

EQUATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2005–06

abridged report

CONTEXT, CONTENT AND IMPETUS OF EQUATIONS WORK IN 2005–06

EQUATIONS critically analyses tourism development in India in order to influence tourism policy and practice towards equity, sustainability and people centeredness. This is done through research, site-specific campaigns, advocacy with government and industry, but above all through networking – with communities affected by tourism, groups, local government bodies, industry players, academia, media and concerned individuals. The year 2005–06 marks the end of a three-year programme that focused on networking through our project '**People-Centered and Sustainable Tourism: Influencing Tourism Policy and Development in India through Networks**'. During this last year, we consolidated our efforts of strengthening local and national networks engaged in the tourism debate while continuing other focus activities like research and advocacy in thematic areas, information dissemination and consultations. While our focus has continued on strengthening networks in the four southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, we have also established contacts in West Bengal, Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and the North East.

In the last year, EQUATIONS has attempted to respond to emerging trends and challenges in the socio-economic climate and policy at the state and national levels. Strengthening research on role of international financial institutions, reviving the CRZ debate, contextualizing tourism developments in the north-east, campaigning against the WTO's Hong Kong Ministerial and research on the coastal regulatory framework in the context of tsunami have been some of these. Analysis and critique has been undertaken on emerging policy changes like the EIA Notification, CBD Guidelines on Tourism, projects of the ADB and World Bank and their impacts, the Forest Rights Bill, Right to Information and state-level legislations like the Kerala Ayurveda Act and the Kerala Tourism (Conservation and Preservation of Areas Act) and the Goa Children's Act have fed into our advocacy and campaigns

EQUATIONS was invited by the Kumarakom Gram Panchayat to share information in the light of their proposed constitution of a Functional Committee on Tourism. The Committee will monitor tourism development by bringing in experts who have no direct vested interests except conservation and sustainability of tourism. In Karnataka we have been collaborating with the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) on the issue of resource management and control of natural

resources in tourism sites. EQUATIONS has facilitated the sharing of experiences on peoples' charter on tourism with Panchayats at Vythiri as well as with NGOs based in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. In Kerala, with inputs from EQUATIONS the DYFI played an assertive role stop the effluents flowing from hotels into the Vembanad Lake (Kumarakom) and in collaboration with the Panchayats to close down illegal massage parlors. In the northeast, EQUATIONS has been asked by local groups to provide research support on tourism plans for the region and undertake field trips to assess the ground situation. Work through research projects has helped re-establish contact with local groups in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in the post-tsunami context. All these efforts have at their base our vision to bring about a shift in the way tourism should developed, questioning who really benefits from tourism, how can it be made more democratic and demanding responsibility in tourism.

The National Consultation on State of Indian Tourism held in Bangalore in July 2005 saw participation from a wide cross-section of activists and academia from different states. It sparked off debates on burning issues like rights of indigenous communities, ecotourism and the tsunami and served as a platform for exchange of ideas and experiences from across the country. We have also continued our commitment to the international network through the Global Tourism Interventions Forum (GTIF). A strategic GTIF meeting which we hosted in July 2005 helped to identify issues that the international network would focus on in the coming year and strengthen solidarity on issues like the tsunami. EQUATIONS continued GTIF work in the poly-centric WSF held at Karachi in March 2006 where a presentation on people-centric tourism was made. Our participation in international meetings on the SBSTAA and Convention for Biological Diversity helped us to broaden our understanding of international policy directives for sustainable tourism. We have also used this opportunity to influence other groups who work on indigenous peoples and biodiversity issues to look more closely at tourism, which is being presented as supportive of biodiversity conservation. Likewise participation in international strategy meetings on trade and the WTO at Geneva, Hong Kong and Bangkok have helped in fine-tuning collaborative campaign strategies to counter the Doha Round.

2005-06 offered the opportunity to consolidate many efforts and also thrown up many more avenues for intervention, campaigns and advocacy ... 2005-06 was also a year that saw important institutional changes in structure and process which have also demanded considerable energy to be focused inwards. We also share with you a report of the transition process that was set in motion within EQUATIONS and conclude with ideas and strategy for the year to come.

EQUATIONS WORK IN 2005–06: ACTIVITIES, IMPACT AND LEARNINGS

Network Building

The network-building programme aims at establishing networks and strengthening collaborative work on tourism issues with local and community based organizations, panchayats, academic institutions, the government, tourism industry, special interest groups, legal forums, trade unions, and policy & research organizations. It works with the principle of establishing state networks to ensure that interventions are rooted in the issues, experiences and rights of local communities, while interfacing actively with policymaking and policy influences bodies. EQUATIONS has active state networks in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

One of the primary objectives of the three-year project was to set in place a system of networking at the state-level to monitor tourism trends, interact with key stakeholders, undertake research and thereby influence tourism policy and development. Over the last three years, EQUATIONS has set in place state networks in the four southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Network coordinators have established and strengthened the tourism debate in these states by monitoring and keeping in contact with peoples' movements, panchayats, tourism service providers and action groups and strategic lobbying with government. Supportive and capacity building interventions for activism at the grassroots were made and campaign support extended to facilitate and sustain campaigns. A short summary of main activities in the four states undertaken in the last year follows.

