issue of sustainability. Based on the principles of the UNEP, for ecotourism to be sustainable, the following process would need to be followed:

*(Mapping Issues And Challenges Of Ecotourism- EQUATIONS December 2011)*

- Ensures prior informed participation of all stakeholders
- Ensures equal, effective and active participation of all stakeholders at all stages in the ecotourism projects
- Acknowledges adivasis'/ other forest dwellers'/ local communities right to say ‘no’ to tourism
- Development - to be fully informed, effective and active participants in the development of tourism activities within their communities, lands and territories
- Promote processes for adivasis/ other forest dwellers'/ local communities to control and maintain their resources, culture and rights.

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Annexure - 1

Brief Note on Limits of Acceptable Change

The Encyclopaedia of Ecotourism\(^1\) defines Carrying Capacity as “the amount of tourism-related activity that a site or destination can sustainable accommodate; often measured in terms of visitor numbers or visitor-nights over a given period of time, or by the number of available accommodation units; management techniques such as site hardening can be employed to raise a site’s carrying capacity”.

Over a period of time, the carrying capacity framework has come up for criticism especially in the context of wildlife/nature based/ecotourism. One of the major criticisms being that the carrying capacity model does not take into account the social implications while arriving at the number of visitors allowed entering a protected area.

Over the past approximately 10 years, the concept of Limits of Acceptable Change has evolved and found to be far more relevant to ecotourism.

The definition of Limits of Acceptable (LAC) as defined by the Encyclopaedia of Ecotourism is “a land management philosophy that identifies specific indictors of environmental quality and tourism impacts, and defines thresholds within which the conservation goals of a protected area are met”.

The LAC is a planning model and does not merely look at the level of use and impact of tourism but on identifying the desirable environmental and social conditions for visitor activity. The process entails the listing of existing conditions and identifying the optimal limits for both physical and social conditions.

The model involves a 9-step process, which have been articulated differently by different policymaking bodies across the world. Below is the 9-step process as propounded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)\(^2\)

1. Identify special values, issues and concerns attributed to the area
2. Identify and describe recreation opportunity classes or zones
3. Select indicators of resource and social conditions
4. Inventory existing social resource and conditions
5. Specify standard for resource and social conditions in each opportunity class
6. Identify alternative opportunity class allocations
7. Identify management actions for each alternative
8. Evaluation and selection of a preferred alternative
9. Implement actions and monitor conditions
What is important to note is that the model uses a process which is systematic, explicit, defensible and rational and involves public participation, this last element being most important if benefits of ecotourism are to accrue to communities.

It is suggested that the Ministry review the LAC model and adapt/arrive at a model to suit the realities of forest and protected areas in India, such as the Western Ghats.

Annexure - 2

Brief Note On Tourism Impact Assessment

Tourism is increasingly being seen as a developmental tool, which can address issues of poverty, employment and community and regional development through what is known as multiplier effects. Over the past 25 years, through its work on understanding who really benefits from tourism, EQUATIONS has repeatedly highlighted the negative impacts of tourism as well as the potentials for positive impacts. We believe that if conducted in a manner, which is democratic, just, equitable and sustainable tourism can be an empowering experience. However, policy makers and the tourism industry approach tourism only from the perspective of contribution to the GDP and to company profits respectively. For any activity to have a positive impact, it is but obvious that there would be negative impacts, which would need to be mitigated. Similar is the case with tourism, which is most definitely not as benign as it is made out to be.

Tourism is multi-sectoral in nature and includes issues of infrastructure (transportation, electricity, water, and land), labour, use of natural spaces as tourism products. Apart from the tourism industry, which includes hotel/resort owners, tour operators and tourists, important stakeholders are communities who live in the vicinity of tourism destinations. Tourism has social, economic, cultural, environmental and political implications for these communities, which are not adequately considered while framing tourism policies and guidelines.

Impacts of tourism could be:

• Actual or / and perceived
• Direct or / and indirect
• Cumulative or / and immediate
• Reversible or / and irreversible
• Quantitative or / and qualitative
• Positive or negative
• Isolated or / and part of a chain reaction

A study of all impacts – positive and negative – are therefore imperative to further the positive impacts and to mitigate the negative impacts. EQUATIONS proposes that for all tourism projects, Tourism Impact Assessments be carried out prior to the planning and implementation of the same.

Below is a broad framework, while outlines the areas to be studied. The methodology would need to be multi-pronged including the use of questionnaires, question guides and Participatory Rural Appraisals.

Step I: Collection of Baseline Data – Demographic Data

Step II: Collection of Data on Impacts
Section I: General Data
1. General Historical Data about the destination
2. Attractions
3. Purpose of visit/Motivations
4. Tourist Statistics
5. Tourism Statistics Section

II: Stakeholders
1. Service Providers
2. Branding
3. Marketing and Promotion
4. Employment in tourism industry
5. Informal, unorganised sector
6. Taxes/fees from tourism service providers - to local/state/central government
7. Tourists
8. Local Communities
9. LSG Institutions

Section III: Impacts
A. Social Impacts
1. Contribution to Community
2. Communities Access to Natural Resources
3. Access to common property resources
4. Health
5. Crime, Safety and Security
6. Displacement
7. Land Rights
8. Social Injustices
9. Intrusion into private space/privacy

B. Cultural Impacts
1. Standardization
2. Commodification of culture / Commercialization
3. Acculturation/Demonstration effect
4. Identity
5. Role of tourism in understanding between people and cultures / intercultural learning
C. Economic Impacts

1. Percentage of tourism revenues retained in local economy
2. Employment benefits to local people
3. Role of SMEs in tourism
4. Dependence of local economy on tourism
5. Enclavisation
6. Level of prices/ inflation

D. Environmental Impacts

1. Water
2. Energy
3. Waste Management
4. Transportation
5. Dependence on forest resources
6. Changes to Natural Resources
7. Pollution
8. Aesthetics

Section IV: Institutional Issues: Legislative and Political

1. Rights/ Violation
2. Policy, Legislation
   a. National Policies and regulatory framework – state and local
   b. Lobbies influencing Tourism Policy
   c. Local Community Participation in Policy Formulation
3. Policy, Legislation (Individual establishments)

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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Easy evidence/ Means of verification</th>
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## Text in the Report: "Adoption of carrying capacity concepts, pollution prevention and polluter pays principles in regulation (page 85)"

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<th>Suggestions</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Over a period of time, the carrying capacity framework has come up for criticism especially in the context of wildlife/nature based/ecotourism. One of the major criticisms being that the carrying capacity model does not take into account the social implications while arriving at the number of visitors allowed entering a protected area. Over the past approximately 10 years, the concept of Limits of Acceptable Change has evolved and found to be far more relevant to ecotourism. A note on Limits of Acceptable Change is part of the detailed comments.</td>
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## Text in the Report: "In ESZ1, Ecotourism policy of MoEF to be followed refined by the WGEA to promote minimal impact tourism in the region (page 85)"

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<td></td>
<td>The ecotourism policy of MoEF is still in its draft form, although one year has passed since the draft was released. The term “minimal impact” is vague and inadequate.</td>
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## Text in the Report: "In ESZ2, strict regulation, on the basis of a Tourism master plan and social audit (page 85)"

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<th>Suggestions</th>
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<td>The general suggestions, the suggestion to encourage more small-scale tourism is welcome, as is the suggestion that water bodies should not be enclosed with concrete boundaries.</td>
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<td>It is not clear how the Tourism Master Plan will be formulated, or the process involved in formulating it.</td>
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## Text in the Report: "Provision for rainwater harvesting should be made compulsory for all new large and medium tourist infrastructure in the Western Ghats (page 85)"

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<td>This is a good move. However, rainwater harvesting must be made mandatory for existing tourism establishments also.</td>
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Careful planning for the management of waste (page 86)

We recommend a complete ban on plastic in tourism areas, as only stringent regulations such as these will restrict the usage of plastic.

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<td>A special cell within WGEA needs to be constituted to deal with tourism-related issues. Control of tourism developments and activities, including licensing and overall targets for and limits to the scale and type of tourism should be overseen by the WGEA</td>
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The WGEEP itself has as one of its mandates the proposal for a Western Ghats Ecology Authority. There has been a recent trend among civil society conservation groups to call for the establishment of a Western Ghats Conservation Authority. We believe that such a move may be well intentioned but can have many negative (unintended) consequences that have to be cautioned against. These development authorities transfer the powers from Local Self Governing Institutions (LSGIs) and are known to usurp their powers and mandate.
Changing Stripes – A Call to the MOEF to Walk Its Talk

To,
Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan
Minister Environment and Forests
Ministry of Environment and Forests
Paryavaran Bhavan,
CGO Complex,
Lodhi Road,
New Delhi - 110 003

Dear Ms. Natarajan,

Subject: Submission of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to the Supreme Court on August 22, 2012 in the case of Ajay Dubey vs. National Tiger Conservation Authority & Ors. (SLP (Civil) No (s). 21339/2010) asking for permission to review the existing guidelines for conservation of tigers.

According to your Ministry’s affidavit, the said permission is being sought for two reasons: (1) in acknowledgement of the importance of the tourism industry in the creation of livelihood opportunities for local communities and their ensuing loss if the ban is permanently imposed (2) the hasty manner in which core and buffer areas of Tiger Reserves are being notified.

We have the following observations to make on the issue:

1. MoEF lately, seems to be backtracking or reviewing a lot of its own guidelines and reports. The submission to the Supreme Court to allow for time to review guidelines for tourism in and around protected areas and WGEEP report are recent examples. This raises the question about the process of policy formulation in the first place. Further, it is an unhealthy practice, as these processes are time consuming both for the Ministry as well as the stakeholders who participate by commenting and suggesting improvements to the draft guidelines/reports/policies.

2. Tourism in forest areas needs to be seen within the broader framework of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (henceforth referred to as WLPA) and The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (henceforth referred to as FRA). In this context, we submit the following:

   a. The MoEF claims it is concerned about the process of demarcation of core and buffer areas that is being conducted in a rushed manner over the past few weeks. However, your Ministry may recall that this is not the first time that processes have been bypassed as your Ministry has itself ordered for this process in the past and succeed in thereby notifying about 30,466 sq kms as core/buffers of tiger reserves.

We refer to your Ministry’s order (through the NTCA) of November 16, 2007 to states with tiger populations to notify Critical Tiger Habitats (CTH) within 10 days of the receipt of the same. This was to be done by a 2-member expert committee headed by the State Chief Wildlife Warden in consultation with respective Park Directors. The motivations for this was to create the CTHs...
before the FRA could be brought into effect, which is more stringent in process and which in fact allows for Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs) and not CTHs. The year long delay in notifying the FRA though the bill was passed in 2006, the quick manner in which the WLPA amendment in 2006 were brought into effect and MoEF’s motivation for the same have been discussed widely and also brought to the Ministry’s attention by various adivasi and forest rights groups/activists across the country. (What needs to be noted is that in 2005, the amendment to the WLPA was introduced in the Parliament after the FRA).

b. The Ministry is using the fact that CTHs have not been mentioned in the FRA and CWHs have not been mentioned in the WLPA amendment of 2006 to highlight that CTHs are outside the purview of the FRA. However, it should not be forgotten that the FRA over-rules all other legislations prior to and after the passing of the FRA if they are impinging on the rights of adivasis and other forest dwellers to be granted. Given the gross violations in terms of process in declaring National Parks, CTHs and TRs, whether in the case of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and amendments made to it 1993, 2003 and 2006 and the FRA, implies that every single such declaration has to be checked for its legality.

This has also been repeatedly brought to the notice of your Ministry a fact it has chosen to ignore.

c. Ever since the rules for the FRA have been framed since January 2008, adivasi communities and forest rights groups/activists have been struggling to have the law implemented and for adivasi and other forest dwelling communities to have these rights recognised. Yet, the Ministry has never paid heed to this. Your Ministry behaves like the FRA does not exist citing the fact that MoTA is responsible for its implementation. In your current affidavit to the court asking for a review of processes for tiger conservation, this vital aspect before any protected area in the country can be notified finds no mention.

We find that the Ministry picks up community voices as per its convenience. While adivasi communities and forest rights groups/activists have been highlighting the haste with which core and buffers are being notified in response to the Supreme Court directive (dated July 24, 2012), the Ministry remains silent on the status of the implementation of the FRA (both in terms of process and the number of claims settled) in these same areas.

d. This makes us wonder if the Ministry has succumbed to the pressures of the tourism lobby and is only using these issues now as hostage to stall and buy time to revise the guidelines in the interests of industry.

There has been ambivalence in the rights recognition under the FRA, but the declaring/notifying of CTHs has been going on unabated. Between 2007 and 2009, area under tiger forests has increased by 22% from 25, 551 sq. kms. to 32, 878 sq. kms. During the same period the number of tiger reserves in the country jumped from 28 to 39 spread over 17 states with known tiger populations. In this process 2 violations of a very grave nature have been committed. (i) the definition of CWH in the FRA (Section 2 (b)) says that “..on the basis of scientific and objective criteria, that such areas are required to be kept as inviolate for the purposes of wildlife conservation as may be determined and notified by the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests....” and Section 4 (2) (b) which says “...that the activities or impact of the presence of holders of rights upon wild animals is sufficient to cause irreversible damage and threaten the said species and their habitat” (ii) Section 4(2) “... provided that no forest rights holder shall be resettled or have their rights in any manner affected for the purposes of creating inviolate areas for wildlife conservation....”

There is no information in the public domain indicating that the required studies have been conducted or that any attempt has been made to uphold rights of the adivasis and other forest dwellers being affected by the creation of the tiger reserve. Therefore the commitment of the Ministry towards the implementation of the FRA is further questionable.
None of these issues raised are new to the Ministry and would have heard this repeatedly for the past 4 years. However, when the tourism lobby and a handful of conservationists raise questions of employment and livelihood and the threat of poaching, the Ministry chooses to do an about turn in its position of phasing out tourism in core areas of tiger reserves in 5 years, even if not an immediate ban. The NTCA has remained steadfast on this position despite receiving flack from the tourism lobby and conservationists alike right since June 2011, when the draft guidelines were made public for comments. This sudden change in position raises questions about the intentions of the Ministry and whose voices it chooses to respond to.

Adivasi communities and forest rights groups struggle for years before the Ministry and its state counterparts, the Forest Department, are even willing to listen to their perspective, much less act on it. However, resistance from the powerful lobby of the tourism industry and conservationists has such a dramatic impact! What makes the situation worse, is that the Ministry has decided to re-open the guidelines for tourism in and around protected areas for discussion in the guise of concern for local communities when its interests have consistently remained elsewhere.

Based on the arguments laid out above, we the undersigned demand the following from the Ministry:

1. Review legality of all Tiger Reserves in the country
2. Stop any further processes of declaring/notifying core and buffer areas of Tiger Reserves until studies are conducted to prove the need for inviolacy.
3. Immediately implement the Forest Rights Act in letter and spirit
4. Make the tourism industry accountable to the communities by regulating tourism practice in and around the protected areas

Copy to:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests
2. Minister, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
3. Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
4. Minister, Ministry of Tourism
5. Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
6. Supreme Court Registry
7. Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority
8. Members, National Board of Wildlife
We the undersigned

1. EQUATIONS
2. Anurag Modi, Shramik Adivasi Sangathan
3. Anita Mathew
4. Ananya Dasgupta
5. Himanshu Thakkar, SANDRP
6. Ranjan Alexander
7. Gouranga Chattopadhyay
8. Seema Bhatt, Independent Consultant
9. Tanushree Gangopadhyay, Media person
10. Alternative Law Forum
11. Pushpa Achanta
12. Deborah McLaren
13. Dr. Padmavathi B.S, President, The Creative Tree Educational Foundation
14. Alison Stacliffe, Founder, Tourism Concern
15. Syed Liyakat
16. Halasya Sundaram B. N.
17. Anuradha Pati
18. Krishna Ranga Rao Gujjari
19. Mirza Zafiqur Rahman, Partner, Gypsyfeet Travels, Assam
20. Ganesh Anantharaman
21. All India Forum for Forest Movements (AIFFM)
22. Padmaparna Ghosh
23. Viren Lobo
24. Vivek Chettri
25. Sumesh Mangalassery
26. Sudhir Vombatkere
27. Gururaj Budhiya
28. The Shola Trust
29. Dr. Vivek Y. Bhide
30. Dr. Ashok Kundapur
Missing the Woods for the Trees?
A commentary on the recent debates around ecotourism

2nd August, 2012

On July 24th, 2012, the Supreme Court passed an interim order in the case of Ajay Dubey vs. National Tiger Conservation Authority & Ors. (SLA (Civil) No (s). 21339/2011 disallowing tourism in core areas of Tiger Reserves and a direction that all states notify the core and buffer areas of tiger reserves within 3 weeks. This interim order has generated a lot of debate in the country in which conservationists, tourism industry and forest rights activists have vociferously participated. EQUATIONS Commentary on the interim order seeks to debate these from the point of view of communities in and around protected areas!

Ecotourism is increasingly being seen as a driver for the eradication of poverty through economic development of communities, contributing to conservation of the environment and conservation education for tourists.

Ecotourism particularly wildlife tourism and even more specifically tiger tourism has been in the news and hotly debated largely due to two significant developments in the recent past.

In October 2010, a case was filed in the High Court of Madhya Pradesh at Jabalpur by Ajay Dubey of Bhopal-based organisation Prayatna, asking for a ban of tourism in tiger reserves. Based on an interim order received on 19/1/2011, a Special Leave Petition (SLP) was filed in the Supreme Court in 2011. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) was also in the process of drafting guidelines for ecotourism in protected areas independently, and on June 2, 2011 issued the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas. Subsequently, the Guidelines have been finalised and submitted to the Supreme Court on July 9, 2012 as per its directions in the interim order dated April 3, 2012.

The two most crucial elements of the guidelines are: (1) phasing out of tourism from core areas, and (2) shifting tourism into buffer areas and therefore incentivising conversion of land from current land use to forest areas. This incentivising assumes that there are real choices and free will, which are aspects communities hardly enjoy. The impacts of this form of market led conservation, in its different avatars of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) on communities’ rights over natural resources have been substantially highlighted and opposed by several tribal movements across the world. Therefore, the inclusion of this form of ‘regeneration’ seems like a backdoor entry of the corporate sector and developed/industrialised countries motivated forms of addressing climate change.

