

TRAVEL BEHAVIOR: THE HIDDEN EN-GENDERED DYNAMICS

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Abstract *Travel and tourism has become one leisure pursuit in which both genders have started enjoying unparallel freedom in terms of near equal participation. In a phenomenon earlier dominated by males, now women form an important segment primarily on account of the progressive social changes in the interest of women favoring their social interest. Though there has been a significant restructuring of social roles with times it has been difficult to completely erase the strict traditional 'doing gender' associated with males and females regardless of advancement and progress in societies. While fusion of gender roles can be seen to a significant extent in advanced societies, the strictly patriarchal, male dominated developing societies still remain tinctured with a deep essence of gender segregation. This exploratory study is aimed at investigating if 'doing gender' is manifest in travel behavior of males and females. With the aim of understanding the relationship between gender and certain dimensions of travel, the study aims to find out if the genders abide by and carry out strict traditional gender roles in the domain of travel. A further comparison of tourist of Foreign and Indian origin is made to understand if the travel behavior of either gender is characterized by segregation or fusion of gender roles which can indicate the extent to which the societal context patterns the that roles males and females play in travel.*

Keywords Gender, Travel, Responsibilities.

INTRODUCTION

Though tourism is a unisex phenomenon, gender statistics form an important aspect of understanding travel and tourism trends. If one takes a close look at the history of travel trends, it is seen there has always existed a gap between male and female traveler statistics. This has been due to different societal status accorded to men and women which has allowed men to be more free and independent to travel and has restricted women largely to the confines of home to take care of family responsibilities.

Delving into travel history it is seen that since ages the ideology 'Women's place is in the home' has reigned supreme in society. Since ages travel was considered the public sphere of men in contrast to the private sphere of 'home and family' assigned to women. Travel history documents that single women traveling alone were considered immodest and lacking propriety. This was so because men were considered extrovert and capable, while women were thought of as being vulnerable, needing protection, submissive and ideally expected to remain at home to take care of home and family. Richter (1994) rightly noted that 'until the sixteenth century,

to be a woman and to travel and remain respectable, one had to be generally either a 'queen' or a pilgrim' (p.147). Richter also noted that in early times women participated in travel only as "as vital support system for missionary work, immigration, imperial adventures, diplomatic support, or civilizing the frontier" (p.147).

However, over the past few decades there has been a gradual but positive change on account of development and progress in societies that has led to a significant increase in the female travel market. The percentage of women in all tourist-generating countries has started rising and this can be attributed to the changing status of women in society that has gradually empowered women and made them independent and confident to participate in travel as well. Factors like education, awareness, availability of leisure time, women employment, availability of disposable income and the changing nature of 'Ethic of Care' (Shaw, 1994) have all contributed to the mushrooming of a significant female tourist market that defies the age old taboos attached to travel of women.

As a near equal participation of both genders continues to grow in the travel market it is of significance to explore

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if gender identities and 'doing gender' still continues to influence the travel behavior of males and females.

BACKGROUND

Deconstructing the Meaning of Gender

Gender is an important variable of the demographic segmentation of the tourist market that comprises both males and females. The study of gender provides vital information to tourism industry about aspects like the number of male and female travelers, their travel interests, patterns and behaviour. Gender is not only a difference in biological make up of males and females, but needs to be understood in a broader context. A common understanding is that Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity).

The concept of gender has been coined and understood differently by Sociologists, Social Psychologists and Tourism scholars (Chodorow, 1997; Kramer, 2004; Richter, 1994; Risman 2004; Rybczynski, 1991; Swain 1995). Swain's definition of gender has been frequently cited in gender aware tourism research. The definition elaborates Gender as a system of culturally constructed identities that are expressed in ideologies of masculinity and femininity. These interact with socially structured relationships in division of labor and leisure, sexuality and power between women and men. The role of society is very important in the construction of gender (Henderson, 1994). Hence gender is understood differently across societies. From a socio cultural perspective, gender can be referred to as socially learned behavior and expectations that are associated with the two sexes (Anderson 1993). According to Lerner (1986), gender is a set of cultural roles that defines behavior as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. It signifies a set of socially constructed relationships, which are produced and reproduced through people's actions.

