CHAPTER: -II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Women Empowerment - Its Necessity:

2.2. Tourism and Local Community Development:

2.3. Tourism and Women Empowerment:

2.4: Community Attitudes towards Tourism:

2.5: Tourism Products:

Research Gap:

Problem Statement:

Objectives of the Study:

Scope of the Study:

Perceived Limitation:
CHAPTER: II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1. Women Empowerment - Its Necessity:

Women’s empowerment is particularly important for determining a country’s demographic trends. Demographic trends in turn affect its economic success and environmental sustainability. The status of any given section of population in a society is ultimately connected with its economic position, which (itself) depends on rights, roles and opportunities for participation in economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of a society’s stage of development (Singh 32). Naz and Choudhury (20), enumerate that socio-political, economic, and religious constraints exist to a greater extent in women’s empowerment and gender development. Their study suggested that proper policy making, implementation, education to both genders and equal socialization and the role of government would promissingly increase gender development and women’s empowerment in society.

Women’s economic empowerment is not only a question of rights. When women are given economic opportunity, the benefit are also large for their families, their communities, and ultimately for national development efforts. Opening economic opportunities for women puts poverty reduction on a faster track and steps up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The aim of MDG includes the eradication of poverty and hunger by 2015 (World Bank). For empowerment of women action is required at multiple levels to change gendered norms, from individuals and families to communities, through programmes, policy, and legislation (Keleher and Franklin 43). Economic empowerment of women is very important for the society as women are more likely to spend their income on the health and education of their children than men (Cox and Healey 26).

Sen (35) made a compelling case for the notion that societies need to see women less as passive recipients of help, and more as dynamic promoters of social transformation, a view strongly buttressed by a body of evidence suggesting that the education, employment and ownership rights of women
have a powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and contribute to economic development. Economic participation concerns not only the actual number of women participating in the labor force, but also their remuneration on an equal basis. Worldwide, excluding the agricultural sector, in both developed and developing countries, women are still averaging slightly less than 78% of the wages given to men for the same work, a gap which refuses to close even in the most developed countries (Billitteri 48). Aggarwal (2) commented that economic participation of women is very important. Their presence in the workforce in quantitative terms is important not only for lowering the disproportionate levels of poverty among women, but also as an important step towards raising household income and encouraging economic development as a whole.

Yumkella, the Director-General of UNIDO, expressed that Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, especially in developing countries, is ever more important in light of the current mega trends and challenges the world is facing. Empowering women translates into greater prosperity for families, communities and economies, ultimately leading to sustainable development. He commented on economic empowerment of women as the economic participation of women, and their presence in the workforce in quantitative terms. This is important not only for lowering the disproportionate levels of poverty among women but also encouraging economic development in countries. In their report, Hosni and Lundberg (78), advised the Nepal Government to incorporate women’s development in its poverty reduction plan. They commented in the report that women should become an urgent priority in the government’s poverty reduction plans. Only then could Nepal be in a position to effectively address its other problems, including gender gaps, and achieve self-sustained development.

Despite worldwide evidence of the low levels of female participation in social, educational, economic and political spheres, there is still a tendency to see it as a real problem only in a limited number of countries. Yet, as noted above, the reality is that no country in the world, no matter how advanced, has achieved true gender equality, as measured by comparable decision-making.
power, equal opportunity for education and advancement, and equal participation and status in all walks of human endeavor. Gender disparities exist even in countries without glaring male-domination. Measuring these disparities is a necessary step towards implementing corrective policies (World Economic Forum 2). Tesoriero (330) mentioned that in India, there are fewer women in the paid workforce than men. Women are under-represented in governance and decision-making positions. Most women do not have any autonomy in decision making in their personal lives.

Research has revealed that women join the workforce because economic productivity enhances their self-esteem, even at the cost of dual pressure and additional stress. However, this stress often results in detrimental effects on satisfaction with life and work and adjustment in general (Desai et al. 441). The working women’s status at their workplace reflect their vulnerability as they are typically paid less and have less financial and social security than men (Usher and Morais 516; Nyaupane, et. al. 1380). Their jobs are characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and substandard working conditions, especially in Western Asia and Northern Africa, where paid employment opportunities for women are the lowest. Globally, only one quarter of senior officials or managers is women. In Western Asia, Southern Asia and Northern Africa, women hold less than 10 per cent of top-level positions (MDG-3).

Assam Human Development Report (125) threw light on inequality in the achievement between men and women of Assam in different spheres of life. The report viewed that poverty, violence and lack of political participation were the main issues of concern for South Asian Women, and Assam was no exception. Assam’s overall Female Workforce Participation Rate (FWPR) is 20.8%. It is lower than the national average of 25.7%. The majority of women workers are either unpaid or poorly paid and belong to the category of unskilled labour. Female work participation rates (FWPR) in Karbi aglong, Golaghat and Nagaon are 33.36%, 31.59%, 19.08% and their respective ranks are 3, 5 and 15. Nayak and Mahanta (12) revealed that development process in Assam is not gender neutral; women enjoy quite inferior status as compared to
the average women in India. Percentage of women in the government services and their political participation is quite low and does not show any sign of significant improvement.

A number of authors (Mitchell and Eagles; Mitra 329; Jurajda 220) highlight long term discrimination between gender in terms of occupation, earnings and promotion prospect. There are many factors that may affect women’s empowerment such as age, education, assets etc. Rahman at. el. (296-301) observed that the age of female has negative effects on empowerment. That implies that younger females are more empowered. They further observed that assets are positively related to women’s empowerment. On the other hand, Kabeer, et. al. (38-9) studied paid work as pathway to women’s empowerment, but the study reflected a different picture. The result shows that not only economic but other two factors cognitive and relational are also important to bring sustainable and transformative changes in women’s lives leading to empowerment.