Kerala

The Kerala Government continues to promote every nook and corner of the state as a tourist destination. Focus areas for the establishment have been medical tourism, ayurveda, monsoon tourism, spice tourism and farm tourism. There have been interesting developments at the policy level. The Kerala Tourism (Conservation and Preservation) of Areas Act 2005 granted the tourism department the power to promote any area that has tourism potential to be declared as special tourism zones. It gives the department the authority to declare any area, including protected areas and other sensitive ecosystems to be opened up for tourism. The Kerala Ayurveda Health Centres (Issue of License and Control) Ordinance, 2006 was promulgated by the government to curb illegal practices in Ayurvedic centres. This has been a long standing demand from civil society groups but the Act is yet to become operational.

EQUATIONS has engaged with tourism issues in Kerala for many years and this year continued attempts at deepening the tourism debate with emerging issues. Focus

was on capacity-building, monitoring and documentation of trends and initiating site-specific campaigns. In capacity-building, EQUATIONS conducted a tourism impact assessment training workshop at the request of local partners with participation of local groups, educational institutions and local panchayat. The local groups were able to pressurize the panchayat to take stern measures against a local tourist resort that was involved in illegal construction and filling up of backwaters in Kumarakom. The campaign against Kerala's nomination for the WTTC'S (World Travel and Tourism Council) Destination Award was a highlight. Given the evidence of undemocratic and unregulated tourism in Kerala, EQUATIONS and many other local groups campaigned against the choice of the state for this award. The concerns raised were also acknowledged by representatives of tourism industry in Kerala. We have reason to believe that this assertive campaign led to Kerala being withdrawn from the list, putting pressure on the state tourism department to more seriously demonstrate its commitment to sustainable & responsible tourism practices .

As part of the nation-wide campaign against the WTO's Hong Kong ministerial, we organised a state-level consultation to discuss impacts of WTO policies. The meeting was attended by members of civil society, research groups, elected representatives, media and other interested individuals. After the consultation political parties - CPM, Janata Dal within the state are giving serious thought to take the campaign further as a political agenda. The consultation, along with others on issues like the ADB's loan has brought back macro-economic policy issues to the forefront of the development debate in the state.

The program worked towards developing EQUATIONS' Kerala office as a tourism research and documentation center. The compilation on status of tourism (Oct05-Mar06) in Kerala, documentation of tourism statistics for the period 1986-2006, analysis of the Kerala Ayurveda Health Centres (Issue of License and Control) Ordinance 2006, and photo-documentation of tourism development in the places visited were some efforts.. With the change in government post-elections, EQUATIONS needs to strategize its interventions with government in Kerala as whatever the color of the party in power, tourism will continue to hold centre stage in the coming years.

Tamil Nadu

Over the last year, while the people of coastal Tamil Nadu struggled to bring their lives back to normalcy after the devastating tsunami of December 2004, the government's efforts have been on inviting tourists back to the state's coasts

through its “Reassurance Campaign”. Mangrove rich areas of Muthupet, Pitchavaram and the tropical forests in Point Calimere that acted as the natural barrier during the tsunami are being proposed to be promoted as ecotourism destinations.. The impact of tsunami has not slowed down development of beaches in Nagapattinam, Velankanni, Silver beach, Manohara planned under the Coastal Area Development Programme. On the positive side, it is encouraging to see that the local groups are taking legal actions against the tourism development coming up at the cost of livelihood of local communities. The year’s activities concentrated on this issue.

The state network put in efforts to highlight issues in the post–tsunami context for the Coastal Area Assessment Project. Field surveys, photographic documentation and district meetings in Cuddalore, Kancheepuram and Ramanathpuram to highlight impacts of tourism and share findings of the study were undertaken. We continued our efforts and support role in the Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Coordination (TRRC) collective that works on various social, political, economic and environmental issues in the context of post tsunami reconstruction. At another level, EQUATIONS met with tourism department officials to share concerns on the departments focus on infrastructure development and tourism with little concern for people in the post–tsunami context.

A decisive consultation on impacts of WTO policies on the people of the state energised the globalisation debate in Tamil Nadu. EQUATIONS partnered with long–standing networks like HRF to organise a pre–Hong Kong advocacy meeting in Chennai which resulted in producing a resolution signed by over 750 groups and panchayat leaders decrying the WTO and Indian government’s position. The resolution was taken to the Indian WTO Consulate in Geneva and the Commerce Ministry in Delhi. With district meetings in Thanjavur, Madurai and Salem and follow–up meetings taking place, the wheels of an impacts of globalisation campaign in the state have been set in motion.

In the months ahead, advocacy on CRZ with the findings of the CAA project and WTO as well as strategic advocacy with the new government are imperative. Strengthening research on hill tourism, cruise tourism – that has received a fillip with the Sethu Samudram Canal project and the blueprint of an alternative tourism policy are focus activities for the coming year.

Karnataka

The Karnataka Government last year has prioritized the development of a 320 km long coastal stretch on the lines of Goa and Kerala. The Government has also signed an MOU with Goa on arranging tour packages between the two states and has also opened its beaches to private investment for infrastructure development for tourism in the coast. Another priority area of the state is ecotourism with Jungle Lodges & Resorts, a state owned company, recording 30% revenue growth in the last year. These “successful” ecotourism developments in the state are being questioned by civil society groups working in Nagarahole and Coorg, as they do not include benefit sharing principles with the community.

