

An account of the dark side of Goa's Tourism and a plausible solution

Smitha Bhandare Kamat

S.S. Dempo College of Commerce & Economics, Panjim- Goa (India)

Abstract:-

On the glistening holiday flyers, Goa is every tourist's yearning of a peaceful sun-drenched heaven. Ever since the Hippies discovered this erstwhile Portuguese colony in the sixties, tourists have been flocking this land of good times. Over the decades, Goa which once boasted of virgin white beaches, inconspicuous locals, and the green finery, has evolved a hideous side which detonates violently, raising questions and demanding solutions. Glance through any of the local dailies- crime, perversion, and in general degradation of social, cultural structure seems to have become more of a norm rather than an exception. Can this be the outfall of unplanned, harried, unbridled growth of the tourism industry in the state? This paper looks into the progression of the dark side of tourism in the state of Goa. A survey of 300 domestic as well as 300 international tourists was undertaken to understand their sense of safety and security in visiting this State. The paper concludes that 'Village Tourism' could be a plausible solution to the unabated crimes related to tourism in the state.

Key Words: Crime, Goa, Village Tourism

INTRODUCTION

On the glistening holiday flyers, Goa is every tourist's yearning of a peaceful sun-drenched heaven; Tall swaying palm fringed beaches, white churches silhouetted against magnificent sunsets, warm, friendly locals, an exclusive drawing of lifestyle, culture, cuisine... it is like a dream come true. Goa is indeed synonymous with sun and sand, fun and frolic, and in general a holidayer's paradise, which opens its arms to the cream of the crop and the backpackers with equal gusto. Ever since the Hippies discovered this erstwhile Portuguese colony in the sixties, tourists have been flocking this land of good times. Over the decades, Goa which once boasted of virgin white beaches, unassuming locals, and the green finery, has definitely undergone a transformation, and in turn has evolved a hideous side which detonates violently raising questions and demanding solution. Glance through any of the local dailies- crime, perversion, and in general degradation of social, cultural structure seems to have become more of a

norm rather than an exception. Can this be the outfall of unplanned, harried, unbridled growth of the tourism industry in the state? It is a time to stop and take stock of the situation.

Thus, the objective of the present study, is to get an insight into the dark side of tourism in Goa and the possibility of introducing 'Village Tourism' as a plausible solution to counter the menace in the industry.

Review of Literature

The bounty of nature has bestowed the state of Goa with rich flora and fauna, one can't possibly miss the luxuriant green hills and woods, sinuous rivers and rivulets and some of the most beautiful beaches of south east Asia in this state. Besides, Goa also boasts about its share of world heritage structures, ancient temples, churches, forts, monuments, not to forget its unique culture. But Goa's 105km long shoreline was and still is the focal fascination for one and all. A petite state on the western coast of India, it has witnessed a tremendous growth in tourism over the decades, both the domestic and foreign tourists flock to this land of good times.

Geographical Area	0.04 (lakh sq. km)
Capital	Panaji
Population (2001 Census)	In lakhs 13.48
Percentage of State Population to All India Population	0.13
Literacy Rate (2001 Census)	82.01%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female 	88.42% 75.37%
Principal languages	Konkani, Marathi and English

* Source: CSO Estimates -Official Website of Government of Goa

Well, this land of good times has a dark side too. The fall out of tourism industry in Goa, has been an escalation in violence, child sex abuse, prostitution. Drug abuse and drug trafficking. Going back in time, the hippies' discovery of this tiny state post liberation, in the