Hughes (112-13) studied how motivations are linked to the types of businesses women build and the economic rewards they receive among Canadian women. The findings suggest diversity in the motivations and success of women entrepreneurs. The most commonly reported motivator is a desire for independence, freedom, and to be one’s own boss (cited by 24% of women). However, other “classic” motivators—such as challenge and financial opportunity—are somewhat less important, and superseded by work-family balance (13.3%) and flexible hours (10.2%). Close behind these is another factor often associated with work-family balance, the ability to work from home (8.4%). Several other “classic” factors are also important. Challenge (10.0%) is the most commonly cited, followed down the list by opportunities for earning more money (6.4%) and control (4.6%). The gender differences in motivations are statistically significant. It is interesting to see that “work-family” factors are far less salient for men. Just 7.9% of men cite any of the work-family factors as a primary motivator (that is, balance, flexible hours, and work from home).
Effectiveness of education is reflected over time, particularly in employment and income data (UNICEF 28-29). Girls' education has significant economic benefits. Psacharapoulos and Patrinos (1) estimate that every year of schooling lost represents a 10% reduction in girls' future incomes. In a 72-country analysis, as well as country studies in Uganda, Kenya, and Zambia, reductions in HIV/AIDS infection rates are found to be related to literacy and girls' education. In a 63-country study, gains in women's education contributed more than any other intervention to reduce malnutrition, between 1970 and 1995, due to more productive farming (Smith and Haddad 62). Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is a non-formal education programme. Village women joined this low-paid teaching work outside their home for the benefit of deprived community members and in turn it enhanced their social standing in both society and at home (Sperandio 134). Studies have shown that an extra year of girls' education can reduce infant mortality by 5-10%, especially in low income countries. In Africa, children of mothers who receive 5 years of primary education are 40% more likely to live beyond 5 years of age (Herz and Sperling 2). Multi-country data show that educated mothers are 50% more likely to immunize their children than uneducated mothers (Gage et al. 307). According to Mukhopadhyay (222-23) women empowerment through education has emerged as the only way to put an end to the horrors of dowry in India. While education may not be an adequate base for empowerment, exclusion from education reinforces powerlessness (Jayaweera 421). In India, the adult literacy rate of female was found to be 54.16% which is much lower than the male literacy rate of 75.85%. In Assam also literacy rate of female (56.03%) is lower than the male literacy rate, which is 71.93% (Census of India).

Presently Micro Finance Institutions are assisting women for their empowerment. The RDCP (Regional Development in the Copa’n Valley’ Project) is being promoted as a success story by the World Bank in terms of economic opportunities for ‘vulnerable groups’. The use of microenterprise funding as one of the foundations of the World Bank’s ‘Gender Plan’ is problematic (Ferguson 20). According to her RDCP lacks in clear guidelines about what a ‘gender component’ actually means. It leads to confusion and
contradiction at the levels of national policy-making, programme design and project implementation. Although indigenous women’s groups were to be given ‘priority’ in the RDCP, the ambiguous and vague ways in which ‘gender’ was presented at the national and project level meant that in practice these were not the highest priorities of the RDCP.

According to Cheston and Kuhn (5) microfinance programme when properly designed can make an important contribution to women’s empowerment. In recent years, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in developing countries have introduced microfinance programmes offering financial services to low income households, specifically targeting women. This was based on the premise that women in poor households are more likely to be credit constrained, and hence less able to undertake income-earning activities.

According to Nai (46), micro-credit is helping in economic empowerment of women. With the aim to meet the Millennium Development Goals and microfinance programmes’ role in supporting it, there has been an increasing expectation on their impact on women’s empowerment. Contribution of microfinance to women’s empowerment is widely recognised. Almost all rural financial institutions in Sri Lanka have provided easy access to women, particularly in the villages, estates and among fishing communities. Small Farmers and Landless Credit Project (SFLCP), Poverty Alleviation Micro Finance Project (PAMP). Thrift and Credit Societies have been successful in providing loan facilities up to 93% for women (Jayamaya 7).

According to the Harris (27) of the 106.6 million poorest clients reached by microfinance, at the end of 2007, 83.2 percent or 88.7 million were women. The growth in the number of very poor women reached has gone from 10.3 million at the end of 1999 to 104.7 million at the end of 2009. This is a 919 percent increase in the number of poorest women reached from December 31, 1999 to December 31, 2009. The increase represents an additional 94.4 million poorest women receiving microloans in the last 10 years. The report also reveals that MFI’s coverage is maximum (64.2%) in Asia.
Government of India introduced the first goal of National Policy for the Empowerment of Women as to create an environment for positive economic and social policies for full development of women. The aim of the policy was to enable women to realize their full potential (Ministry for women and Child Development). In spite of all these Claros and Zahidi (9), found Gender Gap Rank of India as 53 with an overall score of 3.27 (scores are reported on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 representing maximum gender equality). In 2010 the gender inequality index value of India was reduced further to 0.748 and ranked 122 (HDR-2010, 158).

Involvement of women in business world is increasing in recent years (Cave and Kilic 280). Worldwide various organizations are working for women empowerment through different programmes. PROGRESA-Oportunidades is a nationwide anti-poverty programme in Mexico, involving the disbursement of cash transfers and incentives to improve health, nutrition, and education. The programme has had a significant impact on women’s empowerment and status, access to appropriate health services, and school enrolment, particularly among poor families (Adato et al. 90).

The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) of India is a trade union reaching a vast number of poor self-employed women. Since the foundation in 1972, SEWA has emerged as one of the leading organizations of poor working women in the third world (Spodek 193). SEWA’s approach is multi-level, from the micro levels of skill building to institutional and legal reform and capacity building, to enable local organizations to increase their effectiveness and sustainability. SEWA have been effective in improving women’s economic status because they have started with the premise that women are fundamental to the process of economic development (Mehra 146). The achievements of SEWA have been remarkable, utilizing social protections and innovative services with rapid growth of 25-35% per year (Grown, Gupta and Pande 542). In North East India, NEWEA (North East Women Entrepreneurs’ Association) is working for the benefit of women entrepreneurs in this area (Gohain 5).
2.2. Tourism and Local Community Development:

Tourism is a major economic activity in terms of income generation, employment creation, foreign exchange earnings, and interchange of cultures and people (Ige and Odularu 71). According to Andriotis and Vaughan (66-67) tourism has potential to generate economic activity in areas where there are typically few alternative sources of economic diversification. It has been realized by many governments and, as a result, tourism has been identified as an important aspect in many development and regeneration strategies.

According to Aref and Redzuan (208) tourism plays an increasingly important role in the development of communities. The benefits of tourism can either be tangible (e.g. job creation, state and local tax revenue, etc.) or less tangible (e.g. social structure, quality of life, etc.). Mitchell and Eagles compared the differences in the level of community integration in the respective tourism sectors of the Andean communities of Taquile Island and Chiquian, Peru. Data were collected through survey of key-informant interviews, and participatory observation. Integration was primarily defined by percentage of local people employed, type and degree of participation, decision-making power, and ownership in the local tourism sector. It was found that higher levels of integration would lead to enhanced socioeconomic benefits for the community.

Studies have revealed that tourism increases employment opportunities for the local people, contributes to income and standard of living (Dyer et al. 415; Gu & Rayn 642), brings in new business and improves investment opportunities (Kwan & McCartney 430).

According to Binns and Nel (236) the emergence of tourism as a leading economic activity in recent decades is undisputed. Williams (1) argues, it is now seen as a catalyst for modernization, economic development and prosperity in emerging nations in the Third World. In South Africa, the potential of tourism to revitalize local economies at a crucial time in the country's history has been seized upon by many local authorities and stakeholder groups. They wished to use tourism as a Local Economic
Development (LED) strategy to create jobs and refocus their local economies. Hampton (753) suggested that the nature of small-scale locally owned tourism businesses, particularly their minimal capital requirements, might be seen as a form of 'pro-poor tourism'. It may provide a useful component of local economic development strategies for poor communities. Further, Small-scale tourism development may also be seen as an effective local response to some of the effects of globalization, specifically, increasing flows of international tourists to developing countries.

