Tourism management in a coastal tourism destination

This essay considers tourism management in a coastal tourism destination – Indian's smallest state Goa. Study critically assesses coastal tourism definitions, tourism background, review of current trends, policies, management issues with recommendations and future concerns.

According to many coastal tourism definitions, it might be concluded that sun, sand and sea are one of the most significant types of holiday in the world, provides an important commercial sector of the tourism industry, but with some possibility of negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts. As Page and Connel (2006) stated, the meeting of land and sea creates biologically and geologically diverse environments and unique landscapes which may form the basic for tourism. Works of Nowak (2007) and Gormsen (1997), similarly defined coastal tourism and agreed that the coastal zones and its natural environment play a major role in attracting tourists, offering the best opportunities for leisure, physical activities and pleasure for all age and social groups which applies to the beaches of all continents.

Coastal tourism definitions also analysed impacts of tourism at the coast from different perspectives including change of socio-economic and settlement patterns, cultural impacts on the local population and its environmental impacts. J. Page (2005), who defined coastal tourism as site for pleasure, and place for spiritual fulfilment also pointed out that inappropriate tourism development in coastal areas can cause erosion, salination of fresh ground water sources, sewage outfall into shallow waters, environmental degradation, pollution, destruction of habitats and ecosystems, loss of coastal and marine resources and impacts on ground water. On other hand, Marsden (1999) considered seaside tourism as tourism

of significant economic and social value and the potential for resorts to contribute to rejuvenating neighbouring areas through employment, leisure and business opportunities which should be exploited.

All definitions mentioned positive and negative effects on the regional and national economies, local culture, physical infrastructure and environment. It is therefore essential that local governments issue the relevant laws and set up the methods for efficient control of all the activities made by investors, tour operators and other private and official actors at all stages of tourism. If all the participants collaborate efficiently in general understanding of sustainable development, then tourism at coastal resorts may provide most of positive contributions to the future of coastal areas with less negative effects.

Goa has been formed in 3rd century BC and after its rich history it was released to India in 1961. Since 1987 it became a proper state with its own official state language, Konkani. Catholicism and certain Mediterranean customs have been brought by Portuguese colonialism in sixteenth century. Because of its background and history it is multi-lingual and multi religion country with most Goans identify much more with Goa than with Indian subcontinent (Saldanha, 2002).

Contemporary change in Goa is very much connected to tourism. Goa first came to the attention of the international tourist ' community' during the 1960s and 1970s when the state's palm-fringed beaches became a haven for Western hippie travellers. Odzer (1995) observed that few other types of foreign tourists visited the state in large numbers during this period. Indian

government began to consider more seriously the possible economic benefits of promoting international tourism and by 1986 had decided to exploit Goa for the purposes of charter tourism. National Tourism Action Plan of 1992 as part of the Indian economy's liberalization placed increasing emphasis on the demand-centred model of international tourism, particularly luxury tourism. The Indian Government designated the 1990s as the ' Decade of Tourism', and tourism currently dominates the discourse of development within the state of Goa (Routledge, 2001). From 24 charter flights during the 1985-86 season, number increased to 758 flights in 2007-2008 season to Daboli, Goa's international airport (Department of Tourism, 2009).

Tourism in Goa today is one of the major economic activities with multiplier effect which percolates to the local community. Because of its natural scenic beauty, 105km long coast, straight beaches, very hot weather, picturesque villages, its culture, temples, monuments, Goa has a positive tourism profile. The most comprehensive beach resort in India, Goa's coastline provides endless sun drenched crescents of sand. Vagator, Anjuna, Baga, Calangute and Candolim beaches stretch out in an unbroken palm fringed line offering facilities for parasailing, yachting, windsurfing, and deep sea diving. There are 29 beaches in Goa, many churches from 16th centuries, temples more than 500 year old, religious centres, science spots, wild lives and other attractions for tourists (Know India, 2009).

