



Recent Trends in Tourism Industry and Women

KEYWORDS

Tourist, Eco Tourism, Health (Medical) holidays, Rural Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Cultural Tourism.

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ABSTRACT *The World Tourism Organization defines, tourists as people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty – four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited".*

The Tourism Society of England defines tourism as, "Tourism is the temporary, short term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes".

In fact tourism is essentially an expression of natural human instinct for experience, education and entertainment. It is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy, which accounts for 11 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employ around 225 million people worldwide.

Since tourism industry is one of the major employer of women, offers various job opportunities for independent income generating activities and at the same time it affects women's lives in destination communities. The involvement of women as members of workforce in tourism industry worldwide develops women's employment by providing various entry points. It creates paths towards the elimination of poverty among women and local communities in developing countries.

Usually the restaurant, catering and hotel industry provides larger employment opportunities in tourism industry. But Gender disaggregated data for this was not available for all countries. As per the latest data available from ILO and UNDP the number of women and men working in tourism related professions are more comprehensive than for the average wage and working hours the availability of this information is still highly limited.

In India in recent years the foreign exchange earnings from tourism have recorded a massive compound annual growth rate both in terms of (11.59%) dollar and (12.74%) money value. The average contribution of tourism industry to the country's GDP was 5.3 percent. It is presently the third largest export industry in India – the first two being gem and jewellery and ready made garments and employs the largest human power in the country. India is expected to be the second fastest growing (8.8%) nation in the world, over the period 2005 – 20145, because it is one of the few countries in the world blessed with tremendous variety of tourist resources. The Govt. of India has also been implementing many schemes through ITDC and the Ministry of Tourism.

With this backdrop in this paper an attempt has been made to discuss the recent trends in tourism sector and to highlight the role played by women in this sector with special reference to India

Introduction

The general picture shows that tourism industry seems to be a particularly important sector for women (46% of the workforce are women) as their percentage of employment in most countries are higher than in the workforce in general (34.40% are Women, ILO, Data). The numbers of women and their percentage of their workforce in tourism vary greatly between countries form 2% to up to over 80%. Though there were few obvious regional trends it would appear that in those countries where tourism is a more developed industry, women generally account for around 50% of the workforce.

The proportion of women's to men's working hours available, for 39 countries, is 89%. which means that women work for 89 hours, when men work for 100 hours. The ratio of women's to men's wages is 79%. Means women are working for less hours than men and receive even less pay. However, it cannot be sure if this is due to women's typical occupations being paid less, women being significantly more in part time and / or temporary employment, and / or women being paid less for the same work.

Women's Positions in the Tourism Industry:

Some facts about women's positions in terms of hierarchical levels shows that the situation in the tourism industry resembles the one in the labour markets in general. As in other sectors there is a significant, horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market in tourism.

Horizontally, women are being employed as waitresses, chambermaids, cleaners, travel agencies sales persons, flight attendants etc... Vertically, the typical gender pyramid is prevalent in the tourism sector – lower levels and occupation with few career development opportunities being dominated by women and key managerial positions being dominated by men. In the service sector, examining the occupations being particularly relevant in the tourism sector, it can be observed that more than 90% of people working in catering & lodging, as waitresses, bartenders, maids, baby sitters, cleaners, house keeping helpers, launderers, dry – cleaners and the like are women.

Though women have achieved higher levels of education than ever before, their share in management position remains unacceptably low, with a tiny proportion succeeding in breaking through the "glass ceiling".

There are number of factors inter – linked, which help to maintain gender, segregation of the labour market. Among them are gender stereotyping, traditional gender roles and gender identity – women are seen as being suitable for certain occupations and they seem themselves as suitable. In addition to this the traditional gender roles assigned to women – the main responsibility of bearing and rearing children, caring for the elderly, and doing household work. Thus women are often forced to choose casual labour, part-time and seasonal employment.

