

A STUDY OF TOURISM AND ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GOA

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ABSTRACT

Foreign exchange profits and revenues are directly impacted by the rising demand for and popularity of T&T both domestically and internationally. Goa's economy relies heavily on the tourism and travel industry, especially in light of the recent mining ban and limitations. All the destinations have had to differentiate themselves and compete at a greater level because rising new markets entered the global rivalry. Tourists today value leisure activities more highly and watch out for the preservation and growth of rural areas for reasons including curiosity, the quest for knowledge, serenity, escape, sustainability, and a reverence for nature; these are all examples of the higher-level needs that consumers are pursuing in the era of experiential marketing. Goa needs to adapt itself to attract the high spending tourists amid a global surge in tourism.

KEYWORDS:- Ecotourism Development, Goa's economy , tourism and travel industry.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers topics such as Goan background, infrastructure growth, tourism's beginnings and significance, ecotourism's challenges, the government's role in fostering tourism for the state's long-term economic health, and the role of experiential activities in Goa's promotion of sustainable development.



Figure 1 Monsoons in Goa

TOURISM IN GOA - ITS ORIGIN & IMPORTANCE

Since the beginning of time, Goa has been a magnet for all sorts of traders, historians, monks, and missionaries, and this constant flux has left its mark on the state's social, cultural, economic, and environmental growth. Luxury hotels such as the Mandovi in Panaji (commonly referred to as the pioneer of the tourism industry in Goa) and the Hotel Zuari in Vasco da Gama were established thanks to the visits of foreign dignitaries and their friends and family during the Portuguese regime.

Most tourists to Goa come from "Western Europe, North America, Australia, and Japan" (Wikipedia, 2011), giving the state a distinct identity among India's many other well-known tourist spots. Goa's natural beauty and the availability of foreign goods drew visitors from all around India. Travelers from all over the world were wowed by Goa's pristine environment, wide variety of plant and animal life, pristine beaches, delectable cuisine, laid-back way of life, fascinating blend of Indo-Portuguese culture, and warm, welcoming residents.

Goa's tourism business increased steadily throughout the years, necessitating the establishment of a system to maintain public safety. The 'O Centro do Informacao e Turismo de Goa' was founded in 1959 and is considered one of the earliest authority in this

field. The Department for Information, Publicity, and Tourism was established in 1962, not long after Liberation on December 19th, 1961; however, the importance of the tourism industry was not fully appreciated until much later; the Department of Tourism was not established until 1977, and the Goa, Daman, and Dui Registration of Tourism and Trade Act was not passed by the Legislative Assembly until 1982. Domestic and foreign tourists began flocking to Goa shortly after Liberation.



Figure 1 Virgin Beaches of Goa

Source : Lonely Planet

After gaining popularity during the hippy heyday of the '60s and '70s, Anjuna's 'flea market' is still going strong every Wednesday. The original hippies who set up shop here sold imported goods to locals in order to make ends meet during their remaining time in the state. Perfumes, jeans, and other imported apparel, jewelry, cigarettes, and electronics were common goods on their shelves. The 'Hippies,' also known as the 'Flower children,' fled to Goa from California in the late 1960s, seeking solace and a refuge from the consumerism and violence they saw in the West (de Souza, 2009). They were just equipped with a backpack and a few dollars. The full moon parties, which feature performances by both local and internationally renowned musicians, emerged out of this period of Goa's history as a haven for hippies. This helped propel the state to the forefront of the international tourism industry.



Figure 2 Sun Bathing on the Virgin Beaches in the early 80's

Source : Lonely Planet

When Goa first opened as a tourist destination, it catered primarily to Indians and other land travelers. However, as air travel became more common, and economical (no frills) flights became more accessible, a new phenomenon: international tourism, with visitors from countries with higher incomes seeking out those with lower costs and higher standards of living, was born and is now booming. Due to the high disposable income clients' demand for increasingly sophisticated options for their fulfilments, mass tourism has become increasingly exploitative (Equations, 2008). Even though modern tourists don't come to Goa to do business, the "fair" still goes on, with activities and sights to please anybody interested in sports, culture, religion, food, fun, fitness, or rest and relaxation (DOT, 2015).



