

EQUATIONS¹Submission to National Policy for Women 2016

Articulating a Vision for Empowerment of Women

May 2016

Engendering tourism policy and understanding tourism impact on women will be key steps to combating the discrimination, feminisation and informalisation of women workforce in tourism.

II. Education

Current tourism education is based on current industry needs and requirements but not about the community needs and requirements. It should cover the needs and aspirations of the community in terms of tourism which would definitely include the women of the community and bring in critical understanding on the way women are affected through tourism and what is their role in planning, and implementation of different forms and tourism models. There needs to be focus on developing understanding on the impact of tourism and the multidisciplinary nature of tourism

III. Economy

Raising visibility

ii) The industry segregates women into areas of employment which commercialise their perceived domestic skills and “feminine” attitude towards domestic skills and feminine nature- thereby stereotyping their roles with lower economic gains. As in many other sectors there is significant horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market in tourism. Since tourism is seasonal in nature and women are employed at the lower rungs of the labor market, their services are not required during the lean seasons. This leads to insecurity in employment both in formal and informal structures and service generation. Further the contractual nature of their employment, deprives them from many benefits that a full time employee enjoys like medical benefits, insurance and bonus. There should be increased visibility to such issues of women in the tourism sector and women in and around tourism destinations.

Acknowledge the important economic contribution of women in tourism and by creating opportunities for income generating activities, effective marketing and integrating women’s entrepreneurship from formal and informal sectors through various plans and schemes of MWCD. This would encourage in promoting women’s self employment, access to credit, capacity building and enhanced skills, access to the market, encouragement to form associations and cooperatives to increase their bargaining power and to ensure their safety, health and social security needs so as to promote women’s participation in tourism development.

Women should be encouraged to take up non-stereotyped roles to expand their capacities. Build capacity of women in terms of skills, linkage with market, access to credit to facilitate improved participation in tourism.

Create spaces within policies and projects on tourism for women’s engagement in all aspects of tourism development (planning, implementation, participation, ownership and monitoring), that should be determined by their informed participation. Women to be considered as an important stakeholder in the process of tourism development

Industry, Labour and Employment (Skill Development, Entrepreneurship)

Special skill development schemes, incentives, projects and sustainable programmes should be encouraged with convergence of the Ministry of Tourism, the MWCD and other ministries like

¹ **EQUATIONS** is a research, campaign and advocacy organisation. We study the social, cultural, economic and environmental impact of tourism on local communities. We believe that tourism should be non-exploitative, equitable and sustainable. Website- <http://equitabletourism.org/>

Ministry of Textile, Ministry of Human Resource Development along with the National Skill Development Corporation.

Linking Associations of Women Entrepreneurs in both formal and informal sectors with tourism development activities.

Service Sector

i) Women's participation in the upcoming services such as information based industries, telecommunication, infrastructure, customized highly skilled business services, software-designs; computer programming and financial services (Banks and insurance), tourism sector will be encouraged. Skills and work incentives for frontline workers which rely heavily on female labour in health and education will be strengthened.

IV. Governance and Decision Making

viii) Encourage and strengthen of women's participation in the District and State Tourism Councils, Tourism Development Committees, Village Development Committees, Village Shaksharta Samities, Neighbourhood Development Committees, Community Development Societies, Gram Mahila Mandals, Balika Mandals, through mobilization and adequate representation, training and budgetary allocations.

ix) Women as active members in preplanning and planning processes and the vision groups who are part of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of tourism processes, structures, institutions, programmes and events.

x) Capacitating women ward members on the issues and impacts of tourism and the processes in tourism that can be made pro-women. Women in these positions would act as catalysts in mobilising and coordinating all women's groups and associations in being active agents in tourism.

V. Violence Against Women

Protection: Expand scope, enforce and monitor the implementation of the Sexual Harassment at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, to include both the formal and informal sectors within the tourism industry. Help lines and Women's safety services must be strengthened, revived and monitored for their functioning in tourism destinations.

Objectification of Women in Tourism:

Internet usage that promotes, seeks any contacts for sex tourism and other sexual services, for search of pornographic material and/or to solicit the sale and purchase of illicit substances shall be prohibited.

Social Security :

- Promotion of social security benefits for women in tourism. Strengthen protective mechanisms to combat exploitation of women in and around tourism destinations and women in the tourism industry value chain.
- Basic amenities like water, toilets, resting sheds and creche for children to support women engaged in tourism activities.
- Ensure equity in wages, opportunities and positions in the formal sector in tourism. Provisioning of participatory spaces for women in the informal sector groups catering to tourism.
- Enable spaces for participation of women in spaces which are directly and indirectly catering to tourism like vendors and have their adequate representation in the various associations and

6. EMERGING ISSUES

Tourism development is often rationalised on economic grounds in terms of employment generation, especially for women. However the tourism industry is far from being gender just. Women in the organised sector in tourism are relegated to relatively low skill and low paying or stereotypical jobs. They face very high risks of sexual harassment and exploitation and are discouraged from forming unions or associations to consolidate their strength and influence.

The process of including women is often disconnected due to their participation in public spaces which is interwoven with socio- cultural norms. Quantitative measures of women's participation in development may not accurately reflect the degree of power which women are able to exercise , thereby focusing on the quantity and not on the process results in another form of exclusion and not the complexities embedded within the socio- cultural realities.

The informal sector is the most direct source of income for local communities in tourism in developing countries. In the developing world 60% of women (in non- agricultural work) work in the informal sector. Much of this is linked directly and indirectly to tourism . the role of women in the informal tourism settings such as running Homestay facilities, restaurants, shacks, crafts and handicrafts, handloom, small shops and street vending is insignificant. But these roles and activities that women perform in tourism are treated as invisible or taken for granted.

