

traveller

OUTLOOK



RESPONSIBLE
TOURISM SUMMIT 2015

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OUTLOOK TRAVELLER RESPONSIBLE TOURISM SUMMIT 2015

December 9
Kamal Mahal, ITC Maurya, New Delhi



Presents



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In keeping with the spirit of Outlook Traveller's Responsible Tourism initiative, this report was printed on FSC-certified paper to support sustainable forestry.

CONTACT
Sohy Banerjee
sohy@outlookindia.com
Swastik Banerjee
swastik@outlookindia.com

HEAD OFFICE
AB-10, S.J. Enclave, New Delhi 110029
Tel: 33505500; Fax: 26191420
outlook@outlookindia.com



OTHER OFFICES
MUMBAI Tel: 33545000; Fax: 33545100
KOLKATA Tel: 33545400; Fax: 24650145
CHENNAI Tel: 42615224, 42615225
Fax: 42615095
BENGALURU Tel: 45236100; Fax: 45236105

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VINOD ZUTSHI
*Secretary, Ministry of
Tourism, Government
of India*

SUMAN BILLA
*Joint Secretary, Ministry
of Tourism, Government
of India*

**DR HAROLD
GOODWIN**
*Director, International
Centre for RT,
Professor of RT,
Manchester Metropolitan
University*

**DR VENU
VASUDEVAN**
*Former Secretary, Kerala
Tourism, also associated
with the Kochi Biennale
and the Incredible India
campaign*

**ASHWANI
LOHANI**
*Chairman and Managing
Director, Air India*

AMAN NATH
*Chairman,
Neemrana Hotels*

NAKUL ANAND
Executive Director, ITC

SUNIL KUMAR
*President, Travel Agents
Association of India
(TAAI)*

**TANVI
SUNDARIYAL**
*Additional Managing
Director, Madhya Pradesh
State Tourism
Development Corporation
(MPSTDC)*

JOSE DOMINIC
*Managing Director and
CEO, CGH Earth*

**SANTOSH
MISHRA**
*Managing Director,
Chhattisgarh Tourism*

**BELINDA
WRIGHT**
*Executive Director, Wild-
life Protection Society of
India (WPSI)*

**SHOBA
MOHAN**
Partner, Rare India

MARK WATSON
*Executive Director,
Tourism Concern*

**MANISHA
PANDE**
*Managing Director,
Village Ways*

**ANOOP
SHRIVASTAVA**
*Deputy Director, Uttar
Pradesh Tourism*

JYOTI KAPUR
*President, Association of
Domestic Travel Opera-
tors of India (ADTOI)*

**DR RAJSHREE
AJITH**
*Director, Kerala Institute
of Tourism and Travel
Studies (KITTS)*

SHAMA PAWAR
Founder, Kishkinda Trust

STEVE BORGIA
*President, Ecotourism
Society of India (ESOI)*

**RAJNISH
SABHARWAL**
*CEO, The Ultimate
Travelling Camp*

SHEEL GUPTA
OST Public Relations

JEREMY SMITH
*Editor and Co-founder,
TravIndy*

**SUMESH MANG-
ALASSERY**
*Kabani Bamboo Village,
Kerala*

**MANDIP SINGH
SOIN**
*Founder and Managing
Director of Ibex Expedi-
tions and Fellow of the
Royal Geographical
Society*

**KINGSHUK
BISWAS**
*Marketing Manager,
Gujarat Tourism*

**PRANAB
SARKAR**
*Honorary Secretary,
Indian Association of
Tour Operators (IATO)*

**PEEYUSH
SEKHSARIA**
Architect



THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARED
2017 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR
TOURISM IN A RESOLUTION ADOPTED
ON DECEMBER 4, 2015

THE CHALLENGES

“Tourism presently accounts for 5% of global emissions – approximately 4% from transportation (40% of those from air travel and 32% from car travel) and almost 1% from the accommodation sector. Demand for air travel is forecast to double by 2050.”

The Guardian, 2013

Given the growth of tourism at about 5% globally, the pressure on the social and economic aspects of the industry is also expected to be significant.

THE ROAD AHEAD

“Tourists are demanding the greening of tourism. More than a third of travellers are found to favor environmentally-friendly tourism and be willing to pay between 2 and 40% more for this experience. Traditional mass tourism has reached a stage of steady growth. In contrast, ecotourism, nature, heritage, cultural and “soft adventure” tourism are taking the lead and are predicted to grow rapidly over the next two decades. It is estimated that global spending on ecotourism is increasing at a higher rate than the industry-wide average growth.”

*‘Tourism in the Green Economy’ by
UNWTO/UNEP*

Recently, the UNTWO also announced its intention of devising and implementing policies by 2030 “to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”.

“Issues such as climate change, effective resource management, poverty reduction and inclusive growth need to be at the center of tourism development. Now that the Goals have been approved, it is time to step up our action, time to advance policies and business strategies that monitor and minimize the negative effects of tourism development and maximize its positive impacts, namely through the distribution of its benefits among host communities.”

*UNWTO Secretary-General,
Taleb Rifai*

Many of the world’s biggest travel and tourism companies are:

- 20 per cent more carbon efficient today than they were in 2005
- On course to cut CO2 emissions by 50 per cent from 2005 to 2035
- On course to reach the target of 25 per cent reduction by 2020

*World Travel & Tourism Council
(WTTC), 2015*

WHAT IS RT?

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM (RT) IS TOURISM THAT CREATES BETTER PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE IN AND BETTER PLACES TO VISIT

THE CAPE TOWN DECLARATION (2002)

RT TAKES MANY FORMS... DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS HAVE DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM



**SOCIAL
BENEFITS**



**ECONOMIC
BENEFITS**



**ENVIRONMENTAL
BENEFITS**

FOR TOURISTS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES



WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM?

The Cape Town Declaration framed at the Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, held in Johannesburg in 2002, adopted the following universal principles of responsible tourism:

- » Minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts
- » Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions
- » Involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances
- » Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity
- » Provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues
- » Provides access for physically challenged people
- » Is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence



THE BIG 20 TAKEAWAYS

WHAT WE LEARNT FROM BOTH THE POLICYMAKERS AND THE STAKEHOLDERS WHO WORK ON THE GROUND WITH COMMUNITIES

1

Create better places for people to live in and better places to visit

2

Respect the planet and its people.
Generate greater awareness for both hosts and guests

3

Make RT an interdependent project with regular tourism

4

Communicate a clear RT mandate for hoteliers, travel operators, public and private minders, local communities, and travellers, especially domestic tourists, who account for a large chunk of the business

5

Address the need for an RT-specific classification system

6

Make community the centerpiece of all RT discussions

7

Arrest outmigration, generate jobs and skills, invest in training and employing at least one member of each local family, create infrastructure, schools and opportunities for the community.
But make sure that tourism is the additional, not the primary source of income, and that it takes into account local aspirations as well

8

Maximise tourism's ability to employ a diverse workforce, including retirees and homemakers, and to generate ancillary business opportunities, such as food production, transport, and so on

9

Facilitate better dialogue between the government, both central and state, and the service providers

10

Invest in collective, symbiotic public-private action, such as linking subsidies with RT compliance, creating and managing infrastructure together, and maintaining the cultural and environmental sanctity of built heritage by law and practice

11

Know that there's a business case for RT across categories—from luxury to budget/backpacking industry and travellers, RT can bring tangible and intangible benefits for everyone

12

Make heritage more accessible — not under lock and key, better lighting, no differential pricing

13

Create better tools and vehicles for identifying and marketing RT businesses

14

Create a network of passion-driven individuals and businesses that may/may not know about each other, and in turn, a wealth of RT-related knowledge

15

Galvanise viable public and private interventions as a group

16

Don't treat RT like a product. Treat it like an experience. Sell the RT story — much like cinema — by selling the dream, the big picture. Not by dwelling on the details

17

Link RT with benefits, not sacrifice, for both service providers and travellers

18

Capitalise on the trend of authenticity or experience economy mapped by researchers at Harvard