sixties, brought drugs, dope and dough to the state (Noronha's (1999). In subsequent decade of the seventies, Chalres Shobhraj made news of international scale, as the compulsive 'Bikni Killer' on the beach. These mid-seventies mishaps were perhaps the glimpse of the tip of the iceberg and time would unravel greater horror. In the years to come, hippies were joined by backpackers, drifters, rambles; techno addicts package tourists en masse. Statistics reveal that 2.2 million foreign tourists visited Goa in 2007, of which 10 British tourists have died in Goa and the British Commission claims that at least four were due to unnatural causes. Is Goa still safe for tourists? Questions Nanjappa Vicky (2008). But, one of the more worrying aspects of Goa-related murder cases is attempts by police to brush them under the carpet. Leahy Joe (2008). Crime is turning into the new growth-industry along parts of the North Goa beach belt. It is coming in alongside prosperity brought in by the booming tourism sector, over the past decade Noronha, Fredrick (1997).) Countries like the US, Japan, Russia and Israel have all separately questioned the Goa Tourism Ministry with concern, asking why they shouldn't issue travel advisories declaring Goa unsafe mynews.in(2008). Interestingly, tourists are volunteering to expose the dark side - a pamphlet titled "Rape Alert", displayed by Western tourists at a Goan beachside restaurants warns- 'no girls should feel safe! Noronha Fredrick, (1997) on a similar note, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office cautioned on its web site as far as Goa is concerned "Do not walk alone in isolated spots in the popular tourist areas especially after dark. There have been several recent incidents of sexual assault against women in Goa." Costa Ethel Da (2002).

The mysterious death of British teenager Scarlett Keeling undeniably, exposed and confirmed the explosion of mounting crimes on its shoreline. On one hand, the tourism ministry is trying its best to prevent Goa's image from being maligned as an unsafe destination, on the other, the home ministry in Goa has blamed the tourists themselves my news (2008) In fact, recently, the

tourism Minister Micky Pachecho called Goa the "rape capital" of India, while Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manohar Parrikar described the state as "a capital for drugs and criminals" IANS(2010). Thus , the common cry is ,Goa is no longer sought for its famous beaches, but rather for sex, wine, women, drugs and even pedophiles because of Goa's lax laws and child prostitutes and a reportedly lower incidence of AIDS. Martin Tony (2008). Unnatural deaths, crime, rape have become a norm rather than exception, but, suprisingly, the Diwali-eve scooter blast crime including the reported murder of the British teenager Scarlette and 26/11 blasts in Mumbai had not affected tourism in Goa' UNI (2009). The industry moves on .

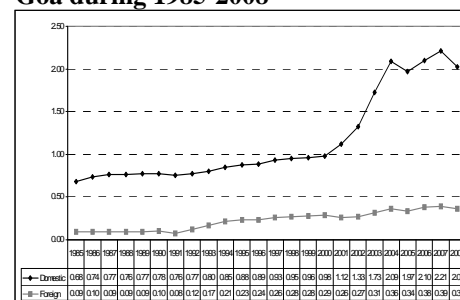
Methodology

Micro Study: Primary data was collected by surveying 300 domestic as well as international tourists visiting the state in the month of July09-Sept.09 structured questionnaire were administered to both set of tourists. While secondary data was collected through various research articles, manuscripts and sites.

Analysis

The Government of Goa declared tourism as an industry in the year 2000. It could no longer ignore the incredible swift strides it was making by contributing 24.7 per cent to the tertiary sector and 13 per cent to the State's GDP. The direct and indirect employment generated is around 20 per cent. Goa annually contributes almost Rs 1,500 crore to the Centre from its tourism-generated revenue. The flow of tourists both domestic as well as foreign has been mounting, and at times exceeds the local populace which stood at. 1.34 million (2001 census). The year 2003 saw a record total of 532 charter flights, bringing 1,40,000 foreign tourists. Goa touched a figure of 2.045 million by December 31, 2003. Goa arrival data (2007).

Exhibit 1. Tourist Arrivals (in million) in Goa during 1985-2008



Source: *Tourism Statistics 2006 & 2007. Department of Tourism, Government of Goa, 2008.*

As far as crimes are concerned, Exhibit -2 depicts the IPC cases for 2006 and 2007. There is no significant hike in the cases detected as well as reported w.r.t. homicide, robbery, burglary etc. As against this Exhibit -3 for the

2005 and 2006, shows a decline in the minor act cases, which deals with offences such as begging, gambling etc. The above two exhibits in no way categorically specifies tourism related crimes, thus the gravity of the trend of crime in the industry is hard to fathom and harder to garner.

