



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Sociology

TOURISM AND ITS LIFE-WORLD IMPACT ON WOMEN: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF AGONDA

KEY WORDS: Women, Tourist Gaze, Emancipation, Empowerment, Inclusion, Exclusion, Conflicting roles.

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ABSTRACT

Tourism as a flourishing industry in Goa has exposed local population particularly women to many new changes in their lifestyle, jobs, entertainment, social life, social relationships, cultural transitions, political leadership, economic stability. Agonda, a quintessential village with crystal clear beaches used to be a quiet and secluded village till the early 90's with few tourists visiting the village, until it became a beaming tourist destination with the development of five star hotels, shacks, huts, entertainment clubs and fancy restaurants. This paper sets out to analyze the impact of tourism on local women in Agonda, and in doing so highlights the shift from traditional occupations to the exposure to a modernized job market and the emancipation and empowerment it has brought about in the lives of local women. This study aims at looking at the conflicting roles, inclusions and exclusions that operate in a local women's life because of the impact of tourism and looks at how the 'tourist gaze' has an impact on the lives of these women. The study is based on the lived experiences of the local women in Agonda, and one of the researcher being a local resident of this village has used methods such as participant observation and case study method to collect data on the lived experiences of the local women and the transitions seen in the lives of these women by the local population in general. The literature will aim at demonstrating the effects of tourism on the local woman and in doing so will bring out the changes and challenges that have not been given importance in the life of local women.

INTRODUCTION TO TOURISM IN GOA

Tourism as a flourishing industry in Goa has exposed local population particularly women to many new changes in their lifestyle, jobs, entertainment, social life, social relationships, cultural transitions, political leadership, economic stability. Agonda, a quintessential village with crystal clear beaches used to be a quiet and secluded village till the early 90's with few tourists visiting the village, until it became a beaming tourist destination with the development of five star hotels, shacks, huts, entertainment clubs and fancy restaurants.

Tourism is an industry which is very fast growing industry and the people prefer travelling and seeing different places and at the other end people make their living on the tourism and tourist entering their country or state. With today's modern world so much of complexities, stress people need to go away from their daily routine in order to relax, are stress free and spend time with their family. Other end is receiving wherein people have business through tourism and earn their means of livelihood. The Overall picture about tourism is not so fancy rather local have fear of losing their identity and losing their essence of authenticity of the place. There are negative and positive side to the tourism industry, because people associate drugs, rave parties, drinks, sale of girls as a part of tourism. But if one tries to understand tourism beyond its negativity we also will encounter different positive sides to it.

Goa is a land of stunning beaches, scenic beauty that redefines holidays with its exquisite mix of sun, surf and beaches. Tourism is said to be the backbone of Goa's economy. In the 1960s and 1970s, post liberation the tourists came into Goa in small numbers and were mostly backpackers (who were popularly referred to as 'hippies'). Indians (Domestic tourists) as well as foreigners (International tourists), flock to Goa due to its peaceful atmosphere and its beauty. Tourism has emerged as an employer and revenue earner for the country. Tourism provides job opportunities for the jobless. And the people of Goa have benefited to a great extent due to the influx of tourism as a massive Industry which is one the main source of revenue for the state.

INTRODUCING AGONDA – A TOURIST DESTINATION

Agonda, a quintessential village with crystal clear beaches

used to be a quiet and secluded village till the early 90's with few tourists visiting the village. Tourism is one the fastest growing industries on the Globe and the same is true even in the case of Agonda. The beach is famous for its picturesque and white sand beaches, with cosy shacks, cafeterias and Olive Ridley sea turtle nesting sites. Agonda has a stunning beach which is 3km long – tourist destination. Tourism on a large scale began in Canacona in 1997 but till 2000 Agonda was not on the tourist map of Goa. It is only when Palolem (neighbouring beach) started becoming crowded – tourists – especially foreign tourists started migrating to Agonda. Agonda today is a preferred global tourist destination with resorts, shacks, hotels, backwaters and,, infrastructural development. The tourism department of Goa, advertises Agonda – advertises Agonda as “A beautiful cove of white sand, safely secluded in the palms with peace and tranquillity”. Tourism has generated employment opportunities to the local women in Agonda -educated and also uneducated. Here Pagi, Velip, Gaunkar - Dessai, Catholics and some migrant communities from neighboring states are found. There is no much trace of Muslims in this region.

Review of Literature

“According to Godfrey and Clarke (2000), socio-cultural change relate to local quality of life and sense of place. The social impact on the receiving areas of tourism, like any other aspect related to the sector, can have positive and negative effects. Positive impacts can be improved means of transport, banking facilities acculturation, modernization etc. but there would be negative impacts like vandalism, drunkenness indecency etc. The locals tend to imitate the life style of the tourist; this changes the pattern of consumption from the local products to western products.”