19

Let it be a positive message and approach of accountability plus initiative

20

Understand and adapt international nuances of RT

WHAT THEY SAID

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS WHO SHARED THEIR VIEWS ON RT INITIATIVES IN INDIA AND ABROAD



1. Vinod Zutshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism 2. Dr Harold Goodwin, Director, International Centre for RT 3. Belinda Wright, Executive Director, WPSI 4. Ashwani Lohani, Chairman and MD, Air India 5. Steve Borgia, President, ESOI 6. Dr Rajashree Ajith, Director, KITTS 7. Jose Dominic, MD, CGH Earth 8. Dr Venu Vasudevan, Former Secretary, Kerala Tourism 9. Mandip Singh Soin, MD, Ibex Expeditions 10. Tanvi Sundariyal, Additional MD, MPSTDC 11. Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC 12. Sumesh Mangalassery, Kabani Community Tourism and Services, Kerala 13. Peeyush Sekhsaria, Architect 14. Jeremy Smith, Co-founder, Travlndy 15. Manisha Pande, MD, Village Ways, Kumaon 16. Santosh Mishra, MD, Chhattisgarh Tourism 17. Shoba Mohan, Partner, Rare 18. Anoop Srivastava, Deputy Director, UP Tourism 19. Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism 20. Mark Watson, Executive Director, Tourism Concern 21. Shama Pawar, Founder, Kishkinda Trust 22. Kingshuk Biswas, Marketing Manager, Gujarat Tourism 23. Sunil Kumar, President, TAAI 24. Rajnish Sabharwal, CEO, The Ultimate Travelling Camp 25. Aman Nath, Chairman, Neemrana Hotels

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VINOD ZUTSHI

*Secretary, Ministry of Tourism,
Government of India*

The Government of India and the Ministry of Tourism is committed to spearheading the movement of RT in this country in the true spirit of Incredible India. I'm confident that the interaction of local stakeholders with the international panel of delegates and speakers participating in this summit will be an ideal opportunity for them to understand the international nuances and the best practices of RT prevalent worldwide and to adopt them within this country. I also hope that the summit will provide a platform to connect all institutions and individuals, will catalyse discussion in a forum that is focused on mapping out viable organisational-level interventions and get the government agencies to commit to implementation on the RT programme.

RT is also sometimes interchangeably referred to as eco-tourism or sustainable tourism, with academics fine-tuning their understanding as it expands in its scope. Over the last two decades this newfound understanding has found supporters across the board from luxury hotel chains to NGOs to media houses and seasoned travellers themselves...

I'd like to highlight some of the initiatives and endeavours of the Government of India under the Ministry of Tourism. The Ministry launched a

comprehensive sustainable tourism criteria for India, STCI, for three major segments of the tourism industry, namely the tour operators, accommodation and beaches, backwaters, lakes and river sectors, during the sensitisation workshop on sustainable tourism for stakeholders in August 2014.

The Ministry has framed guidelines for approval of hotel projects at the implementation stage and also guidelines for classification and reclassification of operational hotels under various categories. As per these guidelines, the hotels at the project stage itself are required to incorporate various eco-friendly measures like sewage treatment plants, rainwater harvesting system, waste management system, pollution control, introduction of non-Chlorofluorocarbons equipment for refrigeration and air-conditioning, and measures for energy and water conservation.

The tour operators approved by Ministry of Tourism sign a pledge for commitment towards safe and honourable tourism and sustainable tourism to fully implement sustainable tourism practices consistent with the best environment in heritage protection standards such that the present tourism resource requirements optimise both local community benefit and future sustainable users.

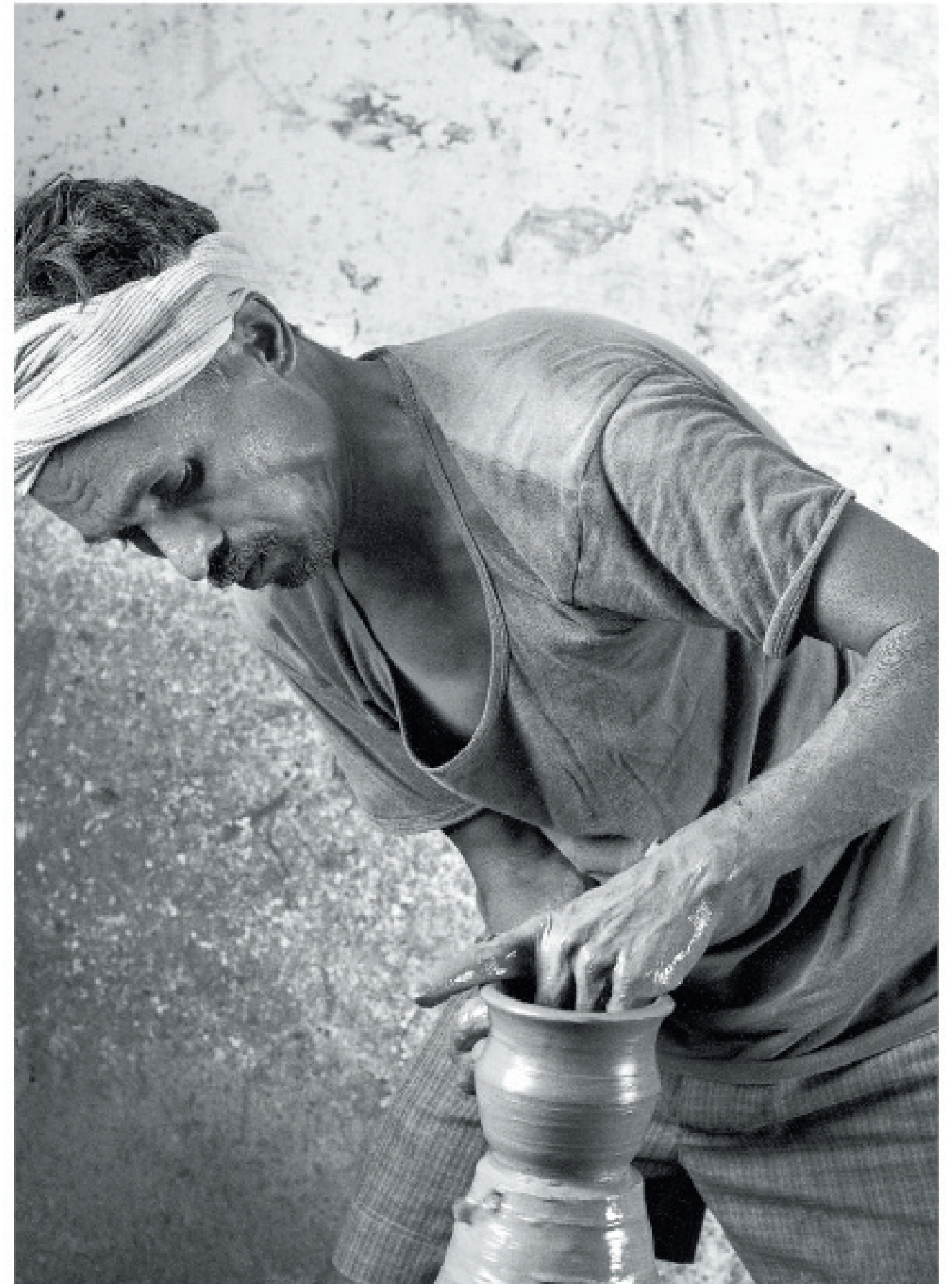
We hold constant dialogues with state governments, various tourism-related institutions and stakeholders for drawing up strategies for development and promotion of tourism in the country, including sustainable tourism.

The ministry supports from time to time various seminars and events that deliberate or focus on tourism in the country, including sustainable tourism in the rural areas. We have been running major social awareness media campaigns under the brand Atithi Devo Bhava since the year 2008. These campaigns are aimed at creating awareness about the benefits of tourism, the need to protect our environment and heritage, and follow ethical behaviour. They are on TV channels, FM radio channels, print and online media under various themes. The campaigns have been very well received and proved effective in sensitising the masses on various issues, including RT.

We've also been running Campaign Clean India to achieve an acceptable level of cleanliness and hygiene at tourism destinations for an inclusive and sustainable development of tourism.

And last, but not the least, as an incentive to the stakeholders, the Ministry of Tourism grants National Tourism Award under the category of Most Responsible Tourism Project and Tourism Initiative.

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DR HAROLD GOODWIN*Director, International Centre for RT,
Professor of RT, Manchester Metropolitan University*

I would like to say at the beginning that I think there's probably in India more responsible tourism than there is in any other country in the world, but it's well hidden. And I think one of the opportunities that today's conference creates is to bring that out far more for people to see.