EQUATIONS had sent its comments and recommendations to the MoEF on the (Draft) Guidelines for Ecotourism In and Around Protected Areas, key among which are:
1. The guidelines need to give primacy to Gram Sabhas by ensuring that their approvals are sought in the process of tourism development as is the case for other forms of development. This is a massive lapse in the light of the 73rd and 74th amendment and hope this will be rectified in the final guidelines.

2. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (henceforth referred to as the Forest Rights Act) has not been considered while formulating these guidelines. We hope that the final guidelines will ensure that the provisions of this key Act are upheld in the context of the governance and regulation of tourism and rights of forest dwelling communities.

3. The very important resolution of the XXI meeting of the Indian Board for Wildlife in January 2002 regarding the demarcation of eco-fragile zones and guidelines for which have been issued by the Ministry on February 9, 2011 have been disregarded. The guidelines issued in February 2011 mandate regulation of tourism in a 10 kms radius from park boundaries.

4. Along with guidelines for tourism in forest and wildlife in and around protected areas, it is important that there be regulation of tourism in a range of ecosystems, not just forests.

The Supreme Court order of July 24, 2012 in the Ajay Dubey vs. National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) & others case is an interim order, which has disallowed the core areas in tiger reserves for tourism till final directions are issued by the court on the matter. All parties have also been given a 3-week window period to respond to the guidelines submitted by the NTCA. The matter has been posted for final arguments on August 22, 2012.

The government in particular the MoEF has welcomed the ban. The Ministry of Tourism has stated that the ban will not affect tourism. Some of the state Forest Departments are working hard to come up with novel tourism products in core areas, which can be considered as sustainable! For e.g. recently it was reported that Ranthambore has received permissions to conduct tiger safaris where injured and ageing tigers would be kept in enclosures and a safari will be conducted within these enclosures. The Forest Department also feels that this will make it easier for tourists to spot the tiger!

Going by media reports so far, a large section of the high end tourism industry has raised concerns against this move. The position of many conservationists is that tourism can be detrimental to the environment and what is needed is regulation rather than a blanket ban. Forest rights activists have been largely silent on the issue, except for a few who believe that the ban without the implementation of Forest Rights Act will make the forests vulnerable to forest mafia.

The issue of core and buffer areas in tiger reserves is a long standing one and the ramifications of this are much wider than tourism. This in fact impacts the lives of people living in the forests even more. Therefore, the debate on tourism in tiger reserves needs to be located within this broader context. What the case has done is bring to the fore issues that already existed in the past, but unfortunately without adequately taking into consideration legislations like The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution.

This leads us to the other aspect of the current interim order – the mandate to notify core and buffer zones. The court had given the state governments a 3-month period to notify cores and buffers, which was ignored by most. A miffed court then gave an impractical 3 weeks resulting in a scramble to notify these areas allowing for no time to follow the prescribed process, which includes discussions and resolutions being passed in Gram Panchayats about their acceptance of the proposal of the Forest Department.
In the year 2005, two bills were introduced in the Parliament: (i) The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 and (ii) Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005. While both Bills were passed in 2006, the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 (henceforth referred to as WLPA amendment of 2006) was notified in the same year and the Forest Rights Act in 2007 with implementation to be effected from January 2008. The WLPA amendment of 2006 legislated on the creation of Critical Tiger Habitats (CTHs), while the Forest Rights Act provides for Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs). (For a detailed difference please refer to a presentation by C.R. Bijoy titled “Special Areas and FRA – CTH & CWH”).

The Ministry is using the fact that CTHs have not been mentioned in the FRA and CWHs have not been mentioned in the WLPA amendment of 2006 to highlight that CTHs are outside the purview of the Forest Rights Act. However, it should not be forgotten that the Forest Rights Act over-rules all other legislations prior to and after the passing of the Forest Rights Act if they are impinging on the rights of adivasis and other forest dwellers to be granted. Given the gross violations in terms of process in declaring National Parks, CTHs and TRs, whether in the case of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and amendments made to it 1993, 2003 and 2006 and the FRA, implies that every single such declaration has to be checked for its legality.

There are three arguments that the tourism industry and conservationists make in favour of allowing tourism in protected areas: Employment to local communities, contribution to conservation, and controlling of poaching. However, a realistic view of the way tourism operates and is conducted seriously challenges all these arguments.

Over the last few days, many varying estimates of how much employment tourism generates has been reported. Very few of these can claim research or sound statistical data at the local level to substantiate them. That the existing tourism linked statistics in the country is rather unreliable is a well-acknowledged fact. The current debates therefore only underscore the need for rigorous data and analysis on impacts and spin offs of tourism, which the State Forest Departments and Departments of Tourism need to take up.

Three significant studies that have been conducted and we can learn from are by the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board (MPEDB) titled ‘Contribution of Ecotourism to Livelihood – Bandhavgarh National Park’ (date unknown), Karanth, K & DeFries, R (2010) titled ‘Nature-based tourism in Indian Protected Areas: New Challenges for Park Management’ and Swaminathan, L.P. & Purshothaman, S (2000) titled ‘Forest Conservation Tourism and Extraction: An Economic Perspective’

Karanth and DeFries states that less than 0.001% of population living with 10 kms. of a PA find employment in the tourism industry. However, the MPEDB study shows that 62% of the people involved in tourism activity at Tala (a small village near Bandavgarh National Park with an approximate population of 1220) are local people. However, they are all largely involved in the unorganised sector of drivers, cooks, labour, guide and general business. All the managerial level work is conducted by outsiders.

Therefore, while it is true that tourism development generates employment opportunities for the local communities this “fact” needs to be understood not just through numbers but from multiple perspectives. Firstly, the issue of self-determination. In areas around Protected Areas adivasis who used to own land, have due to poverty been forced to sell out to the resorts /hotels and become employees as guides and drivers (with luck), but usually end up working as security guards, gardeners or waiters at the restaurant. Therefore the mere generation of employment does not take into account the disempowerment and lack of dignified life that the adivasis experience.
Furthermore, there is the question of ownership within the tourism industry as most of the establishments, whether lodge owners or jeep owners are usually not from the region and more often than not from cities/towns. As seen in the case of Kanha National Park, they can be from as far away places as Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. The income thus generated from tourism is taken away from the region and into the bigger cities. In fact, the question of who constitutes the term ‘local’ is contentious. It is interpreted differently by communities in the vicinity of the tourism establishments, for whom local is anyone from within that community while the owner of an establishment interprets the term as per their convenience. The tourism industry at Kanha and Bandhavgarh for example have identified all those who live anywhere along the Park boundary to be local, even if they are from a village several tens of kilometres away and very often from the neighbouring district.

This brings us to the question of the local economy. It is common knowledge that resort owners are rarely from the village where the establishments are. This has two implications - (i) people from the local communities are alienated from their land. (ii) A source of livelihood is lost for both the landed and the landless agricultural labourers. This is evident in the Kabini area, where large tracts of land have been sold to people from Bangalore and Mysore. While those who sold the land have moved to cities to ensure better education for their children and in search of other avenues for livelihoods, the people from the landless communities have been forced to migrate out of the district in search of work. Some villagers have shared that an average of 200 people were employed by one landowner, but one establishment would not be able to provide employment to so many people. Therefore, the understanding of costs and benefit of tourism needs to take these layered experiences and perspectives into account.

According to researchers, on the issue of tourism contributing to conservation, estimating the costs of regeneration and the sources of funds received by the Forest Department is a difficult task. Firstly, identifying and segregating different cost components is a challenge since administrative costs overlap various activities including conservation and management. Secondly, identifying the source of resources (both revenue and income) is also a challenge. The Forest Department receives money from both the state and central governments. According to the MoEF website, there are several crores of funds parked in Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), which is also used towards management of tiger reserves. The Government of India also receives large amounts of funding from various International Financial Institutions for forest regeneration. Thus, the issue to examine is if the income generated from ecotourism activities does go back to the Forest Department and in particular attributed to conservation linked activities. Currently, all earnings from forests (NTFP, timber, entry fee etc.) go back into a common pool (except in the case of Madhya Pradesh) wherein all non-plan income of the state is parked, from where allocations for different expenses are made. There is no way in the current system of functioning to ensure that the income from tourism is ploughed back to the Forest Department for regeneration work.

In the case of tiger reserves, the WLPA amendment of 2006 has mandated all gate receipts are to be used for stakeholder development including conservation and community development. The only state which has proffered information on this is Madhya Pradesh, where the money from gate receipts is pooled together at the state level and then distributed to the National Parks based on necessity and status of Park funds.

The other argument in favour of continuing tourism in core areas of parks is that this will be a deterrent to poaching. Poachers usually operate at night, when tourists are not allowed in the parks. Poachers also know the behaviour of the animal and are able to hunt them down when tourists are not around. Further, on an average only 1/4th of the parks have marked tourism zones. In the case of Bandhavgarh
and Kanha, which have healthy tiger populations, only some of them are known to habit the area in the tourism zone. The majority of them choose to inhabit the higher and interior reaches of the reserve. At a more fundamental level, considering that forest department has emptied the tiger reserves of people by displacing the villages who used to live there and who were the most obvious watchdogs for the poachers, it becomes the responsibility of the forest department to ensure that poaching does not happen instead of passing on this responsibility to the tourists.

There has also been the case for a greater regulation of tourism and there is no question about this. Tourism does need to be regulated both inside the Park as well as in the periphery. While the notion of carrying capacity is the popular way of regulation within the Park, it is limited in terms of the factors as it takes into consideration only disturbance to wildlife and not people in and around the area. Regulation at the entry gates has become a governance nightmare, with the Collector and Park Director both shifting the responsibility of the same. The outcome of this is the chaos witnessed at all the gates of tiger parks. The rampant and ugly growth of tourism establishments in the periphery has been critiqued but seen little regulation.

We also need to recognise that several tiger reserves are also pilgrimage destinations like Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Periyar Tiger Reserve and others. These traditional places of worship is a right according to the Forest Rights Act. Therefore, a blanket ban on tourism in core areas is a simplistic approach and a more nuanced understanding of the realities of these ecosystems is required.

Our position in this debate is that tourism cannot be seen out of the context of rights of all stakeholders. While media reports have highlighted the issue of rights of citizens to see the tiger and forests of our country, it is also true that the rights of people who used to live in these very same forests has been violated. Section 4(2) of the Forest Rights Act says “The forest rights recognized under this Act in critical wildlife habitats of National Parks and Sanctuaries may subsequently be modified or resettled, provided that no forest rights holders shall be resettled or have their rights in any manner affected for the purposes of creating inviolate areas for wildlife conservation except in case all the following conditions are satisfied...”. Some of the key conditions are: “…that the activities of impact of the presence of holders of rights upon wild animals is sufficient to cause irreversible damage and threaten the existence of said species and their habitat” and “the free informed consent of the Gram Sabhas in the area concerned to the proposed resettlement and to the package provided has been obtained in writing;”. Just like it has not been established that tourism is harmful to tigers, so also the claim that people living in the forests have caused the decline in tigers can and should be contested.

The position that the WLPA amendment of 2006, mandates that core areas need to be inviolate, therefore tourism also should be banned seems a limited view. The issue of understanding tourism’s real impacts and contributions needs to be studied and more reliable data needs to be worked with before conclusions are drawn. However, the more central issue of the implementation of the Forest Rights Act and the rights of adivasis and forest dwellers is being lost in the battle about tourism (or making the battle only about tourism). We believe this issue needs to be brought back by MoEF and NTCA into the core area of the debate!
References:

3. EQUATIONS (2011), ‘Calling to Account: Image and Ethics in Corporate Accountability in Tourism’
5. Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board (MPEDB), ‘Contribution of Ecotourism to Livelihood – Bandhavgarh National Park’
Note of Objections

22nd September, 2012

Dear Dr Rajesh Gopal and members of the committee,

This has reference to our earlier communications to you (Tushar Dash through an email dated 18th September 2012, in response to email from Dr Rajesh Gopal sharing the final draft of the guidelines for tourism in tiger reserve, and Swathi Seshadri in the meeting).

In our communications we had pointed out that the guidelines have retained sections which are problematic with respect to specific provisions of the Forest Rights Act and Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act 2006 and we had conveyed our disagreement on the final guidelines. However we have not received any response on the issues and points raised in our communications which has prompted us to file this note of objections. For information of the committee we would like to put on record the following points shared in our earlier submissions to the committee in the meeting on 14th September 2012 and later through email in response to revisions in guidelines shared with members of the committee and communications during the meetings on September 17th and 18th.

In summary our objections are as follows:

• The guidelines assume that the identification of “core” and “buffer” areas in the tiger reserves is complete, when the NTCA itself states that it neither has any overall guidelines for this purpose, nor can it certify that this was done in accordance with law. There are serious objections to the demarcation of these areas in all tiger reserves. Hence we had suggested that the guidelines should include a clear statement that tourism is subject to compliance with all procedural and rights related aspects on demarcation of tiger reserves (i.e. section 38V). Not only has this been left out; in fact point 2.2.4 now does the opposite and refers to cores, territories etc as if these are final. Though the terms of reference of the committee explicitly included this issue at point (ii), the final report makes no mention of the question of demarcation and treats the matter as settled. We take serious objection to this effective endorsement of prior illegal actions, which have led to illegal harassment, evictions of local communities and violation of the Forest Rights Act along with ensuing conflicts.

• The final guidelines provide for identification and mechanisms to secure “corridor connectivity / important wildlife habitats.” Such identification is outside the scope of these guidelines and indeed is not even provided for in the Wild Life Protection Act.

• Point 2.2.5 gives Field Directors “unified control” over restoration of buffer zones. This is not in keeping with either the Forest Rights Act or the Wild Life Act and will lead to violations of both.

• The tourism industry has unjustifiably been given a special role in allocation of funds collected from tourism facilities (para 2.1.7).

In more detail, our objections are as follows:

About the final guidelines shared on 18th September 2012:
1. Point 2.2 (Page 6 and 7) of the guidelines provides for developing tourism plan by the state government and mentions that “The plan should inter alia include identification of corridor connectivity/important wildlife habitats and mechanisms to secure them. This site-specific tourism Plan forming part of the Tiger Conservation Plan would be approved as per the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972”. It further mentions that the plan should i) Identify (using landscape ecological principles and tools) and monitor the ecologically sensitive areas surrounding Tiger Reserves, in order to ensure the ecological integrity of corridor/buffer areas, and prevent corridor encroachment.

It should be noted that such identification of corridor connectivity and mechanisms to secure them has got no legal basis under WLPA. The Tiger Reserve administration has no power over any area outside the tiger reserve. Further, in our comments to the above points we have pointed out that there is absolutely no need of suggesting identification of corridor connectivity... and mechanisms to secure them as the mandate of the committee is primarily to prepare a guideline for tourism plan and not to prepare a tiger conservation plan. There are suggestions like identification of ecologically sensitive areas....prevent corridor encroachment etc which may be part of the larger tiger conservation plan. In addition to creating chaos, this would also make it easier to evade the WLPA’s stringent legal requirement that any measure for tiger conservation cannot infringe on people’s rights. These points need to be deleted as it would again lead to a situation where identification of corridor connectivity and securing them would lead to further expansion of tiger reserves and in turn to encroachment on land and forests accessed by local communities which could be in violation of the Forest Rights Act akin to what has happened in the case of notification of buffer areas following the Supreme Court’s order.

2. Points in 2.2.4 (Page 7 and 8) especially the concepts on core, territories etc do not have any legal and policy basis. There is no comprehensive guideline developed by NTCA/MOEF on operation of section 38 V dealing with core/buffer zonation, rights and co-existence etc. In the absence of such comprehensive guideline, incorporating these concepts and criteria in the tourism guidelines is not proper and the committee is not mandated to do this. Further the point ‘Current tourism zones where only tourist visits are permitted and there are no consumptive uses, tigers density and recruitment does not seem to be impacted’ does not have any basis and borders on suggesting that tourism can be permitted in tiger reserve, but not use of these habitats by local communities. This also seems to differentially treat the rights of local communities guaranteed under WLPA and FRA vis-à-vis tourism, which is not a legal right at all. This point needs redrafting and the portions mentioned above need to be deleted.

3. In point 2.2.5 it is mentioned that “Restoration of buffer forest areas should be done through its unified control under the respective Field Directors of tiger reserves vis-à-vis the Guidelines of Project Tiger / National Tiger Conservation Authority”.

4. This point is not in conformity with the Forest Rights Act. Forests and landscapes in tiger reserves on which local communities have rights come under FRA which vests power and authorities in gram sabhas and local communities to manage and protect forests which include tiger reserves. Restoration of buffer areas therefore can not solely come under the unified control of field directors as powers for decision making related to management are vested with the gram sabhas. This point either needs to be deleted or if mentioned then the above point with regard to authority of gram sabhas be mentioned.

In point 2.1.7 it is proposed that funds collected from tourism facilities should be administered by the Tiger Conservation Foundations with the Tourism Industry having a say in how and where this fund is utilized. Tushar Dash had pointed out that there is no need of suggesting
separately that tourism industry will specifically have a say on utilization of the funds. Utilization of the funds should be the collective decision of the members of Tiger Conservation Foundation which is an authority set up under WLPA. Suggesting that a specific group will have a say in decision making in utilization of the funds would lead to undue influence on the decision of the Tiger Conservation Foundation and also utilization of funds. Swathi Seshadri had raised the issue of the composition of the Tiger Conservation Foundation and was informed that all stakeholders including representatives from the tourism industry and Gram Sabhas were included. If this is not the case currently, representatives from Gram Sabhas and tourism industry should be included.

Retaining the above points in the guidelines is likely to allow tourism in tiger reserves with a greater say of tourism industry in development and implementation of the plan (and through this promotion of high end tourism), while encouraging further expansion of the tiger reserves areas into land and forests accessed by communities and is likely to result in conflict with the objectives and provisions of both WLPA and FRA. This in turn would lead to repetition of illegalities committed in notification of recent buffer areas and of the critical tiger habitats notified earlier.

Other issues on the guidelines and on the issue of declaration of buffer areas (shared in the 14th September meeting):

Following issues and points were shared in the meeting on 14th September.

1. Mixing of the two issues of tourism and declaration of buffers has resulted in the notification of buffers in a hasty manner without following the due process under Wildlife Protection Act read with Forest Rights Act.

2. Operation of section 38 (O) 1 (c), which is the key mandate of the committee, is subject to section 38 (V) which provides for notification of tiger reserves (core and buffer) following a process of scientific and objective criteria, ensuring recognition of forest rights (as per FRA), co-existence etc. The tiger conservation plan under WLPA is expected to address all of the above issues and also covers tourism as part of the tiger conservation plan. The tiger conservation plan should follow a landscape approach covering all the aspects of zoning, rights of local communities, conservation, co-existence, tourism and other uses in an integrated manner and guidelines mandating such plan for the landscape be developed through full participation/consent and the use of all forms of knowledge.