Davis (1991:65) concurs that gender is investigated in terms of, i) the individual (how men and women behave, their beliefs and attitudes and their identity), in terms of ii) social structure (gendered divisions in the social activities or labor of men and women), and in terms of iii) symbolic orders (gender symbolism, how we think about 'masculinity' and 'femininity'). Being a social construct, gender can be understood on the basis of beliefs, perceptions and patterned behavior. It involves the expression of social inequality and hierarchy between men and women. Therefore gender creates differences between understanding of males and females.

Gender Dynamics and Privileges

Gender theories have been constructed in psychology, sports, literature and sociology. Many sociologists believe that gender signifies relationships of power, opportunity and oppression.

The concept of *Gender Polarization* defines mutually exclusive scripts for being male and female (Bem, 1993). Personality traits such as independence, assertiveness, reason, rationality, competitiveness, and focus on individual goals are considered to be traits associated with masculinity. Compassion, care, nurturance, responsibility, sensitivity, passion and the ability to focus on communal goals are traits associated with femininity (Cross and Markus, 1993; Easlea, 1986; Keller, 1983; Meyers-Levy, 1988; Weinreich-Haste, 1986). It is believed that based on male and female characteristics, the society creates domination and subordination of either gender creating a hierarchical structure of opportunity and oppression (Ferree, 1990). A particular gender automatically brings with it privileges or restrictions that determine the role-played by an individual in society. Lindsey (1994:68) mentions in her study that as quoted by Miller and Swift (1991), George Orwell might have put it this way, "all men are equal but men are more equal than women". This suggests that men have always enjoyed better position and privileges in society, as compared to women. While males are associated with power, females are identified as the 'fairer or weaker sex.' Lorber (1999) points out that the multiplicities and intersections of race, ethnicity, social class, and gender construct a hierarchy of domination, in which the same people can be both oppressed and oppressors. His belief centers around the view that gender is socially constructed and males and females themselves determine the superiority of a particular gender in the society. However, it is noted that dominance of a particular gender or unequal status between the genders is a characteristic feature particularly visible more in developing countries. Fox (1992) supports the view that particularly women who are not European-American (among others) are rendered 'invisible'.

Gender Roles are a culmination of gender polarization and signify the expected behavior and tasks to be performed by males and females in a society. These are culturally derived behaviors and activities associated with masculinity or femininity, and signify an individual's beliefs about the roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and women. Once a person is labeled a member of a particular gender, he/she is morally accountable for behavior as others in his/her category do. In "*Doing Gender*" (West and Zimmerman, 1987) men and women conform to the unwritten role prescriptions and norms of a particular society (Deutsch, 2007, Risman, 2004). These unwritten role prescriptions for males and females are deep rooted in societies and 'doing

gender' in accordance to the roles leads to creation of differences that are neither inevitable nor essential. Though studies have investigated societal gender role structures as close to gender neutral as possible (Coltrane 1989; Risman 1986, Risman 1998), yet gender differences have been found in studies confirming that it difficult to completely discard the roles that become a part of one's existence and identity. Sudha and Dutt (1999) identify that in a society, the education system, the content of educational depictions and way of imparting education strengthens gender roles and there is a mutual relation between how one's gender determines ones' life experiences, opportunities available, ability to make decisions and act autonomously in society, or how society exercises restraints, or else, provides the freedom for the same. Even in the family, men and women are found to be playing specific gender roles (Bose 1987; Christensen and Heavey 1990; Commuri 2000; Thompson and Walker 1989; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Traditional Gender Segregated Responsibilities

