

India & Sustainability The Way Forward

Rethinking Tourism
through Sustainable Tourism

Central Nodal Agency for Sustainable Tourism



पर्यटन मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
TOURISM

PHOTO BY RAVI PINISETTI

Sustainable Tourism: The Way Forward

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India launched the [National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism](#) with a vision to position India as a preferred global destination for sustainable and responsible tourism. The Strategy aims to increase the economic, social, and environmental benefits to build a low carbon, inclusive and resilient tourism sector in India.

Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) has been designated as the Central Nodal Agency (CNA) for the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism.

Event in Focus:

Ministry of Tourism, in partnership with the United Environment Program (UNEP) and the Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI) organized [National Summit on Developing Sustainable & Responsible Tourist Destinations](#) on June 4, 2022 in New Delhi. On this occasion, the Ministry of Tourism launched the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Traveller Campaign.



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The Feature State: Kerala



Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission

The first phase of responsible tourism in Kerala began in 2008 after the Government of Kerala decided to implement it on an experimental basis at four selected destinations. The [Responsible Tourism Mission](#) was established in 2017 as the Nodal Agency for the Sustainable Development of Tourism in the State. The vision of RT Mission is to transform Kerala into the first Sustainable Tourism State through Responsible Tourism activities.



The RT mission's activities include starting and growing local tourism businesses, establishing ties between the community and the tourism sector, promoting women's empowerment, eradicating poverty, and uplifting the marginalised, as well as implementing the idea of waste-free tourism centres in partnership with tourism entrepreneurs and the local community and achieving green certification for a select number of tourism centres.



Notable Projects



STREET (Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential, Ethnic Tourism hubs) Project: 10 selected places of Kerala are being developed/rebranded into theme-based streets



PEPPER (Peoples' Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment through Responsible Tourism) Project: Development of potential sustainable tourism projects at a destination through active involvement of the local communities.



Harbingers of Change: A Brief Overview of some of India's best Changemakers in Sustainable Tourism

Changemaker 01: NotOnMap



The narrative behind NOM is the creation of 'Travel With Impact'. The initiative bridges tourists who are on the lookout for authentic travel experiences with services provided mainly in the rural areas that lack access.



NOM has successfully created an ecosystem for rural tourism in 14+ states in India, restoring more than 200 culturally rich houses, creating 1000+ jobs across remote areas and training more than 8000 youth.

[Not on Map](#) is a platform that creates tourism experiences connecting urban travellers to rural experiences in order to foster a healthy exchange between the two.



NOM created its first Model Village in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh with 12 homestays. They have played a major role in the development of Community Homestays and Model villages through Responsible tourism.



Initiatives of NOM directly support the achievement of the following UN SDGs:



Changemaker 02: Global Himalayan Expedition

Global Himalayan Expedition is an organization that aims to foster a positive relationship between the tour participants and the locals. The objective is to leverage tourism as a force for the upliftment and empowerment of the local communities.



GHE's initiative of electrification through solar power has led to the creation of 131 Electrified Villages, 9245 tonnes of Carbon Offset and generation of 175 KW Solar Power, impacting over 60,000 lives in the mountain regions.



The expeditions are framed around responsible tourism principles where the travellers/students/corporate workers trek to remote areas of the Himalayas and contribute to the community upliftment by participating in activities like educating the local children, installing solar panels for renewable energy, etc.



Initiatives of GHE directly support the achievement of the following UN SDGs:



Changemaker 03: Waste Warriors



Waste warriors is a volunteer-driven organization that is working on a vision for a cleaner India. The team includes 143 people working over 7 different locations.

It all started when Jodie Underhill, a British tourist visited India in 2008 and was bothered by the garbage accumulated in pristine areas of the Himalayas. Her initiatives of volunteer clean-up drives led to the creation and establishment of Waste Warriors.



Waste Warriors has successfully collected and processed over 4579 MT of solid waste, organized 1000+ volunteer-driven clean-up drives, transformed 5 wards as Model wards and boosted 600+ businesses to adopt Solid Waste Management practices.

Waste Warriors encourages the locals to take action and clean up their environment by instilling a sense of willingness and accountability in them. Due to their shared love of the mountains, the community members and volunteers are motivated to address this issue.



Initiatives of Waste Warriors directly support the achievement of the following UN SDGs:



Leading the Change: A chit-chat with Responsible Travel Influencers





@keralafoodie
340k Followers

How do you support responsible behaviour and sustainability through your work?

I began by changing myself first. Making the choice to avoid single-use plastic during my travels took some thought. Therefore, I took step one at a time. Soft drinks in plastic bottles were the first thing I gave up. Then, I noticed chocolate and candy wraps everywhere which made me say no to them. Next, I stopped plastic-wrapped chips, biscuits, and finally mineral water bottles.



How difficult is it to find alternatives?

People think it's hard to travel without plastic. But if you are willing to say a strict no, then it's very much feasible. Initially, it was hard for me as well. Doing away with the packaged mineral water was the most challenging thing. Now it's almost been over a year without plastic bottled water.



As tourists what can we all do to be more eco-friendly?

The first simple thing is carrying a water bottle. Just carry steel or any metal bottle, refill and use. Next, remember that you can survive without chips and biscuits. Carry a metal straw while traveling. If you intend to make a purchase while traveling, bring two or three cloth bags. This is more than enough.



In your opinion, how far along are we, in attaining sustainability in India?

In the olden days, we were implementing some of the best sustainable tourism practices. Aside from the cities, our population continues to lead a sustainable lifestyle. Contrary to the popular belief, every individual has a lot of power and can bring about a big difference. It's time we realize that sustainability is not difficult at all.



@sreedevikkutty
12.9k Followers

How do you support responsible behaviour and sustainability through your work?

Sustainability is a very ambitious word for me. I used to throw the word around a lot without completely understanding if I am being relatable or realistic. I've transformed from being someone who felt superior to others because of the lifestyle that I practised to a person who now believes that it's completely not possible to reach zero waste but we can certainly work towards low waste and low carbon footprint. The idea is to be more mindful and responsible for your actions.



How are you creating and promoting alternatives?

I grew up in a small town and I currently live in a village. Re-using is something that comes very naturally to me. I have been doing it because my grandparents and my parents have influenced me to reuse things since childhood. In terms of business, the local community members advocate environmentally responsible practices, based on which we develop new ideas and try them out!



Can you tell about your experience with EV and recharge stations available in India?

Our EV experience has been great. We've travelled about 50,000 kms. We've had problems with recharge stations but the customer support has been really good due to which the problems get solved very quickly.



Is sustainability difficult or doable?

There are a lot of practical hurdles when one practises it. You have to be ready to face the initial discomfort. But once you start, you find your way! You will develop your support system, friends and brands that will help you support your sustainability ideals.



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