The whole issue of the sustainable development of our world is also relatively new. It's with great sadness I heard about Maurice Strong's death 10 days or so ago [November 2015]. He was the person who in 1972 really pulled together that first conference on environment and development, and by 2012, we'd been through 40 years, my working lifetime, and to be honest, the problems are bigger now than they were in 1972. We may have done some things to address sustainability but the problem has gotten bigger faster than we've dealt with it. We are at the moment, I think, still losing the battle.

...We worked eventually with the association of independent tour operators, and we chose the language of responsibility for two reasons: one, that it was possible to be very specific about what the tour operator or the hotelier was going to do about a particular issue. What were they going to take responsibility for? And the industry was happy with that because it meant that they were going to pick up a particular agenda and not feel that they were responsible for everything. And I was happy about that because it meant that what was just an inoperative, abstract idea was now a concrete idea, with specific issues, which needed to be addressed.

...I'm often asked who is the father of RT. I'm extremely clear about that. It's a Swiss German-speaking academic,

Jost Krippendorf, who wrote a very important book published in the early '80s in German and not until 1987 in English called *The Holiday Makers*, in which he made the point that every individual tourist builds or destroys human values when travelling. And I thought the piece of film, which *Outlook Traveller* have created for this summit, brilliantly stated that. Each of those ordinary tourists interviewed for the film was talking about that sense of respect and responsibility of valuing the place and its people for what they are. What is interesting about RT is that travellers get it. The industry will often pretend that it doesn't understand, but travellers nearly always understand what it means to travel responsibly and to travel with respect.

...Effectively, what had happened by 2000 was that we had a movement, which had begun in the UK around RT with tour operators, and a movement, which had started with the communities and the government in South Africa around RT as well. And that resulted in the 2002 declaration.

What I often say to communities is that the real challenge is for you to use tourism to benefit your community and not to be used by tourism.

[RT] has two senses: has the sense of people being held to account and has the more positive sense of people taking responsibility, seeing a problem, responding to it and dealing with it. We have at the moment a serious ostrich problem with people just sticking their heads in the sand and hoping that somebody else will solve the problem. But as Abraham Lincoln said, you can't escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.

The problem is, of course, when it's

everybody's responsibility, it can very quickly become nobody's.

There are very few global issues. I think there are probably only two, in fact: one is carbon and the other is plastic...

One of the things that the industry has been very reluctant to look at, and we've pushed it very hard over the last few years, is child protection. It's a critical issue. It's not on most people's sustainable tourism agenda. But it's a very important RT agenda item.

All forms of tourism can be more responsible. It's equally possible it seems to me for luxury to be responsible. I know plenty of backpacking practice, which is irresponsible, and I know lots of luxury practice, which is entirely responsible...

Now, if you look at the work that Harvard had been doing... they now argue that there are four successive consumer sensibilities as they call them: availability, cost and quality were the first three, the trend now is all about authenticity and the experience economy. And it seems to me that that's absolutely at the heart of tourism, and it's absolutely been at the heart of what Indian tourism has to offer from the beginning, really. That sense of an authentic experience of somebody else's place, and somebody else's culture.

Ultimately — and this is where *Outlook Traveller* is important—it's about better stories, it's about diversity, it's about the stories we tell, about the credible stories, and it's about capitalising those market trends to benefit local communities and their quality of life. And that's done very successfully in Kerala, but it's also done in many other places in India.

...But for RT to be good, it needs to

have quality and depth, and we have to accept that those experiences are a joint product—they are created by the host and guest together because that's what creates the memories. One side alone cannot do it. It's about creating memories, which then become part of the viral marketing, and social media becomes a very important part. Justin Francis, who runs ResponsibleTravel.com—I co-founded it with him—talks about how you should be able to taste the difference. If it's an RT holiday, it should feel different.

...Now, Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways at the time, who in 1994 at the launch of the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards talked about—he really let the cat out of the bag here... He said that tourism and the travel industry is essentially the short-term renting out of other people's environments. And the problem is that

the people who collect the money for the short-term lets are all too often the airlines, the transport companies, the hotels and the tour operators, and rarely is it the local government who have to clean up after the tourists, and even more rarely the local communities. And really what RT is about is trying to re-balance that.

But what we need to do at the government level is to get more focus on yield rather than just on numbers. I mean you can look to extend seasonality and extend lengths of stay, so the economic benefits are greater for each traveller.

There's a series of more practical reasons [that make business sense] about minimising risks, about having license to operate with the local community, about product quality, about cost savings, about staff morale, and maintaining staffing and a whole range of reasons to do with

market advantage. There are lots of different reasons why it makes business sense, and you don't win the argument about the business case by deploying only one of those arguments; you need to use all of them.

...[Classification] is not just a stamp though. It's more than a certificate. People have to be able to experience the difference.

So if you think about it, it's a product in experience enhancement, brings loyalty, differentiates you in a crowded market place, it's a non-price competition (it doesn't need to affect your bottom line), it enables you to attract the market segments that will be most profitable. It gives you added relevance for particular products. We all want guilt-free holidays and we all want better experiences. There's a really strong commercial case for RT.

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ASHWANI LOHANI
Chairman and MD, Air India

Environment builds on environment. If we keep a place clean, we will tend to maintain it.

I don't think it's a tourism-related problem; rather, it's a problem of where we live. All of us expect things to be good, things to grow, places to be clean, spick and span, the environment to be great. But at the same time, we expect somebody else to do it.

...India has a tremendous tourism potential as far as international tourism is concerned, as also domestic tourism, inter-state and intra-state tourism, inter-regional tourism within the state, and intra-regional tourism within the state. We have to grow. There's tremendous growth potential, but we have to grow with responsibility. Both are equally important. One should not be at the cost of the other.

When I joined the tourism ministry, I was told that there were five Ss on which the foundations of tourism were built: *soochna* (information), *suvridha* (facilitation), *suraksha* (security), *samaraksha* (infrastructure), *sahyog* (cooperation). We have to grow using these five Ss... Provide better infrastructure, provide a safe environment for the tourist, a better information system which lets the tourist know whatever he wants to know, a great system of providing facilitation to tourists, and cooperation

—international cooperation, cooperation within India, cooperation with the tourism sector, cooperation between the stakeholders, cooperation between the centre and the state, cooperation within the state by the tourism department with various other departments.

...Our dream [when I was in Madhya Pradesh] was to build a resort, which is not connected to the grid. To produce electricity through solar panels, to provide air-conditioning using geothermal resources, to use biomass for producing biogas for energy and to take care of the kitchens. We looked at cleaning the tourist destinations. We took a lead in this by involving all the stakeholders, the people of that place as well as the tourists who came to that place. And again this experiment was extremely successful.

We also looked at standardisation, because standardisation plays a great role in RT. In fact, we set a world record in the field of standardisation, by having as many as 24 ISO certifications within the ambit of Madhya Pradesh Tourism.

...[The stakeholders of the tourism industry in India] have to provide different experiences, we have to develop new destinations in a very organised manner, and we have to innovate.

My experience has been that generally a tourist—once he is inspired by the environment you give him, a clean environment—maintains it that way. He

does what he's told. Provide good signages. Tell him to keep the place clean. Tell him not to litter. Tell him to behave responsibly. And he will. But we'll have to take the lead in that, by providing a lot of signages, giving him safety—we built on that aspect by bringing in the tourist police at a large number of locations—providing good facilitation, and involving local people.

I've also worked in the [Indian] Railways, and I'm bringing this point forward because in our country most of the travel is done by trains. Indian Railways is a major player in this sector. I looked after the Delhi region, and there too I found that, despite half a million passengers converging on New Delhi station every day, and about two million in the entire division, we could make a tremendous impact in keeping the station clean because of the active participation of first and foremost, the local employees of that division—the people whose job it was to keep the place clean. By giving them a sense of pride, by motivating them.

...At Air India, we are very sensitive to the cause of environment. We have set up a committee for that purpose and we have been working towards it. One of our biggest achievements was when the AIATA gave Air India its environmental assessment certificate in November 2015. But there is still a long way to go.

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JOSE DOMINIC
MD and CEO, CGH Earth

What we learnt [from a project in Lakshadweep] was that luxury wasn't about built ostentation, but about the experience. Though made of mud and thatch, a place could be extraordinarily luxurious. And that discovery created a new approach for our enterprise.

