

**REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH OF THE YOUTHS
ENGAGED IN TOURISM GOA, INDIA
ABSTRACT**

By

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ABSTRACT: Tourism is an irreversible social and human phenomena resulting from freedom of movement, easy mobility at economically accessible prices and greater purchasing power of the people including those belonging to the lower/middle classes with the spirit of adventure. The World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1987 had projected for Goa as one of the most preferred tourists destination for the international tourists and assumed Goa to host two million tourists by 2000. The 1960s witnessed ‘Hippies’ culture to Goa and it soon became small paradise for the international tourists particularly. However, the administration did not perceive this as an economically profitable activity and indeed considered it as a threat to the locales because of the westernized free behavior of the tourists and hence made their entry difficult. Sooner, with the start of charter flights from Germany in 1970s it became a commercial viable activity and in 1987 tourism was given the status of industry. The problems of the tourism industry touched alarming proportions both on the national and international map due to its ecological, economic and social implications. Presently Goa has earned status of an international tourist hotspot for reasons such as liberal culture, easy availability of cheaper sex and liquor, scenic beauty and safe surroundings without any fear to any terrorist attacks etc. Over the years, tourist arrivals in Goa has increased multifold and the ratio of domestic tourist to foreign tourists has changed drastically from about 94:06 in 1965 to 80:20 during 2002. Out of the foreign tourist arrivals to India, nearly 12 percent make it to Goa. A spatio-temporal analysis shows that the four coastal taluka’s (namely

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Tiswadi, Bardez, Salcette and Marmugaon) which accounts for nearly 25 percent of the state's total geographical land, receive as much as 97 percent of the total tourist arrival in any year (Sawant, 2001).

Government admits that Goa is in danger of replacing Bangkok as Asia's prime sex resort. Sex-tourism includes various occupations such as bar girls, female and male escorts, singers, erotic dancers and masseuses. Economic factors are major causes of sex-tourism. Youths sometimes give up to sex-tourism as a sense of duty to their parents or to share the family burden. Youth tired of living in rural poverty with no future find themselves ready and willing to take chance at a new life promised to them by the agents. Many of the youths who have been exposed to the dream of living in luxury as fed to them through television and other mass media, some actually initially believe that they will receive luxuries and hence engage themselves in easy life style. Engaging in sex-tourism related activities seems to them the only means available to actualize their dreams. Among teenagers it is also popular to follow the lead of one's peer group.

In the light of above backdrop, the present paper attempts to explore important social and economic dimensions of tourism on the lives of youth in the state of Goa with prime focus on the issues related to their reproductive and sexual health. The study is based on the indepth interviews with youths in the four coastal talukas of Goa viz. *Tiswadi, Salcette, Marmugaon and Bardez*, the hot spots amongst the tourist, particularly among the international tourists. We have interviewed Fifty-seven (57) youths who are involved in various types of tourism related services. The study very clearly brings out that majority of the youths involved in tourism related services were school dropouts and were into sex-tourism as they perceived this as an easy and attractive (lucrative) way of earning fast money. Besides educational status, their life style (including drug abuse, fondness for foreign products etc.) too appeared to be an important reason for their involvement in the sex-tourism.