



Call for Action !

A Robin Hood Reversal – Facilitating The Powerful and Punishing The Weak

EQUATIONS
30 October 2012

The Department of Tourism had announced the Draft Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act, 2012 in September 2012. This document is the critique of the Draft Act along with our suggestions and recommendations for change in the Act.

To,
Anand Singh
Minister, Tourism
Government of Karnataka,
#49, 2nd Floor, Khanija Bhavan,
Race Course Road,
Bangalore 560 001

October 30, 2012

Dear Mr. Singh,

Sub: EQUATIONS comments on the Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act 2012

We welcome the Department's endeavour to create an Act to facilitate Tourism Trade in Karnataka. Enclosed are our comments and recommendations on the Draft Karnataka Tourism Trade Facilitation Act 2012.

We summarise our key comments and recommendations below -

1. The Act focuses only on facilitation of tourism trade, and does not mandate itself with the important role of regulation. Considering the potential social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts that tourism can bring, it is important that the Act is regulatory in nature, so that negative impacts are minimised. Accordingly, we recommend that the Act be renamed to Karnataka Tourism Trade Regulation Act 2012.
2. The informal sector does not find a mention in this Act. This is disappointing since studies have shown that the informal sector contributes as much as 70% to the tourist economy of a destination. Even where it does in the case of hawkers and guides, the position it takes is against the constitution.
3. It is important that the role of the local self-governing institutions (LSGIs) are recognised and privileged in tourism planning and development. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments, which devolve powers to LSGIs must be upheld in letter and spirit.
4. The Act is silent on the impacts of growth in kinds and models of tourism development and tourist numbers. This is a serious lapse, since tourism has been proven to have major social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts on local communities and the environment, which are of detrimental in nature.
5. Tourism is a complex and inter-disciplinary subject. Thus, inter-departmental collaboration between various Departments and ministries is critical. The Act completely fails to mention any kind of such collaborations.

6. Given the scope and scale of this Act, we recommend that the Department conducts multi-stakeholder consultations, and takes into consideration views from all the stakeholders. To ensure that local communities have access to this process, the Draft Act should be translated into Kannada and meetings held at all tourism destinations in the state. Sufficient prior information should be given to the communities so that they can participate in these consultations.

We sincerely hope that you take our recommendations and would be happy to discuss the points raised in an attempt to make tourism democratic, just and sustainable.

Yours sincerely,

Swathi Seshadri
Networking Coordinator
EQUATIONS

Copy To:

1. Smt. Latha Krishna Rao, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Chairman, KSTDC
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3. Tallam Dwarakanath, President, Tourism Committee, FKCCI
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