“Tourism is a very much part of a globalization process. It is genuinely a powerful and a unique form of change in the community. Tourism may have different effects on the social and cultural aspects of life in a particular region, depending on the strength of the region. In Goa, it has emerged as the foremost industry in the post globalization era and it has driven for the socio-economic and environment transformation. Presently, tourism contributes approximately 34percent of the total workforce – (economic survey 2011-12).”

“In the last two decades, the traditional Goan culture like folk dances, music, festival celebrations etc. is slowly decreasing and western culture such as pubs, dance bars, rave parties, casinos, nudism on the beaches and sex trade has come to the forefront.” Kimberely and Steffi (2016).”

According to Avinash Raikar (2009) “tourism provides a scope for mixing of people; to understand each other and thus influence each other's socially and culturally. However, there are two views about the socio-cultural impact of tourism: first, the interaction between host and guest could destroy traditional culture and thus, tourism is a threat to culture and people; secondly, the interaction between host and guest could create new opportunities for peace and greater understanding.”

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in the study is purely a qualitative approach. “If we think about the word “Methodology”, it is the way of searching or solving the research problem.” (Industrial Research Institute, 2010), derived from (Williams, 2011). Ethnography, Auto – ethnography has been employed to study the lived experiences of people from Agonda – Goa.

Methods:

“Research methods refer to the behavior and instruments used in selecting and constructing research technique.” (Kothari & Garg, 2014, p. 7).

This research paper includes research methods like participant observation, case study and interviews wherein in depth, open ended information is gathered. Various secondary sources have also been utilized in this paper.

RESEARCH QUESTION/OBJECTIVES

To understand the impact of tourism on the socio-economic conditions of women in Agonda, Canacona Goa.

1. To study the self-sufficiency and economic independence among women in Agonda.
2. To analyze the shift of occupation from traditional to the exposure to a modernized job market in Agonda.
3. To identify the changes seen in the socio-cultural lifestyle of women in Agonda.
4. To study the impact of the “tourist gaze” on local women in Agonda.

ECONOMIC FACTOR

With the influx of tourist in Agonda, there has been a shift in occupation from traditional to the modern job market –tourism industry, hospitality industry. Besides the local community taking up modern jobs, women are also involved in traditional occupation like fishing, agricultural activities, cashew nuts plantation for consumption however high income is earned through cashew nut cultivation.

Another source of income is earned through renting residential areas to the tourist and also by offering services like massages, beauty treatments, yoga therapy, ayurveda clinics, internet cafes, shopping centers. Now women get fixed salaries at the hotels and resorts when earlier they would be paid on a daily wage and work was also uncertain – women are also heavily tipped by tourists. Women have become entrepreneurs today.

Educated women have taken up jobs – receptionists – back office. Women has also taken up tailoring as one of their business, petrol is sold at high price, sale of coconuts, organic fruits. Women can take her own decisions, sometimes husband does not work which makes women a bread earner in the house. Widows are being empowered.

SOCIAL FACTOR

Shift from family traditional occupation to modernized

occupation which has affected social and family life. Standard of living has increased with new technologies, mobiles and rent a bike business. Women are learning English and trying to communicate in English with an accent. With the influence of the tourist many locals also stand an opportunity to migrate to different countries.

Agonda, being a tourist destination it is a common trend among many well to do locals to migrate to other villages away from the coastal belt of Agonda, to stay aloof from negativity of the tourist gaze mainly for the future prospects of their children.

Girls are afraid to move around freely as they fear the 'tourist gaze'. The social institution of marriage and family has also undergone drastic changes - transition from joint family to nuclear family. In some cases we have observed a trend wherein local women prefer marrying foreigners and have also settled with them along the coastal belt.

CULTURAL CHANGES

There is change in the dressing styles - women wear clothing according to their convenience, even hotels have provided employees with uniforms. Changes in the food habits are seen - for instance - for breakfast, where they would eat Bakri, Kanji, Nachni (Ragi Porridge) today these women and their families have accepted English breakfast like scrambled egg and bread. Change in food consumption from fish, curry and rice to chinese/ continental/ Italian cuisines.

There is an increase in rave parties which are taking place in the hinterlands of Agonda and creating a menace in the village. There is also less participation of local women in cultural festivities like shigmo, pooja, diwali because their focus is to increase their income.

CONCLUSION

Women are economically independent in Agonda, and they can take their own decisions in life. Though women have an occupational mobility with the influx of tourism yet they are involved in agro based farming activities for their own consumption. Local women feel unsafe in the vilage, but in reality they are under the dominance and fear of patriarchy and mainly because patriarchy is deeply rooted in Goan society, women feel vulnerable to move out freely.

Socially and culturally with the influence of modernity, women are losing their cultural identity - socially alienating themselves from family structures of the society. We conclude by saying that although tourism is largely linked with the negative impact –violence against women, drug trade, crimes, nudity, pubs, rave parties.

In Agonda, tourism has mostly had a positive impact on the lives of local women, ensuring economic benefits, improving their standard of living and empowering them to sustain and become self-sufficient and in doing so emancipates the agency of women.

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