The potential role of tourism in providing economic opportunities for communities living adjacent to natural heritage has long been recognized (Goodwin 355). Tourism brings development to the locality. For the development of the locality, involvement of local community in tourism activities is important. Bowman (270) suggested that sustainable tourism programmes should be designed locally and based on local area. Sustainable tourism helps in developing the tourism in rural areas based on local natural, social and cultural resources (David 211). Sustainable tourism is possible only when local community is economically benefited. It should help in retaining the tourism revenue and development of the destinations. Tourism is the only international industry where the customer travels to the product and lack of modern development can be an asset (Ashley 8). Therefore, it is one of the few industries that are actually suited to more remote rural areas lacking infrastructure, where job opportunities are meager. It also has the potential to be more sustainable than other industries (Dhakal 3).

Ateljevic examined the entrepreneurial behaviour of small tourism businesses and their ability to contribute to regional development. The research, by combining in-depth interviews and a survey, reports on a case study of Wairarapa, a region of New Zealand that has recently seen a large expansion in the tourism sector. The study identified a number of perceived constraints to Small Tourism Firms' (STFs') growth and their success as well as the regional socio-economic prosperity. Competition, particularly from other small businesses (44.5 per cent), labour costs (22 per cent), lack of demand (36.7 per cent), limited access to finance (16.6 per cent), high operational costs...
associated with regulatory and financial obligations, followed by high interest rates, lack of skilled workers, and competition from larger businesses, were the main concerns for owner/managers. According to him, the success of both the small tourism sector and the Wairarapa region at large depends on how well they respond to the changing circumstances. Wairarapa has not only emerged from a traditional rural area to a dynamic region because of its geography that fits into the framework of “new tourism”, but also because of economic necessity that has pushed local communities to yield their entrepreneurial capabilities. Policy coordination and integration is required across the breadth of government agencies either directly (e.g. regulation, compliance) or indirectly (e.g. interest rates, regional tourism marketing) involved in small firm development. Given that, the small firm is multifaceted by its very nature. There is an imperative for research to demonstrate not only the issues affecting development within the sector but also the benefits that the sector contributes to wider processes of regional economic development.

Ashley has indicated that there is a potential of community-based tourism to generate financial and social benefits for communities in Namibia, and hence to achieve objectives of development and conservation. In Namibia tourism contributes approximately 5% to Gross Domestic Product and 12% to foreign exchange earnings. According to her, there is potential for further expansion of community benefits from tourism in Namibia. For example, income earned by local workers and communities from tourism enterprises could increase three-fold in the communal areas of Caprivi, Bushmanland, and Kunene, even without any increase in the natural resource base or decrease in agricultural land-use. By raising local incomes and developing skills, this expansion can contribute to sustainable local development and community based conservation. At the same time, involvement of local people in the industry improves the tourism product and enhances popular support for the industry. Wages paid to local staff by private operations, such as up-market lodges, will continue to account for the bulk of local incomes from tourism. However, income that is earned and controlled by the community is probably more significant at boosting local development and conservation. It can be distributed more widely, linked more visibly to wildlife conservation, and can
involve development of local skills, institutions and decision-making. This income can be earned from campsites, crafts and other community enterprises (N$2-20,000 per year), voluntary revenue-sharing by lodges (N$10-15,000 per year), and joint ventures between communities and investors (N$20-80,000 per year). Ashley’s estimate of potential tourism activities in Caprivi, Bushmanland and Kunene indicates that income from crafts could double and other community-enterprises expand five-fold. Much has already been done, at both local and policy level, to promote community based tourism. However, many constraints remain. The report pointed out that communities need more information, skills, and rights over land and wildlife to engage equally with tourists and private operators. Private operators also need information and incentives. So there is much that Government can do to set a favorable policy environment, facilitate communication, ensure government procedures and regulations, and accommodate needs of community-based tourism. In 2003 the total estimated direct income and benefits to conservancies and community members amounted to nearly $1.764 million. Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) supported enterprises (i.e., joint-venture lodges, trophy hunting concessions, thatching grass industry, community-based tourism enterprises, crafts, and live game sales) resulted in the employment of 542 full-time and 2,933 part-time employees in Namibia (USAID).

Huttasin investigated the impacts of tourism development at Baan Tawai, the first OTOP (One Tambon One Product) Tourism Village in Thailand, and examined the relationship between demographic factors and Baan Tawai residents' perceptions of the social impacts of tourism development. Data collection tool for the investigation was questionnaires. The finding was that the residents positively perceived the social impacts of tourism in terms of job creation for women in the village. More than 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statements that tourism offers women in the village additional job opportunities, reduces unemployment, increases the pride of villagers, increases family income and increases the standard of living. However, more than 90% of the respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with the negative impacts that tourism brings into their village, for example,
dramatically and rapidly increasing prices of land and houses, and changing of villagers' vocations from farming to tourism-related careers. Additionally, more than 80% mention that tourism has increased the number of people moving from other areas to the village, and has increased litter and garbage in the village. It is interesting that more than 60% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements that tourism increases prostitution, drug abuse, vandalism and burglary in their village. Furthermore, more than 50% did not believe that tourism benefited only a few people in their village and felt that prices of goods and services increased because of tourism.

The development of tourism in Okavango has led to the establishment of community-based tourism initiatives (Mbaiwa). These have resulted in income generation, and employment of the local people. The Tawana Land Board has allocated land on joint venture partnerships with tour operators. Through this local communities in Okavango have been able to generate revenue for themselves through hunting and photographic tourism activities. But when the researcher informally interviewed the community-based organization’s (CBOs) Board members they pointed out that benefits (e.g. revenue) that local communities obtain from community-based tourism are insignificant when compared to those obtained by the private tour operators or by government. For example, local communities sell a single elephant to a safari operator at US$ 8000, the same elephant is sold to an overseas safari hunter by the operator at US$ 80,000. This means tourism in the Okavango Delta does not have substantial and meaningful economic benefits to the local people. Hence, its sustainability in terms of socio-economic benefits becomes questionable.

A key challenge in sustainable tourism is to develop economically viable enterprises that provide livelihood benefits to local communities while protecting indigenous cultures and environments. Such ventures are difficult to assess due to a general lack of effective assessment and monitoring methods, a lack of consensus about methodology and the inability of some monitoring systems to incorporate all elements of tourism impacts (Simpson). He formulated a structured integrated assessment approach to assess the impacts of initiatives that purport to deliver net livelihood benefits to communities.
living adjacent to or within the tourism destination. The approach included a survey of household and tourists, Participatory Rural Appraisal for the villagers and interview of stakeholders. The approach has been developed to enable generic use in different geographical contexts taking into account a variety of aspects including ownership structure, levels of employment, infrastructure, governance, and sustainable livelihoods (SL). Two pilot case studies were also conducted in Maputaland, South Africa, to reflect on the implementation and theoretical underpinnings of the protocol.