This year, four key zones were identified within the state for intensive networking – Coorg, Hampi, Coastal Karnataka and Bangalore urban and surrounds. The focus of our interventions was to strengthen the understanding on linkages between investment, infrastructure development and tourism promotion in the state. In Coorg, EQUATIONS participated and contributed to a workshop on ‘Developing ecotourism policy for Coorg’ where concerns on unregulated growth of ecotourism and its impacts on communities and the environment were raised. The need for defining basic elements of an ecotourism policy was also discussed. This was followed with field visits to investigate rapid ecotourism developments, its impact on livelihood of locals and mushrooming of home-stays in the region.

In Mangalore, EQUATIONS’ discussion with network partners focussed on the strong linkages between tourism and infrastructure development in the coastal Karnataka. The role of projects funded by international financial institutions like Asian Development Bank in urban infrastructure development was critically analysed. Advocacy on IFIs was strengthened in a state-level consultation on ADB’s projects and policies held in Bangalore with participation from elected councillors and project affected towns to discuss loan conditionalities.

Future activities include implementing the Rapid Assessment Survey in coastal Karnataka to obtain field data and enhance networking on tourism trends, child trafficking and displacement. Research on Hampi to understand the linkages and implications of tourism development is proposed.

Andhra Pradesh

Following information technology (IT), tourism is next on the priority list of the state government and every effort is being made to promote tourism. From “Andhra Pradesh Unlimited”, the campaign strategy has now started using a new

slogan “Kohinoor of India”. Heritage, pilgrimage, beach and ecotourism are the tourism products being promoted. In addition Government of Andhra is all set to make Buddhist circuits and rural tourism as the State’s USP on tourism. Not surprisingly crucial community livelihood and identity concerns have been disregarded in the eagerness to get on to the tourism bandwagon. In Araku– Borra caves, a popular tourist destination, only 18 local tribal people have secured employment, that too of temporary nature, in the state department’s tourism activities. Fisher folk increasingly face displacement threats from port and other infrastructure projects, including aggressive mega plans for tourism on Vishakhapatnam– Bhemmunipatnam coastal stretch.

As the AP networking programme was initiated this year, focus was on identifying issues, geographical focus areas and network contacts and partners. EQUATIONS had interactions with the officials of State Tourism Department, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC), State Forest Department, Integrated Tribal Development Authority (ITDA) and Vishakapatnam Urban Development Authority (VUDA) and collected information on policies and proposed projects. During these visits, EQUATIONS established contacts with civil society organisations and had discussions on specific tourism issues at various sites. The organisations working in Vishakhapatnam have requested EQUATIONS to intervene for addressing tourism impacts. From the field trips to Vishakhapatnam, Bhemmunipatnam and Araku valley –Borra caves, it is evident that community and environmental concerns have been neglected in the tourism development and the local communities are facing strong threat to their livelihood and identity.

In Hyderabad EQUATIONS was able to bring tourism perspective and impacts of ADB policies, in the strategy meetings organized by network partners, prior to upcoming ADB AGM (Annual Governors Meeting) to be held in Hyderabad in May 2006. In Vishakapatnam meetings were held with KERATAM (a network of NGOs working with fisherfolk and fisher unions) and DHIMSA (a federation of tribal headed NGOs, working with tribal communities in Paderu division). Both the networks have felt the need for EQUATIONS campaign support to their ongoing struggles, on the issues of tourism induced displacement and livelihood of fisherfolk and tribals. Implementing this and responding to the fisherfolk issues including the impact of coastal regulations will be a challenge to the state network programme in the coming year.

Campaign Support

The Campaign Support Unit (CSU) is the hub of information collection, analysis and dissemination on tourism issues and trends in EQUATIONS. Its main activities include collecting information from different sources, compiling trends in tourism from the states, producing dossiers, monographs, investigative reports and research studies on tourism issues and disseminating such information to those who would make use of it in further advocacy, campaigns, and policy change. Maintaining the EQUATIONS documentation centre which is repository of books, reports, journals and newspaper clippings on tourism collected over 20 years is one of its main tasks as well.

During this year, CSU continued its task of disseminating information and analysis of tourism to a wide range of constituents as well as ensuring support to other campaigns within EQUATIONS. An important step has been the integrating of legal and policy research within CSU's work structure. Collection of information and dissemination of internal reports and material is ongoing. The team is working on a proposal to redesign and revamp the EQUATIONS website as a source of current, updated information and shape it as a key campaign tool.

The legal and policy research unit has worked to produce timely analysis of new policies and legislations to supplement work of other programmes. In the last year, analysis was brought out on the Kerala Ayurveda Act, liberalising legal services in India and conducting an internal workshop on the Right to Information (RTI). The RTI workshop has helped in introducing the internal team to the use of RTI as a tool for securing public documents and information as an aid in research and campaigns.