People, who were employees at the hotel, like the Lakshadweep islanders whose only previous knowledge was fishing and harvesting coconut, and again in Periyar, village boys and girls, became the stars of the hotel. They would wear the traditional dress. The local community appreciated this. The food that we gave our customers wasn't from the standard Indian-Chinese-Continental menu, but Periyar cuisine, basically what the local people ate regularly. That pretty much became our standard.

Local communities saw this and thought, "We also build our houses like this. Our boys and girls work here. And yet, this hotel is a grand international success. Why don't we do it too?" So they started their own hotels, and they too were extraordinarily successful.

...The year 1994 was the year of the Surat plague. That year, [inbound] tourism in India came to a standstill.

Zero. And this was the year that India discovered India. The Gujarati came to Kerala. People would have usually gone to hill stations. But instead they came to Kerala and went to other destinations. Coconut Lagoon, which was the first hotel in the backwaters, was also discovered by tourists that year. It is said that thereafter, it so sparkled India, that a Gujarati girl would not get married unless the boy offered a honeymoon at Coconut Lagoon. And what's Coconut Lagoon, other than just a collection of old *tharavad* houses?

All we did was to use ideas that were owned by the community, and convert beautiful old local houses that were being demolished.

In a way, Kerala's development and growth was facilitated by industrial turmoil. 'Red' made Kerala 'green'. Industrial strife resulted in smokestacks not coming to the state, and that gave the opportunity for the development of this new industry—tourism.

...[At one point] the queen of this palace called and asked me if I could make her palace into a hotel [Kalari Kovilakom]. I said, yes, of course, Rajasthan has showed that palaces and hotels work very well together. "However," she said, "there's a concern. Never has meat been eaten

in our palace, nor wine been drunk. In fact, when the Viceroy Lord Willingdon visited the palace, my great grandfather informed him that never has anyone entered the palace wearing leather shoes. The Viceroy promptly removed his shoes and entered." She asked me if I could make the hotel 'no shoes, no wine, no meat'? I said yes, let's make it a palace of Ayurveda, leave the world behind. Leave wine, shoes, meat, mobile phones and laptops. Of course, it too went through hard times, but today it is our most successful product. Even the kitchen follows Ayurvedic principles. So, using the knowledge of the community, you reinforce their own position, and create an extraordinary product. Not only is this hotel completely off the grid, but we use total water harvesting—in fact, the lake here has been created as a water reservoir.

The reason for our success is that these local knowledge-based things become the feature of our hotel. So, again, what's good for the planet, and good for the community, is excellent for business!

...I will say please don't treat your customer as king. By doing so, we lose the plot. Instead, if you were to do what is right, those who love it will get great delight, and for the others, it's better that they walk away.

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TANVI SUNDARIYAL
Additional MD, Madhya Pradesh
State Tourism Development
Corporation (MPSTDC)

To understand and discuss the relevance of these [RT] terms and how we aim to establish certain practices, certain protocols, so that this terminology does not remain just a term that everybody discusses at conventions alone, we need to ensure that it has an impact on the field, and there's a certain feedback generated from the exercise, so that this term gets updated, renewed and reinforced over a period of time.

In my understanding, ethical practices in tourism usually means that we're implying that it is the responsibility of a certain sector... the business sector. [But] the responsibility is on every stakeholder: the tourists themselves, the local population, the government bodies, the business bodies, which also includes transporters. But the term RT would have a larger ambit because it ensures that there's greater participation and collaboration of all the stakeholders, wherein all of them have been given certain key responsibilities.

...[For example] take the police at our tourism destinations. I wouldn't say that it's a fully established tourism police but at least we're trying to make

sure that the police, which is a regulatory institution, is geared to talk to tourists, to help them if they are lost, or have some other issues. So it relates to a behavioural change overall.

...Sometimes, when we're looking at RT and various initiatives in tourism, we forget that every person has a right to travel. So in a lot of our tourism destinations, which can be difficult to reach, we have facilities for the disabled, so that the experience is not denied to them and it is as pleasurable and as comfortable for them.

...When we talk about RT, there's a very important human element, which is ensured by having good training programmes with local guides; good orientation programmes. Recently, we had a very good homestay registration-cum-orientation programme which started from Ujjain.

...By virtue of an example [a state-run RT resort in the Hoshangabad district], maybe we could create an environment where more private investors would like to collaborate with us on such practices. They would perhaps want to set up their own units, and we would like to help them with our tourism policy initiatives.

...A very important part of RT is the participation of the local community, and unless the local community feels involved and economically benefited by this, there would not be enough support for this entire section. So, this is something we're doing in Chanderi.

...I believe it is possible to be profitable, sustainable, responsible and popular as well.

...There should be no drives for cleanliness; it should be completely a part of your everyday culture and your everyday environment.

...As government players, what we have to be in charge of is building consensus and trying to collaborate with different stakeholders, who at many points of time may not fully agree with all the protocols that you are trying to establish.

The first and primary stakeholder would be the local community. Not only should they know what is happening around them, they should be positively benefited by it and they should feel that there's an importance of this sector in their lives. They should be getting jobs out of this, and we should be trying to skill them and involve them. Unless we do that, this term would remain a term.

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NAKUL ANAND
Executive Director, ITC

Luxury is ultimately about the unattainable. Luxury is more implicit, less explicit. Luxury is more intelligent, less obvious. Luxury is driven by need, not by desire. A personal statement is intertwined with authentic experiences. Ultimately, luxury is all about happiness. Luxury is all about taste, not merely about money. Rightly, as somebody has said, wealth whispers and money screams... Luxury should not be prices lower than the consumer's expectation of value and higher than what he or she wants to pay for it. Price is what you pay, value is what you get.

What one generation sees as luxury, the next sees as necessity. This information causes value shifts and changing trends. Businesses like us must continuously align their brands to the value shifts in the wider society at large.

There are new measures of success. Products are judged not by price but by quality and value, people not by income but quality of life.

...The mega trends in this century

are security, technology, concern for health as a result of greater awareness, sustainability and geopolitics. These are what will cause the seismic shifts. When these forces act upon luxury as I defined it, we get a new term that is called deeper luxury.

Overconsumption is no longer a signal of success and has been replaced by conspicuous to conscientious consumption. The new type of luxury, whose deeper values are fully embodied in the sourcing, manufacturing, marketing and distribution of products and services is rightly gaining prominence. Authentic luxury brands are those that provide goods and services to all affected by their creation and that identify the consumers as having the means and motivation to respect both planet and people.

...[There] was an interesting initiative that we did with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). We all know about overfishing in the world today. We identified with them fish that are overfished, fish that could be overfished and fish that

are plenty in the world. Against each fish item were one of the three indicators which tells you... We cannot not offer it, but we do want to make you aware of it. Our own experience has said that anything that is red, more and more people have gone in for the orange or the green option.

...[ITC Gardenia] was perhaps the first LEED platinum-rated hotel, and we wondered whether we are at a crossroads or whether choosing the path less travelled is going to be acceptable to the consumer. We were pleasantly surprised when ITC Gardenia got awards for the most luxurious hotel in the world and the greenest hotel in the world.

We believe that a business can and must play a role. Therefore, we have consciously moved from a single-dimension financial value creation to triple-bottomline philosophy of creating value that encompasses the economic, environment and social dimensions. No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come.

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STEVE BORGIA
President, Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI), and Founder, INDeco Leisure Hotels

Long, long ago, there was no wi-fi. There were no web-sites. There were no tourists. But still this great country had attracted anybody and everybody around the world to come here... right from Ghengis Khan to Alexander to the Mughals, the Dutch, the British and the French. They took so much, but we still have so much to offer... Most countries have realised what the development of the hospitality industry can bring. Sustainable and responsible tourism is on a global upward trend, so I wonder, why are we not pitching what we have already, for this is the very strength of our country...

Look at our budgets, look at our tourism policy. It does not scratch where it itches... They are still talking about old ideas of 'development', such as broadening of roads, building hotels, setting up wi-fi connections.

...When I went into a village 20 years ago to start a rural project, I didn't know what the meaning of rural or responsible tourism was. I was just a frustrated United Nations employee who wanted to do something that I couldn't do within that organisation. So I said, responsible tourism is goodness, common sense, innovation and care. And that is the framework within which we have built this organisation [Indeco Hotels].