Simpson showed that the tourism initiatives had affected community development and the communities' livelihoods and assets in both positive and negative ways, the positive impacts generally seem to be outweighing the negative ones. The financial benefits are limited to a select few households who have members directly employed in tourism sector. Other livelihood assets such as physical assets (e.g. infrastructure) have improved only marginally and these improvements have not met the expectations of the community or the tourism industry stakeholder. Improvements in human resource assets are also limited to those few who have been trained for work in lodges. Some gender empowerment took place in the Mathenjwa community as a result of the curio shop being built and a group of women taking on the manufacturing of products to sell there.

According to Panigrahi the ethnic communities should be encouraged to enrich their ethnic heritage and skills so as to make their traditions more attractive rather than less in the face of change. Eco-tourism (inclusive of its ethno component) should provide an opportunity for these tribal communities to generate more income from the tourism business in a dignified manner. He also mentioned that the fabric of native culture reflected through folklore, folk music, folk dance, and customs should be promoted through required value addition.

According to Cengiz et.al. (3840) tourism brings in socio-economic and socio-cultural benefits, it can also bring along some costs. For this reason implementing ecologic tourism in areas that are ecologically sensitive will minimize such problems. They also stated that for the sake of the principle of
sustainability, an understanding of a participatory tourism that does not harm natural and cultural sources and environment, that protects recreational tourism sources, and that aims development should be adopted. The matter of tourism, which has a sensitive ecology, need to be solved together with the local community on protecting-using basis and on environment sensible ecologic tourism basis.

2.3. Tourism and Women Empowerment:

In most developing countries, gender inequality is a major obstacle for development. In order to achieve the millennium development goals in 2015 one of the most important aspects will be, to try to diminish the gap between women and men in terms of capacities, increase access to resources and opportunities, and reduce vulnerability to violence and conflict. One of the aspects in which gender (inequalities) issues can play an important role is tourism development. In changing the lives of poor women, enhancing incomes and increasing their self-esteem, there are more and more tourism projects to support women empowerment. Not much attention has been given to research about women empowerment through tourism yet (Ampumuza et. al.7)

The tourism industry represents a huge economic factor and its environmental and social impacts are obvious and have been well documented. In addition, integrating gender perspectives into the discussion of tourism is particularly important as the tourism industry is one major employer of women, offers various opportunities for independent income generating activities, and at the same time affects women’s lives in destination communities (UNED-UK).

Ong (7) interestingly commented on tourism as the key which, if innovatively applied, can surely unlock doors of empowerment for women. According to Bansal and Kumar (9) local women of Kullu valley in India are empowered by handicraft business in tourism. Panda (32) mentioned that women of Assam can get engaged in Eco-tourism sector, either as self employed or private and public servant for their empowerment.
Tourism is more labour intensive and employs a higher proportion of women. Unlike many other traded-good industries, it has potential in poor countries and areas with few other competitive exports. Tourism products can be built on natural resources and culture which are assets that some of the poor have (DFID).

The overarching vision for the Global Report on Women in Tourism (42-3) is to promote women’s empowerment and protect women’s rights through better tourism work. There are five goals: to promote equal opportunities for women working in tourism; to inspire increased entrepreneurship for women in tourism; to advance women through education and training; to encourage women to lead in tourism; and to protect vulnerable women and those working in home-based tourism enterprises. This report aimed at monitoring how well tourism was inspiring women as employers and entrepreneurs. Overall women are much better represented as employers in the hospitably industry. The key overall findings of the report are:

- Women’s pay appears to be closer to men’s in tourism than in other sectors.
- Women are much more likely to be employers/ self-employed in the H&HR (Human resource) sector than in other sectors.
- Women are slightly more likely to hold leadership positions in tourism than in other sectors.
- Women are more likely to work from home in the H&R sector than in other sectors.

According to Ghodsee (474) tourism can be considered as one of the important sectors for women empowerment; it is a labour intensive industry and tends to employ many economically disadvantaged groups, such as, women and ethnic minorities. In another study in Bulgaria, Ghodsee found that although only 29 percent of managers and administrators in Bulgaria are female (UNDP), 71 percent of managers and administrators in tourism are women. Women dominate middle and the high-level management positions. Out of 42 hotels and villas in the resort of Albena, 32 had women hotel managers at the beginning of the summer of 2000. She prepared a survey of 24 questions for women and men working in the tourism sector. 850 questionnaires were
distributed and 787 were received back. Of these, 91.5 percent of the respondents worked in hotels; 4 percent were employed in free-standing restaurants; and 4.5 percent came from other tourist establishments in the resorts (i.e. shops, bars, etc.). Of the 787 responses, 489 were from women and 297 were from men.

Hazel (101) conducted a longitudinal research to study the processes of tourism and socio-cultural change in a Turkish village context by exploring how gender identities and gendered spaces are being reconstituted through tourism-related work. As tourism has developed in the region surrounding the World Heritage Site of Goreme in central Turkey, men have become tourism entrepreneurs and gained tourism employment whilst women have remained largely excluded from tourism work. This is because in Goreme society tourism work is considered a man’s activity as it is inappropriate for women to work in the ‘public’ sphere. During the past five years, however, there has been a marked increase both in women’s paid employment in local tourism small businesses and in women’s micro scale entrepreneurial activity associated with tourism. He considered some of the broader influential aspects of social change, and also looked at how the spatial and moral boundaries have shifted in order to allow women to work in the tourism domain. The women’s relationship with tourism space and work has added insight into how, as tourism has developed, women have negotiated the spatial and moral boundaries of tourism in order to find a ‘place’ for themselves in the tourism economic realm. As the more successful pansiyons (Guest house) have grown and formalized their employment structure, female spaces have been included within the overall hegemonic male space of the establishment. Particularly for the young women in Goreme, the spatial boundaries and the boundaries of shame are gradually shifting and being stretched out. Some older women, too, are ‘crafting new selves’ through their entrepreneurial activities; activities which are working to reconfigure ‘domestic’ space in its use for economic gain and also to challenge the ways that gender identities are performed within that space.
Ferguson (20) argued that while tourism development may, in theory, contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, a substantive reframing of policies is required in order to be able to maximize this potential. She also pointed out that the broad overview of the relationship between tourism and the MDG-3 has highlighted some of the tensions and complexities of this issue.

In Guatemala, men hold most technical and higher paying jobs in Tourism (Usher and Morais 516). On contrary to this women hold occupations consistent with their traditional roles as family caretakers. These occupations include cooking food, producing and selling crafts, and cleaning in tourism and lodging facilities.

