



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

*Journal homepage:*<http://www.journalijar.com>  
*Journal DOI:*10.21474/IJAR01

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
 OF ADVANCED RESEARCH**

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## IMPACT OF NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ON BRAND 'GOA'- AN OPINION SURVEY OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS.

**Mr. Abhishek Karmali<sup>1</sup> and Dr. B. Ramesh<sup>2</sup>**

1. Asst. Professor and Course Director of the BBA Department of SridoraCaculo College of Commerce and Management Studies, Mapusa, Goa.
2. Ex Head & Dean, Faculty of Commerce, Goa University, Goa, Former President of Indian Commerce Association, Former President of Indian Accounting Association.

### **Manuscript Info**

#### **Manuscript History:**

Received: 19 March 2016  
 Final Accepted: 29 April 2016  
 Published Online: May 2016

#### **Key words:**

Tourism, Image, Brand, Goa, Publicity.

#### **\*Corresponding Author**

**Mr. Abhishek Karmali.**

### **Abstract**

Goa has rapidly gained worldwide recognition as a tourist hot spot and has the distinction of being the most sought after destination, having ranked among the top ten in the Millennium year by BBC. This acted as a huge boost for tourism in Goa and the initial few years, post 2000 saw double digit growth in tourist inflow into the state. But after this initial spurt, from 2004 onwards the growth slowed down substantially with a couple of years in fact registering negative growth rates in tourist numbers. According to the tourism officials the slowdown can be attributed to several factors like, global economic meltdown and also the negative publicity garnered by Goa pertaining to issues like Safety of Women, Drugs, assault on foreign nationals, etc. In today's times of 24X7 coverage by TV news channels and print media all these negative aspects of Goa get highlighted more often than not. Two of the biggest incidents in Goa which captured the national media space were: 1) The Scarlet Keeling Murder (Feb 2008) which portrayed Goa as unsafe for women and even described it as the rape capital of India. 2) The Nigerian clash with the Goan Police (Nov 2013) portrayed Goa as a heaven for Drug Cartels.

The objective of the paper is to study the impact of all this negative news flow on Brand Goa. The scope of the study is limited only to the domestic tourists who visited Goa during the month of August 2015.

*Copy Right, IJAR, 2016.. All rights reserved.*

### **Introduction:-**

Goa has always been blessed with scenic beauty and vast abundant natural resources. It is also known as "Pearl of the Orient" and a "Tourist Paradise". Blessed with a 105 km coastline along the Arabian Sea, Goa has some of the world's most beautiful beaches which attracts lakhs of tourist every year.

The tourism in the state gained prominence only after it gained independence in 1961 from the Portuguese. Post-independence Goa in the early 60's gained popularity among the Hippie back packer from the west seeking Nirvana. For them Goa was a peaceful economical destination with beautiful beaches and sunshine. After this initial arrival the state slowly grew in popularity among the tourists (domestic as well as foreign) not only for its beautiful beaches but also for its natural scenic beauty, abundant greenery, temples and churches with distinctive style of architecture, colorful and lively feasts and festival and above all, hospitable people with a rich cultural milieu.

Tourism in Goa today is the principal economic activity of Goa. It attracts approximately 30 lakh domestic and foreign tourist annually. Tourism's share in Goa's GDP is 33% and it contributes RS. 850 crores to the States revenues and approximately Rs.450 crores to the central revenues. Tourism employs 1/3rd of the population of Goa which in world terms is an extraordinary statistics and it is the one industry where economic benefits filter down to the grass root level via the multiplier effect.

### **Relevance of Research Topic:-**

Goa has rapidly gained worldwide recognition as a tourist hot spot and has the distinction of being the most sought after destination, having ranked among the top ten in the Millennium year by BBC. This acted as a huge boost for tourism in Goa and the initial few years, post 2000 saw double digit growth in tourist inflow into the state. But after this initial spurt, from 2004 onwards the growth slowed down substantially with a couple of years in fact registering negative growth rates in tourist numbers.