...I took luxury to the village. I am always concerned about rural India because children in villages don't get the opportunities that children in the cities get. Take decent medical care, for instance — it's just not available to them. So we took tourism to underdeveloped regions and added luxury to it, and said, let's be responsible with it. Ultimately, [in rural India] it's not the

growth in tourism business that they seek; they seek better livelihoods.

We engage all local people as our suppliers. The bullock cart is owned by us but the fellow riding it comes from the village. He takes his fee directly from the tourist. These are [part of] the atmosphere [that is] created. The dancer comes from the village too, and so on...

We looked at it not as responsible tourism, not as sustainability. We looked at it differently. We said, let's be good. Let's be innovative. Let's be careful.

...It is not the government's responsibility. We can do it our own way too. We need a RT promotion council in the country, and tourism and policies will have to get directed towards that. Tourism is not the responsibility of the government alone.

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JEREMY SMITH
Editor and Co-founder, TravIndy

At its worst, tourism is homogenous and destructive. It is disconnected from places and communities around it. It lays waste to environment; provides people with poorly paid, uninspiring jobs. I can go on holiday to Thailand and have the same experience as I would in the Cayman Islands—never leaving the resort, never discovering anything new.

This is why for many tourists, the best part of the holiday takes place before they actually go. Before the airport, before the plane, before the visa. It's when they are full of anticipation.

...The best people I know [in RT] weren't even 'RT', often the opposite, the paltry package deal. They offer experiences to travellers that exceed the dreams and expectations they had at home. Their stories play out in locations that are truly remarkable, and they ensure guests enjoy experiences they will remember and retell for the rest of their lives.

...We need to stop selling our holidays as meaningless products, when travellers are looking for meaningful experiences. Products have parts. The key factors when selling them—function, volume, price.

We go to the cinema to escape the everyday. To dream of new locations and stories we might live. It to me is very similar to how we plan our holidays. When it comes to marketing RT, too often we forget this. So where we should be sharing dreams, we shout about our unique features. It's fair-trade, organic, locally sourced, we use no child labour, no animals were hurt in the making of this holiday. These are good, vitally important things, we should be doing as a matter of course. Before we look to talk about them to our guests, we need to first ask ourselves, how does it impact the experience people are here to enjoy.

We have to show people how our environmental and social efforts improve their holiday.

Last year Radisson Blu launched a towel reuse campaign, Just A Drop, with benefits to charity. For every 250 towels their guests reuse, the hotel chain will donate enough money to provide clean water for a child for life. Its tangible, it's understandable.

[House of MG in Ahmedabad] has worked out each average room uses per month. When you stay there, it then measures the amount of electricity each

room uses on any given night and lets you know that if you use less than the allotted amount, you will receive credits to use in the hotel gift shop or the restaurant. The gift shop supports local enterprises. They are not selling sacrifice. They are selling abundance.

What makes Soneva very rare is that when they measure the hotel's carbon footprint, they include the cost of the guests' flights in the hotel's figures. It makes it harder for them, but it makes it more honest about the hotel's impact.

...Tourists are now sharing, travelling in search of good stories. They come armed with camera phones, updating their blogs and profiles in real time from the free wi-fi in their hotel room. They work as your marketers and ambassadors, sharing your stories with the people that they trust the most—their friends... Everything we do is providing people with content they might share. Which is why, the answer to the question—how to make your responsible tourism communication a success—is simply, delivering a good experience.

Don't just escape from the worries of today, experience the best of what tomorrow's world can be.

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SUMAN BILLA*Joint Secretary, Ministry of
Tourism (MoT), Government
of India*

All of us who've been in this tourism business are fully aware that you cannot run this business going against the community. There are stray instances where there is a standoff between the community and the entrepreneurs and those are ugly. There will always be problems... But the important thing is that whatever it is that we do, we need to make the community the centrepiece of all our initiatives.

...There's this oft-quoted piece on BBC which was there many years ago. It was an interview with a child in Cuba. The child is asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And the child says, "I want to be a tourist." Because, you know, for him, a tourist is someone who comes with lots of money in his pocket and who has a good time and goes away. But I think even if the tourist has a good time, and even if the entrepreneur becomes wealthy, both of these are non-negotiable. In this process, we also need to develop a mechanism in which the community is also helped, both in terms of the environment, and also socially, feeling like a part of society and the entire initiative.

Another dimension is that tourism is increasingly becoming experiential. And when I say experiential, I don't just mean the grandeur of a room, or the quality of

the meals that you serve, but this is about what sort of experience the tourist has? The tourist will have a chance to peep into the heart and soul of the community; is he able to interact with the community and connect with the community in a way that enriches his understanding, makes him sympathetic towards the people that are hosting him? I think that is the experience towards which tourism will ultimately lead. It is already a very strong market, and that is where the business is going to drive.

...Another reason why RT is important is that it can create avenues for employment for a diverse workforce. Which other sector in the world will be able to employ housewives, or retirees who will truthfully and sincerely work at their own time and convenience and be socially useful or productive and be able to contribute to the sector and to society positively? I think it's a great opportunity for people who will otherwise not be able to take up employment opportunities, and get a sense of self-fulfillment.

...We need classification because all those who do this can't just pay lip service that we're RT compliant. It's important for us to walk the talk. What do you mean when you say you're responsible as a tour operator, as a hotelier? What should you be doing?

...Today there are various subsidies that

are given, not from the central government, but from the governments of the various states so that there's an incentive on capital investment, subsidies on power, and all the things that we give anyway. Align it to a responsible framework and it'll automatically yield a good number of results. There will be something in it for the entrepreneur to make that conscious choice to work there.

What would be the government's role in this, broadly? We have to create a framework, because there are many initiatives. I see many people in this room... All of them have done fantastic work as entrepreneurs, as individuals making that RT framework work within their sphere of activities. But what the government needs to do is to sort of broadbase that framework; create one that works across the sector. Make everybody else, you know, come into that.

In the national tourism policy that we're on the verge of announcing, the pillar, the thing that it rests on, has two elements. The first is growth. India needs to grow at a rate that's commensurate with its potential. And the second is that this growth must happen within a framework of responsibility.

...If we're able to take care of safety and cleanliness, there is no force on earth that can stop us from growing... MoT is committed 100 per cent into making RT happen.

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DR RAJASHREE AJITH*Kerala Institute of Tourism
and Travel Studies (KITTS)*

Earlier, we had a top-down approach with the state government at the top, the industry at the bottom. The local governments in the community could not see or perceive any benefits [from tourism]. There were a lot of community- and trade-related conflicts happening too. This was not the correct way to do it. Therefore, in Kerala, government intervention came in the form of RT, and it actually helped tourism projects go forward.

...Mr Suman Billa, who was the [state tourism] secretary then, would always tell me, "It's not about one destination. We have to replicate it. This success story can be a success, only if we replicate it." And I'm happy to report that we have replicated it successfully [after Kumarakom] at Thekaddy, which is evident from the fact that it got the National Tourism Award for responsible tourism this year, plus an international award.

...[In Kumarakom] with regard to local procurement, we conducted studies to understand a hotel's needs and figure out how to make a link between local people and tourism. An agricultural calendar was prepared, discussions were held with hoteliers whereby we

could come to an agreement on buying local produce from the farmers. In fact, production groups were identified and supply groups were also formed by the local government.

...Capacity building and skill development have been given great consideration. So from organic farming, glass-making, and making paper bags and cloth bags—whatever can be made or produced by the locals—we take the maximum amount of those products or the produce.

...[We also] protect nature with the help of the communities who are part of waste management programmes. Sewage treatment plans are drawn up and collection mechanisms involving the local community are set up for waste management at a bird sanctuary, for instance. We have mangrove regeneration programmes where 1,600 mangroves have been replanted with the joint efforts of the community members as well as the local resorts. Reconversion of fallow land into agricultural land also has been a good step in the project. Quite a lot of new ponds, which were earlier used for waste disposal, are now used for fish farming.

... [There is an] RT classification scheme instituted by the government

of Kerala, and 13 out of the 18 resorts of Kumarakom have been classified... In this, we have delineated sustainable, economic, socio-cultural and environmental criteria.

...The result of the Kumarakom RT initiative is that the industry-community conflict has been fully resolved, and the local panchayat here plays a great role in the development of tourism in the area. In Kerala, the role of the local panchayat is very important... But I want to point out that when we replicated it in Thekaddy, we did not have and still do not have enough support from the local panchayats. And yet, we have been able to make it successful.