Figure 3 Festive Season of Christmas

Source: GTDC

Even people and institutions that have nothing to do with tourism feel the massive effects of tourism on "cultural, social, and ecological" aspects of human life. Goa has become a long-haul winter destination in the European markets and a preferred family destination in the domestic market, making it one of the most popular tourist spots at all times of the year (DOT, 2015).

Goa's love of music, art, history, and culture is a clear indication of the region's rich "Indo-Portuguese" cultural legacy. Tourists from all over the world go to Goa for its "Sun, sand, and Sea" (Sawant, 2013) and a chance to experience the state's renowned beaches and unique architecture. Goa, like many other popular tourist destinations, has seen an upsurge in visitors from all over the world as a result of the boom in globalized tourism. Visitors attend "International Film Festivals India (IFFI), traditional festivals like St. Francis Xavier Feast, Three Kings Feast, Christmas, Shigmo Ustav, Carnival," among others, to learn about and celebrate India's rich cultural heritage. They visit the casinos in big numbers, especially the offshore casinos, and they take part in beach tourism and ecotourism, particularly catering to those who want to take in the area's stunning scenery, enjoy some time in the great outdoors, and learn about the area's unique culture.



Figure 4 Portuguese Architecture- Heritage

Source: Lonely Planet

Goa's tourism business is crucial to the state's economy, society, government, and society at large, as well as the environment, especially in the wake of globalization. This is obvious from the increase in available jobs; currently, the tourist industry accounts for around 34% of the GDP and employs close to 30% of the total workforce (Economic Survey 2011–12). Due to the temporary mining ban, tourism has become Goa's primary industry. The Department of Transportation (DOT) describes tourism as "the backbone of the Goan economy" due to the substantial economic impact it has on the lives of so many locals.

Goa also boasts a highly developed hospitality business, which welcomes almost 10% of all international visitors to India. Bardez, Salcete, Tiswadi, and Marmagao's coastlines attract more than 90% of the country's and the world's visitors. Calangute, Baga, Vagatore, Anjuna, Candolim, Arambol, Morjim, and Ashwem are just a few of the popular beaches in northern Goa. In contrast to south Goa, which is famed for its peace and calm and Goan village experience, north Goa is home to a vast network of hotels, resorts, restaurants, bars, discotheques, casinos, tattoo studios, stores, and enterprises. Tourists get the rare opportunity to rest and soak up some rays right next to the water.



Figure 5 Sun bathing on the Beaches in the Modern Times

Source : Lonely Planet

Tourists can always find something to eat or drink at one of the many huts that have sprung up along the coast. There are times when this is combined with inexpensive ayurvedic treatments performed on the beachfront bunks. Artists from India travel from beach to beach selling their items and providing services like hair braiding and mehendi designs so that tourists can get a taste of India.



Figure 6 Commercialization of Tourism

Source: Lonely Planet

According to Kamat (2010), the majority of visitors to Goa are under the age of 30, showing that they are seeking adventure and enjoyment, while a sizeable percentage of visitors in their 50s and 60s — primarily retirees and chartered tourists — are seeking peace and tranquillity. Goa is becoming increasingly popular as a short holiday and weekend getaway for college students and young professionals. Goa is widely recognized as an excellent vacation spot. More than 90% of domestic tourists and more than 99% of international tourists visit coastal locations for leisure activities (Report by Datamation Consultants, 2005-2006). This oversaturation of the coastal areas has led to haphazard growth, which has exacerbated Goa's already considerable set of difficulties. The magnificent beaches of Goa attract a wide range of visitors, from young, active people to older, more relaxed ones.

