

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Tourism and Service Providing in Coastal Goa, India

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Abstract:

Sinquerim, Candolim, and Calangute-Baga are well-known tourist destinations of Goa. Tourists who come from world over are provided with various services by the Shack owners and the migrant workers. A Shack is a temporary structure like a restaurant serving food and beverages to the tourist, which is built on the beaches just above the high tide line. In this article various services which are provided in the Sinquerim, Candolim, and Calangute-Baga beach to the tourists are described. We have also described the changes in this sector. Moreover, the interference of the government in the functioning of the Shacks and activities of migrant workers who carry on their work in these beaches are also discussed.

1. Introduction

Goa is one of the popular tourist destinations in the entire world. Described as 'The Pearl of the Orient' and the 'Tourist Paradise', Goa is located on the western coast of India called as Konkan coast. Goa attracts not only domestic tourists but also international tourists from around the world. It is famous for its natural beauty, architecture, culture, water sports, sea food, monuments, churches, temples, beaches, etc. With this we can see that Goa has both inland tourism and beach tourism, but among these two types of tourism, beach tourism is the central attraction for the tourists to visit Goa.

The three S's i.e. Sun, Sand, and Sea are the major attractions of the tourists who come to spend their leisure time for relaxation and other purposes. These three S's is found in the coastal areas of Goa starting from Keri beach in the North to Galgi Bagh beach in the South of Goa. Those who come to experience the Sun, Sand, and Sea require various services and these services are provided by both the locals as well as the migrant workers. The major services provided to the tourists in the coastal region are by the Shack owners and the migrant workers. Shacks provide with shelter, food, beverages, sun beds, etc. and the migrant workers provide services like massage, beach wears, jewellery, etc. This will be discussed in depth in the later part of this paper.

Over the years several transformations have taken place in the nature of service providing in coastal Goa and also several issue have emerged relating to tourism in coastal areas. This paper along with the description of the service providing in the coastal Goa attempts to highlight some issues affecting the Shacks, migrant workers and the tourists. This paper confines to the coastline from Sinquerim to Calangute-Baga.

2. Service Providing from Sinquerim to Calangute-Baga Beach

Goa, is a small State on the West coast of India with a 105 km. long coast, with an area of 3702 sq. kms. and a population of about 14,57,723 according to 2011 census. If we look at the total number of tourist arrival in Goa, in 1978 it was 2 lakhs and in 2015 it has increased to 5297902 tourists (Citizens Charter, 2015). The increase in the tourist population in Goa is basically because of the services provided by the Goa Government, Locals and also migrants. The various infrastructural services provided by the Goa Government has enabled the tourists to easily access the tourist spots.

The major services provided to the tourist are Shacks, Water Sports, Stalls selling clothes, Restaurants, Jewellery Shops, Lingerie Shops, Music Clubs, Spice Shops, Fruit Sellers, Massage, Bike and Car Rentals, etc. Here we will discuss the various services provided at the Calangute Beach by the Shack owners and migrants workers working on the beach and how they have transformed with the increasing demand for various services.

2.1. Services Provided by the Shack Owners and Migrant Workers

According to Verma (2014) 'Shack is a primitive dwelling or a slum, but in Goa it is more associated with the beachside freebies like beach sun beds, umbrellas, food, etc. The third chapter titled, 'The Baga-Nerul watersheds: tourism, local stakes, and transformations' in the book, 'Coastal tourism, environment, and sustainable local development (Noronha et.al., 2003)' there is a section devoted to beach Shacks. The chapter describes the beach Shacks as:

- "similar to restaurants and are a part of the food and beverage sector of the tourism industry. Operating on or near the beach, only during the tourist season from mid of September to end of May, these cater mainly to tourists. Located just above the high tide line on public space or private properties, these structures have a rustic appearance as they are built of organic materials such as wood, bamboo, and matted leaves. These materials are used due to the temporary nature of these structures as well as their location within the Coastal Regulation Zone area".