Balasubramanian carried out a study to find out different measure to strengthen rural livelihoods through the tourism process. He argued that the art and craft skills of the rural population and tourists’ interest in endogenous tourism can help in income generation and enhancement of basic qualities of life in rural areas. He observed that tourism is being used as a vanguard area for testing new livelihood possibilities, particularly for women and other disadvantaged groups.

Gentry examined Belizean women’s employment experience in alternative, mass, and non tourism businesses to determine whether the alternative sector addresses criticism attributed to mass tourism employment. Data were gathered using anthropological research methods including semi structured interview and participant observation. The research highlighted the diversity of experiences in various employment sectors. This case study showed that employment is exploiting traditional belief, particularly in reference to sex-based segregation, housewifization of labour, double workday, low wages, and low education levels. However, in terms of household economic decision making, social interaction, business ownership, and level of autonomy, employment seems to be offering opportunities to challenge the norm.

According to Scheyvens (235-46) women and girls have greater interaction with the natural environment than men do. Women’s cooperation is needed if
that natural resource base, the resource upon which the ecotourism trade is dependent, is to be sustained. Four dimensions of empowerment of women, which are involved with ecotourism ventures discussed by her are: economic, social, psychological, and political. It is essential to consider issues such as whether a community has control over an ecotourism initiative (political empowerment), whether it provides opportunities for people to develop new skill, gain respect within the communities and thus improves their self-esteem (psychological empowerment), and whether it enhances community cohesion (social empowerment). The study highlighted both disempowering and empowering impacts of involvement in ecotourism for women. One key finding is that women are not simply victims of inappropriate ecotourism development, rather they have benefited greatly from some well-planned initiatives.

Wilkinson & Pratiwi found that tourism development in Pangandaran has influenced gender roles and relations especially among the lower-class local people, in social (e.g., child-rearing practices) and economic terms. Despite the problem of double or even triple work responsibilities, more women have become self-employed by engaging in the informal sector, particularly in informal trading. This has led to more control over their lives, as they can be at least economically partially independent. This economic improvement has the potential to empower them to have more control over their own lives and their family’s survival in a community with a significant predominance of poverty.

Tourism has demonstrated its potential for creating jobs and encouraging income-generating activities to benefit local communities in destination areas. The tourism sector provides various entry points for women employment in small and medium sized income generating activities, thus creating paths towards the elimination of poverty of women and local communities in developing countries (Hemmati). According to her the general picture suggests that the tourism industry seems to be a particularly important sector for women (46% of the workforce are women) as their percentages of employment in most countries are higher than in the workforce in general (34
are women, ILO data). The number of women and their percentage of the workforce in tourism vary greatly between countries from 2% up to over 80%. Although there were few obvious regional trends it would appear that in those countries where tourism is a more mature industry woman generally account for around 50% of the workforce. It appears that there has been a broad increase in the participation of women for tourism industry at a global level. The majority of this increase in female participation may be driven by the growth in the industry for specific countries, such as Puerto Rico, Chile and Turkey. For the industrially developed countries, there has been little change in the actual participation of women in the tourism industry.

Hemmati also highlighted the gender disparity in tourism work and wage structures. The proportion of women's to men's working hours available for 39 countries is 89%, which means that women work 89 hours when men work 100 hours. The proportion of women's to men's wages is 79%. Regarding the disproportionate relation between women's and men's working hours and their respective wages, there is a divide between the developed world, which employs females on an average weekly wage equivalent to 80% of a male's wage, and the less developed world, where average female wages fall by another 10% to 70% of male wages. However, there are significant variations within these groups. Women's position in tourism industry in terms of hierarchical levels is also not equal to men. Horizontally, women and men are placed in different occupations. Women are being employed as waitresses, chambermaids, cleaners, sales persons in travel agencies, flight attendants, etc., whereas men are being employed as barmen, gardeners, construction workers, drivers, pilots, etc. Vertically, the typical "gender pyramid" is prevalent in the tourism sector. Lower levels and occupations with few career development opportunities are being dominated by women, and key managerial positions being dominated by men.

Research by Nyaupane et.al. (1379) found that tourism development in the Annapurna region of Nepal has resulted in the empowerment of women. They argue that tourism has improved the quality of life for local inhabitants and has revived the traditional culture of the region. Impact of tourism on
mountain women are also studied by Sherpa in terms of economic opportunities, extension of household work, empowerment and bringing market to the mountains. Though in Nepal the percentage of women employment in tourism is 50% or even more, their role in decision making with respect to resource management is less compared to men. Migration of men, commoditization of women, and loss of indigenous culture are challenges for mountain tourism. These challenges can be addressed by bringing together stakeholders through social mobilization. Capacity enhancement, skills training and providing access to credit to mountain women are some ways through which the role of mountain women in tourism can be optimized. Above all, the leading role of mountain women in natural resource management and their roles as preservers of culture and indigenous wisdom have to be acknowledged and the Government ought to take appropriate protective steps if it is actually committed to protecting and enhancing one of the leading industries of Nepal. McMillan et al. studied how commercial hospitality has catalyzed sustainable social change in Nepal through empowering women. Utilizing a new framework, developed by combining existing theories, empowerment of women teahouse owners/managers was assessed. Primary research consisting of interviews and participant observation was undertaken over a three-month period in the central region of Nepal. The study revealed that involvement in the hospitality industry improved the livelihoods of the women tea house owners/managers; it also has the potential to facilitate sustainable empowerment for future generations, providing them with education, choice, control and opportunities.

In many cases, tourism is considered to have negative impact on women. However, studies have shown that tourism is not the only reason for that. The study conducted by Losinski & Waldorf in San Cristobal, Galapagos Island, shows that alcoholism, abuse, prostitution and machismo culture are all themes of women's rights that existed on the island long before tourism did, and still continue to exist. The quantity and ways in which these factors affect women's lives and opportunities have changed over time. However, an attitude of gender equality is more widespread in younger generations. Even the mindsets of older generations are also changing. Factors responsible for
this change include media, foreign and local activism, foreign students and volunteers, and tourism.

Due to the continuous need for full time, part time, casual and seasonal staff, the tourism industry is often considered as ideal for women who need to accommodate paid work around their various traditional gender related roles and responsibilities (Parrett). Tourism industry has tremendous opportunities for women. To make women successful in tourism industry, few changes or improvements are to be made (Frangialli). According to Green (104) there are four broad areas for improvement that would serve to enhance women’s employment opportunities and skills. These include: Skills development and training, Flexible working, Childcare and Information dissemination.