CSU has continued work towards generating site-specific monitoring cells to serve as a local source of collecting and disseminating information on tourism impacts. In addition to the fully-functional Kumarakom cell, efforts are on to adapt the concept in Wayanad, Masinagudi, Mangalore and Kanyakumari. CSU also conducted two short missions to investigate tourism issues in Guruvayoor (Kerala) and Araku-Borra (AP). While the former was investigating news of possible child sexual exploitation in the Kerala temple town, the latter was to find out more on impacts of ecotourism development in the tribal regions of Araku and Borra in AP.

A critical advantage for CSU has been its physical integration back within the main EQUATIONS office. This shift that came along with EQUATIONS move into its new premises has undeniably benefited the staff team as well as interns, volunteers and visitors to the office in use of the Documentation Centre.

Local Self Governance, Empowerment and Tourism

The LSGE Programme works with local self-governance bodies –urban and rural – in tourism areas so that they may play a more active and decisive role in tourism development. It works in close association with state networks through research support on the rights of panchayats; sharing of experiences between different bodies and campaigning on policy changes that threaten to limit their role in local tourism development.

Working with *panchayats* to influence local tourism development has been a priority activity for EQUATIONS. In the last three years, mapping of panchayats in tourism areas, interactive meetings with panchayat leaders to enable them to assert their rights, chalking out strategies collectively to deal with influencing tourism

development in their local areas, facilitating panchayats in tourism locations to involve in the political process and advocacy to ensure participation in tourism debate and decision making process were some of the activities undertaken towards this. These attempts were made to achieve higher sustainability of tourism development that includes putting in place regulatory regimes, ensuring benefit-sharing in tourism and upholding welfare of local communities.

This year, the programme's focus was on research, documentation, networking at regional and national level and providing campaign and advocacy support to local self governance issues in the context of tourism. Furthering the research efforts of the previous half-year, the program has brought out (also in collaboration with the women and tourism program) a 3 volume compilation of research and documentation. The first volume focuses on powers given to local self governing institutions as provided by the Constitution and its linkages with tourism policy and development. Volume Two focuses on locating tourism in the policy and legal context of four southern states. This compilation is aimed at helping different stakeholders to understand the linkages of tourism development with rights and powers of local bodies.

In the four focal southern states, the Programme has continued networking with panchayat representatives and NGOs that work on capacity-building and training of elected representatives. The strategy has been to get elected representatives to take cognisance of tourism development and its impacts in their area and how to assert their rights better in shaping tourism development and benefits. In Tamil Nadu, the Programme met with both the Department of Rural Development and Planning and department of Tourism to discuss possibility of training elected representatives on tourism issues. In Andhra Pradesh, the programme initiated the process of mapping panchayats in the coastal tourism stretch from Vishkapatnam - Bheemunipatnam. This will be useful in working with them on the impacts of tourism development in this region and discuss issues in the Grama Sabha.

The Programme also extended support in taking forward other campaigns in EQUATIONS to local elected representatives. These included the WTO campaign, CRZ campaign through the Coastal Area Assessment Study and campaign on PESA and tribal rights.

Women and Tourism

EQUATIONS monitors, documents, and publishes the impacts of tourism on women with the objective of helping women gain dignity and greater control over their lives. The tourism industry claims to be a major employer of women globally. Women, at the bottom economically suffer the most when resources are used for tourism. Research to a certain extent has tried to understand links between tourism and prostitution but other socio-economic impacts of tourism on women require considerable attention.

Network meetings were held to facilitate the discussions with civil society organizations to ensure greater access, control and ownership of women over livelihood and natural resources in the context of tourism development. Compilation and dissemination of trends on women's issues was a strategy to keep the networks interested in the issues of tourism developments impact on women. In Tamil Nadu, the programme facilitated a rapid assessment survey (RAS) in select districts to discuss and establish links between tourism, women and children. The findings of RAS was compiled and presented to the network partners in Cuddalore and Kancheepuram for validating the issues outlined in the report. The issues highlighted during these meetings included displacement, access to resources, women's employment and increase in the levels of prostitution. The Programme also brought out a dossier on women and tourism in Tamil that was disseminated to local partners.

In Karnataka, the programme worked on the issue or rights of women workers in collaboration with Mahila Karmikara Horata Okkoota, a forum of NGOs and women's movements that works on issues and problems of women working in the unorganised sector. We also presented a paper in Kannada on the issue of women employees in tourism. To expand the base of EQUATIONS' networking in Karnataka, the program expressed solidarity with the groups working on the issues of violence against women. EQUATIONS participated in the protest and submission of petition to women's commission against acid attacks on women.

A key focus has been on working with elected women representatives to create awareness on tourism and its impacts. These include interventions with women elected representatives to create awareness about their powers and functions as peoples' representatives and their role in monitoring and regulating tourism development in Karnataka. EQUATIONS initiated the discussion on tourism in training workshops conducted in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi. We have prepared learning material on the powers and functions of elected women representatives, impact of tourism on women and role of representatives in ensuring responsibility in tourism to use in forthcoming training programs.

Tourism Education

EQUATIONS strives to influence tourism education both at national and international levels through collaboration with institutions teaching tourism, thereby influencing tourism curriculum, building awareness among teachers and students of tourism and promoting research studies on issues related to tourism impacts and policy.