3. Currently there is no comprehensive set of guidelines for implementation of the provisions under section 38 (V) dealing with the entire procedure for delineation of cores and buffers of tiger reserves (following scientific and objective criteria), recognition of forest rights (as per FRA), co-existence and ensuring that relocation from core areas is only done in accordance with the conditions specified in WLPA and the FRA. In the absence of such guidelines, mixing the two issues and treating core/buffer under section 38 (V) as a subset of section 38 (O) 1 (c) related to tourism has resulted in bypassing the central provisions of the WLPA (read with FRA) which represent the intent and spirit of these legislations.

4. This has compounded the problems already created by the similarly hasty notification of the critical tiger habitats of tiger reserves without following the knowledge based (scientific and objective criteria) and democratic process (consultation with the gram sabhas) mandated by the law (the WLPA does not provide for independent notification of cores) during which buffers of earlier tiger reserves were also classified as critical tiger habitats of the tiger reserves. It is because of this that today new, often
densely inhabited areas, are being identified as buffers of the expanded cores leading to conflicts and protests which is ultimately defeating the purpose of tiger conservation. In view of the above issues the following was recommended:

- The present guidelines should only limit their scope to section 38 (O) 1. (c) and should not include other provisions of section 38 (V) implementation of which requires wider consultations and developing comprehensive guidelines which are not in place.

- The ecotourism guidelines and declaration of buffers have happened in a situation where the process for recognition of rights under FRA has not been initiated in most of the protected areas and tiger reserves. In many tiger reserves, as a consequence of declaration of core and buffer, villages are being relocated without recognition of forest rights or establishing the impact of the presence of scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers on wildlife or exploring the possibility of coexistence.

- The recent notification of buffer areas, following the Supreme Court order, has led to restrictions on the land use, collection of MFP and entry by local communities in the notified buffer areas of many tiger reserves despite these areas not being protected areas under the WLPA. This is ironical since the very aim of creating buffer zones as per section 38 (V) is aimed at promoting co-existence between wildlife and human activity with due recognition of the livelihood, developmental, social and cultural rights of local people. It may be noted that communities living in tiger reserves and other PAs have for long faced illegal curtailment and/or non recognition of their rights. This has continued even after implementation of Forest Rights Act as the process for recognition of rights in most TRs and PAs is not being permitted or has not been initiated. In this context, the initial notification of critical tiger habitats/core areas (without following the due process under WLPA), relocations thereafter without recognition of forest rights or meeting the other mandatory conditions to be met prior to any relocation, combined with the recent notification of buffer zones (with further restrictions on the livelihoods and other rights of communities) have aggravated the situation. This has created conflicts and confusion and an increasing antagonism against creation of Tiger Reserves or other tiger conservation measures. The purpose of the amended WLPA of putting in place a more democratic process for tiger conservation stands defeated in the whole process.

Dr. Rajesh Gopal had recorded the issues and concerns for discussion. He had further informed that in view of the complaints of violation of WLPA and FRA in the process of notification of buffer areas the NTCA has filed an affidavit in the court wherein it has requested the court to allow NTCA to review the process followed to notify buffer zones in tiger reserves across India.

In our communications to Dr Rajesh Gopal and committee members we had requested to put on record the issues regarding notification of buffer and earlier core in the committee’s report for submission in the court and for follow up actions at the NTCA. However these issues have not been recorded and the minutes shared have not reflected the discussions on these issues.

Since the above points with regard to the guidelines and with regard to the issues of core and buffer declaration in tiger reserves have not been taken into account we believe the committee has not fulfilled its commitment as per the mandate mentioned in the terms of reference and therefore we would like to register our objection. We had suggested that those contentious points, on which there is disagreement and which are not resolved, should be submitted to the Supreme Court along with the guidelines finalized by this committee.
During the meeting we had also suggested that a separate report/note be prepared by the committee to submit to the Supreme Court on the above mentioned issues. However, this has not been done. We therefore send this to you asking that it be submitted along with the guidelines finalized by this Committee to the Supreme Court.

With Regards,
Tushar Dash,
Swathi Seshadri
Committee members

Endnotes
1. Shared by Tuyshar Dash and Swathi Seshadri
A Robin Hood Reversal – Facilitating The Powerful and Punishing The Weak

The Department of Tourism had announced the Draft Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act, 2012 in September 2012. This document is the critique of the Draft Act along with our suggestions and recommendations for change in the Act.

To, 30th October 2012
Anand Singh
Minister of Tourism
Government of Karnataka,
#49, 2nd Floor, Khanija Bhavan,
Race Course Road,
Bangalore 560 001

Dear Mr. Singh,

Sub: EQUATIONS comments on the Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act 2012

We welcome the Department’s endeavour to create an Act to facilitate Tourism Trade in Karnataka. Enclosed are our comments and recommendations on the Draft Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act 2012.

We summarise our key comments and recommendations below -

1. The Act focuses only on facilitation of tourism trade, and does not mandate itself with the important role of regulation. Considering the potential social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts that tourism can bring, it is important that the Act is regulatory in nature, so that negative impacts are minimised. Accordingly, we recommend that the Act be renamed to Karnataka Tourism Trade Regulation Act 2012.

2. The informal sector does not find a mention in this Act. This is disappointing since studies have shown that the informal sector contributes as much as 70% to the tourist economy of a destination. Even where it does in the case of hawkers and guides, the position it takes is against the constitution.

3. It is important that the role of the local self-governing institutions (LSGIs) are recognised and privileged in tourism planning and development. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments, which devolve powers to LSGIs must be upheld in letter and spirit.

4. The Act is silent on the impacts of growth in kinds and models of tourism development and tourist numbers. This is a serious lapse, since tourism has been proven to have major social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts on local communities and the environment, which are of detrimental in nature.

5. Tourism is a complex and inter-disciplinary subject. Thus, inter-departmental collaboration between various Departments and ministries is critical. The Act completely fails to mention any kind of such collaborations.
6. Given the scope and scale of this Act, we recommend that the Department conducts multi-stakeholder consultations, and takes into consideration views from all the stakeholders. To ensure that local communities have access to this process, the Draft Act should be translated into Kannada and meetings held at all tourism destinations in the state. Sufficient prior information should be given to the communities so that they can participate in these consultations.

We sincerely hope that you take our recommendations and would be happy to discuss the points raised in an attempt to make tourism democratic, just and sustainable.

Yours sincerely,

Swathi Seshadri
Networking Coordinator
EQUATIONS

Copy To:

1. Smt. Latha Krishna Rao, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Chairman, KSTDC

2. Umesh Madivala, Asst.Secretary, Tourism Committee, Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI)

3. Tallam Dwarakanath, President, Tourism Committee, FKCCI

4. K.Shiva Shanmugam, President, FKCCI
EQUATIONS’ Comments to the Draft Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act 2012 Issued by Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka

30th October, 2012

Background

We commend the effort of the Department of Tourism, Karnataka to support responsible and sustainable tourism throughout the state through the Karnataka State Tourism Trade Facilitation Act 2012. The focus on improving facilities for tourism while conserving the state’s rich natural and cultural heritage is both timely and necessary.

Below are our overall comments/suggestions/recommendations to the Draft Act:

1. The primary responsibility of the Department of Tourism needs to be that of regulation. Therefore inherent in this is a policy making role, planning role, regulatory role, coordination and monitoring role. In keeping with this role, we suggest that the Act be named “Karnataka Tourism Trade Regulation Act 2012”.

2. Fundamental to the effective performance of this role, the Department needs to be aware of the potential impacts of the tourism development being planned. Tourism Impact Assessment should therefore be made mandatory before any tourism development can take place (A brief note on this concept is annexed as Annexure 1). Furthermore, in recognition of the fact that local communities pay the highest cost of tourism going wrong, it is important to establish the volume and nature of tourism that the communities living in and around the destination can absorb. It is suggested that the Limits of Acceptable Change framework be used to ascertain this. (A brief note on this concept is annexed as Annexure 2).

3. The Bill needs to recognise that communities living in and around tourism destinations have the first right to the natural resources that are used as tourism products. Therefore, the Department needs to consult and gain consent from the gram sabhas/Local Self Governing Institutions (LSGIs) which is the governance mechanism, before any tourism development takes place/facilitated.

4. The Draft Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act, 2012 should be made available to communities living in and around the different tourism destinations in the state, in Kannada to ensure the opportunity for them to influence this important Act which will significantly impact them socially, culturally environmentally and economically. Further, this act will also influence their continued access to natural resources as well as they ability to democratic decision making at the village/town/city level. The Department of Tourism needs to recognise that tourism is inter-disciplinary
in nature and therefore involves different issues like labour, health, natural resources etc. It is of utmost importance that relevant working relationships be established through different mechanisms between the Department and other relevant Departments in the state.

5. The Draft Act focuses only on Adventure Tourism and Film Tourism while overlooking the different forms of tourism which exist in the state like: Pilgrimage, Wildlife, Golf, Coastal, Rural, Heritage, Cultural, Medical and Cruise tourism. SoPs for each of these also need to be defined and put in place.

6. Finally, while ensuring no law of the state of Karnataka are violated, it is important for the Department to take into consideration relevant central laws, policies and guidelines while finalising this Act. For e.g. the National Tiger Conservation Authority has evolved guidelines for tourism in and around Tiger Reserves, which the Department of Tourism, Karnataka would need to follow.

The following sections detail EQUATIONS comments on the draft Bill and related recommendations for addition.

**Chapter I: Preliminary**

2. Definition

h) “Eco Resort” means a tourist resort whose facilities are designed to have the least minimal impact on the natural environment in which it is situation where sustainable practices are followed.

“Eco” refers to “Ecology”, which has been interpreted in a limited way. Subsumed in the term Ecology is Human Ecology which itself draws from anthropology, sociology, economics, geography and biology. Therefore, minimal impact on the natural environment does not fully define a resort which is genuinely eco in nature. The resort would need to be aligned to the social, cultural and economic aspects of the region as well if it is eco.


t) “Tourist Assistance Force (Green Police)” means the Force engaged to provide safe tourism by the Department and deputed to a tourist spot in the state for the safety and security and provide necessary tourist information to visiting tourists;

The need for a Tourist Assistance Force (Green Police) is questionable. Experiences of the Green Police in Karnataka and other such mechanisms in other states of the country show that these Police serve only the interests of the tourist and do not protect local communities from violations committed by tourists. There is definitely a need for information that should be accessible to tourists. However, this should be done through interpretation centres and tourist information kiosks. Additionally, the creation of the Green Police is the creation of a parallel structure, which is unwarranted.

It is suggested that the LSGIs be mandated with the monitoring and regulation of tourism at the destination level. This will ensure that local communities are protected from violations and vandalism by the tourists. Making LSGIs stakeholders in the process will also ensure effective support to the tourists. To ensure that this is institutionalised, the Department of Tourism should collaborate with the Department of Rural Development, Department of Urban Development and the Department of Social Justice and Welfare.
Chapter II: Registration of Home Stays

3. Registration:

(1) Every person intending to operate a home stay accommodation shall apply to registration to the prescribed authority in the prescribed manner.

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

This section focuses on formalising the largely informal sector of home stays through registration, certification and standardisation of facilities and protocols. However, it is critical to ensure that formalisation does not occur at the cost of excluding certain groups of people from the registration and certification processes through high entry barriers. It is important to consider the accessibility needs (language, communication) of people from local communities who may not have skills to pursue the home stay registration process without adequate support. The registration process therefore needs to be kept simple and affordable and the District Tourism Officer should facilitate the registration process in cases where the home stay owner is unable to do so.

Additionally, for ensuring accessibility and inclusivity, it is also important to explore avenues of training and capacity building for home stay operators to facilitate improvements in their quality of operations.

7. Classification of home stay accommodation:

a) The prescribed authority may...classify the home stay accommodation and award a grade to each home stay accommodation and the quality of food, accommodation and service, which may be charged by the owner of the home stay accommodation for boarding or lodging or for both from other customers.

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

It is unclear whether the standards referred to in 7(a) are along the lines of any existing national standards or any other. It will be useful to specify which standards are to be followed, similar to the detailing provided in the section on registration of Adventure Activities. In this context, existing classification and standards of the Ministry of Tourism and other State Departments of Tourism might be referred to keeping the local context and realities in mind.

Chapter IV: Licensing of Guides

16.1 The prescribed authority shall issue licenses in the manner as may be prescribed, to such number of guides as the State Government may determine from time to time.

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

The selection of the guides, and the decision about the number of guides should be done at the local level, involving the LSGIs, and not done at the State level. Moreover, to meet the stated aim of the Bill towards sustainable tourism, encouraging local youth in taking on roles of tourist guides is critical, and should be pursued. Issues of training and ongoing capacity building for guides can also result in meaningful and informative tourist experiences.
16.5 Whoever is found to be acting as a Guide, at any tourist destination, without obtaining licence from the prescribed authority, even after once fined for such an offence under subsection (4), shall be liable to be arrested without warrant by the jurisdictional Police Officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector.

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

While licensing of guides can be value added service that tourists receive at the destinations, penalising a person working as a guide without license is unconstitutional, which reposes rights under Articles 19 (Freedom of speech, Freedom to practice any profession), Article 20 (Protection in respect of conviction for offences) and Article 21 (Right to life and personal liberty).

Therefore, all reference to registration of guides being mandatory need to be removed.

**Chapter V: Registration of Adventure Activities**

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

The detailing of certification standards for all forms of adventure activities (land, water and air) is well presented and structured. However, a lack of clarity on issues of responsibility and accountability emerges. Therefore a mechanism to regulate adventure activities needs to be put in place in collaboration with LSGIs.

**Chapter VI: Prohibition of Certain Acts and Activities in the Tourist Place, Areas or Destinations and Punishment for Contravention thereof**

25.1 Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any Karnataka law, no person shall engage in the practice of touting, begging and hawking articles for sale in or around any tourist place, areas or destinations.

25.5 Whoever practices begging or engages himself in hawking articles for sale at any place of tourist importance or any tourist destination or in any tourist area, shall upon first contravention of prohibition made under sub-section (1), shall be dispersed by the Green Police of the Department and such person shall be removed from that area.

25.6 Whenever it appears to any Green Police that any beggar or hawker or a body of such persons whose activities are prohibited under sub-section (1), have entered in the tourist area, shall direct the persons contravening the prohibition to leave the area and remove themselves beyond that area.

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

In India, the informal sector contributes significantly to the tourism economy. A conservative estimate puts this number at 70%. Hawkers, street vendors, way side dhabas and eateries, vendors selling handicrafts, trinkets and other items for tourists all represent a part of the huge informal labour force of the tourism sector.

In such a scenario, it is disturbing to note that the Bill seeks to put an end to hawking in tourist sites. While such a move will severely impact the livelihoods of thousands of people, it is also a violation of laws and constitutional provisions, namely, Article 14 Right to Equality, Article 19 (1) (g), Article 38(2), Article 39 and Article 41.
With its strident anti-hawker stand, the Bill fails to take into account the National Urban Street Vending Policy, which is currently under debate in the Parliament, but is also contradictory to the Policy. Therefore, the Department needs to align its hawking/street vending policy along the lines of the central Act when it is passed.

Chapter VII: Duties of Local Authorities towards Public Health and Sanitation in the Tourist area

2.6.1 Notwithstanding anything contained in any Karnataka Law, the local authorities under whose local areas, the places of tourist destination or tourist areas are situate, shall have the duty to ensure cleanliness and check defacement and defiling of the properties in their respective local areas as also to effectively enforce the laws prohibiting littering on streets and public places and to maintain general cleanliness at all roads, streets and public places and, therefore, it is hereby declared their statutory duty to keep all places and areas of tourist destination, clean and hygienic and concerned local authorities shall ensure cleaning of roads, drains, manholes and maintenance of street lights and prevention of encroachments in and around those places and heritage sites in respective areas, which are known as tourist areas or an area frequented by tourists.

EQUATIONS Comments:

The Department of Tourism needs to be comprehensive in its perspective and planning for tourism development. The caste system, which is perpetuated by birth and very often based on occupations is at the root of the understanding of cleanliness and hygiene of the Indian society. It is the Mahars, Valmikis, Madhiga, Mala and several other such dalit communities who have historically been forced as cleaners of ‘filth’ in our villages and cities (Several studies have shown that the city sweepers are largely from these dalit communities). Without addressing the class system, a mere cleaning up of tourism destinations is highly insufficient. What would be needed is conscientization of the entire society towards the issue of hygiene and its linkages with the caste system. Without changing the caste system, no amount of cleaning, awareness and punitive action will be successful in bringing attitudinal and behaviour change in the country.

26.2 The State Government, in the Department of Urban Development shall oversee the compliance of provisions contained in sub-section (1) and may issue directions to the concerned local authorities for strict compliance of their statutory duty and in cases of persistent non-compliance and default, initiate action against erring local authorities in accordance with the laws governing such local authorities.

EQUATIONS Comments:

It is unclear why the Department of Urban Development alone has been tasked with the supervision of local authorities in aspects of public health and sanitation. For the rural areas, it is the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj that has oversight, and this distinction needs to be clarified.

Chapter VIII Duties and Responsibilities of a Tourist

EQUATIONS Comments:

The Bill is largely silent on the role of the tourist. This is most disappointing, since a responsible tourist
is absolutely critical in tourism at a destination being sustainable over a long time. At the very least, it is suggested that the Department puts up a prominently visible list of DOs and DONTs at every tourist site, and monitor the way it is followed. The Department should also conduct awareness sessions for tourists, about the negative social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts of tourism. The role of the LSGIs in facilitating responsible tourist behaviour and actions cannot be overemphasised.

Chapter IX: Statistical Information

27. Statistical information- (role of local authority)

1) Each and every service provider whether licensed, recognized or registered as service provider of any category under the provisions of this Act or not, shall be duty bound to furnish such statistical information or statistical data and at such intervals and in such form to such authority as may be prescribed.

EQUATIONS Comments:

Since the role and mandate of the LSGIs in collecting, maintaining and updating statistical data and information on a wide range of issues is specified in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and related legislations, such data should be submitted to these LSGIs, and a separate authority/entity should not be established.

It will also be important to define standard methodology of data collection as current statistics are quite unreliable. More accurate data will also be useful in assessing and informing plans and policies of tourism in the State.