The standard size of the Shacks given by the Department of Tourism in Goa is 18x8 metres according to the Shack Policy of 2013-2016. The maximum number of sun beds permitted by The Directorate of Tourism is twenty per Shack. These Shacks open in the morning at around 8.30am and end at mid night or even sometimes early hours in the morning at around 4.30am. For the convenience of the tourists, these Shacks provide them tables and chairs where the tourists can sit comfortably and eat their meals. They serve Continental, Chinese, Indian and Goan dishes to the tourists along with soft drinks, juices, beers and liquor. The very fact it starts in the morning and end at midnight shows that the tourists get their breakfast, lunch, dinner and in between eatables all along the day and night, which makes the tourists to spend more time on the beach. Another reason for tourists to stay on the beach is because of the affordable prices and better deals given by the Shacks as compared to the hotels.

Some of the services which the tourists get now from the Shack owners include sun beds, umbrellas, food, night parties and water sports. Besides there are also some people who are engaged in dolphin trips and water sports. But if we go back to the early days of the emergence of tourism in Goa in 1960s there were no Shacks seen on any of the beaches in Goa. Through an informal conversation with one of the Shack owner we got to know that Shacks apparently emerged only in the 1970s, then the question is, how did the tourists get the various services from the inception of tourism in Goa? This may have been possible as the hippies who were the first to discover Goa as a beach destination in 1960s, got the various services from the locals (The Navhind Times, 2014). They stayed with the locals in their houses which were located at the coastal areas (Trichur, 2013). Tourism involves in itself an interaction with the local people, institutions and the environment. Because of globalisation and the rise of the leisure class the tourism industry has grown both nationally and internationally (Sequeira, 1999). And because of this growth both charter tourists and backpacker tourism has increased.

Often the backpackers like to live with the locals and share their lifestyles (Loker 1988:33 as cited in Scheyvens, 2002). Their main motivation is meeting the local people (Riley 1988:325 as cited in Scheyvens, 2002). This is what shows in the history of the hippies travelling to the Goan beach of Calangute, where they stayed with the local people and shared their lifestyles, they ate what the Goans provided from their kitchen. They learned their culture and travelled to the untouched places “as a curious and adventurous traveller in search of ‘authentic’ experiences” (Cohen, 1982:221 as cited in Scheyvens, 2002).

Now let us move on to the migrant workers who are the second largest service providers at the beaches of Goa. Here we are focusing on the migrant workers who are working in the Shacks and also those who carry on their work independently serving the needs of the tourists. The major services provided by the migrant workers are massage, stone arts, sarong, jewellery, nail arts, etc.

The migrant workers from the Shacks on the one hand helps in the kitchen and as waiters and on the other hand they carry their business of selling sarongs, beach wears, doing massage, painting the nails, selling jewellery, etc. With this the tourists find ample time to spend on the beach as they do not have to go to the market specially to buy what they want. In this way the tourists get everything what they want under one roof. These migrants had come to Goa in search of job, and with the easy access to the beach and no permission required to carry business on the beach, some migrants started a minor business as fruit seller, selling soft drinks, coconuts, etc. In a conversation with us, a second generation migrant lady told a story of her mother who was the second person to sell fruits in Calangute beach and a Goan lady being the first one. The following quote shows the transformation in the services provided to the tourists in Calangute by the migrant workers.

- “My mother came to Goa with her whole family to work as a labourer in the construction sites. After a while, a lady from our native village offered my mother to work for her as a fruit seller in the Sinquerim beach. She then started the business of selling fruits in Sinquerim beach. She came to know that there was only one Goan lady selling fruits in Calangute beach, after which she moved to Calangute beach from Sinquerim beach. As the years passed, we then started selling soft drinks and coconuts to the foreign tourists categorised as hippies. When the tourism increased with more tourists the Goan built more Shacks and provided food for the tourists. Because of which we suffered losses in our business. Then we thought of working in the Shacks and continuing with our business, but it was not possible for us to sell fruits, soft drinks and coconuts as in this case the Shacks provided these items. Then we started selling sarongs and beach wears which was a profit for us and also the Shack owners did not have any objection. This business being seasonal, we had continued working in the construction sites during monsoons. But now we are working only in the Shacks and carry out our business of selling various things to the tourists.”