The focus of the program was to generate a debate amongst the academia of tourism in various institutions on the content of tourism education in India. EQUATIONS has engaged with students through awareness programs on tourism impacts as well as providing internship opportunities.

A national level consultation was organized by Kerala Institute of Travel & Tourism Studies (KITTS) in Trivandrum, Kerala in Jan'06 during The All India Tourism Teachers Association had organized a national workshop on ecotourism. This opportunity was used to co-organize with KITTS a consultation with academicians on status of tourism education syllabi in India. The participants were of the opinion that the current syllabi needed change as it did not incorporate components of tourism impacts, sustainable tourism practices and methods of impact assessment. EQUATIONS proposed a study to evaluate the existing syllabi of different institutions. This was accepted and a core group consisting of academicians & researchers was formed to take forward this process in the coming year.

In Kerala, the networking program had interactions with the members of tourism club on concerns and issues of tourism at the Government Vocational Higher Secondary School for Girls, Thrissur. At Marian College, Idukki, EQUATIONS had sessions with students on the role of International and National organisations in tourism development policies. There have been repeated requests from many tourism teaching institutions in Karnataka and Kerala for interactive programs with students.

EQUATIONS also conceptualised a novel internship proposal as an interface with academic institutions teaching tourism and the tourism industry. The internship project aims to establish a year round program for students with various sections of the tourism industry and tourism related organisations, to be simultaneously carried out for the duration of their educational course. With the changing profile of the travel and tourism industry due to the rise in tourist volumes and diversity of services offered, there is an increasing demand for specialised professional services. The need to initiate a program of this nature for students is mainly pitched at introducing students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to assume a range of professional roles in the future. We need to ensure the buy-in for this from both the teaching institutions as well as industry.

Ecosystems, Communities and Tourism

EQUATIONS' Programme on Ecosystems, Communities and Tourism strives towards influencing international, national and state policies on ecotourism - keeping democracy, protection of environment and peoples' rights as inalienable benchmarks.

With ecotourism continuing to be the buzzword in industry and government, scant attention is paid to the rapidity of its development and potential impacts on intruding into tribal and indigenous lands. Fears of the impacts on unsustainable 'ecotourism' have come true in the tribal belts of central India, northeastern states, Andaman and Nicobar Islands with displacement, ecological degradation and consequent loss of livelihood options for locals. No longer a colluder but a key facilitator in this process is the Ministry of Environment and Forests - MoEF that is on a drive to do away with even the meagre protection that current environmental laws offer to suit the needs and demands of industry giants. Amendment to the EIA notification, CRZ notification and non-tabling of the Forest Rights Bills were changes in the policy environment that we responded to on priority during the year. In responding to trends and policy reform measures EQUATIONS has ensured the highlighting of the role of tourism.

As part of the Film and Advocacy Project on Forest Dwellers and Nomadic Tribes, in the reporting period, preliminary field visits and primary photo research documentation was undertaken in states of Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat. EQUATIONS is working with Grass Roots media who are the film makers. In addition to primary field visits, our research based on secondary data and compilation of issues and concerns across various states is on track.

An important research activity for the programme was the Coastal Area Assessment Study for Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and the Andaman Islands. This study was undertaken in the context of the tsunami of 26 December 2004 to revisit issues relating to legal and policy frameworks governing the protection of coastal and island ecosystems.

This study is a contribution to the ongoing debate and advocacy efforts to revisit the coastal area development debate and current legal and policy frameworks, specifically the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Based on the studies carried out and emerging recommendations, we have prepared advocacy materials for pursuing a campaign to combat the rapid growth of tourism in coastal areas and A & N Islands and to strengthen the CRZ Notification. In March 2006, the MoEF announced that the CRZ Notification will be replaced by a Coastal Management Zone Notification. The CAA Study has also provided a strong basis to counter the MoEF's move and to launch a campaign to retain and strengthen CRZ Notification.

During the year, EQUATIONS also had the opportunity to be represented and

highlight tourism issues at significant national and international meetings. We participated at a workshop on Communities and Biodiversity organised by NEPED and Kalpavriksh in Nagaland. At the workshop, EQUATIONS presented its views and experiences of work on biodiversity, ecotourism and benefit sharing in Nagaland. In another set of consultations on ecotourism organised by ATREE, EQUATIONS contributed perspectives of community decision-making and benefit sharing for documenting case studies from Kerala, Karnataka and Sikkim.

EQUATIONS participated at the 11th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in November– December 2005 at Montreal, Canada. A paper critiquing the CBD's Tourism guidelines from the perspective of impact of indigenous people was presented at the event and circulated to participating NGOs and country delegations. In a follow-up, EQUATIONS participated in the 8th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at Curitiba, Brazil between 21–31 March 2006. Participation at these international events has helped the Program to develop contacts with groups from across the world, especially indigenous people's organizations and movements. We have also attempted with the GTIF to promote a discussion group on tourism to follow the CBD texts and make interventions in related processes

EQUATIONS has been involved in a consultancy role in the Khonoma Green Village project (Nagaland) state government and Khonoma Tourism development Board in a model project to develop sustainable models of tourism. We have had difficulties in ensuring that payments due to us were made , effectively blocking our ability to monitor progress of implementation according to principles and values of ecotourism that the project was conceptualised on. A trip to Nagaland for another workshop gave us the opportunity to visit Khonoma and we observed that the project had deviated considerable from its founding principles. We have been able to initiate a series of important discussion with officials to communicate our serious concerns at these developments and to urge them to intervene.