Chapter X: Declaration of Tourism Trade as Industry

28. Declaration of trade and service providers under tourism sector as industry: All trade and service providers in tourism sector are hereby declared as industry for all such purposes as are outlined in the tourism policy of the State Government or as may be declared by it from time to time which may include availability of incentives to recognized and registered tourism units, and concessions, at par with industrial units, from State Government as also for availability of finance through financial institutions in accordance with their norms and policies.

EQUATIONS Comments:

The absence of hotels and resorts and other kinds of accommodation facilities in the registration and certification procedures is glaring. Although some hotels are already in the formal sector and follow relevant registration and taxation provisions, it is important to include them in within the scope of the current Bill as well, making appropriate reference to other existing legislations that are being followed by hotels and resorts.

There is a need to decide on standards and guidelines for establishment of new hotels and resorts and other kinds of accommodation facilities as well, and include LSGIs and communities in monitoring of these facilities too and not just of home stays.
Chapter XI: Responsible and Sustainable Tourism

**EQUATIONS Comments:**

While this is an important section and a few points detailed on how the industry can move towards responsible and sustainable tourism, we feel that given the debate on this issue at the national and international level this should be the section that informs the document. Many aspects of responsible and sustainable tourism that need to be considered are detailed below.

Quoting from the Mid-term appraisal of the 11th Five year plan for Tourism, ‘Tourism is an industry with great reliance on attraction and amenities, along with dependence on the goodwill of the local community. Of late, the social and economic consequences of tourism have raised various issues related to environment and the impact on the local community.

Therefore, in order to have sustainable tourism development, the involvement of local people would be of utmost importance’.

Elaborating on the concept of sustainable tourism, the following aspects need to be considered when developing our understanding on the axes of economic, social, cultural and environment:

1. **People centred**
   a. Tourism is based on local aspirations and contexts and delivers local benefits
   b. Tourism development acknowledges people’s primary rights over common property resources and natural resources & recognises that nature is not a commodity
   c. Tourism models shift from mass /consumptive nature to interactions, learnings, genuine human encounters and mutual respect
   d. The success of tourism projects is measured not by the economic gains alone, but also the growth of social capital and empowerment
   e. Local people’s right to say no to tourism is respected

2. **Democratic / Participatory**
   a. Decision making is participatory, transparent, inclusive and based on primary research and facts
   b. Tourism development is undertaken with people’s consent, keeping in view their vision for how tourism should develop
   c. Tourism is regulated by norms developed by local communities, local governance bodies, and tourism developers, that aim to minimise negative impacts and ensure sustainability and equity
   d. Consultations on tourism impacts are based on dialogue, education, awareness, learning from experience

3. **Equitable**
   a. Systems and mechanisms encourage and facilitate participation of local communities and local institutions to influence tourism and the sharing of benefits in more equitable ways
   b. Local ownership is strong, small and medium enterprises are vibrant, local employment and local economies are stimulated by tourism development. Strong backward linkages ensure that tourism relies on local produce and local skills
   c. Innovative models of benefit-sharing are evolved and implemented
4. Accountable

a. Tourism policy makers and implementers hold themselves accountable through ethical practice and stringent regulation for negative impacts, and if tourism does not deliver on its promises

b. Information about tourism plans is in the public domain – so that impacts can be assessed and plans and policies influenced

c. Processes of consultation and free and prior informed consent are ensured in decision making

5. Non-exploitative

a. Tourism does not displace, alienate people from traditional livelihoods or and exploit marginalised communities, women and children. In particular tourism has zero tolerance to any form of child abuse – labour, sexual abuse, pornography, trafficking

b. Tourism does not expropriate – land, water, public commons, forests and other natural resources. Tourism conserves biodiversity.

c. Tourism is culturally sensitive and does not commoditise local practises and culture. It strives to balance the need for commercial viability and the supporting and reviving of cultural traditions, arts and crafts

d. Tourism practices ensure responsible use of natural resources, low energy use, effective waste management, and minimum negative impact on the environment

6. Transparency

a. Tourism policy makers are transparent about information, decision making processes and fund flows

b. Advisory Bodies formed for tourism function in a transparent manner

c. Tourism industry players conduct impact assessments in a transparent manner and people have access to the same

Fundamentally, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) and the Indian Sustainable Tourism Criteria (ISTC) should be the basis of arriving at criteria to set parameters for sustainable tourism. If the tourism industry violated the ISTC, stringent mechanisms need to be put in place rather than only disallowing participation in road shows and international travel marts. In the context of guides, a mere non-possession of license invokes an arrest without warrant but the formal sector receive only a ban from a promotional event.

Initiatives from others states can also be considered as a framework to work on the issue of responsible tourism which is a welcome move., It is however critical that the learnings, gaps and lacunae from Kerala’s Responsible Tourism Initiative are taken into consideration and a plan is developed for the entire state.

The Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism is another guideline that must be adopted to ensure that tourism:

• is undertaken with respect for basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourist and local residents

• aids the prevention of sex work, sex tourism and forms of sexual exploitations in tourism, particularly in women and children

• enhances the prevention of forced or involuntary drug use, manipulated and incorrect

• information, cultural and social intolerance which could increase vulnerability to crime
In this context, decentralisation of tourism planning, implementation and development assumes critical importance. In fact, aspects of tourism are already part of the Constitutional mandate of the LSGIs in both rural and urban areas. For instance, promotion of cultural activities, maintenance of public amenities and facilities, coordinating markets and fairs are all under the legal jurisdiction of LSGIs. The current Bill must recognise this critical role for LSGIs and local communities in any aspect of tourism development, particularly in the promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism.

The Kerala Tourism Policy, 2011, provides a good example of recognition of the role of LSGIs in tourism development and sustainable development. Section 53 (Reservation of Powers of Local Authority: Nothing in this Act shall take away or reduce any of the powers vested in any local authority by or under any law for the time being in force, imposed on it such law) of this Bill does recognise the role of LSGIs, but this must be incorporated into the entire Bill and also find means of being operationalised and translated into practice.

Annexure 1

Brief Note on Tourism Impact Assessment

Tourism is increasingly being seen as a developmental tool, which can address issues of poverty, employment and community and regional development through what is known as multiplier effects. Over the past 25 years, through its work on understanding who really benefits from tourism, EQUATIONS has repeatedly highlighted the negative impacts of tourism as well as the potentials for positive impacts. We believe that if conducted in a manner which is democratic, just, equitable and sustainable tourism can be an empowering experience. However, policy makers and the tourism industry approach tourism only from the perspective of contribution to the GDP and to company profits respectively. For any activity to have a positive impact, it is but obvious that there would be negative impacts which would need to be mitigated. Similar is the case with tourism, which is most definitely not as benign as it is made out to be.

Tourism is multi-sectoral in nature and includes issues of infrastructure (transportation, electricity, water, land), labour, use of natural spaces as tourism products. Apart from the tourism industry which includes hotel/resort owners, tour operators and tourists, important stakeholders are communities who live in the vicinity of tourism destinations. Tourism has social, economic, cultural, environmental and political implications for these communities, which are not adequately considered while framing tourism policies and guidelines.

Impacts of tourism could be:

- Actual or / and perceived
- Direct or / and indirect
- Cumulative or / and immediate
- Reversible or / and irreversible
- Quantitative or / and qualitative
- Positive or negative
- Isolated or / and part of a chain reaction

A study of all impacts – positive and negative – are therefore imperative to further the positive impacts and to mitigate the negative impacts. EQUATIONS proposes that for all tourism projects, Tourism Impact Assessments be carried out prior to the planning and implementation of the same.
Below is a broad framework, while outlines the areas to be studied. The methodology would need to be multi-pronged including the use of questionnaires, question guides and Participatory Rural Appraisals.

**Step I:** Collection of Baseline Data – Demographic Data

**Step II:** Collection of Data on Impacts

**Section I: General Data**
1. General Historical Data about the destination
2. Attractions
3. Purpose of visit/Motivations
4. Tourist Statistics
5. Tourism Statistics

**Section II: Stakeholders**
1. Service Providers
2. Branding
3. Marketing and Promotion
4. Employment in tourism industry
5. Informal, unorganised sector
6. Taxes/ fees from tourism service providers - to local/ state/ central government
7. Tourists
8. Local Communities
9. LSG Institutions

**Section III: Impacts**

**A. Social Impacts**
1. Contribution to Community
2. Communities Access to Natural Resources
3. Access to common property resources
4. Health
5. Crime, Safety and Security
6. Displacement
7. Land Rights
8. Social Injustices
9. Intrusion into private space/ privacy

**B. Cultural Impacts**
1. Standardization
2. Commodification of culture / Commercialization
3. Acculturation/ Demonstration effect
4. Identity
5. Role of tourism in understanding between people and cultures / intercultural learning
C. Economic Impacts
1. Percentage of tourism revenues retained in local economy
2. Employment benefits to local people
3. Role of SMEs in tourism
4. Dependence of local economy on tourism
5. Enclavisation
6. Level of prices/ inflation

D. Environmental Impacts
1. Water
2. Energy
3. Waste Management
4. Transportation
5. Dependence on forest resources
6. Changes to Natural Resources
7. Pollution
8. Aesthetics

Section IV: Institutional Issues: Legislative and Political
- Rights/ Violation
- Policy, Legislation
  - National Policies and regulatory framework – state and local
  - Lobbies influencing Tourism Policy
  - Local Community Participation in Policy Formulation
- Policy, Legislation (Individual establishments)

Proposed framework for analysis once the data is collected

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Annexure 2 :

Brief Note on Limits of Acceptable Change

The Encyclopaedia of Ecotourism defines Carrying Capacity as “the amount of tourism-related activity that a site or destination can sustainable accommodate; often measured in terms of visitor numbers or visitor-nights over a given period of time, or by the number of available accommodation units; management techniques such as site hardening can be employed to raise a site’s carrying capacity”.

Over a period of time, the carrying capacity framework has come up for criticism especially in the context of wildlife/nature based/ecotourism. One of the major criticisms being that the carrying capacity model does not take into account the social implications while arriving at the number of visitors allowed entering a protected area.

Over the past approximately 10 years, the concept of Limits of Acceptable Change has evolved and found to be far more relevant to ecotourism.

The definition of Limits of Acceptable (LAC) as defined by the Encyclopaedia of Ecotourism is “a land management philosophy that identifies specific indicators of environmental quality and tourism impacts, and defines thresholds within which the conservation goals of a protected area are met”.

The LAC is a planning model and does not merely look at the level of use and impact of tourism but on identifying the desirable environmental and social conditions for visitor activity.

The process entails the listing of existing conditions and identifying the optimal limits for both physical and social conditions.

The model involves a 9-step process, which have been articulated differently by different policy making bodies across the world. Below is the 9-step process as propounded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

1. Identify special values, issues and concerns attributed to the area
2. Identify and describe recreation opportunity classes or zones
3. Select indicators of resource and social conditions
4. Inventory existing social resource and conditions
5. Specify standard for resource and social conditions in each opportunity class
6. Identify alternative opportunity class allocations
7. Identify management actions for each alternative
8. Evaluation and selection of a preferred alternative
9. Implement actions and monitor conditions

What is important to note is that the model uses a process which is systematic, explicit, defensible and rational and involves public participation, this last element being most important if benefits of ecotourism are to accrue to communities.
It is suggested that the Ministry review the LAC model and adapt/arrive at a model to suit the realities of forest and protected areas in India.

**End Notes**

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. 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 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.” 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.

An argument often presented in support of more tourism development is that it generates employment at different levels due to the wide range of services it requires. Research and the stories of women engaged in tourism have shown that it is an industry that is far from being gender just. 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. EQUATIONS paper Women in Tourism: Realities, Dilemmas and Opportunities demonstrate that 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.

The situation is far worse for women in the informal sector. At a conservative estimate about 70% of the tourism economy is informal. With tourism providing an occupational opportunity that is seasonal in nature, it attracts many, particularly women to join vending business as selling trinkets, eateries, handicrafts, running home-stay facilities. However, the needs and rights of women working in informal sector at tourism sites have not been taken into account. The situation worsens particularly in regard to the safety and security of women when evictions take place, a trend that is increasingly being seen in tourist destinations as a process of ‘clearing out the unwanted’ and creating a façade of beauty. Inaccessibility to the space make them vulnerable to different forms of exploitations.

On the social and cultural front, tourism also reflects social, economic and political power relations existing in society, therefore, initiatives taken in relation to tourism should take into consideration these realities. Despite tourism being presented as a priority sector bringing social equity and justice, there is little to show how this is implemented to make such transformation a reality. For instance, the Clean India Campaign launched by the Ministry of Tourism in December 2011 has not taken social reality such as dynamics between caste and gender into account. Women from Dalit communities constitute large part of cleaning jobs, especially manual scavenging. According to government estimates for 2005, 95 per cent of a total of 700,000 manual scavengers were women. They face discrimination on both caste and gender grounds and are subjected to multitude of atrocities including rape. Without addressing the links between filth, caste and gender a superficial campaign on Clean India is unlikely to work!
The marketing of tourism is one area which features women prominently. The language of patriarchy, heterosexuality and tourism promotion are inter-linked and 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. 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. 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. Women working at destinations as well as adivasi women are shown in a stereotypical way in tourism brochures and other material. Beautiful, smiling women are often picked to cover brochures and other promotional material. Indigenous women are also used in promotional 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”.

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. 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. In order to meet the demand of the predatory male tourists, the industry has looked the other, and even provided passive encouragement to trafficking. 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.

Tourism has often led to cultural commodification and twisting culture out of its context, meaning and functions. The tourist sees what is promoted and not how communities see themselves through their cultural practices. Women are often used to promote tourism, even if not linked to sexual exploitation. Fulmani, a young adivasi girl from Jharkhand, another central Indian State, said, “We are called by the district administration to dance before strangers, when ever people come to visit the officers. Why should we dance before these strangers? Our dance is part of our expression of happiness, way of showing our reverence to the almighty. We feel disgraced.” The first victims of such “tribal tourism” promoted by the government are women, particularly young girls and boys.

We call upon governments, policy makers, industry, civil society to engage in more systemic ways with the challenge of women’s empowerment in tourism. It is time for the government to recognise tourism as a site for blatant and inhuman exploitation of women in tourism. We urge the committee to incorporate provisions to protect women at tourism destinations and declare that tourism will not be promoted at expense of women’s dignity, respect and rights.

We urge the Committee to take cognisance of the fact that tourism can and has been a site of sexual exploitation of women and that any law addressing this will take into account tourism’s role and be applicable to tourism destinations as well.
Kerala State Tourism policy states the setting up of the Task force against Trafficking and Abuse which should be taken up.

Kerala State Tourism must declare for Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse in Tourism which clearly denounces sexual exploitation of children and commit that tourism and tourist destinations will be child exploitation free zones

Department of Tourism along with the Department of Social Welfare and Labour to come up with State Plan of Action to counter child abuse in tourism & Action Plan to Combat Child Labour in Tourism – coordination with relevant departments and involving all stakeholders including industry, tour operators, travel agents, hotels, local authorities, the judiciary, the police, child rights and other civil society organisations and communities for the protection of children and combating child abuse.

Dept of Tourism to appoint a nodal person for coordination and publish the name and contact details. Department of Tourism to state in their Annual Report every year the incidents uncovered of child sex tourism, the efforts they have taken to combat this and their commitment to make Kerala free from Child Sex tourism.

Department of Tourism to work with different sections of the industry – particularly those where the abuse is most rampant – small, medium, informal as it is in these where the exploitation of children occurs frequently.

To assess efficacy & strengthen existing mechanisms – Childline, CWC, SJPU. Strengthen hotline services by guaranteeing that they have the networks and services callers need. This includes victim protection services as well as police follow-up of required. Guarantee availability of multiple languages so as to accommodate most if not all callers.

Efforts must be made to actively involve the panchayats (elected bodies responsible for administration at district level, usually in charge of local development issues), in monitoring the situation in their areas, including checking children who come into and leave village. A system for record keeping must be created. In addition to that, community-based organizations must work more closely with the police to provide legal assistance to victims and also to ensure that the police systematically lodges each FIR with the relevant details and actively pursues cases.

The tourism industry, tour operators, travel agencies, hotels to join the existing Code of Conduct (www.thecode.org) for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism developed by ECPAT International or the Safe and Honourable Tourism Code developed by Ministry of Tourism.

EQUATIONS Submission to Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights on the Issue of Child and Tourism
Fines and penalties should be extremely severe for companies and/or individuals who are engaged in prohibited behaviour. If a hotel fails to report incidences of minors being brought into the hotel by person other than family members, then the hotel should lose its license. Strict monitoring must also be applied to tour companies if their guides facilitate tourists securing children. The owner and the manager of the hotel or establishment should be held solely responsible for any contraventions.

Running extensive media campaigns to inform tourists that exploitation of children and Child Sex Tourism is not acceptable in the state and country, in partnership with Tourism Industry.

More in-depth studies on the commercial sexual exploitation of boys and girls in the context of tourism is needed to support effective campaigns and interventions against this phenomenon. To engage more with those who work on the issue.

Expand the mandate of tourist police for monitoring and reporting child sex tourism.

Develop information to be given to tourist- translate to multiple languages

Child rights laws and methods of handling child abuse cases also to be specifically included in the Police Training School curriculum. Capacity building of the police, government department and local NGOs to address child pornography would be highly recommended, as there is a lack of such expertise in India and the problem is escalating.

Sensitisation and training of authorities like railway and traffic police, airport authorities, is particularly important so that they are aware of various child rights laws and methods of preventing and handling child abuses related cases

To develop database on exploitation of children in tourism- drawing information from all available sources like police, child line, MWCD, MoL. Information to be shared with agencies like Interpol, Immigration authorities, police etc

Care facilities and human resources should be made available to adequately support sexually exploited boys. These services must be based on minimum standard of care which is yet to be developed. Moreover greater access to viable alternative livelihood options must be made available to sexually exploited boys.
A Call for Systemic Engagement with Women Issues in Tourism!