With changing times, societal development and progressions, though men and women may take on new structural roles, their allegiance to masculinity and femininity remains largely undeterred. An 'Inside-Outside' dichotomy operates between the roles and responsibilities of males and females. Traditionally men have been responsible for the 'outside' domain of life, i.e., engaging in productive economic work for material security of the family, and carrying out all other male associated chores that relate to smooth functioning of the professional and family/household life. They are also responsible for tasks that ensure the future security of life. The patriarchal ideology defines men as stronger as and more capable than women, and the paternal role assigns men the protection of women and family. Women on the other hand, have been responsible for the 'inside' domain within the house, more associated with the 'Ethic of Care' (concept proposed by Gilligan). Shaw (1994) elaborates upon the 'Ethic of Care' that states women to have inborn characteristic of being caring, concerned, loving and bound to the maternal instinct. It is considered a natural order that women are supposed to be homemakers, care takers and to carry out household tasks that provide comfort to other family members. Their duties entail, rearing children, providing care and emotional security to the family. Such predefined gender specific roles inevitably tend to spill over in all activities that a person engages in. Such roles even unconsciously filter into the domain of leisure and tourism.

Gender Roles in Travel Behavior

In relation to tourism, research on gendered nature of tourism experiences concludes that women experience

travel/holidays differently than men, with the emphasis that socially defined roles of women in society make parity of experience difficult (Swain and Momsen, 2002). Timothy (2001) makes an interesting observation about how gender roles filter into vacationing behavior. He notes that men and women behave differently as tourists and especially when women are accompanied with children their task often becomes an extension of their house caregiver role even when travelling. A woman's holiday does not resemble leisure travel while a man's holiday time is more leisured. Hence women are considered the underprivileged gender even in leisure. When participating as tourists, while men experience a degree of independence, women are not observed to be totally free of their female responsibilities as they carry over their womanly care-taking qualities even on a journey handling the repetitive chores as like taking care of children, assuring timely meals, packing, unpacking etc.

Other studies have investigated women's leisure (Henderson, 1988; Robinson 1990) and identified that women with families may rarely have a holiday even when tourists (Deem 1986; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1990). Deem (1986) made an important observation in his research that even if women undertake holidays, women with families have been identified to rarely have a 'holiday', as tourists. Hence whether it is during normal course of home engagements or on holiday, women in families never have been completely free to dissociate themselves from familial responsibilities even in their leisure time.

Blurring Gender Specific Roles

Over the past few decades a noticeable blurring and overlap of male and female roles has been observed in societies around the globe. Many pre defined gender roles have now assumed 'gender neutral' status becoming 'unisex'. While women are now actively venturing into the 'outside' male dominated domain, men have started sharing equally in 'inside' domain of housework and childcare responsibilities. However such a trend is more visible in modern families especially where both the spouses are equally educated and economically independent. Perkins and Mies (1996) observe that childless couples have less traditionally gendered household task arrangements whereas couples with children have a more gendered division of labor.

In view of these changing gender specific roles in contemporary times, this exploratory study makes an attempt to identify if travel behavior of males and females is characterized by strict traditional gender roles and if at all gender segregated roles and responsibilities are more pronounced in developing than developed societies.

METHODOLOGY

The paper has been derived from the researcher's doctoral work that focuses on gender issues in tourism. All though the scope of the doctoral work is much wider addressing several issues related to travelling behavior of either gender, the main research questions addressed in the present study are as follows.

RQ1. In tourist opinion, are travel related responsibilities gender segregated?

RQ2. Do the views of Foreign and Indian respondents differ on gendered travel responsibilities?

The study was conducted in the State of Himachal Pradesh in the North Western Himalayas of India. The State was chosen for the study as it is a highly popular tourism destination that attracts both domestic and foreign tourists and now ranks tenth in terms of tourist arrivals in India. The top ranking four districts in terms of tourist arrivals in the State i.e (Shimla, Kullu, Kangra and Chamba), were chosen for the questionnaire survey of a total 400 respondents. Stratified random sampling was used for sample selection taking two parameters, i.e. Gender (male, female) and Origin (Foreign, Indian). For comparative purpose an equal number of male and females respondents were taken as sample, each of which constituted an equal number of Foreign and Indian respondents i.e. 200 males (100 Foreign and 100 Indian), and 200 females (100 Foreign and 100 Indian). The sample selected from each district was in proportion to the overall total number of incoming tourists in the 4 selected districts (i.e. Number of tourist in the district / Total number of tourists in the State, x 100). The marital status of the respondents