Globalisation Impacts and Tourism Programme

EQUATIONS' work on globalisation and tourism involves analysing the impacts of international trade agreements – both at the multilateral and regional levels – on liberalization of the Indian services sector, with a specific focus on the tourism development and regulation in the country. This also involves monitoring and assessing the role of other international, regional and national agencies whose economic policies stand to impact and affect sustainable tourism development.

The last year was a challenging one for the programme as the WTO's 6th Ministerial Conference was held in Hong Kong. Bolstering regional and national voices against unfair trading rules was critical as was interacting with the country's negotiating machinery to advocate our perspectives and arguments. We see the efforts at Hong Kong as a step to be built on by national groups and international networks working on tourism to understand and influence the GATS debate, especially in the context of advocating for a GATS- Tourism Impact Assessment strategy. A second aspect of our work on globalisation impacts is related to the Asian Development Bank and its influence on tourism development in India, especially the Northeastern region, through regional economic blocs.

Research activities form the basis for strengthening the programme's advocacy . On WTO-GATS, the programme carried forward work with the support with EED-Germany on the GATS Impact Assessment Framework by disseminating the report among government delegations in Geneva, central government offices and international activists. In the run-up to the HK Ministerial, an advocacy & lobby paper on '*Sacrificing Sustainability at the WTO Altar: the case of tourism in the GATS*' was distributed at Hong Kong. Publishing of the research paper - 'GATS Dilemma in the Web of Tourism' in ECOT's Perspectives has been an important intervention for the programme in strengthening national and international advocacy on the GATS and Tourism. On regional trade agreements, work on the dossier 'Bilateral Trade Agreements: Issues and Concerns for India' was completed to bring to the fore issues emerging from these agreements. The programme has intensified work on international financial institutions through critique papers on specific projects as well research work on the role of the ADB in tourism development through the SASEC regional tourism plan and its implications particularly in the Northeast.

Networking has been important given the pace of developments in the run-up to the Hong Kong Ministerial in December 2005 and the run-up to the ADB's AGM in Hyderabad. At the international level, the programme made three important interventions - at Geneva (October 2005), Hong Kong (December 2005) and Bangkok (February 2006) on the WTO and GATS. These interventions highlighted the issue of tourism in the trade debate, meeting with negotiators and strategising with regional groups on post-HK strategies on how to derail the Doha Round. In Geneva, EQUATIONS was invited to represent views of civil society on the Indian government's stand at the WTO during the General Council Meeting in October 2005. We were able to take the statement of concern emerging from the Chennai GATS Workshop with over 750 signatures to negotiators in Geneva and participate in lobby meetings organized with the WTO Director General Pascal Lamy, Chair of Services negotiations Ambassador Mateo of Mexico, Brazilian delegation,

representatives of the G-90 group (comprising African, Pacific and LDCs) and the Indian delegation.

During the WTO's 6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, EQUATIONS organised an international workshop on GATS and Tourism and highlighting the tourism aspects in the trade debate. The consultation was organised on 14th December 2005 (observed as anti-GATS day) to direct the attention of international civil society trade activists towards the tourism sector by presenting case studies from different parts of the world on lines between GATS and Tourism. Speakers included Rodrigo Rubio Ruiz from Peru, Jane Kelsey from New Zealand, Dot Keet from South Africa, Guyonne James from the UK, Marianna Hochuli from Switzerland, Michael Frien from Germany and EQUATIONS' presentation from India. This was followed by a tourism activists strategy meeting to discuss how to work internationally on issues of trade and tourism. In a symposium on Fair Trade in Tourism, EQUATIONS participated and confronted representatives of the UN-WTO who were advocating the use of GATS as a clear instrument to increase profitability, sustainability and reduce poverty through tourism.

At the national level, the programme participated in pre-Hong Kong meetings on GATS in Delhi using the opportunity to vehemently critique the Gol's role in the WTO negotiations. At a pre Hong Kong consultation on GATS organised by UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) and Ministry of Commerce, EQUATIONS made a presentation on GATS Impacts on Domestic Regulation and Policy Space. At an international strategists' GATS meeting organised by UNCTAD and CENTAD (Centre for Trade and Development) EQUATIONS not only participated but was able to successfully alter the outcome of the meeting so as to highlight concerns and impacts of GATS rather than promote it. This was a significant move considering the Gol's aggressive stand in pushing for the GATS.

At the regional level, the priority was on general awareness building on GATS and collaborating with groups at the state-level to be more active on the issue. In Tamil Nadu the Programme contributed to three WTO workshops at Dindigul, Chennai and Thanjavur with updates on negotiations, points of critique on the Gol position and campaign strategies. With these efforts, local state networks have taken forward the issue well and organised a state agitation on the 13th of December 2005 to protest the inauguration of the HK Ministerial. In Kerala, EQUATIONS and Kabani co-organised a consultation on WTO which has contributed significantly to an active debate on globalisation policies in the State.