According to the tourism officials the slowdown can be attributed to several factors like, global economic meltdown and also the negative publicity garnered by Goa pertaining to issues like Safety of Women, Drugs, Garbage, etc. And the bigger concern is that some of these inadequacies are more concentrated and visible along the coastline, the very coastline which has been the basis of tourism in Goa. Some of the most famous beaches in Goa are not only facing inadequate infrastructure (poor roads, garbage management, inadequate rooms etc.) but are also earning a bad reputation for drugs, sex and other law and order issues. In today's times of 24X7 coverage by TV news channels, print media and internet all these negative aspects of Goa get highlighted more often than not. Two of the biggest incidents in Goa which captured the national media space were: 1) The Scarlet Keeling Murder (Feb 2008) which portrayed Goa as unsafe for women and even described it as the rape capital of India. 2) The Nigerian clash with the Goan Police (Nov 2013) portrayed Goa as a heaven for Drug Cartels. The objective of the paper is to study the impact of all this negative news flow on Brand Goa. The scope of the study is limited only to the domestic tourists who visited Goa during the month of August 2015.

Studying the impact of negative news about Goa would provide an insight to tourism marketers (GTDC and Goa Tourism Department) in addressing some of the issues highlighted by the tourists and also in projecting the right image of Goa through its promotions.

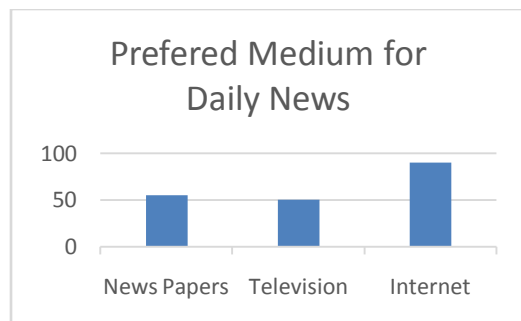
Such a study is more important to Goa where at one extreme the government of Goa is spending crores of Rupees on promoting Goa at different platforms and at the other extreme various negative factors like deteriorating law and order situation, safety of women, easy availability of illegal drugs are giving it negative publicity.

### **Methods**

To carry out this research, a personal interview was conducted by means of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 6 close ended questions and 1 open ended question to measure impact of negative Goa related news coverage on tourists. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the media the tourists are exposed to, the extent of trust they have on the news they are exposed to, the impact of negative Goa related news on these tourists, and the perceived safety of Goa as a tourist destination after the tourist visits the state. The sample size chosen was 100 domestic tourists and the sample chosen was a Selective Sample. The target population surveyed included domestic tourists who were residing in star hotels in North Goa. All the tourists approached were in the age group of 25-45, males as well as females. The survey was conducted in August 2015 which is considered to be an off season of tourist arrivals to Goa. In general, respondents were responsive and willing to participate, and refusal rates were relatively low. The analysis of data was done using simple graphical method, represented in form of bar charts and pie charts for easy understanding.

### **Results:-**

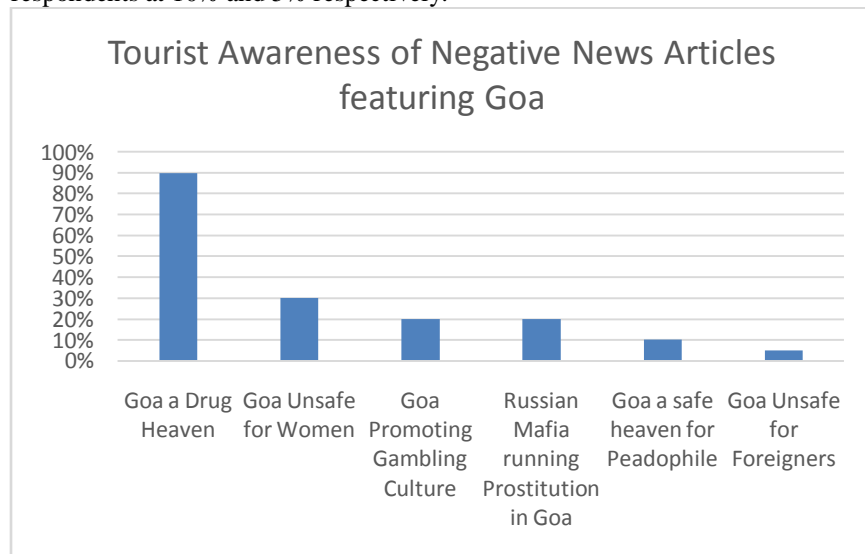
The tourists were asked about the most preferred medium they seek for the latest news. The answers were in tune with the most popular mediums today. Television, Newspaper and Internet are the most popular mediums for news. Internet leads the race with 90% of the respondents saying that they seek news online on various websites. Newspaper follows as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice with 55% respondents preferring it followed closely by Television at 50%. The popularity of internet was also on expected lines as the respondents were all in the younger age group of 25-45.