Tourism sector helps women to create self – employment. Community based tourism initiatives, particular of local women's groups and co-operatives can be an accessible and suitable entry point for women to enter into the paid workforce. There are numerous examples where women and women's groups have started income generating activities on their own. These activities help to create financial independence for local women and challenge them to develop the necessary skills and improve their education.

Marketing seems to be a key constraint for the expansion of community based tourism. Independent initiatives need more information about market and potential customers. Tourists need to be provided with more information about the benefits of buying and using local goods and services. Access to information is provided at best by involving all stakeholders in planning and decision – making. In addition, gender specific information about tourists needs and interests, help to serve women customers, particularly.

Methodology:

The present study is a descriptive qualitative research using secondary data. This data was gleaned from various sources which have been duly acknowledged.

The reports of International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Dept. of Tourism Development were referred. Various web sites like incredible India were also consulted .for the necessary information

Observation and data analysis

The present study is mainly aimed at analyzing the recent trends that have been taking place in the world tourism particularly in Indian tourism industry. The participation of Indian women in this industry was also highlighted in this paper.

Tourism Sector in India:

For the last two years the Tourism in India emerged as one of the major growth sectors of the Indian Economy. For earnings from tourism rose form Rs. 16,429 crore in 2004 to Rs. 21,828 crores in 2005.

Simultaneously there has been a 17.3 percent surge in foreign tourist arrivals, the highest over the last decade for the same period. The Ministry's capacity building funds have also increased with the Central tourism budget being upped form Rs. 350 crore in 2004 to Rs. 800 crore in 2005.

After the launch of Indian Government's Project 'Priyadarshini Initiative' for involving more women in the tourism sector in New Delhi, the project is fast gaining in popularity.

The three – month course trains women as guides in Mumbai, Pune, Goa, and Ahmadabad, resulting over 100 new regional tourist guides. These women guides would be certified to work in Maharashtra, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgah, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar, Haveli.

The Project aims at increasing women's participation and visibility in the sector, skewed traditionally 80:20 in favour of men. Working as guides women assume the role of ambassadors of the tourism industry and the course imparts the in-depth knowledge necessary for the job.

The project was launched in collaboration with the urban employment and poverty alleviation Ministry. It aims at women getting support for self – employment in various areas of tourism like art – cum – souvenir shops. Cafeterias and facilitation kiosks at tourist destinations etc. under the training the women cabbies, for instance are trained for three months in judo, karate, foreign languages, etiquette and tourist handling. They will also get hands – on training in auto repair and have access to easy loans and subsidies to buy taxis.

Apart form manning taxis, the women are trained to work as tourist guides, interfaces at railway offices, hotels, airports, restaurants, information and facilitation kiosks and cafeterias.

The project was launched on Dec.9th i.e on Women's Empowerment Day, by the Tourism Ministry Christened after the erstwhile Prime Minister India Priyadarshini Gandhi. This project will focus on capacity building in the tourism sector under which women will be trained through various Govt. Institutes.

The Training units will include the institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Indian Institute of Tourism Management, Indian Institute of skiing and Mountaineering, and a network of India Tourism Offices in India. The training covers the hotel and travel trade sector, airlines, tourist guides, small restaurants, immigration and customs, police and other blue – collar areas. It will also employ housewives of service officers, as tourist – cum- shopping guides for high – end foreign tourist.

Mansoon Tourism , Buddnist Tourism, Eco Tourism, Medical and Rural Tourism are the other initiatives of the tourism ministry. Project Priyadarshini is part of the Ministry's Sensitization Programme – 'Atithi deo Bhavah' or 'Guest is God' – which was launched a year ago at a cost of Rs.5 crore. The Ministry of Tourism hopes that the effort will bring about a mindset change with regard to women's potential in this sector.

Women have been playing a vital role nor only as tourists but also as service providers in various sectors associate with tourism industry. They have entered and availing the numerous opportunities existing in this industry. Many countries, including India have been making use of this since India has a vast array of protected monuments with 22 world heritage sites, out of which 16 are monuments. It is providing employment to about 2 crores of people in India. As India's tourism infrastructure develops, it could emerge as one of the biggest tourism attractions "The World is just starting to Re-Discover India".