The handholding exercise done by the government of Kerala for this project continues. Though we are an educational institution, we are also a training and consultancy institute [KITTS] for responsible tourism in Kerala, and my entire team (we have sub-teams at each of these destinations) works together to ensure that there is synergy between the community and the trade. They can get our help in resolving any issues they might have. In fact, the problems are identified before they become too huge and result in conflicts.

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SUMESH MANGALASSERY*Kabani Community Tourism & Services, Kerala*

Wayanad was one of the places where farmers were committing suicide in 2005... And now, there are two villages in the area that are earning an additional income through tourism and meeting some of their needs through it during the crisis period. If you take last year's figures, they got an average of ₹10,000 a month as an additional income from the village homestays... But tourism must be an additional income, not the main source of income.

[Our] company is facilitating community tourism. But tourism is just one activity for us. We are also facilitating other entrepreneurial activities, such as food processing and manufacturing of village products. So, basically, we are trying to redefine tourism from a socially detached activity to an inclusive one.

...People always ask us, “Why are you promoting homestays?” and we have a very good answer to that, especially in Kerala, where we have 1.2 million houses empty or unoccupied. The people working in the Middle East or Europe are simply constructing houses where no one lives. So it's an excellent infrastructure to be used for tourism because we're not changing the land-use pattern or anything. It's an existing infrastructure.

And it generates additional income for farmers, fisherfolk and other locals.

When it comes to the guests, they also get an enriching experience through the exchange of culture... Plus, energy consumption is comparatively low.

We are also working with a network of small cottages... The volume of small businesses in tourism is considerably large. Since our mandate is to change the existing form of tourism, we are also training smaller players.

Ninety percent of our guides are housewives, mostly members of self-help groups. There are many service providers in the village, and the villagers are getting a lot back through the village development fund. The fund is utilised for general activities in the village. At present, we have 750 direct beneficiaries, but in 2017, we are expecting to break even and reach 2,500. The empowerment of the community through this programme is really interesting. This training includes waste management, communication skills, hygiene, conservation of natural resources, and gender issues. We conducted workshops for the community where we tried to define what responsible tourism is for them. We are introducing water treatment for bathrooms this year and also drip irrigation systems. We are trying

to create a better environment standard for our programme in the villages.

...We do have a strong business model. Our business is based on the last 15 years of our experience, and we did a market survey with some universities, and we're only using existing infrastructure so our overheads are comparatively low. We have flexibility in our business and very low cost of operations.

...The government has a major role to play. Often our policies don't recognise some of the models, which we are trying to propagate. For example, a community cottage in Alapi was not getting a license because the government was confused about whether it should be classified as a resort or a homestay.

Taxation is also a big problem—every panchayat has a different tax.

The lack of visitor management in other destinations is also a problem... The kind of guests we are getting are not interested in visiting interesting tourist locations. Wayanad is a classic example. Everyone wants to go to the forest but the forests are overcrowded.

The attitude of mainstream tourists, especially the domestic travellers, is a huge problem too because for the communities and the tourists, there's a gap between expectations and reality.

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KINGSHUK BISWAS*Marketing Manager, Gujarat Tourism*

We have around 190 homestays in Gujarat, and all of them are doing extremely well... What does the government do for these kind of homestays? We provide marketing support, financial support, in terms of training, and so on.

...Last May, [the Rann Utsav] case study was presented to the United Nations World Forum (UNWF) in Mexico City. There were two cases from India. One was Kutch, and the second was Rann Utsav. And the UNWF network has compared them to 50 cases of responsible tourism... [Rann Utsav] started as a two-day event, now it is a 100-day event, and it has actually transformed the local economy.

...Recently, the government has also announced the 2016 policy. To position

Gujarat as a vibrant tourist destination, the emphasis is on improving visitor experience, livelihood linkages, sustainable development, enhancing investment opportunities and thus leading to inclusive growth in the state. So we are very open to the idea of responsible tourism. This is reflected in our vision document—to upgrade the environment and also to encourage responsible tourism in the state.

A tourism policy generally gives a lot of incentives, but [in Gujarat] we have also tried to include tented accommodation, etcetera, that not every state is thinking about. Whether it's a high-end resort or a tented accommodation, we are providing incentives for all of them. In the tourism policy, there is a special incentive for people who are into responsible tourism.

We are giving them 75 per cent of the cost of carrying out energy audits, and more than that, we're rewarding people who have innovated.

A lot of work has been done in the area of responsible tourism, but none of this has been documented. So we are financing or providing facilities to research or document these kinds of initiatives. So, every year, we'll be initiating at least three such case studies. We need to identify and document the excellent RT practices across the state and for that you need to have policy framework. [Gujarat] already has this.

...I would like to tell you that we are in the advanced stage of talking with IRMA, which is the Institute of Rural Management, Anand, because we are trying to introduce a course in sustainable tourism.

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MANDIP SINGH SOIN

*Founder and Managing Director of Ibex Expeditions
and Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society*

If we can capture the belief of wanting to do the right stuff, I believe all the clients really want to be innately responsible. For the 36 years of our existence, we’ve never had a campfire despite being an adventure travel company at the core. The reason is that we know in the Himalaya, not only because of carbon issues (because in the early days we didn’t know about carbon issues) that each time we used wood for our clients, the local women who were gathering the firewood for their homes would need to go further and further into the forest...

So once the client gets to know this, he actually respects you for the work you do.

...At Corbett Foundation, we support projects like the conversion of poachers to guides. We want to connect the tourism industry with a lot of NGOs so that they can actually do some good work.

...We brought out three handbooks on environment and eco-tourism. In Nagaland, we converted bird hunters into guides; they have taken an oath, so now you can go there and see the birds—they don’t kill them anymore. Instead, they are birdwatching guides. Similarly,

when we were in Arunachal, we were talking about eco-tourism.

...We are trying to raise the bar for ourselves by trying to talk to the Cham-bal dacoit community, if they could become guides with the biodiversity that they have there which is absolutely fantastic. One of the side issues we want to do is to convert the area or propose it as a World Heritage Site.

We need to do things together because there is no point signing pledges and there is not point agreeing [on] policies and putting it on your website unless you walk the talk.

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AMAN NATH

Chairman, Neemrana Hotels

I think that any wilderness in India can be populated wherever you find a ruin or a structure, which is not listed, and you can do something terribly responsible with it. You can actually make the impossible happen.

...When we were children, I remember long holidays with my family—we used to drive in the mountains and that time we knew that the gods lived in Uttarakhand, in Himachal Pradesh, in the Himalaya. But now Kerala has done the Ravana act, they have taken all the gods to Kerala and there are none left in the Himalaya [referring to the tagline ‘God’s own country’]. So I think if you’re well organised and structured you can market anything. Even Ayurveda... the *sanjeevani booti* came from the Himalaya and is now only found in Kerala, which is wonderful.

...Sometimes, we fool ourselves into believing... How we think we’re so fantastic, we think everything works in India; that’s not entirely true. Just because we talk about something or because somebody’s written a paper on it, or because in conferences like this, we see some of the best examples, we begin to believe that the rest of India is actually that, you know. It’s not quite true.

...The Kumbh Mela where 70 lakh pilgrims arrive... To think if this were to happen in Geneva—70 lakh pilgrims arrive—or in Tokyo or New York, or even cities which are geared for this, they would not be able to cope with that. There is a lot to be said for

the government when it pulls its act together, it’s got the machinery, but it’s not incentivised, and I think it’s also not punished enough.

...[We were told] your people are so fantastic, where did you find them?

Now, these were the people who for the last five years had helped us restore the building, they were the people who were carrying the earth and the sand and the stones on their head. But it comes so naturally to an Indian to be civilised... You don’t have to go to make them responsible in that sense, people bend when they see an elderly person, they touch your feet because they understand the feet are the only part which touch the earth and get the vibrations of gravity and so on... If there is person who cannot walk, then you help them to walk. Nobody has to tell you a manner in how this is done.

...[At Neemrana] we raised a lot of money, we set up a hospital, and we set up medicines for 100 villages and so on. But how to sustain it? While we were doing all this, the government was busy setting up an industrial estate in Neemrana. It is not a thinkable thing to do, in England you wouldn’t set up an industrial complex near one of the oldest heritage resorts. See, the difference between the landscapes of what Neemrana was and what thanks to the government unplanning it has become. We live with it, there is no municipality and no limit to which a hotel becomes responsible for cleaning the sewage of what used to be 5,000 people, and is now 25,000 people.