Submission to Ministry of Women and Child Development, National Mission for Empowerment of Women, National Commission for Women and Ministry of Tourism

June 2014

Tourism development is often rationalised on economic grounds in terms of employment generation, especially for women. Focus only on employment generation without taking into consideration social, cultural, economic and political power relations has resulted in tourism development being divorced from ground realities. This has significant consequences for women living and/or working in and around tourism destinations as well as women tourists.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) in its National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) aims at mainstreaming gender perspective in the development process. National Commission for Women (NCW) has a mandate to ensure effective implementation of the Constitutional rights and other legal measures made to safeguard interests of women. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) has mandate to strengthen the inter-sector convergence by facilitating the process of coordinating all women specific social-economic development programmes across ministries and departments. The National Tourism Policy, 2002 identifies rural and ecotourism as a means for poverty reduction, creating new skills, enhancing participation of women in tourism and thus, facilitating growth of a more just and fair social order. These are fair intentions. However, the results on the ground in terms of women’s political, economic, social and cultural empowerment in tourism have been less than satisfactory. A framework disregarding women specific needs and rights in the tourism sector remains an area of least concern for the ministries of Tourism and MWCD, NMEW and NCW.

To Corroborate our Statement above, we have the following Observations:

A. Status of Women in Tourism: It is an undeniable fact that tourism provides opportunities to women in terms of employment and income generation. However, research and narratives of women engaged in tourism have shown that it is an industry that is far from being gender just. Horizontal gender segregation of work, lack of accessibility to higher (and more well paid) positions, wage disparity, unsafe working conditions, lack of support for working mothers are the common features associated with women working in the tourism industry. A study on Women in Bangalore’s Hotel Industry indicates that these factors have adversely affected women’s career growth. In addition, indifferent attitude of Human Resource (HR) managers towards the issue of sexual harassment is a major concern. The recently passed Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 will be a push for all to constitute an internal complaint committee. However, there is a need for close examination of composition of the committee. This space needs to ensure representatives of employee from all levels to ensure breaking the gendered power hierarchical structure. This is more so in view of the gender segregation of the jobs for example in hotels where most managerial positions are held by men whereas women dominate jobs at lower rungs.
The situation is far worse for women in the informal sector. For e.g. in street vending, with tourism providing an occupational opportunity that is seasonal in nature, attracts many, particularly women to join the vending business. But their needs and rights have not been taken into account. Lack of access to suitable place for business, lack of capital, lack of organisation/ unionization and lack of awareness about government initiatives prevent women street vendors to earn profit from the opportunities offered by tourism. Part time street vendors are not recognised in the National Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014 which goes against women street vendors who mostly work as part time at tourism destinations.

The situation worsens particularly in regard to the safety and security of women when evictions take place, a trend that is increasingly being seen in tourist destinations as a process of ‘clearing out the unwanted’ and creating a façade of beauty. Inaccessibility to the space makes them vulnerable to different forms of exploitations.

Handicraft being largely a home-based industry absorbs large number of women and is also an integral part of tourism. However, women’s issues related to lack of capital, inaccessibility to government schemes due to limited social mobility, to raw materials and market has remained unchanged. For example, there are big players in the market who tend to occupy prime locations due to their financial and political clout whereas women artisans making lac bangles in Jaipur are forced to choose the interior locations due to unaffordable high rent charges of the front locations.

On social and cultural front, promotion of high-end, mega tourism projects put severe constraints on land and water resources for people living in tourism destinations burdening the women most. Tourism development has often led to displacement from ecological spaces, loss of traditional sources of livelihood, lack of accessibility to public spaces, lack of accessibility to natural resources like water, fodder, fuel wood. These are issues more true in case of nature-based tourism. Ecotourism is an example for this where forest dwellers are being ousted from the forests which in turn has led to land dispossession, lack of access to forest produces and loss of dignity and livelihoods. Women bear the brunt most, as these are closely related to women’s roles and responsibility in family.

Projecting women in tourism promotional materials using language of patriarchy and heteronormativity is a general feature of tourism promotional materials. Beautiful, smiling women fitting certain standards of attractiveness, attired in traditional wear are often picked to cover brochures and other promotional material. Depending on the kind of tourist being targeted, brochures of beach resorts sometimes show women in bikinis in order to attract male tourists. By and large, relaxation of codes in respect to food, dress, liquor, and even sex during vacations is seen intrinsic to tourism. Interaction between such projection of women and perception towards tourism makes women more vulnerable as it conveys the image of women at tourism destinations as available to satisfy the needs of tourists/ guests. Such projections contribute in attracting large number of tourists as well as increase in revenue for the state but at the cost of compromising safety and security of women as a member of local community or as a tourist.

Political participation of women as Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) and through spaces like Gram Sabhas needs more attention at tourism destinations. There are incidences, for example in Goa, where illegal constructions came up rapidly during the tenure of EWRs. The political and economic forums that structure and drive tourism development are dominated by men. Silence on women’s potential to shape tourism development continues whilst infrastructure led development has had a direct impact upon every woman.
b. Response from the Ministries:

Patriarchal norms, caste and gender find centrality to the nature of participation of women in tourism. However, social and cultural context of women’s participation is not paid attention by MoT in its initiatives. For example, MoT has taken initiatives to build capacity of people, focusing on young men and women in the age group of 18-28. Hunar se Rozgar Tak is one such scheme to provide training for house keeping, food and beverages, driving, golf assistants/ caddies, stone masonry, bar operations, gardening, front office operations, Butler service, and banquet & kitchen services etc. However, the participation of women, as low as 10-20%, mostly from main cities and towns in such programmes has been reported\(^3\). Limited social mobility of women, lack of awareness and poor connectivity to places can be possible reason for this. Therefore, the ministry needs to mull over such factors if building skills of women is to be ensured.

The Endogenous Tourism Project\(^4\) is another example where social and cultural context has its impact on participation of women in decision-making spaces. The Village Tourism Committee (VTC), an institutional framework within the ETP that seeks to address gender issues by challenging existing power structures. However, a review conducted in 2008 highlighted that the social structures proved too hard to break. In Banavasi and Naggar, interplay between caste and gender is evident where women only from upper caste community were represented in VTC. In Raghurajpur, near Puri-Odisha, a temple and crafts village, the Raghurajpur Heritage & Tourism Committee (RHTC – village tourism committee) was completely devoid of women. They were conspicuously absent from all sub-committees except for one, the sanitation committee!\(^5\)

The National Tourism policy (2002) identifies ‘Safety’ as one of the 7 key areas that will provide a thrust to tourism development. However the steps taken by the Ministry demands intensive engagement with the issue. Response of the MoT to the harassment of foreign women tourists is a case in point. The Ministry launched a sensitisation campaign called “I respect women” in 2013. It has taken a long time for MoT to accept the fact that women travellers are not safe at tourism destinations. While the initiative shows recognition of the issue from the Ministry, one wonders if the reason was because India’s image globally was taking a beating or they were truly concerned because of the harassment faced by women tourists. If the reason is the latter, why hasn’t an initiative like this been taken earlier when so many Indian women tourists have also been faced with similar situations. On the initiative itself, there is lack of information about implementation of the campaign by the state governments. More importantly, there is still a long way to go as one needs to ponder if wearing a badge written “I respect women” is enough to mark a dent on the outlook of society towards women.

Implementing existing mechanisms without acknowledging the gaps in the initiatives on the issue of safety is another area of concern. Safe and Honourable Code of Conduct seems to be the only mechanism. The code was launched by the MoT in 2010 which aims to encourage tourism activities with respect for basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourists and local residents i.e. people and communities. Lack of awareness about the code among state tourism officials and lack of legal enforceability allows service providers such as hotels, restaurants, lodges, guest houses, tour agents, transport operators like taxis, buses, tour guides and other services to escape from their responsibility to make the destination safe and secure. In addition, though women are featured in the code, its implementation has remained limited to the issues related to children. Given the awareness and reluctance to address the issue, we wonder if mild initiatives like the Tourist police and the Code which is a mere guideline are enough to ensure the ‘Safety’ of tourists and people living in and around tourism destinations as mentioned in the Policy (2002). Moreover, there is a need to mull over the integration of women issues in the code in an appropriate way as they are different from that of the children and each one is serious enough that it needs individual attention.
The gross violation of human rights due to sex tourism and trafficking of women are the shadow side of the booming tourism industry. Flourishing of sex tourism was reported in the media in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Both the reportings highlighted the increasing incidences of girls either lured or forced into flesh trade. However reports of this extreme nature of crime did not receive any response either from MWCD or from the MoT. In absence of NCW’s intervention to ensure effective implementation of the Constitutional rights and other legal measures, most women’s lives continues to be a daily battle for respect, dignity and equality in private and public spaces.

Coordination between concerned ministries is very much required for development of tourism that cuts across several sectors, depending on the uniqueness and issues at the destination. For example, street vending requires collaboration between MoT, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of Rural Development. Lack of this co-ordination resulted in the gaps in National Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014 which do not recognize tourist sites like park, market, museums, temples or pilgrim sites and cultural and heritage sites etc. as public place. Likewise, issues of women artisans at tourism destination are overlooked in the initiatives taken by Ministry of Textiles as MoT to promote art and craft. Violation of women’s rights and lack of awareness about various schemes designed by different departments for women demands co-ordination between MoT, MWCD, NCW and NMEW. Lack of co-ordination among the ministries/mission has resulted in lack of gender perspective in the initiatives taken by the MoT. Silence of NCW on the issue of violation of women’s rights at tourism destination has seen almost negligible implementation of the Constitutional and other legal provisions. NMEW has a mandate to strengthen inter-sector convergence but MoT is absent in the list of partner ministries / departments related to empowerment of women.

These issues have been raised for long and the ministries have tried to address the issues in their own ways. Therefore, the point is not lack of initiatives but if these initiatives are enough to achieve the policy objectives in spirit. It is time that issues are approached in a holistic way. For e.g. MoT cannot adopt a contradicting approach to address the same issue i.e. on one hand they launch a sensitisation campaign and on the other allow tourism promotion featuring women in sexual ways. Further, not adopting a cross-sectoral approach and co-ordination between respective ministries is another area of concern. For instance, the MWCD needs to chalk out the strategy for its effective implementation of the legislation by adopting cross-sectoral approach.

We call upon the Ministries to recognise tourism as a site for blatant and inhuman exploitation of women. We urge the ministries to ensure achieving the objective in the respective policies and work towards them in spirit, engaging in more systemic ways with to achieve women’s empowerment in tourism. We urge that a cross sectoral approach be adopted which inter-weaves initiatives taken by the Ministries to address women’s needs and rights in tourism development.

Taking cognizance of the fact, we the undersigned demand the ministries / mission:

- To examine the status of the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Tourism from a gender perspective
- To examine initiatives taken by other Ministries focusing on women from a tourism perspective
- To conduct sensitisation programmes for tourism service providers as part of the sensitisation campaign
- To monitor the implementation of the Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act in the tourism industry and initiatives taken by the employers following the provision of Duties of Employer in the Act
- To ensure women specific issues as part of the Safe and Honourable Code of Conduct
• To ensure inter-departmental collaboration between Departments and ministries / mission including NMEW in view of tourism being a complex and inter-disciplinary subject
• Regulate tourism such that women do not pay the price of another person’s holiday!

Endnotes

1 Women Street Vendors and Tourism: Negotiating Lives and Spaces, EQUATIONS, 2012
2 Women Artisans: Pinning Hopes on Tourism to Craft Livelihood Options, EQUATIONS 2014
3 Study on Evaluating Effectiveness of Hunar Se Rozgar Tak Scheme, Indian Institute of Travel and Hotel Management, Ministry of Tourism, 2013
4 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
5 Women Speak! Women’s Engagement with Community Based and Nature Based Tourism, Tracing the Maze: A Dossier on Women and Tourism, 2011
7 India’s one month wife's sex tourism, 15th April 2013, http://www.newindianexpress.com/ nation/ Indias-one-month-wives-sex-tourism/2013/04/15/article1545579.ece#.Uxht-hQ1hlY
We, members of the Tourism Advocacy and Action Forum, which includes tourism activists and representatives of civil society groups whose work focuses on advocating human rights, community rights and justice, gathered in Istanbul between 28th and 30th August, 2014 to plan advocacy of human rights and social justice concerns in tourism. We pronounce our strongest condemnation of the recent assault on Gaza and here want to draw attention to the issues that come out of this. Witnessing 51 days of extreme violence; criminality violating international human rights law and the Geneva Conventions; and unlimited damage to civilian lives, infrastructures and essential services, we assert these action are unacceptable. This occurs in a context of more than seven years of illegal occupation and brutal blockade of the Gaza Strip which has resulted in the imprisoning of the Gazan people in a virtual open-air prison in violation of international human rights law. The occupation and colonisation of the Palestinian peoples of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the Syrian people of Golan Heights has had devastating effects on Palestinian and Golan Heights economies, society and cultural development and has severely obstructed the economic development of these communities. We strongly support the wider movement for the use of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) which can pressurise Israel to cease its occupation and violations of Palestinian rights; this is done in support of the locally initiated action in Palestine of BDS. Gaza is devastated by the attack and will not be able to heal quickly from such a massive assault by the world’s fourth biggest military, especially when civilians could find no place of safety as even schools, hospitals, Holy Places and UN compounds came under fire. While this aggression was being wrought on Gaza, the colonies, checkpoints, arrests, suppression of peaceful protests and settler violence was rampant in the rest of the occupied territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, terrorising these occupied peoples.

We affirm these principles:

The occupation must end immediately with all final status issues addressed comprehensively according to UN resolutions. These would include: the status of Jerusalem, the issue of the right to return, equitable sharing of natural resources, dismantling of colonies in occupied territories and dismantling of the wall.

We assert there are no military solutions to this conflict and we call for a reliable and durable mediation process that supports the freedom and rights of Palestinians.

As the Tourism Advocacy and Action Forum, we call for:

1. The freedom of movement for all Palestinian people, but especially the Gaza people who have been illegally blockaded, strangulated and isolated for more than seven years, blocked from the benefits of travel and receiving people.

2. We express concern for the archaeological and touristic sites and the need to restore and protect them, noting Israeli responsibility and accountability for this. Israel deliberately targeted museums, old neighbourhoods, educational facilities, historical and archaeological sites and worship locations,
in the recent Gaza war constituting a grave violation of international humanitarian law and a war crime punishable before international courts. We charge this is an effort to obliterate history for political purposes.

3. When there is a possibility to visit Gaza at the end of the blockade (as promised under the recent ceasefire agreement), we call on the International Community to “come and see” Gaza, and bear witness to the devastation to engage in solidarity with the people in a way that affirms the people’s rights and dignity.

As the Tourism Advocacy and Action Forum, we join the Palestinian aspiration for freedom and justice as a matter of urgency. We call on all nations to stop supporting war, aggression and violence which enables this illegal occupation and instead invest in meaningful peace and justice processes that overturn the structural causes of this.

EQUATIONS, India
Dr. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, tourism scholar, Australia;
International Support Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Canada
Kyle Whyte, faculty, Michigan State University, USA
Navaya ole Ndaskoi, Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations Forum, Tanzania;
Pierrette Nicolosi, Altervoyages, Belgium;
Rami Kassis, Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine;
Ranjan Solomon, Centre for Responsible Tourism and Badayl, India;
Rev. Dr. Kaleo Patterson, Pacific Justice & Reconciliation Center, Hawai‘i;
Rodrigo Ruiz Rubio, Vertientes del Sur, Perú;
Taisser Maray, Golan for Development of the Arab Villages, Golan Heights;
Anita Pleumarom, Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team, Thailand
Tourism Advocacy and Action Forum
Istanbul Statement

30th August, 2014

RATIONALE

We have gathered in Istanbul because of our shared recognition of the urgent need to rebuild an international network and forum for courageous dialogue on global tourism impacts. We are gravely concerned about today’s converging global crises, which are manifesting with particular and increasing intensity through tourism, and include both the biosphere crisis and the numerous intensifying social crises that accompany it. These multiple crises profoundly affect humanity, especially today’s children and future generations worldwide, and merit our immediate collective action. We therefore strive for a proactive global tourism advocacy and action platform.

We call attention to the accelerating inequities and injustices characterizing both the global tourism industry and its industrial models for development. This is a historical moment for all actors in the global tourism arena to rethink tourism and recognize that tourism is not a right but a privilege, and increasingly a controversial privilege. Accordingly, we wish to inspire a growing community of care, equipped to engage in advocacy and action for a fundamental shift in tourism policy and practice. From here forward, our endeavour must include naming and confronting the social, economical and political realities, underlying the exploitative relationships characterizing the global tourism industry.

Tourism is a political force which may benefit or harm. Considering the serious and accelerating challenges of tourism such as climate change, destruction of biodiversity, and culture loss - which carry immediate local and global threats for all humanity - we highlight the need to look at the structural underpinnings of these widespread yet often unevenly distributed injustices. We stress the need to support the well-being of vulnerable and oppressed populations affected by tourism, including Indigenous Peoples and other socially marginalized populations, notably women and children.

We also note the need to support those affected by inequities within travel freedoms - such as pastoralists, refugees, and migrant workers. Among these social groups, many are displaced from their ancestral lands, sacred sites, and other places of cultural heritage and dispossessed of basic life necessities (for example, water, shelter, and food). An alarming number of these peoples, communities and individuals are forced by the tourism industry to work in slavery or slave-like conditions. Given these trends, we must dismantle the institutional barriers that prevent the physical and social mobility, continuity in cultural practices, as well as dignified and secure livelihoods which are vital to their well-being. It is our responsibility to work together for harm avoidance.

In recognizing these patterns that must be confronted and changed, we call for the honouring of local peoples whose daily lives are immediately impacted by tourism. Solidarity and concerted action are necessary to lay foundations for ethical pathways for the radical transformation of tourism policy and practice.
VALUES

Recognizing the profound costs of tourism, it is vital to define the values and principles by which we will shift the dominant discourse on tourism.

Our initiative has a distinct vision, shaped by values arising from the realities, experiences, needs, aspirations, and rights of peoples and people’s struggles in and/or from developing countries, as well as others experiencing oppression and disparity as a result of tourism.

First, we clarify the values of our initiative which will define our organizing. As a group, we are reflecting on our path of advocacy, both what we have accomplished as global networks, as well as the limitations of our work - especially, in working with and serving the local peoples affected by tourism. We affirm our commitment to being the change that we want to see in the world. Within our network, we strive for collaboration - through a mutually supportive, non-competitive ethic - dedicated to transparent and accountable ways of interacting. We emphasize inclusiveness, based on our common values, principles, and visions. That said, we point out that our work is characterized by independence from corporate interests. We seek respectful engagement with those holding differing viewpoints; however, we shall confront the actors which undermine the values of shared humanity, starting within our own networks of tourism NGOs.

We are determined to promote a holistic approach to tourism. This requires a radical review of the mainstream discourse on tourism. Decolonization of the global tourism debate is necessary. This entails striving for equity and justice within all discourses and processes on tourism. Foremost, we want to open new spaces for peoples vulnerable to tourism to articulate their experiences and needs in their own voices, languages, and customary ways. Our priority is to amplify the voices of affected people(s), especially children and women.