3. Some Issue Areas in Calangute Beach

Goa is a small state with a rich history but when you talk about tourism it's all about beach tourism. That means there is bound to be a resource problem (Roy, 2012). And because of this resource problem everyone wants to have access to the resources and have a control on them. There are some issue areas in the beaches of Sinquerim, Candolim, and Calangute-Baga pertaining to Shacks, migrant workers, and tourists. We will discuss some of the issues in each section.

3.1. Issues Related to Shacks

As already stated above the standard size of the Shacks given by the Goa Department of Tourism is 18x8 metres. Although the tourism department gives standard size for the Shacks, the Shack owners violate the rules. So the tourism department keeps some checks in the mid of the tourist season, and if found any Shack larger in size they demolish it or the Shack owners have to dismantle themselves. This makes problematic to the Shack owners who feel that the size of the Shack given by The Department of Tourism is not enough to cater to the needs of all the tourists visiting their Shacks. And because of which they increase the size of the Shacks.

According to the High Court rule some space has to be maintained by the Shacks owners for the people to walk on the beach. But what is found is that there are some Shacks who have placed sun beds close to the high tide line (Pinto, 2016). The number of sun beds

being permitted by the tourism department is twenty, which makes them to maintain a space for the people. The Shack owners place extra sun beds and umbrellas to attract more tourists violating the rules of the High Court.

3.2. Issues Related to Migrant Workers

According to some of the respondents in my preliminary visit, the main issue relating to the migrant worker is that they do not possess any licence to carry on with their business on the beach. This forces them to use different ways to do their work on the beach. There are government officials like Police to check the activities which are carried in the beach. Because of the presence of Police, the migrants carry their business escaping from them.

There are also some people collecting *Sopo* (the fees to conduct the work on the beach, which is collected on the daily basis or weekly basis or monthly) called as *Sopokar* (the one who collects the Sopo) to whom the migrant workers have to give in order to carry on with their business. These *Sopokars* are contract workers appointed by the Village Panchayat. However, it is not to be confused that they are getting permission from the State as this work of collecting fees is carried out by the local Village Panchayats. This information we have gathered from our preliminary field visit.

3.3. Issues Related to Tourists

There is a gradual change in the preference of the international tourists from Candolim, Calangute to Agonda and Keri beaches. This is due to the overcrowding in the Candolim and Calangute beaches. Another reason for the tourists to stay away from these beaches is the presence of large groups of domestic tourists who make the international tourists uncomfortable. This is because the domestic tourists try to intimate with the international tourists which is disturbing their privacy. Also there are migrant workers who are working independently, who force the tourists to buy from them (Navhind Times, 2016). This the misconduct of the low income tourists makes the high income tourists uncomfortable and disturbing, which makes them to stay away from the beach areas. This in turn reduces the number of tourists visiting Goan beaches.

4. Conclusion

Service providing is a source of livelihood for the migrant workers as well as the Shack owners. Migrant workers and Shack owners are dependent on the service providing job, if they are stopped from this, then it will lead to the economic crises. The Shack owners and migrant workers are dependent on each other and if migrant workers are stopped to be employed in the Shacks than the Shack owners will also ultimately lead up in economic problems.

As we have seen earlier that the number of tourists are decreasing in the areas of Calangute and Candolim beach, it also leads in the decline of remuneration of both the Shack owners and migrant workers. Thus to conclude I say that, the Shack owners, migrant workers and the tourists are all interrelated and interdependent on each other.

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