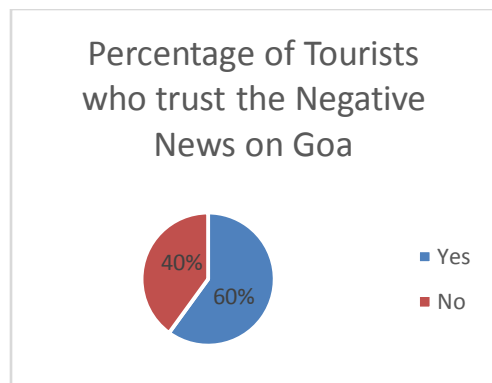
The 2<sup>nd</sup> question focused on the various news items broadcast or published in various mediums, news which portrayed Goa in bad light. The headlines of these news items were chosen from various happening in recent times (last 5 years) and the respondents were asked if they have been exposed to any of these. The news headlines chosen were the following:

- ❖ Goa a Drug Heaven
- ❖ Goa Unsafe for Women
- ❖ Goa Promoting a Gambling culture
- ❖ Russian Mafia Running Prostitution in Goa
- ❖ Goa a safe haven for Pedophiles
- ❖ Goa unsafe for Foreigners.

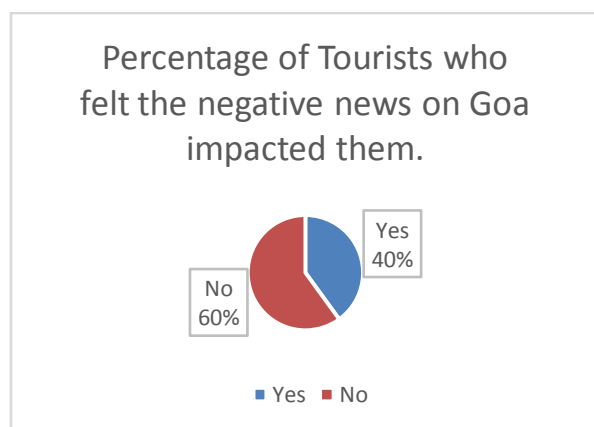
The results proved that in spite of what the police would like us to believe, news portraying Goa as a drug heaven received the maximum exposure. 90% of the respondents said they seen/ read news about the easy access to illegal drugs in Goa. The other news headlines chosen which received significant exposure was about Goa being unsafe for Women at 30%. The news headlines pertaining to Goa promoting a Gambling Culture and the news about the Russian Mafia running prostitution racket in Goa received an exposure of 20%. The news about Goa being a safe haven for Pedophiles and the news about Goa being unsafe for Foreigners received the lowest exposure among the respondents at 10% and 5% respectively.



The 3<sup>rd</sup> question was asked to find out the extent of trust the respondents imparted on such news items which portrayed Goa in bad light. 60% of the respondents believed all these news they were exposed to and 40% said they didn't believe the news. Most of the respondents who said that they don't believe the negative news pertaining to Goa were regular visitors to Goa. This is the main reason that can be attributed to the relatively high numbers who didn't trust the news. Whereas most of the respondents who believed the negative news about Goa were first time visitors or tourists who had not frequented the state often.



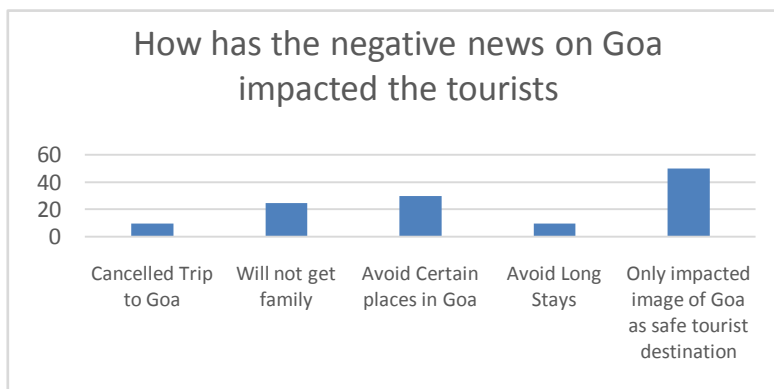
The fourth question was to find out if these negative news items have ever impacted the respondents in their choice of Goa as a holiday destination. The response here shows that this news has had no impact on 60% of the respondents, but a significant 40% of the respondents said that such news has impacted their choice of Goa as a holiday destination.