There is no consistent pattern to the percentage shares of domestic vs international tourists. Between 1975 and 1995, FTAs went from 6% to 21%; then, between 2000 and 2015, they stayed between 21% and 23%; next, between 2001 and 2013, they ranged between 19% and 16%; and finally, in 2015, they spiked sharply to 23%. The percentage of domestic visitors dropped from 94% in 1975 to 79% in 1995, then stabilized between 79% and 77% until the year 2000, fluctuated between 81% and 84% from 2001 to 2013, and then dropped precipitously to 77% in 2015. While the percentage of domestic tourists visiting the state has decreased from 94% to 77% during the same time period, the percentage of international visitors visiting the state has climbed from 6% in 1975 to 23% in the first quarter of 2015, an almost 300% increase.

ISSUES & PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM –ESPECIALLY ECO-TOURISM

While travel and tourism is widely recognized as one of the world's fastest-growing industries, Goa is striving to carve out a niche for itself in the face of rising competition from other international destinations and Indian states. Goa needs to rebrand itself in the eyes of tourists by offering memorable experiences that are different from what other destinations provide. Goa has to be positioned as a "eco-tourist destination," but there are a number of challenges that must be overcome.

1 Waste Management

Due to overtourism, commercialization, and rapid increase in tourism that has outpaced the development of its infrastructure, marine ecosystems are in grave and irreversible danger of extinction. Sewage treatment fails miserably in the vast majority of cases. Our picturesque Goa is plagued with dumping grounds that make the area unclean and unhygienic because a proper waste disposal management system has not yet been established.

2 Environment Degradation

Hotels have replaced farms, beach dunes, and mangrove swamps, putting a significant burden on the environment. Because of construction and excessive tourism, the previously picturesque sand dunes at Morjim Beach have been leveled. Due to pollution and improper use, Goa's pristine backwaters have been deteriorating. The destruction of natural habitats and the poisoning of water sources is threatening the diverse animal and bird life, as well as the enormous number of migratory birds, who call these areas home. The once-huge influx of stunning migrating birds to Goa from all over the world has recently diminished. Groundwater levels have dropped. Environmental degradation, deforestation, pollution, and wasteful consumption of resources have all reached crisis proportions in Goa as a result of the state's prioritization of tourism-related infrastructure development and use.

3 Poor Infrastructural Facilities at the Sanctuaries

The majority of the sanctuaries are off-limits to visitors. The forest service and other government agencies take a casual approach to visitors interested in seeing the local wildlife. The lack of qualified guides and information about the local flora and fauna is the icing on the cake. There is a severe lack of data concerning the behavior of wild animals.

4 Image of Goa

Goa's image has been damaged by its haphazard growth, lack of quality services and amenities, traffic, beach pollution, hawkers' misconduct, prostitution, child abuse, and lack of interesting events and activities. Because of the uncontrolled growth of hotels, resorts, restaurants, stores, and other establishments along the famed coastal belt of Goa, the area has lost much of its individuality, distinctiveness, and attractiveness. Goa has to diversify its image beyond that of a beach getaway.

5 Commodification of Culture

Tourists who prefer Western culture have led to a commercialization of traditional village and tribal folk dances, Portuguese Corridinho dance, local traditional music, festival celebrations, etc., beginning in the late 1990s. Those activities that are highlighted—"pub dancing, rave parties, casinos, nudism, spas, and sex trade"—are given considerable weight. The commoditization of culture to serve the requirements of tourists has spread to the realms of social and cultural development, diminishing the significance and meaning of festivals as activities organized for the vacationer. This amounts to cultural desecration because the religious significance of rituals is downplayed in favor of entertaining tourists. Modern adolescents are becoming more materialistic as a result of sweeping shifts in culture, values, and norms. It is common for locals to change their way of life, customs, morals, ethics, and principles in order to get money, as stated by the works of Burns & Holden (1995) and Burnt & Courtney (1999). Menon (1993) claims that resorts and hotels pick up traditional practices from nearby communities and present them to visitors in a sanitized setting.