Goa mostly attracts domestic tourists but also some foreign markets, mainly Britain. In 2008 according to Department of Tourism (2009), Goa was visited by 80% of domestic tourists, by a total number of 2, 371, 539 tourists; over

388. 000 were foreigners from which 41% were British, 8% Russians, 6% Germany followed by tourists from Finland, France, Switzerland, Sweden, USA, Australia and others. International charter tourists accounted for almost 50% of whole international arrivals.

And where does Goa's tourism rank within whole India? Tourism Statistics (Ministry of Tourism, 2008) shows that Goa is one of the most popular coastal destinations in the country. From total international tourist arrivals in India 5. 37 million in 2008, was more than 7% to Goa's beaches, even when Goa's state population accounts for only less then 0. 14% of population of whole country.

Average duration of stay for foreigners is 9 days and for domestic tourists 5 days. The growth of charter and luxury tourism in Goa has progressively more concerned investments from transnational corporations. As Menezes and Lobo (1991) noted, most of Goa's major hotels have some financial or marketing connections with foreign capital. For example Lufthansa (Germany), Club Mediteranee´ (France), Intasun (UK), and Hyatt Regency and Ramada (both USA) are all involved in international charter flights holiday tie-ups with Goan hotels.

Goa shows significant tourism accommodation availability, however, from the tourist statistics (Department of Tourism, 2009) almost 70% of all rooms do not qualify for even a 1 star rating and are in very poor quality. There are more than 2500 guest houses with number of beds over 4200 to serve tourists, while there are only 83 starred hotels but with almost 12000 beds from which 47% bed capacity are 4 or 5 starred hotels. With new

investments in 4 and 5 star hotels the tourism industry in Goa has evolved into a curious mix of low-budget tourism and up-market development, a mix that is according to Wilson (1997) marked with tensions and potential conflicts over the appropriation of resources.

More than 90% of domestic tourists and 99% of the international Goa's tourists stay at the coastal resorts. Thus, beach tourism is the only type that is keenly encouraged by policymakers. There are different markets which have different motivations to visit the state. The first is the domestic tourists market, who comes in search of the culture that is different from the rest of India. The second is the international tourists market, who visits Goa purely for the natural environment, sun and beaches. Within the category of international tourists, there are two sub-categories, which both visit Goa for its beaches but stay away from each other. Backpackers prefer to mix and live with the local communities, whereas the charter tourists tend to stay in the luxury starred hotels. Domestic and international tourists also differ in terms of the areas they frequent. For the domestic tourist, the beaches hold limited appeal, so they remain away from the places frequented by the international tourists (Sawkar et al, 1998).

As a growing activity at global, national and local levels, tourism needs to be managed in a sustainable and balanced manner. J. Page (2005) examined some basic principles for managing such a destination. He believes that planning, organising, leading and controlling are the most important elements. The management of coastal tourism is complex because the tourism industry is not a homogenous sector or segment of the economy. It is made up of various organisations that are directly or indirectly involved in

tourism. The public sector should intervene to ensure that business objectives are balanced with local needs and stakeholder interests are in relation with the tourism utilities, such as beaches, attractions, infrastructure and overall environment. The public sector is though responsible for trying to liaise, plan and manage the diverse group of interests that are associated with tourism. According to WTTC (2003) it is within government's power to unlock the industry's potential to create jobs and generate prosperity.

Within a structure of co-operation federalism, India has three tiers of government. Central government is the first tier, the second is State government and the third is the village level within the state, known as the 'panchayat' system. Administratively the Goa is organised into two districts, North Goa and South Goa, all together Goa has 189 panchayats. The nodal agency for the formulation of national and state government agencies and the private sector development of tourism is the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. It is responsible for coordination and supplementation of activities of various Central government Agencies and State governments, catalysing private investments and for the development and promotion of tourism in India. It is also in charge of public sector undertaking, the India Tourism Development Corporation, Ltd, and autonomous institutions like Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology, National Institute of Water Sports etc. Functions of the Ministry consist of the development policies, incentives, external assistance, manpower development, investment facilitation, planning, regulation, infrastructure development, human resource development, marketing strategies and many others (Government

of India, 2009). Development activities are co-ordinated by the respective Ministries. Two main nodal bodies for decision making in terms of potential or actual impacts of activities in coastal areas and the seas or oceans are the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Department of Ocean Development.