was neutralized. Analysis was conducted to see if gender and origin are accountable for variation in assuming travel related responsibilities. The researcher identified five prime responsibilities as tourists i.e., 1) information search, 2) making bookings, 3) handling finances, 4) packing/unpacking and 5) taking care of children, to be assessed through the opinion survey in order to identify the views of the respondents on their opinion of whether each activity is reported to be handled by male alone (M), jointly (J) or by female alone (F). Using chi square method the responses of both genders and that of Foreign and Indian respondents were compared.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender Segregated Responsibilities of Tourists Male and Female Respondents' Opinions

In this section the respondents have been asked to give their view on which gender, they think handles various responsibilities as a traveler (if male and female would be travelling together as family). The marital status of the respondents has been neutralized and analysis carried out solely based on the views of respondents.

The responses are analyzed using the chi-square technique taking the Null hypothesis, H_0 that there is no variance in responses to responsibility on various tasks.

Table no. 1 gives the responses and chi square values for males and females on each responsibility.

Male Response: Taking the response of all males, it is seen that for each responsibility task, the resultant degree of

Table 1: Gendered Responsibility of Handling Tasks as a Tourist

Responsibility	Total Respondents (400)							
	Males (200)				Females (200)			
	Observed Frequency *M *J *F	Expected N	Tabulated Value at df 2	Chi Square value	Observed Frequency *M *J *F	Expected N	Tabulated Value at df 2	Chi Square value
Information Search	89 80 31	33.3	13.8	29.230	101 71 28	33.3	13.8	40.390
Bookings	135 59 6	33.3	13.8	126.13	143 41 16	33.3	13.8	135.79
Handling Finance	91 93 16	33.3	13.8	57.790	94 62 44	33.3	13.8	19.240
Packing/unpacking	22 108 70	33.3	13.8	55.720	21 101 78	33.3	13.8	50.890
Care-taking of Children	2 99 99	33.3	13.8	94.090	9 86 105	33.3	13.8	77.530

Source: Primary Data

*M- Male alone, *J-Joint, *F- Female alone

Note: For every responsibility the highest frequency reported is highlighted in **Bold**.

Table 2: Responses of Foreign and Indian Males on Handling Travel Responsibilities

Responsibility	Males (200)				Indian (100)			
	Foreign (100)				Indian (100)			
	Observed Frequency *M *J *F	Expected N	Tabulated Value at df 2	Chi Square value	Observed Frequency *M *J *F	Expected N	Tabulated Value at df 2	Chi Square value
Information Search	35 46 19	33.3	10.6	11.060	54 34 12	33.3	13.8	26.480
Bookings	53 44 3	33.3	13.8	42.620	82 15 3	33.3	13.8	108.74
Handling Finance	37 51 12	33.3	13.8	23.420	54 42 4	33.3	13.8	40.880
Packing/unpacking	13 65 22	33.3	13.8	46.340	9 43 48	33.3	13.8	27.020
Care-taking of Children	2 67 31	33.3	13.8	63.620	0 32 68	33.3	At df 1 10.8	12.960

Source: Primary Data

*M- Male alone, *J-Joint, *F- Female alone

Note: For every responsibility the highest frequency reported is highlighted in Bold.

freedom (df) is 2, at 1% level of significance, the tabulated value for which is 13.8 in each case. It is observed from the table that all the chi square values arrived at for each of these tasks are much greater than the tabulated value, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis in each case of responsibility. This signifies that there is enough evidence to prove that there is a variance in responses, which are not equally distributed.

For making travel bookings, the frequencies reveal that maximum males (135) are of the view that 'males alone' take this responsibility, than bookings being handled by females alone or jointly. This perhaps indicates that men keep themselves more informed, are more confident and consider themselves wiser and competent to make correct and confirmed deals in this task. They feel more responsible for handling bookings. For other tasks like, handling finances, packing/unpacking and care taking of children (frequencies of 93, 108 and 99 respectively) the response of men are much in favor of responsibilities being held jointly.