PRINCIPLES

We are calling for a comprehensive decolonization of tourism and all tourism related processes, including institutional frameworks and dialogues on policy and practice. We are guided by the principles of self-determination and care for our fellow humanity. Tourism narratives must put disadvantaged peoples and communities, including today’s generation of children, at the centre. It is crucial to discern local forms of tourism which are a political force for good from globalized tourism models that ultimately hurt people(s) and place(s).

We have a shared responsibility to evaluate tourism alternatives across multiple scales, with both an ethic of justice and an ethic of care - understanding the present global challenges through local struggles. Therefore, we emphasize the need to critically reexamine the political and economic structural barriers to genuine sustainable tourism, within both local and global frameworks for governance (for example, in the institutions and processes responsible for policy development).

Our work must assure non-exploitative relationships in tourism. This includes fighting the destructive forces of capitalism, racism, and other forms of discrimination and oppression. This is the basis for our solidarity. It entails caring for both the biosphere that we share and all peoples and living beings residing within it.

We commit to principles for action grounded in social justice, including support for peoples’ and communities’ rights to say no to tourism. We especially note the historic significance of inter-generational rights today, in light of the biosphere crisis, current rates of culture loss, and the erosion of Indigenous knowledge systems globally.
The misguided development models of the global tourism industry must be corrected. One vital component of this is the degrowth of tourism. Further accumulation of tourism debt (that is, social, cultural, and environmental damage) is not an option. Humanity sits at a juncture where we must reject practices that are inherently unsustainable.

We urge a precautionary approach, grounded in wisdom.

**ACTION**

Our action is oriented to a profound transformation of the tourism system, to support the emergence of a society which honours justice, equity, diversities, inter-dependence and peace. Central premises for our action include:

- Advocacy highlighting and supporting local struggles, grounded in proactive action research respecting customary law and cultural protocols;
- Making people’s voices visible in national and international arenas;
- Linking people(s) so that they can mobilize together to safeguard their rights;
- Acting as ‘whistle blowers’ to illuminate violations of the rights of people(s), including rights to a healthy biosphere;
- Opposing the cooption of the terminology of social justice, human rights and sustainability - particularly by institutions and agencies whose own mandates undermine these core principles;
- Exposing the UNWTO as an industry-serving body which is inherently unable to develop or oversee a vision of sustainable tourism;
- Symbolic acts and protests to express our concerns and visions.

We stand together, for deeply transformative practice across the tourism sector - premised on mutual care.

Anita Pleumarom, Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team, Thailand
Dr. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, tourism scholar, Australia
EQUATIONS, India
International Support Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Canada
Kyle Whyte, faculty, Michigan State University
Navaya ole Ndaskoi, Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations Forum, Tanzania
Pierrette Nicolosi, Altervoyages, Belgium
Rami Kassis, Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine
Ranjan Solomon, Centre for Responsible Tourism and Badayl, India
Rev. Dr. Kaleo Patterson, Pacific Justice & Reconciliation Center, Hawai’i
Rodrigo Ruiz Rubio, Programa Vichama, Peru
Taisser Maray, Golan for Development of the Arab Villages, Golan Heights
Make Tourism Work for Women: A Way to Engage with Women’s Safety in Tourism

EQUATIONS response to the statement made by Mr. Arun Jaitely, Finance Minister, Ministry of Finance, Government of India on December 16 Gang Rape as small incident causing loss to tourism

11th September, 2014

Recent statement made by the Union Finance Minister Mr. Jaitely about the incident of Delhi gang rape costing millions of dollars to the tourism industry has once again brought the attitude of the State towards women to the fore. It does not only speak volumes about the government perception towards women’s safety but also reveals the approach of government towards tourism. It clearly indicates that earning foreign exchange carries much more weight than ensuring safety and security of its citizens. The minister must remember that a series of harassment against foreign women tourists has led to 25% decline in foreign women travellers to the country. However, the minister has chosen to see violence against women causing losses to the tourism industry while conveniently veiling the issue that demands engagement at systemic level in tourism sector.

It’s only been a year since the government acknowledged the issue of safety and security of women at tourist destinations. Responding to the gang rape of a foreign woman tourist and series of harassment cases against women tourists, the Ministry of Tourism launched a campaign “I respect women” in 2013. While the initiative shows recognition of the issue by the Ministry, one wonders if the reason was because India’s image globally was taking a beating or if they were truly concerned because of the harassment faced by women tourists. If the reason is the latter, why hasn’t an initiative like this been taken earlier when so many Indian women tourists have also been faced with similar situations. Moreover, on the initiative itself, there is lack of information about implementation of the campaign by the state governments. More importantly, it raises a question of whether wearing a badge written “I respect women” is enough to mark a dent on the outlook of society towards women.

Another important concern is framing the issue in the language of protection than rights-based framework. The incidents of abuse to women tourists received attention from the hotel industry, mainly few big players who have taken initiatives to cater to the needs of women travellers. Such initiatives include allocating rooms close to the elevator, providing women attendants for room service, a separate section on a particular floor, better patrolling and security, screening of the calls made or received by all single women travellers, installing CCTV cameras, keeping one month data of single women travellers, maintaining privacy of women guests’ room number and identity and hiring more female attendants. This was also followed by dos and don’ts for women tourists by the Lonely Planet, advisory on safety and security issued by foreign governments (British and Australia for example) and safety tips for women travellers advising dos and don’ts for women travellers. The attitude of providing protection to women along with absence of right based framework has in fact fed into seclusion of places like providing a separate section on particular floor for women and segregation of jobs in hotels which is very much reflected in the initiatives taken by the hotels. With this approach, it is not difficult to understand why hiring more female housekeeping staff is considered but not hiring more women managers? Denial of women’s agency is the core of such practices.
Denial of responsibilities by the sector to address the cause is another manifestation of such initiatives as it imposes ‘dos and don’ts’ on women but does not talk about the responsibilities of the government and the industry. Significance of making infrastructure women friendly cannot be ignored but at the same time what has prevented companies with the tourism industry to form the Internal Complaint Committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. What has prevented the government to strengthen the mechanisms like Code of Conduct for Safe and Honorable Tourism. The code was launched by the MoT in 2010 which aims to encourage tourism activities with respect to basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourists and local residents i.e. people and communities. Lack of awareness about the code among state tourism officials and lack of legal enforceability allows service providers such as hotels, restaurants, lodges, guest houses, tour agents, transport operators like taxis, buses, tour guides and other services to escape from their responsibility to make the destination safe and secure.

The question of unfriendly tourism destinations and right to access public place is yet to form among such initiatives. An important question that remains unanswered is whose accessibility is accepted at tourism destinations? Accessibility of women tourists from certain strata of society with purchasing power is legitimate but not women from lower working classes. Street vendors, sex workers, rag pickers, construction workers and women artisans are in constant denial of access to the destinations but their issues are never recognised. Legitimacy of access of marginalised women is evidenced through constant eviction from the destination. Paying a bribe to authorities including police and goons is one of the only options left to these women to access these spaces. Increase in drug abuse, alcoholism, molestation/ eve teasing at public places like beach, temples and heritage sites seclude local women from such spaces. Thus, legitimacy to access such spaces is constructed at the cost of marginalisation of other women.

Making tourism work for women is the need of the hour. The government and the tourism industry need to respond to the critical questions raised by engaging with the issues at a systemic level to ensure that women’s needs and rights are taken into account in tourism.

Endnotes

2  http://www.lonelyplanet.com/asia/travel-tips-and-articles/77744
4  http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/India
5  http://www.lonelyplanet.com/asia/travel-tips-and-articles/77744
WORLD TOURISM DAY,
An Occasion to Evaluate Promises of Community Development

27th September, 2014

We, the Tourism Advocacy and Action Forum (TAAF), an alliance of individual tourism activists and representatives of civil society groups from six continents, gathered in Istanbul from 28 to 30 August 2014 to discuss human rights, social justice and sustainability concerns in tourism.

During our deliberations, we noted with concern that the theme for this year’s World Tourism’s Day is “tourism and community development”. We find this theme to be highly misleading about community benefits, since the policies and practices of tourism are heavily weighted in the favour of the industry, and its unchecked growth. At our meeting, we shared research on tourism worldwide – for example, in Hawai’i, India, Palestine, Peru and Tanzania - which confirms widespread and deepening violations of the rights of vulnerable peoples and communities, women, children, and both local and migrant workers. Alarmingly, their vulnerability to tourism is more pronounced than a decade ago, due to the practices of neoliberalism, which commodify people, places and cultures, privatise the commons and undermine people’s livelihoods. Today, the heavy, aggregate impacts of tourism on the biosphere threaten community development on an unprecedented scale, globally. Yet populations living in and around tourism destinations generally are excluded from meaningful roles in decision-making about the nature, scale, and regulation of tourism development.

The structure of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) does not allow for it to alter the harmful patterns of tourism. Although part of the United Nations (U.N.), it is industry controlled and industry oriented. The UNWTO steers by GDP accounting alone. It is totally removed from tourism realities on the ground, in the everyday lives of the people(s) most affected by industry activities. As a result, the UNWTO overlooks the voices of adversely impacted communities and people(s), especially those exploited by the industry. The diversity of community experiences with tourism does not factor into its policy, programmes and activities. Accurate, impartial information on the costs and benefits of tourism, particularly of who bears the costs of tourism, is lacking within its institutional frame.

Given this pro-industry orientation, and the industry templates promoted, it is preposterous for the UNWTO to suggest on this World Tourism Day that it is committed to involving communities in the development process and in decision-making. All along, civil society actors concerned with tourism have been denied access to UNWTO processes through numerous mechanisms such as prohibitive membership fees, exclusive structures, closed consultations, and funding inequities.

A U.N. agency that claims to support community development must be responsive to communities’ aspirations, needs, interests, and capabilities. What is needed for responsible tourism governance is a U.N. body that addresses tourism-related issues in a truly democratic way and ensures that its work complies with all applicable international law. Qualitative data derived from peoples’ and communities’ own knowledge systems, methodologies, and values must take precedence.
We therefore call upon the UNWTO to align its work with the full U.N. framework of human rights instruments, including the *U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* which summarizes minimum standards in international law, plus accompanying law safeguarding cultural diversity and the related *Rio Conventions*. UNWTO policy, programmes and activities must be grounded in congruent research, emphasizing genuine self-determination not token community participation.

The ideology of tourism as a force for peace as promoted by the UNWTO must be rejected. More often than not, tourism is a cause of conflict, coming as development aggression. During this U.N. Decade of Non-Violence, the UNWTO must hold firm against exploitation in the tourism industry.

EQUATIONS, India

Dr. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, Tourism Scholar, Australia

International Support Centre for Sustainable Tourism, Canada

Kyle Whyte, faculty, Michigan State University, USA

Navaya ole Ndaskoi, Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations Forum, Tanzania

Pierrette Nicolosi, Alternvoyages, Belgium

Rami Kassis, Alternative Tourism Group, Palestine

Ranjan Solomon, Centre for Responsible Tourism and Badayl, India

Rev. Dr. Kaleo Patterson, Pacific Justice & Reconciliation Center, Hawai‘i

Rodrigo Ruiz Rubio, Vertientes del Sur, Perú

Taisser Maray, Golan for Development of the Arab Villages, Golan Heights

Anita Pleumarom, Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team, Thailand
Failure of British Government to Extradite Notorious Paedophile Raymond Varley to India to Stand

5th November, 2014

We the undersigned NGOs working on the issue of child rights are shocked by the Order passed by a UK Judge on 10th October this year admitting Raymond Varley’s plea that he was suffering from dementia and turning down the Indian government’s request for his extradition on those grounds. Significantly, the diagnosis of dementia was made by a neuro-psychologist of Varley’s choice. Apparently the Crown Prosecution Services (CPS) did not ask for Varley to be examined by an independent expert. According to the news article, by which we are informed about the outcome of the 10th October hearing, the Indian government was given ample opportunities to examine him, which they however, did not do. (http://www.thenewsminute.com/news_sections/1662) (Annexure 1).

In an earlier order in June 2014, District Judge Quentin Purdy ruled that Mr Varley was a “vulnerable individual” due to dementia and should not be extradited. What about the vulnerable children sexually abused by Varley? Why is there no concern for ensuring that justice is done to them? It is important to note that this will definitely set a precedence for all other paedophiles / sex offenders looking for a way out from the clutches of the law.

Like we had pointed out in our earlier letter (dated June 27th, 2014) to National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) (Annexure 2), it is to be noted that Raymond Varley is an associate of the infamous Freddy Peats – a paedophile who was involved in the sexual abuse of young children under the guise of running a charitable home for children and convicted by the Sessions Court, Goa in 1996. The Interpol had issued a “Red Notice” against Eoghan McBride, Werner Wulf Ingo, Dominique Sabire, Zell Jurgen Andreas and Nils Oscar Johnson. Of these, Eoghan McBride and Werner Wulf Ingo were located and were convicted in Goa. Varley was located in Thailand. The NGOs say that when there is a Red Notice issued by Interpol and there is a non-bailable warrant against him in Goa he should have been sent to India. It is absurd that he was sent to the UK.

The same news article also claims that the CPS did not inform the Indian authorities that they could go for an independent medical assessment of Varley to ascertain the efficacy of the claim made by the accused’s neuro psychologist. It is important that the Indian government come clear on the steps taken by it to ensure that the accused is extradited to India and justice restored to the children who have been victims of very severe and grave crimes. Additionally, it is critical that a strong message be sent to other child sex offenders in the country as well as internationally about the seriousness with which the Indian government takes such violations.

We demand that the Departments in Goa and Ministries at the centre of Women and Child Development, Tourism and Home Affairs as well as the Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, appeals against the UK Court’s decision and ensures that Varley does not escape justice.
We the undersigned:

1. CARITAS, Goa
2. Centre for Responsible Tourism, Goa
3. Children’s Rights in Goa
5. EQUATIONS, Bangalore
6. Jan Ugahi, Goa
7. Vikas Samvad Samiti, Madhya Pradesh

CC:

1. Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi
2. Ministry of Women and Child Development, New Delhi
3. Ministry of Tourism, New Delhi
4. Department of Women and Child Development, Goa
5. Department of Tourism, Goa
6. Department of Police, Goa
7. State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, Goa

Annexure 1

Child sexual abuser Raymond Varley gets away; will India approach Theresa May?

Dhanya Rajendran | The News Minute| October 10, 2014 | 4.00 pm IST
http://www.thenewsminute.com/news_sections/1662

Raymond Varley, the British citizen facing charges of sexual offences against children in India from 1989-1991 will not be extradited to India, despite India’s repeated appeals. Putting an end to India’s appeals and practically closing down all legal options for India, a British Court has refused India’s extradition petition. The court has said that India was given ample opportunity for examination, but they didn’t. Varley had claimed that he was suffering from dementia and he was not the man wanted in India for sexual crimes. It is on the basis of his claims of dementia that the court has rejected extradition plea.

66-year-old Varley is one of the accused in the Goa orphanage child sexual abuse case tracing back to 1989 which involved many foreign nationals. The racket was run by an Indian called Freddy Peats in Goa. Peats gave foreign nationals access to children in the orphanage. Back in 1991 when raids were conducted in Peat’s house the police found more than 2000 obscene images of children.

Varley has been charged by the CBI on many counts of sexual abuse including sodomy, indecent assault and taking indecent photographs.

At least five children had identified Raymond Varley from photographs and recounted how Varley has abused them.

On May 8, 2014, a Westminster judge had rejected to grant the Indian government’s request for extradition and had accepted Raymond Varley’s claim that he was suffering from dementia.
Varley, a teacher from Halifax, procured a report from a neuro psychologist Linda Atterton who was based out of Norwich, which was 291 km away from where he lived. Varley made her report the crux of his argument against extradition. It is however baffling how someone suffering from dementia could locate a psychologist through the internet and get the certificate.

Various activists have questioned if the neuro psychologist was qualified to declare Varley was suffering from dementia. Varley’s victory is dangerous for India. In this specific case it means that the man will never undergo trial. There will be no logical conclusion for the case. Activists in India have also not been happy about the way the Crown Prosecution Service had fought the case on India’s behalf.

It should also be of great concern to India that Varley has been allowed to get away on grounds that he has dementia, this could be a loophole that other child sex offenders can claim. The Crown Prosecution Service, activists say, never told the CBI that India could go for an independent medical evaluation.

What about the victims of child sexual abuse and other such offenders Raymond Varley’s case is not just about bringing him back to India for trial, it is also about the victims. Many child sexual abuse victims do not come out in the open, and for those who have, it is important that the legal and policing system brings the perpetrators to book. The UK Court’s rejection will enable other offenders like Johnathan Robinson (another British citizen who is wanted for similar charges) to continue with such heinous crimes without any fear of the law. The only option in front of India now is to ask Theresa May, UK’s Home Secretary to intervene.

What Varley and his defence claimed?
Varley had claimed that sending him to a prison in India would be against his human rights as the prison conditions post a real risk to life. Following Varley’s accusation of Indian prisons, two experts Lord Ramsbottam and Professor Rod Morgan submitted reports in the district court found that there was nothing about Indian prison conditions that would infringe on his human rights. Rod Morgan in his report said “cultural features may be alien to him, taking account of his age medical condition and culture Raymond Varley would likely find living stressful, but I do not think it can be said his human rights would be infringed.”

Linda Atterton in her finding said Varley had “widespread moderate-severe impairment severely affecting everyday life”, but she cannot “pinpoint the type of dementia but it may be Alzheimers”. During one of the hearings, Varley even threatened to commit suicide.

Mocking the system?
An Interpol red corner notice was issued against Raymond Varley in 2001 after a Goa court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against him. But in spite of this Varley has repeatedly been moving between Thailand, Britain, Mexico and Slovania. He was finally arrested in Bangkok, Thailand, but Thai authorities sent him to Britain instead of India on whose request the Interpol notice was issued.

The Independent UK has reported that Varley had previously served time in prison in UK in the mid 1980s and “was given treatment at Wormwood Scrubs to deal with his sexual offending”.