On the issue of International Financial Institutions, the programmes research and networking on the Asian Development Bank and its projects and policies in the region. We also played a key role in the mobilising and strategising towards the

ADB's AGM in May 2006 in Hyderabad. In Karnataka, EQUATIONS, along with Urban Research Centre and other national groups organised a two-day consultation on ADB projects and policies in India. The meeting was well attended by citizens groups, councilors and NGOs from across the state and ADB project towns in North Karnataka (Hubli, Dharwad, Haveri), Coastal Karnataka (Mangalore, Sirsi, Puttur) and Southern Karnataka (Tumkur, Ramnagaram, Mysore, Chennaptna, Bangalore).

Increased awareness among the international tourism network on GATS issues, strengthening capacity of partners to take up direct campaign and advocacy on WTO, a strategic fillip to the campaign on IFIs and reinvigorating state campaigns on globalisation are some of the results of our work. In the coming year the challenge will be to keep the heat on with the government on the WTO and trade liberalisation issues as well as a strong focus on impact assesment. Campaigning against the ADB's AGM and taking forward research and political intervention on IFIS will be key. As will be broadening the geographic base to account for rapid developments and potential impacts in the NE, tribal states and island areas.

Child and Tourism

EQUATIONS studies the links between child abuse, exploitation of children and tourism. It networks with concerned groups, government agencies, the tourism industry and other players to draw attention to and devise strategies for ethical tourism and to ensuring that tourism does not contribute to the exploitation of children.

Our work on the impacts of tourism on children has unfortunately been low key in the last year. We negotiated and began work on a project 'Promoting Collaboration for Responsibility in Tourism (PCRT)' supported by UNIFEM. This focuses on mapping of tourism players in Goa research on the Goa Children's Act, ECPAT Code of Code for tourism industry and Responsible Tourism Guidelines of GoI. This will be followed by consultation, advocacy and collaborative efforts with the critical stakeholders such as tourism industry, government, civil society, media NGO's working on the issue in Goa, with the future objective of linking the outcomes of this experience to national level advocacy.

EQUATIONS has worked on a standard framework to analyse legal and policy guidelines. The Goa Child Rights Act and ECPAT Code of conduct have been analysed and we are making the links to ideas of responsibility and sustainability in tourism... Meetings at Delhi with the Department of Women and Child Development were useful as the Department is keen to support the implementing of child friendly and gender sensitive tourism guidelines and felt that collaboration was needed on trafficking as well as their links to tourism are often overlooked. We are also trying to advocate with the Ministry of Tourism to take forward its nascent

work on responsible tourism guidelines, but these attempts have met with less success.

EQUATIONS has re-established contact with NGOs and groups in Goa – critical for interventions on other issues as well. In the coming year, the programme aims to work on child labour in addition to continuing work through the issues of responsibility in the context of sexual exploitation and trafficking of children.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, PROCESSES, AND STAFF TEAM

EQUATIONS governance processes are its General Body and Managing Committee . The committee consists of the elected role holders – President, Secretary and Treasurer and inducted Members ; the Coordinator and the Staff Representative who is elected by the staff team, are ex-officio members. The Committee at times inducts other GB members or invites specialist resources into its meetings. At the institutional management level, the managing committee also has constituted the Finance Sub-Committee consisting of Treasurer , finance manager and GB member (as well as statutory auditor by invitation) which focus on a more thorough review and decision making on financial information and status. The statutory external audit is conducted once a year while all accounts are scrutinized monthly.

EQUATIONS has decentralized systems of management with programme coordinators being in charge – they initiate and formulate the proposal, determine action plans and budgets and have the authority and responsibility to manage them both in terms of strategy ,content and impact as well as financial utilizations and timelines. In order to support this level of decentralization the organisation also has stringent checks and balances in place.

All project proposals and reviews go through a 4 tier system– the programme team; the Operations team the Chief functionary and the Managing committee. All interventions are as per plan and based on written circulated intervention notes. Travel reports and debriefing sessions follow each intervention. Financial expenditure has to be in sync with planned interventions. This ensures a strong alignment between planned and actual interventions as well as an evaluation of the actual impact of the intervention and whether it was done in a cost effective manner. We have trained our staff team to detailed log frames to plan work. This has helped us articulate with clarity objectives strategies expected impact and outcomes.

Full team meetings not only assess progress but are spaces for bringing in synergies and ensuring that strategic directions are clear. Being in the advocacy space implies that each and every activity cannot be pre-planned and as new issues come up it is important that our strategies and anchors are clear in order to make judicious decisions about which new initiatives to get involved with , what our role could and should be and why.

Quarterly reports formally track progress and course corrections. A six monthly review allows the big picture to be drawn and revisited. Apart from this we also have elaborate Individual appraisal meeting (and our new innovation -the group appraisal) have also been important occasions to align individuals, their skills and capacity and future potential, to programmatic goals and deliverables.

EQUATIONS has always had very strong transparent and open financial systems with robust checks and balances. In the last few months we have worked hard to ensure that our systems are geared towards timely information not just to programme coordinators , but also to the Committee for better financial management. Audit is done on a quarterly basis. The finance sub-committee meets every quarter and approves all financial reports and statements and in turn reports to the managing committee.