Female Responses: Taking the response of females it is seen that for each responsibility task, the degree of freedom (df) is 2, at 1% of significance, the tabulated value for which is 13.8 in each case. It is observed from table 1, that all the chi square values arrived at for each of these tasks are much greater than the tabulated value, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis in each case of responsibility. This signifies that there is a variance in responses. Most women are of the view that tasks like information search for travel, making travel bookings and handling finances while on travel (frequencies of 101, 143 and 94 respectively), are largely a responsibility of males alone. These tasks may be handled jointly by male and female, but the responses do not support the view that

these are handled largely by women alone. As for care taking task of children, responses of women lean more towards this responsibility being handled more by 'females' alone (105) than by men alone, but may be handled jointly. This reiterates the belief women are bound by the ethic of care and consider it their prime responsibility for care taking tasks.

In essence the gendered responses of males and females on tasks of 'information search' of travel i.e. (89, 101, respectively) and for 'making bookings', (i.e. 135 and 143) show high scores in favor of these tasks being handled by 'males alone'. Similarly for the task of 'taking care of children' both males and females show a high response (i.e. 99, and 195 respectively), indicating that 'women alone' usually handle the responsibilities of childcare even when travelling as tourists on vacation.

This provides a clear example of how the 'Inside - Outside' roles are clearly associated with females and males respectively. The Inside home maker and family caretaking responsibilities that women are naturally held responsible for, even filter into their out of home tasks. Men and women differ in their responses on responsibilities of information search and handling finances.

Foreign and Indian Respondents' Views on Gendered Travel Responsibilities

A further break up of the gendered (male and female) responses providing a comparison on the basis of 'origin' of respondents (foreign and Indian) is given in the ensuing discussion.

Foreign and Indian Male Respondents' Opinions: A comparison of Indian and Foreign male respondents' opinions on handling travel responsibilities as tourists can be seen in table no. 2.

Comparing Foreign and Indian males on responsibilities of making bookings, handling finances and packing and unpacking, it is seen that the degree of freedom (df) is 2, at 1% level of significance, the tabulated value for which is 13.8. It is observed from table no. 2, that all the chi square values arrived at for each of these tasks are greater than the tabulated value, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. This signifies that there is enough evidence to prove that there is a variance of response of Foreign and Indian males on the travel responsibilities.

It is seen from the results that only for the tasks of handling information search as a traveler, for Foreign males, the chi square value is close to the tabulated value of 10.6 (df2), at .004 level of significance, and observing the frequency for this task suggests the view of the foreign males that information search is a task handled equally and jointly by both by males and females. Except for making travel bookings (frequency 53), a task considered for 'males' alone, all other tasks are reported by foreign respondents to be 'jointly' handled by males and females. This probably suggests that in some foreign developed societies, because of gender equality and independence, male consider females able and trustworthy to equally participate in travel arrangements. There is blurring of gender stereotypical responsibilities in developed societies.

For the responsibility of care taking of children in the case of Indian males, the degree of freedom (df) is 1, with tabulated value 10.8, but the chi square value is again greater, whereby the null hypothesis is rejected in this case too. In the Indian

male dominated society, Indian males are interestingly of the opinion that information search (54) handling finances (84) and making travel bookings (54) are tasks to be handled by 'males alone'. Indian males perhaps due to their mindset stemming from patriarchal society and prevalence of male supremacy consider themselves more competent to handle these tasks. They do not yet consider females at par and able enough to handle the 'outside domain' of life as they consider themselves to be much worldly wise. They consider the traditional home related tasks of packing/unpacking and that of taking care of children as a prime responsibility of 'female alone'. Though the status of women in India too is slowly being elevated in society towards equality with their male counterparts, regardless Indian women still submissively give into male supremacy and remain confined to handling their traditional female home bound roles or show an extension of the same even outside home.