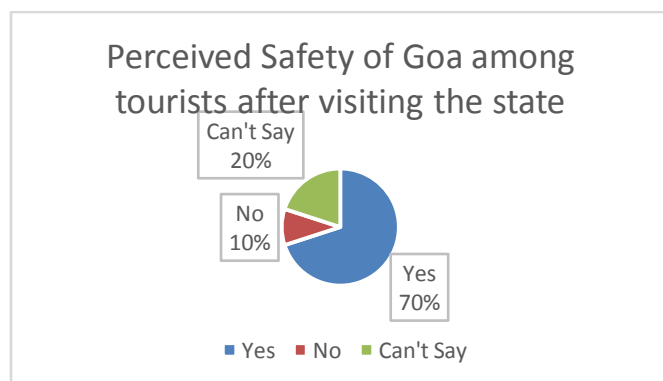
To find the way the negative news about Goa has impacted the tourists, the options chosen for the question were identified after interviewing about 30 tourists. The options chosen were narrowed down to the following:

- ❖ I have cancelled my trip to Goa
- ❖ Don't mind travelling with friends but not with family.
- ❖ I avoid certain places in Goa when on a holiday.
- ❖ I avoid long stays. (More than 3 days).
- ❖ It has only impacted my image of Goa as a safe tourist destination.

The respondents who said that the negative news coverage has impacted them answered this question. The findings show that the maximum impact has been in terms of the perceived image of Goa as a Safe tourist destination with 50% saying that the state image has taken a beating in this regard. 30% of the respondents said that they don't mind traveling to Goa but they are more careful and avoid certain places in the state, especially at night. This response was more common among the female respondents and males who were visiting the state with their family. A sizable 25%, of the respondents, mostly males said that they don't mind travelling to Goa alone or with friends but will not do so with their family. Only 10% of the respondents said that the news about Goa had led them to cancel their trip to the state in the past or made them avoid long stays.



Since all the respondents were tourists who were on a visit to Goa, they were asked about how safe they perceive Goa to be for the tourists after visiting it. An overwhelming 70% of the respondents said they feel Goa is very safe. Only 10% of the respondents said they perceive Goa to be unsafe for tourists. 20% of the respondents were undecided on this issue.



### Conclusion:-

The research has identified a number of findings relevant to understand the impact of negative publicity on the choice of Goa as a holiday destination. Firstly, the younger generation of tourists are increasingly preferring internet over other traditional mediums like television and internet. This is an important point for Goa tourism officials to note as it can help them strategize their promotion and communication much more effectively. Besides negative news on the online platform can be countered much more effectively by having an effective presence on the web.

Goa's image has taken a beating in terms of its perceived safety as a tourist destination and more specifically with regard to safety of female tourists. Besides this a vast majority of the tourists who visit the state perceive the state to be a heaven for drug peddlers which gives easy access to illegal drugs. Even though this has not prevented the majority of tourists from visiting Goa, this can be dangerous in the long run unless this image is cleaned up with the right actions at the ground level and the right image projected through the media. A large chunk of tourists coming to Goa visit the state alone or with friends and perceive it to be not so ideal for families. Besides they also perceive some places within Goa as unsafe. In times when Goa tourism department and GTDC are looking for an image makeover and wants to increasingly target families this is an issue they will need to address urgently.

However the good news for Goa Tourism is that a huge majority of tourists, after visiting the state, feel that it is a very safe holiday destination.

### Limitations:-

There are a number of limitations to this study. Two particular limitations relate to the sampling approach.

Firstly, the respondent sample was only drawn from North Goa who were staying in star hotels. Tourists who visit South Goa may have added a different perspective to this study. Goa attracts both domestic and international

tourists. International visitors might differ in their exposure to the negative news about Goa and may also have a different opinion on how this news has impacted them. An additional limitation is that the tourists chosen for the study were on a visit to Goa and hence the findings may be a little biased as the respondents had already shown their preference for Goa as a holiday destination.

**References:-**

1. Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood(2008), Beyond Sun, Sand and Sea: The Emergent Tourism Programme in the Turksand Caicos Islands (TCI),(International Journal of Heritage Tourism).
2. [www.goa-tourism.com](http://www.goa-tourism.com)
3. [www.goatourism.gov.in](http://www.goatourism.gov.in)
4. Hugh Wilkins, Bill Merrilees, Carmel Herington (2013), Tourism and Destination Branding (Journal of Vacation Marketing).