The case
In 1996, the CBI filed a charge sheet against many persons including Freedy Peats, Werner Ingo of Australia, E.C. McBride of New Zealand, and Nils Jonsson of Sweden. A supplementary charge sheet was filed against Raymond Andrew Varley and others,
Annexure 2:

The Chairperson,
National Commission for Protection of Child Rights,
5th Floor, Chanderlok Building, 36, Janpath,
New Delhi – 110001

Subject: Failure of British government to extradite notorious paedophile Raymond Varley to India to stand trial

Dear Madam,

We the undersigned organizations working on the issue of child rights and on tourism are extremely concerned by the Order passed by a UK District Judge on 8 May this year admitting Raymond Varley’s plea that he was suffering from dementia and refusing to grant the Indian government’s request for extradition.

It is to be noted that Raymond Varley is an associate of the infamous Freddy Peats – a paedophile who was involved in the prostitution of young children under the guise of running a charitable home for children and convicted by the Sessions Court in 1996. The Interpol had issued a "red notice" against Eoghan McBride, Werner Wulf Ingo, Dominique Sabire, Zell Jurgen Andreas and Nils Oscar Johnson. – Of these, Eoghan McBride and Werner Wulf Ingo were located and were convicted in Goa.

We are unable to understand why Varley was sent to England, and not India when there is a Red Notice issued by Interpol and there is a non-bailable warrant against him in Goa. This is unthinkable given that he was wanted for crimes committed in India.

Apparently, a neuropsychologist chosen by Varley has certified him as having dementia. We demand that the NCPCR ensures that a court appointed neuropsychologist certify Varley’s mental state. Further that NCPCR ensures that the Interpol make a submission to the UK District Court regarding his case. We request you to look into this matter at once and ensure that Varley does not escape justice.

Yours sincerely,

Signed
1. CARITAS, Goa
2. Centre for Responsible Tourism, Goa
3. Children Rights in Goa
5. EQUATIONS, Bangalore
6. Jan Ugahi, Goa
7. Vikas Samvad, Madhya Pradesh
A. Tourism Policy, Planning and Regulation

1. Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is applicable to all forms of tourism, which are in harmony with their economic, social, physical and cultural environment in the long term. The 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment that took place in Stockholm and which, in its declaration, defined key principles of sustainable development concerning environment and development, which was to be followed by all countries who are signatories. With the failure of the effectiveness of the 1972 declaration, the World Commission on Environment and Development was created to formulate a global agenda for change. It is in their report ‘Our Common Future’ released in 1987 that a definition of Sustainable Development was promulgated and which has today gained universal acceptability. Below is a reproduction from the document:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.”


The UNWTO defines Sustainable Tourism as ‘leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. Article 3 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 1999, further articulates practices that the tourism industry should engage in to achieve goals of Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, the Agenda 21, an action plan formulated at the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio de Janerio, Brazil, in June 1992 identifies tourism with the potential to play an important role in the global movement towards Sustainable Development. Additionally, Chapter 28 of the Agenda 21, focuses on the role of local authorities in the fruition of the objectives of Sustainable Development.
Quoting from the Mid-term appraisal of the 11th five year plan for Tourism, 'Tourism is an industry with great reliance on attraction and amenities, along with dependence on the goodwill of the local community. Of late, the social and economic consequences of tourism have raised various issues related to environment and the impact on the local community. Therefore, in order to have sustainable tourism development, the involvement of local people would be of utmost importance'.

**Expectation from the Policy, 2015**

1.1 Central to the National Tourism Policy, 2015 is the definition and principles of Sustainable Development. Accordingly, the forthcoming Policy will envision tourism that is people governed and where the accountability of the tourism industry is paramount to its implementation. For this all aspects of tourism - environmental, economic, social, cultural, and its institutions are taken into account. Tourism, will be developed and promoted respecting the land, its people, their culture and the prevailing laws.

1.2 Voices of local people are heard and their perspectives and aspirations privileged as tourism destinations are their homeland and cultural spaces. Where processes of planning and implementation are transparent and participatory so that all stakeholders have the space to influence its forms and outcomes, and where tourism is designed with the principles of equity in benefits at its core.

1.3 As tourism is an important instrument of bringing people together, learning about, and respecting each others cultures, all forms of tourism in our vision are necessarily non- exploitative, respect human rights, are gender just, and do not dispossess nature and communities.

1.4 Sustainable Tourism Cell is to be instituted at the Central and State levels. The function of this Cell would include:

- To coordinate a process for visioning for tourism development in India based on the principles of sustainable tourism: The vision for tourism is of decision making, planning and implementation being democratised.

- Research on the various issues of sustainable tourism – on sound tourism impact assessments studies with focus on specific groups within the society, climate change, tourism carrying capacities of an area and developing monitoring tools that would inform guidelines and practices. Research at both micro and macro level to assess the economic benefits, multipliers and leakages are critical so that policies are based on data. Master planning processes to be more inclusive and consultative with stakeholders particularly local stakeholders. Planning for tourism is not a one off process but cyclical and iterative, based on a loop of experiences, impacts and learnings.

- Coordinate the STCI process – plan, implement, monitor and expand the Criteria to all sectors of tourism (organised and unorganised) within the country.

- Coordinate the Safe and Honourable Tourism Process – plan, implement, monitor and expand the Code to all sectors of tourism (organised and unorganised) within the country.

- As part of its monitoring role, the Cell conducts social audit of its tourism projects once every 5 years.

- The Results – Framework Document developed by MoT will include qualitative and quantitative indicators towards implementation and monitoring of its various initiatives on sustainable tourism.
1.5 A Scheme on Sustainable Tourism is proposed that will work on the following issues:

- Sustainable Tourism Cell – Visioning for Tourism Development, research, coordination, monitoring
- Scheme on Safe and Honourable Tourism – implementation, monitoring and expansion of the Code to all sectors of tourism within the country
- Scheme on Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India – implementation, monitoring and expansion of the Code to all sectors of tourism within the country

2. Tourism Planning

The Constitution of India in Article 40 in the Directive Principles of State Policy, states “The State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government”. The subsequent changes made to the Constitution through the 73rd applicable to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and 74th amendment applicable to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) further strengthen this provision. A key aspect of this is the devolution of powers (funds, functions and functionaries) to Local Self Governing Institutions (LSGIs) so that the Policy is aligned with the laws of the country vis-a-vis governance.

The focus of tourism planning has been focussed much more on the ways to increase revenues from tourism and on improving tourist experience. While tourism is inherently a commercial activity, it cannot be ignored that it results in impacts which both contribute to communities, but which are also detrimental to their interests. Impacts of tourism across the country are evident. However, these have not been compiled and analysed to arrive at concrete learnings on how to improve the experience of tourism from the point of view of local communities. Importantly, certain benefits attributed to tourism have not been adequately explored. For e.g. while it is a popular claim that tourism increases employment opportunities at a destination, there is no account of how it has impeded already existing occupations such as agriculture, fishing, handicrafts and other such traditional occupations, which are far more economically and environmentally sustainable. Therefore opportunity costs of tourism have not been adequately calculated and taken into consideration while planning for tourism.

All development has a threshold, beyond which it harms society rather than contributing to it. Unfortunately, lack of tourism planning has already breached these in several parts of the country resulting in over crowding and running down of resources, which run counter to the objectives of Sustainable Development.

Past experience of the Ministry of Tourism as well as the Departments of Tourism have been the lack of transparency in the planning process. Vision plans are made without true public engagement, where announcements are made in tokenistic forms. Information is the first step to access power. Armed with information and data local communities would be able to contribute meaningfully to the planning process.

While the Ministry engages with the industry to hear from them, their perspectives, there has not been a similar tradition for engagements with people living in tourism destinations. Even within the industry, when plans are made and implemented, the unorganised sector is ignored and at best a few welfare measures are proposed.

**Expectation from the Policy, 2015**

2.1 The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) will ensure that planning processes are accountable, transparent and participatory. Devolution of tourism decision making as per the 73rd amendment of the constitution would aid this process, since it becomes the mandate of the Gram Sabha to include...
tourism planning in its annual plans. Additionally, the forthcoming policy, directs state Departments of Tourism to evolve a process for engagement with PRIs present in destinations so as to ensure that tourism is being conducted in accordance with the policy and law.

2.2 Site specific tourism planning will be undertaken up considering local dynamics in terms of social and infrastructure capital of the local context as well as political realities into account. The planning for tourism will be within the overall development plans of a region and not introduced as a standalone intervention. Planning processes will include engagement with LSGIs in areas where the plan is to be implemented.

2.3 Planning and consultation takes into account impact assessments (environmental, social, cultural and economic) and consensus built on informed consent, calculations of tourism carrying capacity, and sustainable use of natural and other resources. It recognises that planning for tourism is not a one off process but cyclical and iterative, based on a loop of experiences, impacts and learnings.

2.4 MoT takes the responsibility to ensure that information on tourism development and plans are available in the public domain. The planning process will create spaces for the active engagement of women, adivasis, dalits and other marginalised communities in all aspects of tourism development (planning, implementation, participation, ownership and monitoring). The Ministry will adopt gender responsive budget for each and every plan/ programme/ scheme related to tourism.

2.5 The state Departments of Tourism are directed to acknowledge and engage with unions of the unorganised sector within tourism in its planning process, at the destination and state level. Interests of the unorganised sector be reflected in the forthcoming policy and all tourism trade acts in the states be aligned accordingly.


While the MoTs and DoTs conduct market surveys, the findings of these do not seem to influence the planning process. Further, the statistics like visitation data based on which planning does take place are suspect in so far as they represent the situation on the ground. Methods of collecting statistics are ad-hoc and mired with statistical errors.

There is a huge lacuna in the field of Research and Development in tourism. The tourism teaching institutions have been unable to product robust and multi-sectoral research reports as these institutions have a management perspective rather than a development perspective. If tourism is to achieve its developmental goals, it would be imperative that a space to evolve this perspective be created.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

3.1 Scientific techniques to collect tourism statistics will be evolved in collaboration with relevant institutions like the Indian Statistical Institute. Attempts to standardise this would be made as far as possible and keeping in mind the diversity of the nature of tourism and destinations.

3.2 The Ministry proposes to have a dedicated centre for tourism research, policy, planning. It is envisaged that this Centre would generate studies to clarify the role of tourism in the development goals of the country at the macro level and those of the people living in and around the destinations at the local level. Research would result in sound impact assessment studies, tourism carrying capacities, evaluations of schemes and monitoring tools on issues and impacts of tourism which will inform guidelines, practices, projects, schemes, master/ management plans, perspective plans and policies.
Good quality and credible research will be undertaken to understand the potential of tourism products. Policies and plans will be based on research at both micro and macro level to assess the economic benefits, forwards and backward linkages and leakages. A key component of planning any tourism development will ensure consultation with stakeholders particularly local communities living in and around tourism destinations and the unorganised sector in tourism.

Studies on tourism carrying capacities will be conducted while planning projects, master/management plans. These studies are not based only on the numeric calculation of a site but take into consideration the qualitative impacts of the proposed development. This will ensure that over-crowding at tourism sites and in circuits is avoided, therefore creating positive experiences both for the tourists and the local communities.

4. Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism policy and planning until now has been geared towards increasing international tourist arrivals. The consequences of uncoordinated development of tourism without putting into place important measures have led to adverse economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. Often, Departments of Tourism draw inspiration from developed countries especially regarding issues like transportation and last mile connectivity, without consideration for the social, cultural and environmental differences between those countries and a diverse country like ours.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

4.1 The Ministry of Tourism will define the value framework on the principle of sustainable tourism development when proposing to develop any tourism infrastructure taking into consideration the need to plan the economic, social and ecological carrying capacity of tourism.

4.2 A scheme will be developed for the rejuvenation and preservation of old buildings that can be used for tourism purposes. It will encourage renovating and maintaining old buildings for the purposes of accommodation, information centres, museums, rather than constructing new units.

4.3 Basic facilities - toilets, sanitation in a range of tourist facilities including actual sites of visitation, public amenities in destinations, bus stops, railways stations will be developed. Basic amenities to support women engaged in tourism will be developed (creches, separate toilets, water).

5. Monitoring and Regulation

It is in the role of monitoring and regulation that the MoTs and DoTs fall short the most. The issues with monitoring and regulation are that they are inadequate, do not cover a range of tourism activities, are weak in enforcement and there is an inadequate system in place for follow up. The existing mechanisms are either not binding on the tourism industry (e.g. STCI) or are limited in their applicability (e.g. S&H Code) or cater only to the welfare of the tourists and do not concern themselves with the interests and vulnerabilities of the local communities (e.g. Tourist Police). The role of the MoT and DoTs are paramount in the context of tourism since the industry is inherently driven by the private sector and profit motives. In such a scenario it is left to the MoT and DoTs that laws of the land are not violated and that people in and around the destinations are protected from the vagaries of the industry.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

5.1 The Ministry recognises that the monitoring and regulation of tourism is of utmost importance so that it abides by the Constitution, respects and complies with laws, is not exploitative in any way, and functions with sustainability and equity as principles.
5.2 The Ministry takes the responsibility to evaluate and revise its current regulatory mechanisms or develop new ones to encourage and abide with international covenants on trafficking, child labour, biodiversity protection, climate change, governance and a broader sense of human rights – economic, social and cultural rights (beyond civil and political rights).

5.3 Guidelines and mechanisms will be developed in consultation with the relevant stakeholders that would support LSGIs to monitor and regulate tourism at the local level, as the 73rd and 74th amendment of the Constitution of India entrusts powers to LSGIs to identify, formulate, implement and monitor the local level developmental and welfare programmes. The mechanisms will ensure that the tourism industry is accountable in more direct ways for responsible and ethical forms of tourism development with people’s rights as a prime concern.

5.4 While regulations in the forms of laws and notifications are essential, the Ministry encourages codes of conduct or charters that are developed more locally and have a bottom up process. These are ways by which local communities can stake their claim to shape tourism based on local aspirations and contexts. Through such processes the community decides what kind of tourism they want, what they allow, what they disallow, and what they want to offer. This has the possibility of being a powerful process of helping them to search for and articulate their identity in the context of tourism. Where communities have come up with their own charter it has increased their feeling of involvement and ownership of the tourism development process.

5.5 On the two current regulatory mechanisms linked to sustainable tourism, the Ministry will undertake a review of its implementation and revise the guidelines to strengthened both in content and implementation.

5.5.i Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India (STCI): MoT would undertake a mapping of the tourism sectors for developing sector-specific criteria (mega tourism projects / circuits, amusement parks, water parks, cruises, the unorganised and informal sector) as well as one for the destination level based on feedback from stakeholders in tourism. The challenge has been to ensure the implementation of the STCI in its true spirit. It will develop guidelines for implementation and in time move from it being voluntary to making it mandatory for all sectors of the tourism industry.

5.5.ii Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism (S&H Code): In July 2010, MoT launched its Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism. This code aims to strengthen safe tourism practices in India for both tourists and the local population, especially children and women.

The Ministry of Tourism takes a firm position denouncing exploitation of children and women in tourism and its intent to take serious action against this. The Ministry takes cognisance of the growing links between tourism and the abuse of children – in the forms of child labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking as well as the increasing rate of violence against women, the exploitation through sex tourism & forced sex work, objectification of women and the non recognition of women working in unorganised sector and ignorance of issues of women living in and around tourism destinations.

Towards this it will undertake the following actions:

- Review the implementation of the S&H code. The study will analyse existing child and women protection mechanisms in tourism in India and recommend revisions to strengthen existing & develop new mechanisms for better implementation of child & women protection in tourism.
• Coordinate between different ministries and departments to provide protection to children and women from abuse in tourism. Concerted efforts by all the related ministries and departments, law enforcing agencies, local self governing institutions, judiciary, media, Child Line and NGOs is required. A Terms of Reference with all the concerned Ministries/ departments will be developed towards the same.

• Appointment of Nodal person for coordination:
  1. Every concerned ministry/ department to appoint a person assigned to act as the nodal person to coordinate with all other ministries/ departments and CSOs.
  2. The name of the nodal officer, contact details and their roles in print media and place it in prominent places will be published.

• Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with MWCD will develop a National Plan of Action for Protection of Women and Children in Tourism.

• Ministry of Tourism with the State Tourism Departments will conduct an extensive research to map out high – risk (priority) areas.

• To conduct a study on the issues and impacts faced by women in tourism in India as well as examine current initiatives and schemes and bring in a gender perspective.

• Sensitisation workshops for all persons employed with the Ministry of Tourism on the issues and concerns related to exploitation of children and women in tourism will be undertaken.

• To expand the scope of S&H code to also include persons / tourism establishments not registered with the MoT but part of the formal and informal sector of tourism.

• Ministry of Tourism will put in place stringent mechanisms involving the police, child-lines, judiciary, local communities, panchayats and to work with various levels & sectors of the tourism industry.

• Through inter-department coordination, to ensure the implementation of the Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act in tourism industry.

• Strict follow-up of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act in tourism industry.

• To strengthen the Campaign 'I respect Women' – to create awareness on the impacts of tourism on women and publicise 1091, the women helpline number.

• Design/ develop communication material on protection of women and children in tourism and the S&H Code to be given to tourists, communities, which will also be translated in multiple Indian and foreign languages.

• Develop a film and a web page on combating exploitation of women and children in tourism (in different languages) and lobby with Ministry of Civil Aviation to make it mandatory to be screened on all flights.

• The Annual Report of Ministry of Tourism will clearly indicate the number of cases received/ handled and action taken, incidents uncovered of child and women in sex tourism, efforts they have taken to combat this and their commitment to make India free from exploitation of women and children in tourism. This, along with the status of implementation of the Plan of Action, will be reported in the Ministry of Tourism annual report.
B. Tourism Industry

6. Unorganised sector

In India, the unorganised sector contributes significantly to the expanding tourism economy. At a conservative estimate about 70% of the tourism economy is unorganised. Guides, photographers, taxi drivers and owners, small scale accommodation units (lodges, homestays), ticketing agents, hawkers and street vendors, way side dhabas, eateries and shops, vendors selling handicrafts, trinkets and other items for tourists, all represent a part of the huge unorganised labour force in the tourism sector. The other aspect is of unorganised labour within the organised tourism sector, as a large number of the workforce are engaged are employed on a daily / seasonal / contractual basis.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

6.1 The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of the unorganised sector within tourism. It plans to work with the relevant departments and tourism corporations to ensure that mechanisms to promote and protect the interests of this sector are in place - capacity building, access to credit, incentives, subsidies, social security, safe & decent working conditions, uniformity in wages, working hours, licensing, protection from abuse & exploitation by co-workers or tourists.

6.2 A key component of planning any tourism development will ensure consultation with stakeholders the unorganised sector in tourism. Directions are made to the state DoTs to engage with the unions of the unorganised sector and that status reports be prepared, based on which further planning may be done.