Exhibit -2 Statement of IPC cases for the year 2007 and corresponding year 2006

Head of Crime	YEAR 2007		YEAR 2006	
	Rep	Det	Rep	Det
Murder	33	22	38	25
Attempt to commit murder	23	20	14	11
Culpable homicide not amounting to murder	7	6	2	2
Rape	20	20	21	18
Dacoity	7	6	7	4
Robbery	22	14	16	9
Burglary by Day	44	11	24	13
Burglary by Night	248	59	228	56
Theft	494	176	495	178
Receiving of Stolen property	1	1	0	0
Cheating	55	41	55	37
Criminal Breach of Trust	36	23	35	23
Counterfeiting	10	0	9	1
Mischief	26	10	41	23
Rioting	70	54	65	41
Unlawful Assembly	31	20	14	8
Escape from legal custody	3	3	12	6
Adm. Stup. Of Drugs	5	0	1	0
Hurt	150	139	171	152
Kidnapping/Abduction	12	7	16	11
Assault on Public Servant	32	27	24	23
Fatal M.V. Accidents	233	207	224	174
Other M.V. Accidents	554	511	462	389
Other Miscellaneous	363	267	230	169
Total	2479	1644	2204	1373
Percentage of detection	66.32%		62.30%	
Increase/Decrease in Detection	4.02%			

Increase/Decrease in Crime	12.48%
Increase/Decrease in Crime	6.45%

Source:<http://goapolice.gov.in/sta-cimes-04-08.htm>

STATEMENT OF MINOR ACT CASES FOR THE YEAR 2005 AND 2006

Exhibit -3 Head of Crime	YEAR 2005		YEAR 2006	
	Rep	Det	Rep	Det
Gambling Act	1365	1365	1286	1286
Indian Police Act 2083	2083	2083	2068	2068
Arms Act	5	5	3	2
Beggars Act	342	342	426	426
Explosive Act/Explosive Substances Act	0	0	1	1
Passport Act	1	1	0	0
Registration of Foreigners Act	52	52	32	32
N.D.P.S. Act	31	30	29	29
Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act	38	38	26	26
Essential Commodities Act	1	1	0	0
Cinematograph/Copyright Act	9	8	11	11
Indian railway Act	0	0	0	0
Prev. of Civil Rights Act & SC/ST (Prev. of Atrocities) Act	2	2	4	4
Prevention of Corruption Act	0	0	0	0
Other Acts	66	49	72	51
Total	3929	3927	3886	3885

Source:<http://goapolice.gov.in/sta-cimes-04-08.htm>

A study by Klaus and Jerome (2009), indicated that, in compliance with Chesney-Lind and Lind's (1986) findings, tourists in mass tourism destinations are more likely to be victims of grave crimes than local populace. Similarly this analysis also exposed the trend of tourist versus resident oppression, that is, the tourists are much more liable to be victimized by property crime and robbery whereas residents are more prone to be victims of murder and aggravated assault.

To understand this predicament a pilot survey was carried out in July-August 2009. 300 domestic tourists and another set of 300 foreign tourists were interviewed. Exhibit 4 and 5 reveals the scope for the state of Goa to venture into a new form of

tourism and the plausible hurdles which includes the of safety and security of its guests.

Exhibit 5

Goa needs to move into new form of tourism, since it faces (Percentage Values)	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
a. Competition from other states	58	53
b. Beach tourism has lost charm	13	22
c. Create sustainable industry	25	23
d. others reasons	4	2

Undeniably, Goa cannot be dependent on beach tourism alone and it's about time to venture into new forms of tourism, the pressing reason is the tough competition offered by other states in India especially Kerala, Rajasthan etc. The concern is echoed in the reaction of the respondents. Its time to explore the fact that Goa is essentially a village state with around 347 villages as compared to its 44 towns.