Policies by Govt. of India

In the year 2002, the Govt. of India announced a 'New Tourism Policy' to give boast to the tourism sector. The policy is built around the (seven) Mantras of Swaagat (Welcome), Souchanaa (Information), Sucidhad (Facilitation), Surakshaa (Security, Sahyog (Co-operation), Sanrachnaa(Infrastructure) and Safaai (Cleanliness).

Women cab drivers in the Indian capital New Delhi are part of a novel attempt by the government to integrate women into the tourism industry as part of the organized sector.

ITDDC Managing Director M.S. Manchanda says: "We will first advertise about Priyadarshini. When women come forward, we will see what they are interested in becoming – drivers, tour operators or entrepreneurs".

Tourism Secretary AK Mishra adds that "the Ministry's capacity – building funds will be used to train the women. Female tourists to India will also feel confident traveling with female taxi drivers, accompanied by one female helper". This is significant in the wake of complaints against the capital's unsafe public transport system and increasing crimes against women passengers. One such incident was the rape and murder of an Australian traveler Emily Griggs by two cab drivers playing prepaid taxi, on March 17, 2004.

The programme is that it is novel attempt to integrate women into the tourism industry as part of the organized sector. Forty – year – old Rajni Mahajan, a member of the new team, says: "there is nothing that the women of today cannot do. We are flying planes, saving lives and fighting for our country... We are all excited about this new profession and hopefully more women will join us soon".

The Tourism Ministry also plans to help women from different socio-economic backgrounds gain a foothold in small and medium tourism – related enterprises like art – cum – souvenir shops, restaurants and dhabas, and help / information kiosks, under the 'Shehri Rojgar Yojana' of the Urban Development Ministry. This should help boost employment in cities and towns.

Though the Govt. of India has been implementing number of schemes and project to attract tourists, this sector is not free from certain bottle necks. The following are the general as well as specific problems facing by women tourists.

Problems of Women Tourists

Heavy and Multiple taxes, restrictive aviation.

Complex visa procedures

Inadequate facilitation services

Lack of quality and adequate infrastructure – like Transport etc....

Lack of hygiene

Fear of security

Lack of emphasis on product quality

Too many formalities in Airports

Lack of good quality service and food facilities

Lack of secured accommodation at destination

Non-availability of trained guides

Exploitation by shoppers and other service providers

Fear of theft.

Language problemsetc...

Lack of information about fairs and festivals.

Measures suggested to outcome the problems:

The following are the measures suggested to improve the

situation so as to make Indian Tourism sector one of the best in the world.

Effective implementation of Govt. Schemes like 'Guest is God' and Indira Priyadarshini Project..... etc.

Improved awareness on the role of tourism in economic development.

Providing quality services and 'May I help you desks' at Airports

Improving sanitation and hygiene at tourist spots

Giving more Publicity through media about tourist places

Imparting Training to women guides and women Taxi drivers.

Providing safe and comfortable tours to the tourist especially to women and those who visit India alone.

Availability of 24/7 services at tourist spots.

Conclusion:

Tourism is essentially an expression of natural human instinct of experience, education and entertainment. It is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy. In India, in recent years there has been a major growth in the tourism sector. The Forex earnings from tourism rose from Rs.16,429 crore in 2004 to Rs. 21,828 crores in 2005. In India for every international tourist, there are 80 domestic tourists. Domestic tourism also has been forming the bases of a viable and sustainable tourism industry in India. Mansoon Tourism, Buddhist Tourism, Eco Tourism, Cultural tourism, Medical and Health holidays, Adventure tourism, Rural tourism are some of the other initiative of the tourism industry.

Tourism industry has also demonstrated its potential for creating jobs and encouraging income-generating activities to benefit local communities in destination areas. Women have entered into the tourism industry at different levels. Even the Govt. of India is also encouraging the involvement of women in more numbers to attract women tourists from foreign countries as well as from other parts of the country. The Govt. of India has been taking many measures to provides a safe and comfortable touring to national and international tourists.

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