The ideological constructs of advertising industry have infused the tourism, aviation and hospitality industry. In tourism, marketing, women are the 'face' of the sector, being the most widely used objects in tourism promotion after natural beauty and cultural heritage. women have been objectified and depicted as pleasure providers, their images often eroticized, patronizing and misleading. As the definition of indecent representation of women has widened, depiction of women and their bodies in tourism promotional materials is a matter of concern. All tourism issues be it showing traditional cultural events in a tourism destination or a person welcoming the tourists, portrays women. There are also explicit images of women in tourism promotional materials that objectifies women and degenerates women's dignity as a human being.

Relaxation of licences to the tribal zones for the foreign tourists is another area of concern. The high level committees of various states only intends to boost the tourism industry and therefore tends to museumise the tribals. This opens up the dimensions of vulnerabilities of the tribals which are exploitative in nature.

The increased privatisation and expansion of tourism infrastructure has lead to the acquiring land, water bodies, forests, coasts, hills and mountains. These developments have displaced local communities, alienated them from traditional ways of life, restricted their access to natural resources, thereby in turn increasing the burden on women.

7. OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

viii) Develop a National Plan of Action for Women and Tourism to combat exploitation as well as empower women to be the agents of change of their lives and future in inspirational ways. All stakeholders, including the tourism industry, local authorities, judiciary, police, civil society organisations, members from the local communities, Central and State Law Commissions, National and State Commission for Women to be part of this process.

ix) Strengthening and capacitating and coordinating the Panchayat Tourism Development Committees and the Village Development Committees. Clear consultation and communication strategies be prepared and disseminated in coordination with the Panchayat , the local bodies and women associations working towards the interest of women.

x)To skill train the women with various service oriented capacities in tourism destinations in collaboration with the training corporations.

xi) Various statutory mechanisms and legal processes and structures to be established to ensure the prevention and protection of women against any form of exploitation and violence propagated by tourism.

xii) Advocacy on women's participation in tourism and development of advocacy strategies and materials to ensure protection of women in tourism. in coordination with the MWCD, the NCPCR, the National and State Commission of Women and the Civil Society Bodies.

7.4. Advocacy and Stakeholder Partnerships

vi) Policy and Planning: Women are important stakeholder in the process of tourism development. Create spaces within policies / plans / projects for women ' s involvement in all aspects of tourism development (planning, implementation, participation, ownership and monitoring), that is determined by their informed participation.

vii) Awareness: Design and implement promotional campaigns on the protection of women in tourism. MWCD to ensure that women are not portrayed in a stereotypical and sexist manner and urge the MoT to develop modules for the tourism industry (formal and informal sectors) on women ' s safety, women ' s participation and protection of gender rights within their operational mechanisms and processes.

viii) Ensure the empowerment and participation of the Mahila Mandals in the execution of tourism activities and strengthen their convergence with the local tourism committees and the Panchayat bodies . Enable the Mahila Mandals and the Mahila Sanghas to work in coordination with the SHGs and Samuhs for enabling the economic , social and cultural development of women in the communities.

ix) Strengthening the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Safe and Honourable Tourism in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and the concerned departments.

x) Influence the policies of the formal sector - hospitality and travel and tourism industry towards gender equity in wages, opportunities and positions in work places.

xi) Influence the tourism industry with gender sensitive and responsive policies and procedures and mechanisms to combat exploitation of women in the entire value chain and ensure their effective participation.

xii) Influence the policies for the interests of women in the informal/unorganised sector to ensure their participation , ownership and decision making in the various informal processes of work, labor, wages , opportunities and services.

xiii) Develop women's cooperatives and federations linked up with production of garments, handicrafts, handlooms and art working tourism destinations and efforts to link them with the tourism activities.

7.4 Inter-Sectoral Convergence

vi) Work towards the convergence of the MWCD , the Ministry of Tourism and the other ministries working towards the interests of women. Develop interdepartmental Terms of References for work towards protection of women in and around tourism destinations and ensure procedures for implementation of forms of tourism which looks forward to social, economic and cultural emancipation of women.

vii) Enable training of PRIs on tourism issues and the impact of tourism on the local communities which includes both women and children.

viii) Effective coordination between the Village Facilitation and Convergence Services , the village development services , the tourism development committees and the Mahila Mandals ,the PSUs and the LSGIs in channelizing information and awareness on issues/ concerns related to

women and tourism, the various schemes and incentives for women in tourism , the models and forms of tourism initiatives with its processes in the tourism destinations.

viii) To promote tourism education in colleges and universities and also demystify the complex tourism policies and documents. give inputs into tourism education syllabus in the institutes to bring in issues related to women in tourism.

7.6. Gender Budgeting

v) To include tourism (plan/programme/scheme) within the scope of gender responsive budgeting that has been applied across other Ministries.

7.7 Generating gender-based evidence

x) Design and implement promotional campaigns on the protection of women in tourism. MWCD to ensure that women are not portrayed in a stereotypical and sexist manner and urge the MoT to develop modules for the tourism industry (formal and informal sectors) on women' s safety, wome' s participation and protection of gender rights within their operational mechanisms and processes.

xi) Good quality and credible research to be undertaken to examine the status of initiatives taken by Ministry of Tourism and to urge them to bring in a gender perspective. To collect dis aggregated data and case evidences on violence against women in tourism and evolve mechanisms for the safety and security of women travellers (domestic and foreign) as well as women working in and living in & around tourism destinations.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

iv) MWCD can work with the Ministry of Tourism in implementing the Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism. Monitoring and assessment of the Code to be undertaken in coordination with the MWCD.

v) The inter-ministerial committee set up will periodically monitor the achievements and progress of the directives of the National Plan of Action on Women and Tourism.