6 Crimes, Drugs, Alcohol and Prostitution

Goa was thought of as a secure place to live and vacation. However, numerous visitors have recently reported being harassed, attacked, or even robbed while on vacation. The widespread use of drugs, alcohol, and prostitution are the worst consequences of tourism. Since the 'hippies' popularized drug use, Russians, Israelis, and Nigerians have all played key roles in the industry (Source: vickynanjapa.wordpress.com). Everywhere you go, you can buy a drink. Some resorts condone prostitution, which takes a dark turn when minors are exploited by crude adults. These young people often develop a violent character as a result of their experiences. Goa's coastal belts have seen an increase in AIDS incidence due to the easy access to sexual partners.

7 Fall of the Traditional Industry

Because they might be an inconvenience to visitors, residents are being restricted in their use of natural resources, which has a devastating effect on the fishing business. Activities like kayaking, tubing, and surfing can be enjoyed on the rivers and at the beaches. Overuse of diesel engines is a leading cause of water pollution and the death of marine life. Since

residents aren't allowed to dry the fish on the coast due to the stench, the dry fish industry in Goa is all but extinct.

8 Failure to implement Responsible Tourism

Tourism in Goa is not well-organized or responsible. Diversion of basic necessities like water supply and energy for the purpose of tourism businesses is a major issue, as is the diversion of common property resources including land, forests, beaches, rivers, and natural water sources. Hotels, attractions, and sightseeing spots are all marketed to the people and priced accordingly. Goa is quickly losing out on middle- to high-end tourists that value "customer experiences and lifestyles and not product performance" (Holbrook, 2000) over "product performance."

9 Failure to Adopt Experiential Marketing Practices

In Goa, they have too much of everything. All the pieces are in place to make this stunning location a must-visit for travelers from all over the world. However, we have missed out on opportunities to attract high-end tourists willing to pay a premium to countries like Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Dubai because of the lack of interest of the various stakeholders towards sustainable tourism.

10 Ban on the Use of Animals in Tourism

The ecotourism sector in Goa has suffered greatly as a result of the restriction on using elephants and other wild and domestic animals for the sake of tourism. Both international and domestic visitors enjoyed getting up close and personal with the elephants and taking part in the numerous activities that were set up alongside them.

11 Misuse of Western Culture

Since the late 1960s, when it began promoting and celebrating Western culture, Goa has attracted visitors from all over the world. Sunburn, Supersonic, and Goat Festival are just a few of the many Rave parties and music concerts that have recently sprung up. The state's proliferation of massage parlors, spas, and casinos has tarnished Goa's once-spotless reputation.

12 Financial Benefits

Many of the large hotels and resorts that currently provide all-inclusive packages are owned by multinational corporations, non-Indians, and Indians. Because of this, visitors are unable to freely explore the area and hence are less likely to support the local economy. There is little to no net benefit to local communities from the tourism industry, and the industry actually raises living costs without living up to its promise of creating stable local employment. If Goa wants to attract the kind of high-spending tourists who value things like curiosity, the pursuit of knowledge, serenity, escape, social consciousness, sustainability, and a healthy respect for nature, it needs to reposition itself as a destination that prioritizes these things.

CONCLUSION

The tourism industry, and ecotourism in particular, will benefit from this study's increased comprehension of the effects of sense, feel, think, act, and relate experiences on experiential value and customer satisfaction. It will be useful to develop strategies that consider how tourists' age, gender, and nationality will affect experiential marketing, value, and consumer happiness. The participants in the tourism sector can effectively employ experiential marketing to create the best products and services ever provided to visitors by making the extraordinary out of ordinary by knowing the antecedents of experiential value and customer happiness. Understanding the elements (sense, feel, think, act, and relate experiences) that contribute to the experiential value and customer satisfaction of their customers is made easier for the tourism industry by the insights gathered from the research study. In order to create high experiential value and customer satisfaction with their valued clients, the Tourism Department, Tour Operators, and Hoteliers will be able to discover applicable techniques with the help of this information.

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