According to Haladi tourism is an industry that has an impact on economic, social, environmental and political conditions and on gender relations. For any economic activity to be considered as important and meaningful, an assessment of its impact on the lives of people needs to be carried out. During the course of her research ‘Tourism and its Impact on Gender: A Case Study of Goa, India’, she has observed the following:

- The number of women in the hotel industry is significantly lower than men.
- Women are mostly employed in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs and have lesser opportunities than men to find employment in the tourism sector in Goa.
- Women are mostly employed in the front office and housekeeping departments, are employed on a contractual basis and consequently receive lower wages than men.
- There are 146 travel agencies and 91 tour operators in Goa. However, even cursory observation reveals that most of the jobs in travel agencies are occupied by men.
- The number of women in managerial positions is insignificant and those who do find jobs here are employed as front office or secretarial assistants.
- The transport sector is totally dominated by men.
• Even in tourism related businesses like shops, shacks, cafes, and restaurants etc. that are mostly owned and operated by men, women are employed in lower end jobs where their wages are lower than men.

• Tourism continues to attract young girls and boys who often drop out of high school to work in low paid jobs in this sector.

• Today only a very small percentage of the students consider obtaining training/education in tourism related skills as an option before seeking employment. Even if they consider tourism as an employment option, they prefer to begin in semi-skilled/unskilled jobs.

• Tourism does not provide steady employment. The maximum numbers of tourists visit only four out of the eleven talukas (administrative divisions of the state) and so the benefits are concentrated in these areas.

She commented that even if tourism bestows economic benefits by way of generating employment, it is evident from the data and findings mentioned above that the total number of job opportunities for women in the tourism sector is very low and is characterized by gender stereotyping and discrimination. Therefore, the net benefits to women from tourism are extremely low.

According to Munshi (22), tourism processes, like other processes and relations in society, are gendered. The gender bias is built into the discourse of tourism practices, images, and activities. As the tourism processes are expanding rapidly in the globalizing world, there is a need to strengthen the voices against the hegemonic male view of tourism both at the local and global levels. For a start, the agenda of women's movements everywhere must include the demand for greater participation of local people in tourism planning and development, especially if rights and interests of people in tourist destinations in the third world are to be protected. Only then can they share equitably in the benefits that result from tourism.

Petridou and Glaveli (270) examined the effects of training support on rural women's entrepreneurial skills and attitude, co-operatives' viability and growth prospects, and work-family balance. Questionnaires were used to collect data
on participants' perceptions of the effects of the training intervention. The data illustrate participants' perceived benefit in terms of skill improvements i.e. identification and capturing of business opportunities, effective co-operation and flexibility in decision making, and positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship. In addition, perceptions related to the development and growth prospects of the co-operative and work-family balance have also been positively affected.

According to UNWTO, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in tourism matters for two reasons. First, national governments and international organizations are committed to gender equality through a series of commitments: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 3. Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental components of just, equitable societies. UNWTO believes that tourism can provide pathways to empowerment, and that the opportunity for tourism to make a difference in this area should be maximized.

Second, due to women's concentration in the lower status and lower paid jobs in tourism, their potential to contribute fully is currently untapped. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life is essential for building strong economies; creating more stable and just societies; achieving internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights; and improving the quality of life of women, and consequently, that of communities. For the tourism industry, the impact of greater gender equality and women's empowerment would be highly beneficial, because diverse and gender equitable organizations perform better.

2.4: Community Attitudes towards Tourism:

Community acceptance of tourism is a very important aspect for tourism development. It was found that attitudes varied according to people's level of dependency on tourism and certain demographic variables. Interestingly, it was found that less educated people have a more positive perception of
tourism than those who are more highly educated (Alhasanat 379-80). He conducted the study in Petra, Jordan and found that a positive socio-cultural impact of tourism on the people was far exceeding its negative consequences. Brida et. al. (373) conducted a study in the mountain community of Folgaria in Northern Italy, for finding out how the impacts of tourism are perceived by a local population. The results showed that the host population considered ‘tourism brings to the destination much more advantages than disadvantages’.

According to Sharma and Dyer (208) positive attitude towards tourism impacts among communities will result in more successful tourism development. Gursoy & Rutherford (495) suggested that tourism developers need to consider the perception and attitude of residents before they could start a new venture. Moreover, understanding of community perception towards tourism impacts can also help to identify types of tourism, which have the potential for building community capacity (Moscardo 86). Studies have indicated that without residents’ support it is impossible to develop sustainable tourism, but residents only support further development if the balance of tourists’ impacts is favourable for them (Ratz 18). Attitude towards tourism is significantly different between those dependent upon tourism and those not.

Residents those who are dependent on tourism have more positive tourism attitudes. According to Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (980) a host population is influenced by the perceived positive benefits of the industry.

Sekhar (345) mentioned that there appears to be correlation between benefits obtained by local people from wildlife tourism and other sources, and support for protected area existence. Therefore, benefits impact people’s attitudes towards conservation. According to him some of the main problems of tourism development are the unequal distribution of tourism benefits, lack of locals' involvement in tourism and development. There is a need to clearly address these issues, so that protected areas may get the support of local people, which may lead to sustainable development.

Rural ideology theory argues that women are more likely to be involved in community organizations (Petrzelka, et. al. 1130). They revealed that, similar
levels of involvement were found with both male and female in community organizations in tourism in the United States.

Wang, Bickle and Harrill (332) studied residents' attitudes towards tourism development in Shardong, China. The data confirms that residents in most destinations, whether undeveloped, developed or developing, can identify both positive and negative impacts of tourism development. Many residents enjoy the added shopping amenities and the economic benefits that accrue from tourism. The results also showed that the tourism impact on the economy as positive. However, income level was not a significant predictor of attitudes towards tourism development in Shardong, China.

Tourism is a nebulous concept that manifests its impact differently across communities (Fredline et al. 1). Husbands (250) found a significant difference between residents' perception of tourism and with respect to social status and social class. Gu and Wong (268) also reported association between perception regarding impact of tourism and demographics of people. Perdue et al (174) found an interesting result which indicates that the perceived impacts of tourism, both positive and negative, increase with increasing levels of tourism. The results suggest that resident attitudes initially increase favourably with increasing tourism development, but achieve a threshold level of development beyond which attitudes become less favorable.

Walpole and Goodwin conducted a study in Komodo National Park to find out attitudes of local people towards conservation and tourism around Komodo National Park, Indonesia. Overall, respondents held a positive attitude towards tourism. Most would be happy to see more tourists (92.7%) and for their children to work in tourism (88.9%). Few respondents felt that tourism was eroding traditional customs (18.5%), around one-third felt that tourism was damaging their culture, and half did not like the way that tourists dress. There were mixed feelings regarding the distribution of benefits from tourism. Although some respondents felt that only outsiders benefited from tourism (24.1%), half felt that the whole community benefited from tourism. A similar proportion felt that only rich people benefited (47.4%), and few respondents felt that tourism benefited their family or increased their income (27.3%) and
23.0%). Half of the sample felt that tourism had caused prices of goods and transport services to rise. The mean score on the 11 point attitude scale was 6.6, indicating an overall positive attitude towards tourism.