So is it very difficult for a government for every heritage hotel or a place, which is a destination, to have a municipality or a responsible panchayat, which can also be punished, not just the hotel?

...When you see beautiful pictures of villages in South India or the mountains, it’s not the same thing as what it is in Haryana, where the aspirations are totally urban. They want to live in your house—you might have a dream to live in their house but that’s a separate matter.

...It is not village tourism, it is actually tourism done by urban people with urban sensibilities in a village.

...But this extraordinary set up they’ve got in Gujarat... I went there. I reached at 10pm and all the villagers were waiting because they had to sing a welcome song. So I felt actually a little bad that one had kept them awake, and the villagers say hurry up let’s get into our *dhotis* the tourists are coming, even if they wear jeans the rest of the day. I think there is something Disneyland about it.

I don’t know if the South is more manageable than the North because wherever there is a power centre, there is madness.

I think people are looking for authentic, simple things. It’s not about escalating it into more luxury. We’ve been schooled in the 1960’s a lot with the American hotels that people are looking for more and more—we’ve escalated a lot.

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SANTOSH MISHRA

Managing Director, Chhattisgarh Tourism

Like Mr Aman Nath said, the hygiene and standards of the villages of northern India can be an issue. However, I must tell you that the tribal villages [in Chhattisgarh] are absolutely spick and span.

...One of the ways in which we are trying to protect built heritage is by locking it up. Promptly at 10 o'clock the lock opens and at 5 o'clock the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) guy comes and shuts it down, and that's it. I think a far more efficient way of protecting built heritage is to make it lively, to make it the centre of activity... Light it up, that's a suggestion I have,

and I have communicated it to the ASI as well... now you have efficient LED solutions, you have all kinds of low-impact lighting.

We have noticed that when you make it a centrepiece of discussion of the local community or the city surrounding it, or the whole village gets involved in some way, there is a much better chance of protecting a monument than by keeping it under lock and key.

...Coming to our built heritage, Sirpur is a 6th-century Buddhist site of Chhattisgarh. So [to 'conserve' it] we created something around it: the Sirpur International Song and Dance Festival.

Last year, the Chief Minister was very happy when he saw this, and he said we must make it international, so this year, we will start incorporating international elements into the festival. It's a classical and semi-classical festival, and over the last three years, it has really reached a level that is beyond our expectations.

...In ASI monuments, if you are an Indian, you pay ₹10 and if you are a foreigner, you end up paying \$50. Such differential pricing is something I have been opposing on every forum possible, and I have given it in writing to ASI as well. I think this is one of the hurdles in the promotion of tourism in India.

ANOOP SRIVASTAVA

Deputy Director, Uttar Pradesh Tourism

The responsibility and mandate of a community (and its heritage) lies with specific departments in the government at the centre. These departments keep themselves engaged in the conservation and development of such monuments, but the respon-

sibility of other related departments, the private sector and the society at large cannot be escaped.

...I am happy to share the concept of a heritage arc in Uttar Pradesh. Most of us know about the Golden Triangle circuit, which connects Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Likewise, we have a brand

new heritage arc in Uttar Pradesh, which connects Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi. It looks like an arc when we join the dots on the map. It adopts a cluster approach to promote tourism: promoting the Agra, Awadh and Varanasi regions, as well as the Buddhist circuit in the state.

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PEEYUSH SEKHSARIA
Architect

Lessons from the Mud Mosque of Djenne in Mali are of interest to India, but also largely to the so called ‘Third World’. It is the largest earthen structure in the world, and is actually part of an island complex in the Niger delta. The whole city of Djenne comes together to plaster the mosque every year, where they are all over the mosque, and with great precision and risk they re-plaster it. A symbolic event, the locals look forward to

it... it’s a kind of defining monument for Mali, like Taj Mahal would be for India, and Eiffel Tower for Paris... In 2006, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture evaluated the building because it was a [Unesco] World Heritage Site since 1988, and they came to the conclusion that there was too much mud on the terrace... So the only way, according to them, to correct this was to remove the entire roof and replace it, and to also reduce the frequency of the re-plastering event. All this was in con-

flict with the community. They discovered one day that a team of international experts had opened up the roof. Then on, the re-plastering ceremony has been held once in three years, in a way to accommodate community’s concerns.

I think built heritage gives us a wonderful opportunity to involve communities that have traditionally been involved with this heritage, not government institutions or Unesco or any other person or organisation from outside.

DR VENU VASUDEVAN
Former Secretary, Kerala Tourism

The first point I want to make is that RT is a partnership of the willing. So, speaking to this audience here is like speaking to the converted. We all know... We are practitioners. We’ve been there and done that. We need to be speaking to a different clientele altogether. In fact, we need to go out there and talk to everybody—the DMC [destination management company], the travel agent, hotelier, homestay owner, and tell them that RT as an active practice is beneficial to all of us. It’ll bring in business.

The second point I wanted to make is: spread the word. As individuals we may not have the wherewithal, but —thank you *Outlook Traveller* for this wonderful initiative—you can help spread the word. You can form partnerships... A few of us have been bursting our arteries for the last few years, pushing a small organisation called the Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI). We do it because of our passion for RT. Together, a media house, practitioners and policymakers can create a multiplier effect.

And the last point is that this is an opportunity for us to be prepared for the future. We inherited a kind of tourism—the Western concept of tourism. We were the destination, the host. We were the DMCs, we provided what the white man wanted. RT has the power to change that equation. We can be the ones who lay down the rules. If you want to come to our destination, we’ll set down the rules. And this is a great opportunity for destinations like India. If we all work together, the future looks very bright.

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MARK WATSON
Executive Director, Tourism Concern

Tourism is a huge industry, one of the biggest industries in the world. We’re expected to be 1.8 billion arrivals by 2030 and, of course, that doesn’t include the huge domestic markets both here in India, but also in Brazil and China and other countries as well.

...There is a huge potential for tourism to be good, to lift people out of poverty, it can help protect natural resources and I think there is huge benefit in people travelling and having that cultural exchange.

...Tourists have impacts, so we have some principles of ethical tourism that we try to instill in travellers. The first is that we shouldn’t take anything from the places we’re visiting, we shouldn’t take land away from people, we shouldn’t take water or other resources

away from people, and essentially we shouldn’t leave places worse off after we’ve visited them. The second principle is that we shouldn’t use economic power to exploit people. Tourists are wealthy and are often visiting relatively poorer communities. Wealthy people have a potential to exploit their economic position. Thirdly, we should give something back to the community we’re visiting. We’re travelling around the planet, we’re using a lot of carbon and energy to get to places, we can’t just take photographs and leave footprints. We do need to be able to give something back to the communities that we’re visiting—it needs to be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

...Many of the places we enjoy visiting are the places that are going to be most negatively impacted by climate change

and will probably have the least infrastructure to be able to adapt to those impacts... But there are also destinations that, if we stopped visiting, would also suffer by people not visiting them.

A lot of volunteering packages do not bring any benefits to the people and possibly do harm in those communities.

But we’ve also tried to promote the positive impacts of tourism. We did a whole campaign about ‘Would you like a better holiday?’ Part of that was to say better holidays are actually good for the community, good for local people, etc. If you go on an ethical holiday, you’ll get a more authentic experience and a better holiday from it. We published an ethical travel guide that is now online.

We really look at community well-being and local prosperity and social equity as the key drivers.

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THE SESSIONS



(Top to bottom) A group discussion on how to define RT; a session on whether luxury tourism can be responsible; and deliberating on the business aspects of RT



"THEY WILL ALL NEED GUIDANCE, INSPIRATION AND SUPPORT BECAUSE THEY ARE THE FIRST GENERATION THAT'S PRACTISING RESPONSIBLE TOURISM HERE"

SESSION 1

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE
TOURISM ALL ABOUT?