In 2005-06 we also filled up some staff vacancies resulting in a large ratio of new entrants - while this has been a satisfying experience it has also meant ensuring processes of inducting new staff into the team , tourism issues and EQUATIONS work culture

Information Technology Support

The technology support team has played a vital role in supporting our external communication and day to day by leveraging technology support.. Many of these initiatives coincided with the move to the new office

The dream of making the e-mails online has taken place using web mail access. This enable any staff member to access, send/receive from any location while traveling. New email Id's which can be easily associated with the individual and is of the format of name@equitabletourism.org. The equations website has been shifted to a new hosting service provider. This is a significant change as it will now enable us to change our website design and update the website on a regular basis. An added feature of our new system is that we can generate various reports on the usage of our website globally. Some of our computers also got face lifts for improved performance in terms of better memory or larger storage. The technology

team aims at rationalizing the way data is stored across our various computers, managing better our various list serves and managing more effectively our addresses for better and focused communication and dissemination of information.

Transition Processes

EQUATIONS was mandated by its general body in its AGM in 2004 to come up with proposals on handling a strategic set of transitions in two new areas. With networking, advocacy and campaigns as the base, a membership based national tourism forum and consultancy as a strategic tool for policy impact were the key ideas in the discussions on EQUATIONS future. The Managing Committee was entrusted with the task of working on proposals which were discussed at the 20th AGM in 2005. The entire process has involved significant investment of time of Transition Committee, Managing Committee, senior members of the EQUATIONS staff team and some General Body members,. The members of the GB subsequently approved two resolutions that basically mandated that the processes of evolving these two entities be entrusted to the voluntary leadership and championing of interested GB members. Two sets of groups were formed subsequently, and have been discussing first level proposals. However it seems will take more time and detailed discussions as well as more active leadership at the level of the General body to convert the ideas into reality and further discussions on this are slated for the 21st AGM 2006 .

In another significant change, K T Suresh moved out after a long and visionary innings from the role of Coordinator in August 2005. He has subsequently joined the General Body of EQUATIONS. The search for a coordinator, initiated in advance was not successful and at the point that KT Suresh moved out the managing Committee decided to back a process of strengthening the second line and actively operating on a model of collective leadership. A member of the Managing Committee Rosemary Viswanath in the role of Chief Functionary is responsible for overall functioning , key institutional and donor interfaces, while the staff collective takes on the programmatic and operational areas. This year has seen a lot of energy invested into shaping the nuances of this model in an experiential way and learning to refine it as we went along.

COOPERATION WITH DONORS:

Our core donors of many years Bread for the World and Misereor who had supported the last three year (2003-06) core Network Building project have continued to support our core work that includes all programmes through a one-year bridge grant(2006-07). The expectation is we will consolidate our efforts and

come up with a long term strategic plan and sustainability plan as also make progress on EQUATIONS plans for consultancy and a tourism forum.

HIVOS (India Regional Office) continues its support on an important project Film and Advocacy on Forest Dwellers and Nomadic Tribes Project, and has agreed to an extension of it until March 2007. EED (Tourism Watch and Advocacy Desk) also supported a second phase of WTO-GATS Impact Assessment work. UNIFEM supports our project on responsibility in tourism through collaborative guidelines for sexual exploitation of children with focus on Goa. The Global Forest Coalition has invited , EQUATIONS has been invited as a partner to document ecotourism in India as a case study for their Life as Commerce project, supported by Swedbio. CEE has supported a small project on publication on Ecotourism. CENTAD accepted our proposal for a research paper on legal services and we have received a small grant for the same. In 2005-06 we have also continued our negotiations with Ministry of Tourism and Department of Tourism Nagaland to sort out the stalemate on the consultancy project. A fresh proposal on a participatory process of evolving Responsible Tourism Guidelines was submitted to the Central Ministry of Tourism.

AS WE LOOK AHEAD

With the ready use of tourism development as a tool for economic development – policy makers, state governments and the industry are resorting to the tourism mantra irrespective of its impacts or inability to act as a panacea. Through EQUATIONS efforts – particularly in the southern states, local groups have increasingly the information, capacity and commitment to take their struggles forward. Being an advocacy and campaign organisation our intent in all our interventions is –how does it impact our key constituencies – and in what ways are they strengthened to initiate or take forward the struggles in tourism. Sometimes our constituencies are communities directly negatively impacted by tourism, more often these are local groups – NGO's civil society organisations, panchayats, networks, individuals, media persons who take the campaigns, issues forward. This is the most important aspect of our role and a key indicator for us in evaluating our work. As the only organisation in India that works directly and solely on advocacy related to tourism policy and impacts we feel that placing tourism issues and impacts on the agenda of grass roots organisations and communities itself is an important step for us.

EQUATIONS own efforts need to increasingly gear towards helping establish good models that communities and policy makers can both use to prevent and mitigate tourism's negative impacts and to argue for regulated growth of tourism that ensures local benefits and local control and informed decisions on the impacts of tourism at the community level. The other strategy we increasingly need to adopt is

to move in before tourism actually does damage – the newly emerging tribal states and north east are cases in point.

We step into 2005–06 with excitement about responding decisively to tourism impacts through campaigns, research and advocacy. We see this also as a year to consolidate on internal processes, and on strategic directions