Foreign and Indian Female Respondents' Opinions

The responses of Foreign and Indian females are tabulated in table no. 3. A comparison reveals that the degree of freedom (df) is 2, at 1% level of significance, the tabulated value for which is 13.8 in each case. This signifies that there is enough evidence to prove that there is a variance in response of Foreign and Indian females on the travel responsibilities.

Taking the case of Foreign females it is seen that for the responsibility of information search and handling finances while on travel, the chi square value i.e. 12.1 and 8.9 are lesser compared to the tabulated value of 13.8 and 9.21. In this case the null hypothesis is accepted signifying that responses to these responsibilities are equally distributed.

Table 3: Responses of Foreign and Indian Females on Handling Travel Responsibilities

Responsibi-lity	Females (200)							
	Foreign (100)				Indian (100)			
	Observed Frequency *M *J *F	Expected N	Tabulated Value at df 2	Chi Square value	Observed Frequency *M *J *F	Expected N	Tabulated Value at df 2	Chi Square value
Information Search	40 43 17	33.3	13.8	12.140	61 28 11	33.3	13.8	38.780
Bookings	73 17 10	33.3	13.8	71.540	70 24 6	33.3	13.8	65.360
Handling Finance	44 36 20	33.3	9.21	8.960	50 36 24	33.3	13.8	12.560
Packing/unpacking	10 67 23	33.3	13.8	53.540	24 26 50	33.3	13.8	29.060
Care-taking of Children	4 58 38	33.3	13.8	44.720	5 28 67	33.3	13.8	58.940

Source: Primary Data

*M- Male alone, *J-Joint, *F- Female alone

Note: For every responsibility the highest frequency reported is highlighted in Bold.

Foreign female respondents show a high frequency on the task of information search, packing / unpacking and care taking of children (frequencies 43, 67 and 58 respectively) to be 'jointly handled' by males and females. This again supports the view that there is more sharing of responsibilities between the genders in foreign societies. Indian females feel that these tasks are handled by 'females alone'. This can be attributed to the fact that Indian females consider home and family care giving task as their prime responsibility. Such an observation substantiates the view of traditional gendered responsibilities in the Indian societal context.

However, both foreign and Indian females are largely of the view that travels booking (frequencies 73 and 70 respectively) and handling finances (frequencies 44, and 50 respectively) are a task handled by 'males alone'. This perhaps suggests that females too in the subconscious minds consider males more able and trustworthy to make travel arrangements and handle finances wisely.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Gender has always been an expression of opportunities and hierarchy in society. Merely by virtue of being born a 'male' men have enjoyed a privileged status in all realms of life. However with societal progress around the globe, social and industrial development, importance of female education and the gradual but steady involvement of women in the labor market, women too have started enjoying a respectable status over the years. While there has been a significant fast erosion of gender segregated role conformations particularly in developed countries, in developing countries and male dominated societies, the presence of deep rooted strict gender identities remains still deeply manifest. It is only in metropolitan cities of developing countries, that the blurring of gender roles between men and women has started becoming gradually visible to some extent.

The overall results of this study show that foreign respondents are more in favour of equal sharing of most travel responsibilities/tasks. While foreign females consider themselves confident and able to handle travel arrangements, foreign males have no hesitation in lending a hand to females in their care giving responsibilities even in travel, indicating a blurring of strict gender roles towards 'degendering' (Lorber, 2005).

In the Indian context 'doing gender' is still deeply manifest particularly in terms of care giving responsibilities of the female even in travel. The 'Ethic of Care' (Shaw, 1994) remains an unquestionable and integral part of female existence. The views of Indian respondents (both male and female) are still strongly held in tradition, clearly defining gender specific roles.

This study is significant for both tourism and gender scholars and practitioners in understanding consumer behavior. As socio cultural influences and geographical origin are a strong determinant of travel behavior (March and Voodside, 2005) further research on gendered patterns of tourist behavior could be carried out to monitor how male and female tourists from different countries assume travel responsibilities and examine if strict gender roles are undergoing any transformation running parallel to the continuous socio-cultural changes taking place in society. Future research could also explore if 'degendering' of roles could facilitate and enrich the enjoyment of travel experience equally for both male and female tourists.

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