Farahani and Musa examined the residents' profile, attitudes, and perception towards tourism development in Masooleh, a protected national heritage town of Iran which is characterized by its unique architecture. Number of sample for the study was 250. A questionnaire designed to examine a bigger study of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Masooleh was used for the study. Attitudes and perception of local people towards tourism development were measured using the five point Likert Scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The study was carried out over a four-week period in October 2006. It has been found that majority of the population (83.6%) are in favor of tourism. Residents expressed their intention to support future tourism development of the area (81.6%) together with the development of tourism infrastructure and facilities (77.2%). Tourism is also seen as a major contributing factor to the development of Masooleh by 79.6% of the sampled population. Concerning the residents' perception of rate of tourism development in the area, their opinions are not favorable. Only 32% of them agree that the regional tourism authorities have done excellent job in their decision-making, and 25.6% agree that the regional bodies plan and manage tourism development well. The majority of respondents (55.6%) agree that the public sector has given a lot of attention to promote tourism of the area. However, pertaining to marketing and advertising, 44.0% of the respondents disagree that they have been managed properly, while 20.8% are undecided. Resident also have the perception that tourism is not well promoted during off-season (64.4%). Over half of the sample disagrees with the statement that tourism develops too fast in the region while 17.2% are undecided. The overwhelming majority of respondents (66.8%) disagree with the statement that public authorities always consult local people in tourism development process in this area.

Gursoy et. al. (724-25) found that if local communities perceive that the impact of tourism is positive, they support tourism development in the area.
and vice versa. Residents who see tourism as creating positive economic impacts were found to support both mass tourism and alternative tourism development. However, support for alternative tourism development was found to be higher. However, residents who see tourism as having positive cultural impacts on the local community were found to support alternative tourism while they neither were found to support nor oppose mass tourism development. Positive social impact perceptions were found to have no significant relationship with either mass tourism or alternative tourism. This findings suggested that respondents neither opposed nor supported either form of development even though they indicated that both form of tourism is likely to generate positive social impact for their community. While residents with negative socio-economic impact perceptions were found to strongly oppose mass tourism development, they indicated neither support nor opposition for alternative tourism development. On the other hand, residents with negative social impacts perceptions indicated a strong opposition for alternative tourism development while neither support nor opposition was indicated for mass tourism development.

According to Williams and Lawson (269) tourism may be regarded as consisting of tourists, a business, and an environment or community in which this industry operates. If one is to understand the impact of tourism on residents, the inter-relationships between various elements in the system must be studied. In the study conducted in towns of New Zealand, they observed that people who are most cynical about tourism rate community issues more highly than others (and more importantly), people who are most positive toward tourism rate community issues lowest.

Cortez (138) studied the strategies being adopted by the Government of the State of Bolivia to develop sustainable tourism both as a means of protecting the Bolivian Amazon and a mechanism for the realization of the “Living Well” vision of the national government. The findings confirmed that in the case of Bolivia, tourism is a high political ideal, and not merely a force that is at the mercy and direction of market forces and private entities. Tourism
development is organically linked with concepts of community self-actualization

2.5: Tourism Products:

Medlik and Middleton (201) conceptualized tourism products as a bundle of activities, services, and benefits that constitute the entire tourism experience. According to Smith (592-93) the structure of the tourism product is complex and it is the result of a complicated production process. Production of a tourism commodity begins with the physical plant, which is tangible and controlled to a high degree by the planning and management process. Then, in successive phases, the elements of service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and finally, personal involvement by the consumer are added to the emerging product. In the final analysis, tourism product and process are inseparable.

According to Yavari (16) it can be seen that every country have discovered, both in theory and practice, that handicrafts are one of the most effective factors in attracting tourists in domestic, regional, and international levels. In spite of many possible linkages, the World Tourism Organization is convinced that the synergy between tourism and handicrafts is still, in most countries, far from its full potential (Yunis 2). A good quality handicraft taken home from an enjoyable holiday has continuing power to evoke wonderful memories, and indeed to arouse the interest of others who see it and to encourage them to visit the destination. But the linkage between tourism and handicrafts has not yet been fully explored, understood or developed, with a resultant loss of valuable revenue and job creation opportunities (WTO ix). Tourists want to shop and buy presents. Even the business tourist is not expected to return home empty handed. Buying souvenirs and curios can substantially increase the amount of money that stays in the local economy, and particularly with women. Thus ensuring that poor people can take advantage of these customers, and that tourists have ample opportunity to spend their money, is a critical part of Pro Poor Tourism (PPT). Tourism souvenirs hold strong symbolic value related to pleasurable travel experiences in people’s lives (Litirell et.al. 3).
Tourist expectations are based on inter-correlations among several factors (i.e. past experience, external communication, word-of-mouth communication and destination image). In addition, image can be considered as the main factor generating expectations of a destination (Bosque et al. 144).

Baruah and Sarma (64-65) has shown that tourists' expenditures can be divided into two broad components of categorised and uncategorised expenditures. It might be easier to increase visitors' uncategorised form of expenditures (e.g. commonly on souvenir items) rather than categorised expenditure such as transportation, lodging, food and beverages. They also stated that uncategorised expenditures of tourists cannot be neglected because of its economic significance particularly with reference to local economy. According to Law and Au (241) shopping as a major leisure activity has become an important element in tourism. Many tourists visit Hong Kong for attractive shopping items. According to Wong and Law (401) tourist shopping is the primary source of income for the tourism industry in Hong Kong. In 2000, shopping accounted for more than HK$30 billion (50.2%) of total tourism receipts. The shopping expenditure of tourists, therefore, has a great impact on the local economy of Hong Kong. Their study provides useful information about tourists' shopping preferences and patterns, which can be used for future tourism planning and control. The findings of this study indicate that there is a great deal of difference between the Asian and Western travelers' expectations and perceptions towards the shopping attributes. The effect of hedonic shopping value on approach is greater than that of utilitarian value (Yuksel 66)

Studies have revealed that various factors affect tourists' purchasing behavior. According to Zieba (46) personal connections to the item and background knowledge about it greatly increase the propensity to purchase. Knowledge that an item was made locally also increases value, however, relative originality and uniqueness is more important. This study also revealed that four fifths of the respondents bring gifts and art item home from their trips at least sometimes. According to Kim and Littrell (648-49) with respect to
demographic characteristics, only marital status was significantly associated with purchase intention of tourists.

Women are involved in handicraft business in many countries. Maya women of Guatemala sell woven crafts to the foreign tourists and they are known for their techniques to sell handicrafts to tourists. Maya women who sell handicrafts to tourists are public figure in Guatemala. Their images are featured in hotels, restaurants, airports, and other places frequented by tourists. Often they are the only indigenous persons whom tourists travelling to Guatemala and Yucatan and Chiapas meet (Little 44).