At the local level, responsible for coastal tourism are State governments, District Administration, Local Bodies and Councils. At the Goa itself, it is Department of Tourism which is responsible for tourism policy and its role is to ensure planned and controlled development of tourism in Goa. The government endeavours to provide appropriate package through progressive fiscal and taxation policies, develop tourism as a non-invasive instrument of revitalization, conservation and growth, entrust regulatory measures to ensure social, cultural and environmental sustainability and involvement of local community.

The Coastal Zone Regulation notification in 1991 invited the governments of India's coastal states and union territories to prepare Coastal Zone Management Plans for their respective areas (Noronha, 2004). These zones regulate development and construction in the coastal regions. The main objectives of Coastal Zone Management are to encourage sustainable use of environment, identify and resolve conflicts, balance economic and environmental objectives and adopt strategic planning. An important provision under these laws limits the nature and development of land that is located close to the sea. Goa as a coastal state has the responsibility to identify the zones and prepare management plans within which all future coastal development is to take place.

Government of India, Ministry of Tourism (2005) published Best Practises adopted by the State governments with good examples of how can supervision manage tourism industry. An example from Goa can be the reduction or abolition of luxury tax helps lowering rates. That means more tourists would be attracted to the destination and this could give competitive advantage to the state, as benefits will go to the customers. In order to help cinema theatres to make them financially viable, the Goa government has reduced the entertainment tax from 60 to 40 percent. A complementary reduction on taxes by the Goa Government on water tariff by 22% is noble scheme to attract tourists as well. Goa set up Tourist Police exclusively for providing safety and security to the tourists in frequent areas. Despite these few examples of good practise there is still large scale to provide more benefits for local people in Goa by tourism industry and government should prepare adequate policies for coastal tourism to help locals to get involved with tourism. Locals should be at the first place in considering about development of tourism and they should intervene in decision process making of tourism policies.

The impacts of coastal tourism in Goa have been the subject of discussion amongst academics, researchers and activist groups. Goa's tourism has so far concentrated mainly on the coast. Work of Wilson (1997) considered some impacts of tourism in Goa. The growth of coastal tourism has been fast and uncontrolled. The principles of sustainability and the norms related to the conservation of the environment and ecology were generally ignored. There has been unclear firm policy relating to tourism and the policy initiatives have not been introduced attentive to local concerns. This could

lead to major changes in land use, shortages of resources, such as land and water, and damage to coastal aquifers, the sand dune system, and mangrove vegetation. It is clear that there is much to be learned about the impacts of tourism in Goa, and that further planning and development requires information gaps to be filled.

According to Noronha (2004) almost all difficulties fall into three major domains of coastal policy problems. Those that relate to resource use conflicts, those that relate to resource depletion and those that relate to pollution or resource degradation. It is evident that Goa is facing all these types of policy complications. William (1998) demonstrated that coastal tourism in Goa has resulted in a spatial concentration of buildings in some coastal areas leading to a heavy demand for resources in these places. Another issue observed by Wilson (1997) is the amount of solid waste which is generated and the need for land to cope with the disposal of this waste. With these matters, policy-making should take sufficient note, to make it a case for systematic addressing.

There is no clear and specific coastal focus for its development policies in India. Sawkar et al (1998) observed that the current policies and relaxed enforcement have led to the haphazard and uncontrolled growth of townships. Places like Calangute and Candolim in Bardez and Colva in Salcete have become over commercialized and disorganized in their development pattern. Developments along the coasts of Goa and the future plans for it reveals that these follow the ideas submitted in the Coastal Zone Management plan of Goa rather than its Regional Development plan. These areas have a number of unauthorized constructions, which have paid little

heed to local planning rules, infrastructural supports or aesthetics. There are also signs of over investment which is spreading a price war. ' Lots of international people come and because it is small and beautiful they try to invest money and buy huge tracts of land. Locals feel that our land is being sold,' said the chief minister of the Goan (Pirie, 2008). Nowadays there are steps from government to reinterpret existing property legislation to deter foreigners from buying property.