7. Taxation and Subsidies

Taxes today are skewed in favour of the big tourism industry operators. For e.g. in several home stay policies, taxes such as luxury tax are imposed, which go against the concept and spirit of the concept. Industry associations of the formal sector of the tourism industry often access the MoT and DoT for tax holidays or subsidies in the name of promoting tourism, while the smaller operators receive no such support from the government.

The Ministry will develop the regulation and guidelines which will cover various types of taxes. Currently the many of these comes under different sector such as air transport charge, security charge, departure tax, accommodation tax, entrance fee or eco-tourism tax.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

7.1 The MoT will explore subsidies & incentives to innovative and creative options in order that entrepreneurship at the local level is stimulated on the principals of sustainable and responsible tourism. This increases the sense of control of communities as they are sure that the profits will be ploughed back into development funds for their community. This will be institutionalized and rationalized as the tax equivalent.

8. Corporate Accountability (CA)

The tourism industry in India is growing immensely and the MoT is supporting this growth in many ways. This does not pose a problem in itself. However, that many local communities face serious problems because of this growth, adds a new dimension to this issue. Many of the corporations in India’s tourism industry have not shown concerns about their impacts on the social, cultural, environmental and economic
aspects of the individual and community rights. Corporations often take no responsibility for these negative impacts and have no mechanisms to prevent or mitigate them.

There is a difference between Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Accountability as is clear from the below mentioned definitions:

“Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life”.
-World Business Council on Sustainable Development.

“Corporate accountability can be defined as the ability of those affected by a corporation to control that corporation’s operations”.
-Friends of the Earth

CSR in India is mostly understood and implemented in project mode. Corporations spend money on CSR projects (often no doubt altruistic) but most times have no connection with the core work that the Corporation is involved in and which is causing negative impacts on local communities. Also most CSR activities are voluntary. CA is based on a stricter framework of impacts and regulation, which makes corporations more accountable to the communities whose life it impacts. The most important aspect of ca is the shift in power.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

8.1 The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of corporations to society under the banner of Corporate Social Responsibility. However recognising that Corporations need to be accountable towards communities and people they impact and thereby proposes to develop and implement a monitoring framework of Corporate Accountability in Tourism local self governance institutions. Stringent sanctions against companies introduced when actions of the company are negative.

8.2 The following will be mandated for the Corporations:

• Corporations need to make their actions visible through transparent and accurate reporting on social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts. These reports need to be accessible to local communities. A regular impact assessment conducted on the social, cultural, economic and environmental levels. Corporate decision making to be influenced by these assessments.

• Company plans that impact local communities need to be in consultation with them to keep them informed and give them the opportunity to object.

• Resources or property should not be taken from local communities and if this might happen they should be compensated appropriately and adequately for their loss.

• Standards on social, environmental, labour and social justice issues should be high and based on the existing legal frameworks of the country and international conventions.

• Companies should mention their CA philosophy and practices on their websites so that their customers can make informed choices.
C. Types of Tourism

The Ministry will play a special role in ensuring that the various types of tourism development (urban, rural, nature, wildlife, coast, hills and mountains, islands, golf, cultural, heritage, pilgrim, adventure, niche, MICE, cruises, luxury trains, sporting events, recreation, theme and amusement parks, medical, health and wellness, caravan, film, community governed and ecotourism) are conceptualised based on sound research. The tendency of tourism to go through a life cycle of exploration, consolidation and decline is well known. Equally well known is the inadvisability of over dependence on tourism.

The typology that exists in tourism will be studied closely in terms of effectiveness as it would be valuable to understand the links between emerging entrepreneurship models, impacts in terms of community benefits and “successful” tourism in the long run. It will also reflect on what fails and why. The studies need to highlight the quality of the tourism experience in terms of authenticity, people-centeredness and genuine human encounter.

The tourism typology based on motivations of the traveller must take into account the assumptions about what constitutes responsible, ethical and sustainable tourism. Budgets will be invested in research and development, innovation, use technical advancements to ensure that forms of tourism are more sustainable, reduce heavy use of natural resources, greater use of renewable energy, lower climate footprint (moving away from quick-fixes like offsets).

Lastly, acknowledging that each stage of tourism development is given adequate time in the learning cycle of experience, conceptualising, experimenting and reviewing and to take these into consideration when polices and schemes are reviewed and revised.

9. Rural Tourism

The Rural Tourism Project (RTP) is an innovative response to the agenda in the National Tourism Policy 2002 towards developing rural tourism. The scale of the RTP is very large with currently over 180 sites sanctioned. However the Scheme has not been as successful as anticipated.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

9.1 The Ministry recognises the need to relook at the concept and scheme for rural tourism projects as inspite of multiple evaluations, the fundamental objectives (augment sustainable livelihoods, gender equality, empowerment of women, youth and other disadvantaged sections of the community, working towards cultural sensitivity and environmental sustainability) remain unaddressed thereby resulting in the initiative being unsuccessful.

Therefore the next 2 years will be considered as a time to review, learn and reflect on this intervention and to work with a smaller number of sites but with much more focus and individual attention.

9.2 A review of the scheme will be undertaken not just from the point of implementation of action plan of infrastructure development and capacity building but one that would review keeping the original stated objectives as the base (as conceptualised between MoT and UNDP), assess the impact it has had on the rural people as well as the future sustainability of the rural tourism initiatives being implemented. Based on this the scheme will be revised.

9.3 In parallel to ensure that current sanctioned projects receive adequate support, processes and systems will be built. The mechanisms to monitor progress of the project will be by panchayat and village level administration.
10. Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Cultural tourism has historically been an important form of tourism, even before it was formalised in the manner that it exists today. In India most heritage tourism sites are living cultural sites for communities. There cultural and heritage tourism are not only interactions with monuments and other physical entities but more importantly are interactions with communities.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

10.1 The Ministry of Tourism & Culture will formulate a Cultural Tourism Policy by involving representatives from LSGIs, and civil society organisations. Clear guidelines and regulatory mechanisms will be developed with local communities playing a key role in defining and developing cultural and heritage tourism in their region and in the mitigation of negative impacts of tourism.

10.2 Application to UNESCO of cultural and heritage tourism destinations as world heritage sites will be done only after completely understanding its implications on local communities. The final decision will be taken only after getting approval from the communities and all the Gram Panchayats in writing within the heritage sites.

11. Ecotourism

United Nations Environment Programme defines ecotourism as “Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promote conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local population.”

Subsumed in ecotourism is the issue of sustainability. Based on the principles of the UNEP for ecotourism to be sustainable, the following process will be adopted:

a) Ensure prior informed participation of all stakeholders
b) Ensure equal, effective and active participation of all stakeholders at all stages in the ecotourism projects
c) Acknowledge adivasis’/ other forest dwellers’/ local communities right to say ‘no’ to tourism
d) Development - to be fully informed, effective and active participants in the development of tourism activities within their communities, lands and territories
e) Promote processes for adivasis/ other forest dwellers’/ local communities to control and maintain their resources, culture and rights.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

11.1 The Ministry of Tourism in coordination with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will formulate a new National ecotourism policy as numerous developments have taken place on the issue of ecotourism. The currently policy that is in force was developed in 1998. To ensure that the voices of people involved in and affected by ecotourism are taken into consideration an open and consultative process will be put in place that seeks inputs from the people.

11.2 The Ministry along with State Departments of Tourism will conduct extensive impact studies on the issue of tourism and conservation, impacts of ecotourism at existing ecotourism destinations in the forests, coasts and mountains. The Ministry of Tourism will study the method of Tourism Carrying Capacities and arrive at a mechanism for determining this for India.
11.3 Pilot ecotourism projects will undertaken across various ecosystems keeping stated objectives of ecotourism - conservation, conservation education and community development as its basis. A mechanism for the regulation of ecotourism will be planned and put in place.

12. Pilgrim Tourism

MoT will establish regulatory mechanism to make pilgrim tourism in country more sustainable and long run. Any planned development / tourism infrastructure will be undertaken only after consultation and through a process of decision making with local people. As pilgrimage tourism is also mass tourism in most places, which is detrimental to the place, alternatives need to be considered so as to maintain the carrying capacity of the destination.

D. Tourism Impacts

13. In a move to globalise tourism, the needs of the private sector are often privileged, leaving many communities living in and around tourism destinations adversely affected by tourism.

**Economic Impacts**: Big business gain subsidised land, tax concessions, import advantages, leakages in tourist trade leaving very little gain or benefit for local communities or for people engaged in the unorganised tourism sector. Tourism has not proven its claim of generating quality and secure employment for local communities. Tourism also increases the cost of living for local communities.

**Social Impacts**: Social costs of the abuse of women, children particularly those forced into sex work, trafficking and labour. Current forms of tourism systemically and systematically exclude Dalits from substantive and significant participation and benefits in tourism. Tourism projects have failed to break or even dent rigid social caste hierarchies. Similarly religious minorities and sexuality minorities face very similar discrimination and disempowerment. The growing social and economic aspect of HIV/AIDS linked to tourism. The impact of drugs and narcotics and its effects on vulnerable populations in the developing countries especially linked to tourism. The increased crime linked to tourism impacting local people and tourists.

**Cultural Impacts**: The commodification of culture and traditional practices to cater to tourists needs and increased consumerism in local populations influenced by the demonstration effect. The distortion and commodification of culture, including mass produced handicrafts and demeaning cultural performances designed to entertain and amuse rather than promote interchange and understanding among different peoples.

**Environmental Impacts**: The relentless expansion of tourism is a cause for concern as it continues to pervade forests, coasts, lakes, rivers, deserts, islands, hills and mountains, mangroves, leading to undesirable impacts on ecosystems. Ecological damage & losses incurred through environmental destruction because of tourism. This also leads to make way for tourism enterprises, golf courses, amusement parks, theme parks, ecotourism projects, beach resorts, water sports in these ecosystems. The links between tourism growth and water scarcity, waste and pollution is of serious proportion. The two-way relationship between tourism and climate change – each one affecting and being impacted by it.

**Governance and human rights**: The impact of diversion of people’s essential needs like agricultural land and access to natural & common property resources, as well as the diversion or privileging water and electricity supply to tourist enterprises like hotels, amusement parks is least acknowledged in the narratives on tourism’s successes. The social & economic impact of displacement caused by tourism enterprises on livelihood and life. The dilution of the rights of communities and local governments to regulate tourism
and to say no to tourism. The dilution of provisions of local ownership, regulation and control and the increasing trend of setting up of centralised supra authorities to determined the pace and direction of tourism development. The rights of workers in tourism. The rights of indigenous people in tourism. The complex and covert links between tourism and conflict and militarized zones are increasingly visible. Also the impact of local politics and context on the tourism strategies of countries – particularly those whose own cultural, economic and political contexts and human rights record are at variance with the models of tourism they are trying to promote. All these have implications on the rights of local people that an unbridled growth of tourism rides roughshod on. Tourism projects often fail to consult, engage, or adequately compensate local communities for loss of livelihoods, agricultural lands, and access to natural and common property resources such as forests, beaches, oceans, and lakes.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

13.1 The Ministry takes on the responsibility to spread awareness on the impacts of tourism and ensure that tourism is conducted ethically and does not result in the exploitation of people.

13.2 Tourism Impact Assessment (TIA)

Similar to Environmental Impact Assessment and now Social Impact Assessment being mandatory before a development/ management project is implemented, all new & proposed tourism master/ management plans and projects initiated by the centre and the states undertake a mandatory Tourism Impact Assessment process. A Tourism Impact Assessment is a comprehensive assessment of the tourism site/ circuit which assesses the potential/real impact of tourism across the following 5 dimensions: social, cultural, economic, environmental and governance. The impacts are assessed vis-a-vis a baseline study which is conducted prior to the tourism project/ plan being implemented. It is therefore important that a TIA is weaved into the planning of projects and master/ management plans. All evaluations of existing tourism projects/ master plans include Tourism Impact Assessments within the evaluation framework.

E. Tourism Awareness and Education

14. Despite the rapid growth in the provision of tourism higher education in the past 40 years, uncertainties remain about the content and nature of tourism degrees and how these are aligned with the needs of the many other issues which is linked to the tourism. The current flow of education structure is based on the policy and the industry needs without taking consideration of the critical aspect in tourism. The structure of curriculum followed by the tourism institution is completely as per the parameter of industry expectation and needs, binding the student within limited knowledge and exposure focussing on the how to commoditising and marketing the natural and cultural resource, local ethics and arts, people from in and around tourism destination. The ongoing debates within tourism education is only linked to the marketing, management, promotion and economic development without considering people from in and around tourism destination. Currently in India more then 170 tourism institution is teaching tourism subject but there is negligible presence of multi and interdisciplinary scope of study for our student.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

Universities, Skill oriented, Vocational training and Autonomous Institutions teaching tourism will be encouraged to include critical perspectives and current trends and developments in tourism, which until now has not been taken up by many mainstream tourism studies courses. Such critical perspectives will help tourism professionals to uphold values of people centeredness, sustainability, and equity. The institutions will explore offering tourism with other disciplines and bring in rigour on tourism research. This will raise the bar of tourism education in the country.
The Ministry will play a key role in creating wider awareness on the issues and impacts of tourism and good practices among local communities and LSGIs as that will give them information and knowledge of making an informed choice on whether, how and when they would like to engage with tourism. Should a region choose to then engage in tourism, tailor made capacity building and skill development programmes will be developed in collaboration with tourism / hospitality teaching institutes and experts in the specified field. These programmes will encourage the establishment of social enterprises, which will benefit local people at large.

The Ministry also will plan an awareness campaign on the impacts of tourism targeted towards tourists and the wider public so that they can make conscious and responsible choices as tourists. Through this opportunity we aim for a transformation of the nature of tourism – from its mass consumptive form to something which has elements of interaction, learning and human contact.

The Ministry and the State Tourism Departments will encourage the setting up of tourism information / interpretation centre. These centres will be spaces for local communities to present their own histories in creative and local ways. These centres will be spaces to handle data generation and impact, gather information about tourist profiles and have rudimentary tourism impact assessment cells. Basic information technology based resources such as computers / internet facilities will be provided which will be manned by village youth.

**F. Inter-departmental Coordination**

15. Tourism is inter-disciplinary in nature and requires the coordination of multiple departments to ensure smooth functioning, to avoid duplicity of work, peg accountability, put in place requisite regulatory mechanisms and to ensure proper grievance redressal when they arise. Currently, there is a large gap in this context. For e.g. who is responsible when a woman is abused in a tourism destination? Is it the Ministry of Women and Child Development or the Ministry of Tourism or both? What roles should each play vis-a-vis such abuse? Who should regulate – the MWCD because it pertains to women or MoT since the abuse took place in the context of tourism? There are similar confusions even in the context of granting of permissions. For e.g. how does a state PCB grant Certificates for Establishment and Operation to accommodation units when they propose to come up in zones which violate the CRZ, 2011 guidelines? This is possible only when there is lack of coordination between the DoT, Departments of Environment and state PCBs.

**Expectation from the Policy, 2015**

15.1 The Ministry of Tourism recognises the need to pay significant attention to the coordination of tourism, particularly in the light of the fact that the tourism sector is by nature highly interdisciplinary.

15.2 While the Ministry currently works with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Finance, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Information and Broadcasting, Culture, Shipping, Road & Surface Transport, Civil Aviation, Railways, Home Affairs & External Affairs. To expand and ensure coordination, along with the ones mentioned above, it will also work with the Women and Child Development, Rural Development, Urban Development, Tribal Affairs, Development of North eastern Region Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Human Resource Development, Labour and Employment, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Youth Affairs and Sports which until now at an operational level has been limited. Such coordination among Ministries and bodies will also be encouraged to be replicated at the level of the state.
G. Role of Ministry of Tourism and Tourism Development Corporations

16. Currently, one of the major roles that the MoT plays is that of branding and marketing of tourism destinations in India. This role conflicts with the other roles of the MoT, importantly planning and monitoring. For e.g. promotional material generated by DoTs, apart from popularising a place, also sets in motion the nature of tourism being promoted and the kind of tourists who will visit. For e.g. on the Department of Tourism, Goa, website, under events there is the listing of the Sunburn Festival which takes place in the month of December. This festival is known to be a place where drugs, alcohol and sexual abuse festers. However, it is also a crowd puller not only from across the country but from across the world. So, should the DoT, Goa promote it since it brings in the footfalls or should it not promote it since is a site for the sale of contraband and therefore against the law?

Branding and marketing are important activities, which should be separated from the MoT whose primary role needs to be planning, monitoring and regulation. Tourism Development Corporations or other relevant bodies maybe instituted for this.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

16.1 The Ministry of Tourism envisages its role to be a facilitator, a regulator, a champion for sustainable tourism. The Ministry’s core purpose is to ensure that tourism policy and the planning, coordinating and monitoring of tourism development is based on research and ground realities, privileges local community benefits and local economic growth. While the Ministry has traditionally played the policy making, facilitator and promoter role, it is the other roles that will be the focus in the coming years.

• Policy making
• Planning
• Monitoring and Regulation
• Coordination
• Research and evolving appropriate models for tourism
• Protection – ensuring ethical and non-exploitative tourism
• Education and awareness
• Strengthening local institutions and local capacities

16.2 An area that has until now been under the domain of the MoT is of tourism marketing and brand building of India as a destination. This role in a phased manner will be shifted to the India Tourism Development Corporation. This move is being suggested as marketing involves product/ service development, place (location and distribution), and pricing and promotion. It defines the market and the customer and makes the match between beneficiary, the “product” they design and offer and its match to customer needs and expectations. All of these which are intrinsically linked to the business of tourism and within the scope of responsibilities of ITDC.

16.3 In certain states, one institution functions as both – state tourism department and the state tourism development corporation, thereby creating confusion and more importantly not giving enough time and focus to the key roles that each must perform. The state tourism departments and the state tourism development corporations will be encouraged to adopt this thinking and thereby delineating and clearly defining the role of the two institutions.
EQUATIONS is a research, advocacy and campaigning organisation working since 1985 on the impacts of tourism particularly in terms of rights and benefits to local communities. We envision tourism that is sustainable & non exploitative, where decision making is democratised and access to and benefits of tourism are equitably distributed.

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Equations
Equitable Tourism Options
Flat No - A2, 1st floor, No 21/7, 2nd Cross, 1st A Main Road, Atmananda Colony, Sultan Palya, R T Nagar Post, Bengaluru - 560032, Karnataka, India
Tel: +91 (80) 23659711 / 23659722 Fax: +91 (80) 23659733
Email: info@equitabletourism.org URL: www.equitabletourism.org