

# PRESS RELEASE

## The Shopping Segment of the Tourism Industry

Shopping Tourism in Fiji is considered as one of the biggest income earning segment of the tourism industry. Tourists have now combined their holidays as one in which they engage in shopping for things that they yearn for.

Growth in the shopping segment is evident in the International Visitor Survey (IVS) and it is considered to be one of the segments that provide a great proportion of indirect employment to the country and most importantly to the community level. The segment is one that is closely associated with cultural tourism as most of the items purchased are Fijian artifacts.

Tourists while in the country involve themselves in a lot of shopping expeditions; this takes up a substantial proportion of the Tourist expenditure and it is this amount they spend that is retained in the economy unlike the prepaid expenditures that is not accounted for in our tourism earnings.

In Fiji, its people is one of the greatest asset which again has been reflected in the International Visitor Survey findings. Attitude of shopkeepers and presentation of shops have been very satisfactory and this greatly contributed to the vast growth of the segment. One would wonder as to the items that are being purchased by tourists. Items purchased ranged from handicrafts to clothing and footwear. Statistics (2004) below give us a fair idea of the above:

- Handicrafts that were purchased by 75% of shoppers
- Ready-made clothing which was purchased by 45% of visitors of which most were by those from other Pacific Islands
- Alcohol with an average purchase of 29% all purchases seem to have an affinity with Australians (37%) and those from other Pacific Islands (40%)
- Food stuffs also make up a portion of tourist expenditure whereby 17% of persons who purchased in Fiji purchased food stuffs.
- Perfume was purchased by 13% of visitors on average
- Jewellery with a 12% average was purchased by nearly all groups, the lowest being Canadians
- Tobacco products were purchased by 10% of all visitors
- Footwear with an average purchase of 6% of visitors to Fiji was above average among "other Pacific Island visitors (26%).

### Key Strategic Issues of the Segment

- Supply of merchandise
- Target niche marketing
- Overall Fiji Branding
- Mechanism to ensure Authenticity of products
- Unprofessionalism (harassment, aggressiveness)

### **Development Strategies**

- Specific shopping industry segments
- Product packaging and selling
- Mentoring by established retailers to smaller players
- Tax refund scheme for Travel retail logo
- Shopping levy per outlet
- Proper and recognized Code of Conduct
- Incentives to retailers to spruce up their establishments
- Specific promotion of local products
- Training and awareness
- Identification of target markets
- Capacity building
- Infrastructure and product development
- Product diversification and packaging

### **Impact of the Shopping Segments on Tourism**

- **Economic Impacts**
  - Revenue generation
  - Employment creation
  - Encourage the purchasing of locally made products
  - Decentralized benefits
  - Contributes to family income
  - Visitor satisfaction
  - Multiplier effect
- **Environmental Impacts**
  - Litter
  - Deforestation due to mass production
  - Minimal standards
  - Sustainable use of natural resources
  - Encourage use of biodegradable products
  - Encourage private-public sector & communities on a national beautification programme
- **Socio cultural Impacts**
  - Modernization of their traditional lifestyle and cultural practices
  - Develops traditional culture
  - Develops and strengthen their unique identity
  - Supply chain
  - National pride enhanced
  - Women and youth benefit

Shopping is a major part of the travel experience of a tourist; however the country should be able to design strategies that would promote this segment further rather than losing out to the other tropical destinations who offer better shopping.