experiencing decreasing room occupancy rates, blamed it on the airline's monopoly, and claimed the policy was pulling down the tourist industry simply to protect the airline.

A study by the Economist Intelligence Unit suggests two possible solutions to this kind of problem: Either require tour operators to use the national airline for a substantial proportion of their tours, or require a royalty payment from approved foreign charter airlines. These and other measures, says the study, should help to "tilt the supply/demand equation in favour of the LDCs."

Complicating all the economic issues is the lack of accurate statistics vital to the formulation of effective policies. Figures on how many people travel, where they come from, how much they spend, are often no more than educated guesses. And, as the Economist study wryly points out: those who make the policy often are not aware of how little they know.

Most tourist-receiving countries are aware of the problem, however. IDRC has received a number of requests for assistance to carry out research into the economic aspects of tourism. In cooperation with the Caribbean Tourism Research and Development Centre (ctrc) and several national research teams, the Centre supported a two-year study involving seven countries. The objective of this coordinated effort, the first of its kind, was to provide an accurate analysis of the economic impact of tourism in the islands, with particular emphasis on employment, foreign exchange earnings, and links to other sectors of the economy.

A summary of the project's findings and recommendations was presented to the fourth annual Caribbean Tourism Conference, at which delegates asked for the findings to be widely disseminated in the region. A final report is now in preparation, and will be published by IDRC.

A second IDRC-supported project, still underway, is studying the economics of tourism in five Asian countries. Because of the much more diversified economy of the region, the emphasis here is on comparing tourism with other foreign exchange earning industries, and on finding ways to maximize the economic benefits of the tourist industry.

Separating the economic from the social and cultural impact, however, is not always easy, or even possible. Environmentalists around the world admire Kenya's justifiably famous game parks, and there is no doubt they are a major tourist attraction. But how to assess the impact on Kenyan farmers who were driven off their land? Or the havoc created for others whose lands bordering the parks are frequently overrun by antelope and elephant.

What of the inherently conservative political influence of an industry that is so dependent on an image of stability? At the first sign of unrest, tourists stay away in droves. Following rioting in 1977, the government in Bermuda warned: "Tourism is very fragile. Those throwing fire bombs from cars should understand that very soon they will not have a car to throw bombs from." Such fragility represents an easily exploitable weak spot in any nation's economy.

The universal availability of ice-cold Coca Cola is not just an economic phenomenon, it is also a cultural one. It creates not only a demand, but an attitude. Concludes the Economist study: "Whether or not the development of a tourist industry changes a society's values (and whether that is good or bad) there is no doubt that the socio-economic impact can bring about profound changes in the structure of the host society. Major changes and stresses."

Coping with the changes and the stresses, integrating tourism with other industries, and ensuring a fair share of the returns, are the primary concerns of most tourist-receiving developing countries. For many countries there is really no choice. The deputy Prime Minister (and Minister of Tourism and Trade) of Barbados, Bernard St. John, states it bluntly: "Tourism is vital to the economic and social survival of all the Caribbean territories. Indeed, in many instances tourism is the only alternative."

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**SEX AND THE SIMPLE TOURIST**

**ROWAN SHIRKIE**

Prepackaged exotic sex tours are one of the seamiest sides of international tourism, especially so, they generally involve the exploitation of women in developing countries.

Advertisements in Western European countries offer wallows in the glamorous fleshpots of the Orient. And in South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand — the main destinations of such tours — hotels, night clubs, bars, discos, and massage parlours have sprung up to provide the services to foreign male tourists.

"In Japan, all the big travel agencies handle large tours, especially to South Korea, where kisaeng (meaning prostitute) parties are automatically included in the price," says Jane Cottingham of ISIS, a Geneva-based women's rights group that has compiled a dossier on sexual tourism.

The availability of women as a cheap commodity is one of the chief growth incentives of the trade. The spread of poverty and massive dislocations of people in rural areas in Southeast Asia (and other developing regions) has meant that large numbers of women migrate to the cities. With little education or money, they have almost no choice but to become factory workers, domestic servants, or prostitutes. "Each of these is abysmally badly paid and insecure, but the last (prostitution) is probably the most lucrative, and sometimes it is the only alternative," Cottingham says.

"I get 25 baht (U.S. $1.25) per day working in a battery factory," 20-year-old Nori told the Bangkok Post recently. "But this is not enough to cover my expenses. How could this be enough to pay for my rent, my food, my bus tickets, and other expenses? And I can tell you, I am thirsty." Nori also supports her parents and eight brothers and sisters who live in an outlying village. She supplements her wages by prostitution. Even then, with the takeoffs of hotel and club owners, "guides" or pimps, and tour operators, there is not much left over.

None of the governments of the countries in question admit that a flourishing sexual tourism exists: Prostitution is illegal, they say, therefore it couldn't possibly be part of the tourist industry. Ministerial and women's groups have taken action to try to stop the fleshy trade. In 1973, disembarking Japanese kisaeng tourists were greeted by placard-waving South Korean women offering to throw them back across the sea. More recently, the Christian Conference of Asia sponsored a workshop on international tourism in the Philippines, and renewed a process of international pressure on "sending" countries to ban sex tours.

But, as Jane Cottingham points out, tourism is lucrative, and sex tours are particularly so in some developing countries. Banning prostitution may only create even greater hardship for the already impoverished women engaged in it. As long as the economies of poor countries remain so dependent on those of the rich, the poorest of the poor will have little control over their lives. Says Cottingham: "Women will continue to pay the price, and the human race will continue to be the worse for it."