

BRIEF NOTE ON TOURISM IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Tourism is increasingly being seen as a developmental tool, which can address issues of poverty, employment and community and regional development through what is known as multiplier effects. Over the past 25 years, through its work on understanding who really benefits from tourism, EQUATIONS has repeatedly highlighted the negative impacts of tourism as well as the potentials for positive impacts. We believe that if conducted in a manner which is democratic, just, equitable and sustainable tourism can be an empowering experience. However, policy makers and the tourism industry approach tourism only from the perspective of contribution to the GDP and to company profits respectively. For any activity to have a positive impact, it is but obvious that there would be negative impacts which would need to be mitigated. Similar is the case with tourism, which is most definitely not as benign as it is made out to be.

Tourism is multi-sectoral in nature and includes issues of infrastructure (transportation, electricity, water, land), labour, use of natural spaces as tourism products. Apart from the tourism industry which includes hotel/resort owners, tour operators and tourists, important stakeholders are communities who live in the vicinity of tourism destinations. Tourism has social, economic, cultural, environmental and political implications for these communities, which are not adequately considered while framing tourism policies and guidelines.

Impacts of tourism could be:

- Actual or / and perceived
- Direct or / and indirect
- Cumulative or / and immediate
- Reversible or / and irreversible
- Quantitative or / and qualitative
- Positive or negative
- Isolated or / and part of a chain reaction

A study of all impacts – positive and negative – are therefore imperative to further the positive impacts and to mitigate the negative impacts. EQUATIONS proposes that for all tourism projects, Tourism Impact Assessments be carried out prior to the planning and implementation of the same.

Below is a broad framework, while outlines the areas to be studied. The methodology would need to be multi-pronged including the use of questionnaires, question guides and Participatory Rural Appraisals.

Step 1: Collection of Baseline Data – Demographic Data

Step II: Collection of Data on Impacts

Section I: General Data

1. General Historical Data about the destination
2. Attractions
3. Purpose of visit/Motivations
4. Tourist Statistics
5. Tourism Statistics

Section II: Stakeholders

1. Service Providers
2. Branding
3. Marketing and Promotion
4. Employment in tourism industry
5. Informal, unorganised sector
6. Taxes/ fees from tourism service providers - to local/ state/ central government
7. Tourists
8. Local Communities
9. LSG Institutions

Section III: Impacts

A. Social Impacts

1. Contribution to Community
2. Communities Access to Natural Resources
3. Access to common property resources
4. Health
5. Crime, Safety and Security
6. Displacement
7. Land Rights
8. Social Injustices
9. Intrusion into private space/ privacy

B. Cultural Impacts

1. Standardization
2. Commodification of culture / Commercialization
3. Acculturation/ Demonstration effect
4. Identity
5. Role of tourism in understanding between people and cultures / intercultural learning

C. Economic Impacts

1. Percentage of tourism revenues retained in local economy
2. Employment benefits to local people
3. Role of SMEs in tourism
4. Dependence of local economy on tourism
5. Enclavisation
6. Level of prices/ inflation

D. Environmental Impacts

1. Water
2. Energy
3. Waste Management
4. Transportation
5. Dependence on forest resources
6. Changes to Natural Resources
7. Pollution
8. Aesthetics

Section IV: Institutional Issues: Legislative and Political

1. Rights/ Violation
2. Policy, Legislation
 - a. National Policies and regulatory framework – state and local
 - b. Lobbies influencing Tourism Policy
 - c. Local Community Participation in Policy Formulation
3. Policy, Legislation (Individual establishments)

Proposed framework for analysis once the data is collected.

	Indicator	Remarks	Issues	Easy evidence/ Means of verification	Analysis
Demographic					
Literacy					
Economic					
Social					
Cultural					
Institutional					
Environmental					