Exhibit 6

Not Possible to introduce Village tourism in Goa, since it Percentage Values -	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
a. lacks Sufficient Infrastructure	23	45
b. lacks Sufficient Govt. support	19	25
c. lacks Sufficient Local support	24	6
d. lacks Sufficient Safety and security	34	24

Introducing and injecting a new concept will offer its own set of hurdles, the primary concern is the safety and security of the guests visiting this state, a issue that is a priority with the domestic tourists while the foreign tourist seems to give attention to the fact that the state needs to improvise on its infrastructure facilities.

Conclusion

The following declaration was adopted by seminar on 'Tourism and Goan Culture' in 1987- "Tourism in Goa should be planned, controlled and become people oriented. It is necessary that instead of threatening and eroding Goa's cultural and social identity, tourism should strengthen and enrich them." Afonso Ave (1994) A couple of decades later we are still toying with the idea. Goa tourism industry seriously needs to think in terms of expanding its life span, its sustainability. Sustainable tourism, attempts to make minimal impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income and employment for locals, as well as to promote the conservation of local ecosystems. It is responsible tourism which is both ecologically and culturally sensitive. Abreu Nirmala (2008). George et al., (2009) on the other hand establishes CBT- community based tourism- as tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is *managed and owned by the community, for the community*, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about community and local ways of life. Undoubtedly, involvement of the host community and proactive measures needs to be adopted, to check rising crime, an

unwavering co-operation of the three 'P's is warranted namely, Politicians, Police and the People of Goa. Furthermore, the development of tourism in a rural area is not simply a matter of matching tourist demands with local product supply but a matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability (Gopal et al., 2008). The general notion is that the '*implementation of participatory approach (CBT) to tourism development requires a total change in socio-political, legal and economic structure of developing countries*' which should be complemented by the necessary knowledge of and respect for local contextual realities (Li et al., 2007); thus the conflict between the guests and the hosts can be ironed out, and in turn the safety and security is taken care. There is a great possibility that rural / village tourism

may also have positive impact on sustainable development of villages which will transform the Goa's tourism industry to a higher level through constructive destruction. Subash, Smitha, Klaus (2009), This is relatively a new concept and offers a unique opportunity for comfortable cultural immersion with the local community in a particular region. There is a need to understand the emergence of this concept and merging of the same with sustainability, which will help in restructuring and reengineering the tourism industry of a region (Weiermair, 1995 and 2007), which can easily be replicated in Goa as also for

rejuvenating strategy for transforming the tourism industry in general. The Center for problem oriented policing, provides a range of measures to deal with tourist related crimes, which involves training and sensitizing police, to encouraging victims to give testimony, establishing special security force among others. In wake of increasing crime against tourists in the coastal state the Goa government has proposed to raise a special tourist security force (STSF) PTI(2009). The role of N.G.O. in this regard cannot be undermined, GOACAN a body working in the field of consumer and socio-economic issues, has demanded that joint action from the coastal villagers, panchayats and other government agencies concerned is obligatory to remedy the deteriorating situation. The Hindu, (Sept 23rd '09.) While the Chief Minister Digamber Kamat said 'that the ills associated with tourism could not be removed by the government alone and sought people's co-operation to eradicate them.' He added that laws alone were not enough to eradicate "bad" from the society and that people should also co-operate in this venture with the government NT (2010). Yet another attempt by the tourism industry in Goa is backing a ban on adverts with pictures of bikini-clad women in a bid to promote the state as a family holiday destination. India's tourist state is fighting a media tag dubbing it a "destination for sex tourism" and local government has announced

it will censor advertisements showing scantily-dressed women. How unbeatable it is going to be is yet to be decided. Finally, Nazareath Z (2009) writes in the local newspaper echoing the general feel of the residents namely, 'It is expected of any country to protect the lives of their own people, but, they should also warn their womenfolk to restrain themselves in unbridled partying and hobnobbing with strangers till the wee hours of the morning'. Thus, the journey from hippy tourism in the sixties to sex tourism of today, Goa has indeed come a long way and its about time to shift from beach centric tourism to village centric tourism to regain the prestige and repute of this lost paradise.

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