There has been little effort made in Goa to adhere to the regional plans of creating other types of tourism than beach tourism. That means tourists are almost exclusively accommodated along 105km stretch of the coastline which can impact coastal environment far more quickly than if tourists are spread upcountry.

Governments in India prepare Five Year Plans which play an important role in state's model of economic development. These plans provide the overall direction and framework for policies, programmes and schemes for the Ministries and Departments. Eleventh Five Year Plan for years 2007-2012, prepared by Directorate of Planning, Statistics and Evaluation (2007), contains some interesting ideas. Goa is being treasure of heritage and has immense potential for growth of heritage tourism activities. The government has introduced ' Heritage house scheme' towards promoting heritage tourism. For this purpose, financial assistance in the form of loans and grants is proposed to be given to the owners of the heritage houses for their maintenance and restoration. Another example is that the Goa has beautiful forests and eco-tourism plans which are being implemented through the budget of Forest Department. This project envisages development of an eco-

tourism circuit consisting of Bondla, Cotigao wild life sanctuaries and Mollem national park. This is illustration of cooperation between different governmental departments on the state level which can bring more effective results in terms of sustainable and planned development. Another example could be promoting of discovery and adventure tourism which can attract different market of tourists whether domestic or international.

Currently 80% of all tourists visiting Goa are domestic tourists – yet most of promotional budget is spent on trying to attract foreign tourists. Since Goa is well established tourism destination, it should try to redirect budget allocation. If one year's advertising budget is used to clean up Goa's beaches and provide needed infrastructure in those areas it would earn more goodwill for Goa and attract more tourists than any advertising budget would be able to deliver. There is also need to shift away from charter tourism. It is important to increase tourism revenues by moving Goa up-market. Nowadays, charter tourists pay a very low price for the whole tour in their home countries. So they spend very little in Goa itself. The current focus on beach tourism should be diversified to include other areas, like adventure and eco-tourism, medical tourism, hosting conventions, conferences and so forth.

The analysis of the development of tourism destination is one of the main topics of tourism research. Over a long period of time, tourism products go through an evolutionary process. Butler (1980) put forward the concept of the tourism area life cycle – TALC. The model depicted resorts moving from the initial stage of being found, through the involvement and development stages to a stagnation stage, beyond which there are number of options

possible from decline to rejuvenation. This can be seen in appendix A. Goa's visitor numbers were continuously increasing, however last season in 2008 there was a decrease of tourists because of global economic recession, there is estimated increase in tourist number in 2009 season (Navhind Times, 2009). In appendix B is illustrated how Goa can be linked to TALC model with further explanation. It is still developing tourism destination with some future developments announced by government in last Five Years Plan (Directorate of Planning, Statistics and Evaluation 2007). Goa could still attract a bigger number and different segments of tourists. For example two marinas have been located – one in North and another one in South Goa to be build in near future with facilities for pleasure yachts. There is a plan to build two international-size golf courses, also one in each district of Goa. The government has decided to locate new international airport for transporting cargo and passengers at Mopa, which would be particularly attractive for tourists who will be easily linked to coastal resorts. These developments should give Goa competitive advantage as a coastal tourist destination, but there is need for monitoring and management system which would ensure the effectiveness of coastal and environmental regulations. Goa also needs a systematic study of the environmental impacts of tourism, which could be done through a life cycle analysis, and the valuation of the environment to enable its integration into decision-making. Goa still requires policies for coastal tourism which recognise the type of interconnections among tourism, local communities and the environment, to ensure that tourism contributes to a sustainable development agenda.