Tosun et. al. (96) has examined the tourist shopping experience in the Turkish region of Cappadocia. The answers were general souvenirs (78.3%), pottery (53%), clothes (19.8%), carpets (17.7%), jewelry (15.6%) and leather (4.8%). However, in response to one of the open-ended questions most respondents noted that despite the fact that carpets were the most attractive items to buy, prices were higher than they had expected.

Handicrafts are offering an important avenue for women, the poor and indigenous communities to earn income from tourism. According to research, in Lalibela, the main cultural site visited by 90% of the tourists in Ethiopia, craft sellers earn only 1% of tourist revenue due to a variety of reasons including limited sales outlets, limited variety of handicrafts, difficulty in using credit cards etc (Rowley).

Tourism is an industry driven primarily by commercial interests. While this means there may be limits to its pro-poor potential, it does have a number of characteristics and advantages over other sectors. A marginal improvement in tourism industry could generate substantial benefits. Because the customer comes to the ‘product’, there are opportunities to make additional sales (DFID).

Burke et. al. (512) found that, there is a difference in the work and experiences of female and male managers and supervisors in the hospitality and tourism sector in Turkey, and found that very few women occupy the senior executive positions. The number of men who are employed (2202) far exceeds the
number of women (306) in the hotel industry in Goa. Some 86.8% of those employed in this industry are men compared to women who are just 13.14% of the total (Haladi).

Cultural tourism could be a subject of interest to tourist destinations with cultural amenities, heritage sites, arts centers, historical museums and natural resources, if these destinations could combine culture and leisure in the tourist product (Marciszewska 77). Cultural tourists spend more money while on vacation; they're more likely to stay at hotels or motels; they're more likely to shop; and they spend more time in an area while on vacation. Survey reports of the Travel Association of America revealed that of the 46% of American travelers who included a cultural activity while on a trip, a third of them added extra time to their trip to accommodate more cultural activity. This translated to 26.8 million adults adding some 14 million additional nights. (Lord 8).

Rural tourism has been developing rapidly in China in recent years. But it is insufficient in many aspects. Ju (139) studied the expectations of tourists regarding rural tourism in Yunan province of China. Based on a systematic review of rural tourism, he focused on tourists’ experience. He applied a two-column questionnaire composed of 17 important factors considering rural tourism. This questionnaire has been formulated according to expectation of tourists and actual situation. The study revealed that many facilities cannot meet the tourists' demands, such as sanitary condition and public security, etc. for lack of regulated management. The study suggested construction of infrastructural facilities and developing smooth communication system to meet the expectations of tourists.

Gopal et al. studied rural tourism with special reference to agri-tourism development in Maharastra, India. The research methodology involved both desk research and field research, which was widely used to understand the concept of Agri tourism and the various aspects that are involved in the successful development of agri tourism. For the field research, a questionnaire was used comprising of both open-ended questions as well as close ended questions. Additionally discussions were also held with the officials of the district and other taluka levels to understand the government policies etc.
According to the findings development of agri-tourism in rural areas of Maharashtra is still in its nascent stage.

Gastronomy means assigning cultural value to foods or the way in which they are prepared in a given place or social group. It is one of the elements, which have close links to the new concept of cultural heritage and one of the most highly valued tourism resources in recent years due to its ability to meet the new consumer needs associated with the demand for cultural tourism (Lopez & Martin 168). Gastronomy study is related to the production of food, and the means by which foods are produced; the treatment of foods, their storage and transport and processing; their preparation and cooking; meals and manner; the chemistry of food, digestion and the physiological effects of food; food choices and customs and traditions (Santich 2). The gastronomy tourism and its impact on communities have many points in common with cultural tourism. The underpinning position is that gastronomy is culture and definitively a medium of cultural tourism. In tourism context, this statement may sound unconventional because, whilst art, music and history are commonly seen as cultural tourism resources, gastronomy, together with other areas such as religion, industrial heritage, events, festivals, architecture are considered ‘grey zones’ of cultural tourism (Symons 101). Josiam et. al. (29) showed that the most important factors for the tourists in terms of restaurant characteristics were quality of food, cleanliness of restrooms, general hygiene and cleanliness, atmosphere, employees’ friendliness and price/value for money in descending order of importance. In terms of food attributes, the most important attributes were taste of food, price, spicy food, personal preference and appearance of food, while availability of vegetarian choices, availability of new items, and halaal (permissible according to Islamic Law) certification were the less important factors for the whole sample.

**RESEARCH GAP:**

The above literature review has revealed that many studies have been carried out in the field of local community and women empowerment through tourism. There are many studies on women and the tourism industry both at international and national levels. However, such studies reconciling demand of
tourists and supply are not available. Furthermore, studies with respect to the North East India in general and Assam in particular are almost non-existent. Tourism can be considered as one of the important sectors for women empowerment (Ghodsee 465; Balasubramonian). Scheyvens (246) revealed that local community could achieve economic empowerment through ecotourism. Dey (19) commented that there is uniqueness in the traditional handicrafts and textiles of Northeast India. It can be utilized for future marketing efforts as they may serve as an added attraction for many leisure travelers. From these findings, it is evident that, women of Assam may have definite entry in tourism for employment and opportunities for creating self-employment. This can help eliminating economic backwardness of women and local communities in Assam.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

As tourism offers various opportunities for women to get involved in Tourism Related Activities (TRA), tourism can be considered as catalyst for economic empowerment of women. The present study is aimed to benefit local women of tourism destination through their involvement in TRA. To involve local women in tourism activities it is important to match the preferences of tourists with the available infrastructure and skill of the local women.

At present, Kaziranga is the most popular tourist destination of Assam. The tourist density is highest in this particular destination. Moreover, it is believed that the tribes of Assam are rich in handloom and handicraft products and as the social system goes, more women are involved in such activities compared to men. This particular aspect can be utilised in tourism. Apart from this, involvement in tourism activities can be seen as a complementary activity to the main occupational activity of the household so that the economic conditions improve. Here also, the women can get involved ultimately leading to their economic empowerment. To find out the scope of economic empowerment of women through such activities and develop a sustainable livelihood method, this study is proposed with the following objectives.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the current socio-economic status of the women in the study area.

2. To find out the level of involvement of women in tourism related activities in the study area.

3. To study the relationship between involvements of women in tourism related activities and their socio-economic status.

4. To formulate strategies for economic empowerment of women through tourism related activities.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The scope of the study can be noted in regards of the geographical area, time of the study and the population. The study was conducted in the villages situated in the periphery of four ranges of Kaziranga National Park. The time period of the study was 2010 to 2011. The population of the study was women in the age group of 15 to 45 years.

PERCEIVED LIMITATION:

The perceived limitation of the study was that the study area was confined to nature based tourism destination only.