SPEAKERS

JOSE DOMINIC (MODERATOR) MD and CEO, CGH Earth	MARK WATSON Executive Director, Tourism Concern
TANVI SUNDARIYAL Additional MD, MPSTDC	SHAMA PAWAR Founder, Kishkinda Trust
JYOTI KAPUR President, ADTOI	PRANAB SARKAR Honorary Secretary, IATO

TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Provide constant support and direction to communities; inspire them—remember that this is the first generation that is forced to think about responsible tourism*
- 2. Respect not just palaces, but humble historic structures in rural India*
- 3. Let the government facilitate RT and lead from the front, even as it takes care of the basics like sanitation and law and order*
- 4. Get states that don't have an RT policy to design them*
- 5. Encourage consumers to push for change—the onus is not on businesses alone*
- 6. Regulate domestic tourism, especially spiritual tourism; start from the grassroots; incentivise and set up systems to ensure proper implementation*

EXCERPTS

JOSE DOMINIC

The introduction that we want to make [about RT] is from the point of view of the planet, community, and business...

SHAMA PAWAR

How do we get the convergences to work towards responsibility [in tourism] because all the money is actually coming from the Ministry of Tourism into Hampi and then the tourism is basically, besides the local communities. They can't be just the labour, they also have to benefit from it equally and they have to be taken in confidence, they have to be given guidance... You have to teach them about waste management at an early age and give them a sense of pride in their local architecture.

[In fact, we should figure out] other than the palaces, what can we do for our villages and how can we conserve them?

Very humble, simple architecture [in rural India] also has to be equally respected, because we are losing our simple historic settlements. So what kind of support can we get to turn them into beautiful places to visit? We don't have to go a village in Spain or Italy to experience that kind of tourism. We can travel in our own country.

Of course, if the local tourism industry is doing something, then it has to also be matched by the government... The systems have to be in sync for them to work.

TANVI SUNDARIYAL

I completely agree... Unless and until as a government enterprise we not only match [your steps], but we take leadership in facilitation and helping private investment, and try to engage with local communities, and at the same time, try to do our basic job, which is maintaining cleanliness — solid waste management is just a part of that — maintaining law and order, maintaining all these basic functions, which are government functions essentially. So we must do all this while facilitating private sector participation and investment, training and skill development of the local

population, and try to collaborate, try to be the leader of this consensus building, this collaboration... That's our job.

PRANAB SARKAR

...[Often] things happen without any guidelines and mushroom growth takes place (sic), which is suddenly visible and some local entrepreneurs jump into the business of tourism, and they do not follow any norms. Most of our states have not yet come up with any tourism policy for RT, and we need to develop this in a very organised manner.

I feel that four major partners need to come together: the government (both central and state); the service provider; the local communities; and the tourist himself.

JOSE DOMINIC

Is there any conflict between business and community and environment?

MARK WATSON

When we talk about RT, I think it really comes down to respect. I think the model we have of mass tourism over the last 50 years is a very consumptive form of tourism...

Some of the models of tourism we have are not particularly sustainable. Is there a conflict in some businesses? Most companies are neither good nor bad, they will do what they do to make profit. The consumers also have a responsibility to push the business to be better behaved. I think [the focus should be on] good business, and on ethical behaviour because you get repeat business, long-term business... In Spain, the unregulated market has gone out of control and destroyed what people were seeking. You don't want that situation. Sustainable tourism needs to be built in engagement with the local community.

JYOTI KAPUR

...Domestic tourism today is mostly spiritual tourism. It is not regulated, so we have to strive hard to regulate spiritual tourism in India.

In domestic tourism, the whole idea is to start at a grassroots level [with the

communities]. Locals, even children have to be given some sort of incentive... say, that tomorrow if they collect a plastic bag, they will know that will get something in return.

I have worked in the Indo-China region for 18 years and I have seen examples of rural tourism and home-stays that have been perfected over time because they have started from the grassroots level. They even clean their streets at night.

SHAMA PAWAR

Yes, [in the Hampi region] we are doing all those things, we are giving money to collect plastic. We have set systems... it is a very profitable thing for everybody.

When rural tourism came to us, I said I would like to make a village, which is really nice for the villagers to live in, so they can enjoy it and welcome the guests, rather than it being the other way around.

Right now, there are so many people who are engaged in it. They will need guidance, they will need inspiration and they will need support because this is the first generation [that is mindful of the modern goals of RT]. It will be a win-win situation.

JOSE DOMINIC

In 25 years, Kerala has used tourism as an engine of its growth, contributing 20 per cent of our gross value added. One in four new jobs is in the tourism industry.

For a country like India, being inclusive, argumentative even, is part of our ethos... So RT [and its challenges] is actually a reflection of that.

SESSION 2

CAN LUXURY BE RESPONSIBLE?

SPEAKERS

STEVE BORGIA (MODERATOR)
President, Ecotourism Society of India

RAJNISH SABHARWAL
CEO, The Ultimate Travelling Camp

HAROLD GOODWIN
Director, International Centre for RT,
Professor of RT, Manchester Metropolitan University

JEREMY SMITH
Editor and co-founder, TravIndy

TAKEAWAYS

1. Don't talk of RT as sacrifice, especially in the context of luxury. Address it instead as an opportunity to reclaim the luxuries of life that we have forgotten or forsaken—from connecting with nature to connecting with our cultural roots

2. Work towards sustaining an annual forum to connect passionate individuals and businesses, and leverage their experience and learning

3. Institute an RT-centric awards programme
4. Create a proper RT marketplace for India—where the volume of tourism is large and often unstructured, and where the larger players tend to dominate the space for publicity

5. Find better ways to connect the market and consumer—it's the market that ultimately drives RT

6. Harness and structure, specifically for tourism, the kind of responsibility, the attitude that has always been inherent in our culture

7. Encourage and enforce better regulation so that all businesses have a level playing field

EXCERPTS

HAROLD GOODWIN

The bigger part of the problem in India is not that nothing is happening, but a lot is happening. The problem in India is for what is happening to be recognised. There are two parts to that. One is this annual summit, which I hope will continue. The second part is that there needs to be an awards programme here in India. The third part is that there needs to be some kind of marketplace where people can find these products. Things are happening, but they are not being noticed as much as they ought to be.

RAJNISH SABHARWAL

There is a lot of work at the village level. We see individual RT initiatives, but it would be better to structure it, organise forums and talk about it. Educate, bring about awareness, share what's happening in various parts of the country and be local-specific... It would help us replicate and grow the model faster.

STEVE BORGIA

What's happening is more passion driven. There is no system.

RAJNISH SABHARWAL

I agree with you. Responsibility is a way of thinking. It is an attitude. I believe as Indians, it comes to us from our grandparents, from generations down the line, and its time now that we gave it a structure, we brought it in education systems, in institutions, in hospitality schools, and in the trade.

JEREMY SMITH

...Because we are supposed to be talking about luxury, [I want to highlight] that there's a message problem. People assume that when you are talking about responsibility, you are talking about sacrifice. If luxury is simply regarded to be the opportunity to consume at an excessive level, then it will always be very hard for it to be a part of RT.

We are not living in a world where the opportunity to do many things — to have more time, more space, to have

connections with nature—is increasingly a luxury. That is where the luxury responsible tourism market can offer something to people who have forgotten what it is to experience such things.

STEVE BORGIA

Do you think you need a central driving force to promote RT, or you need to go through public media, agencies?

HAROLD GOODWIN

I do think you need both. But in the end what has driven RT around the world has been the market. It's been about enthusiastic, passionate individuals, that's true. But they need to find the market for those passions to be viable commercially — it's about putting those two things together... What you need to argue against is any kind of institution that produces a straightjacket.

STEVE BORGIA

Do you see India as a RT market, a niche tourism market?

HAROLD GOODWIN

No, I do not think RT is a niche. RT is a dimension of what people are looking for...

STEVE BORGIA

You think government policies, structures can take control of RT, or should it be an independent initiative?

HAROLD GOODWIN

I have seen this thing really turns on the stakeholder engagement, but let the government facilitate that. It can't make it happen, but it can facilitate and make the environment more helpful.

STEVE BORGIA

Can there be different parameters for city initiatives and rural initiatives?

HAROLD GOODWIN

Of course, and that's fundamental to RT. Responsibility is about respecting the priorities where you are.

JEREMY SMITH

Right now in Paris there is an enormous

conference [COP 21] on climate. Whatever happens, we're moving towards an increased level of regulation that will be inevitable. Rather than resisting it, most companies are saying give us the regulation, it gives us a level playing field. It enables us to innovate for solutions.

STEVE BORGIA

Compared to some of the nations that have done well with RT, where do you think India stands?

HAROLD GOODWIN

I don't think any nation has done well with RT. What you see is different practices from different places. There's some good stuff being done in England and Scotland. There's good things being done in parts of Africa. There's some wonderful things being done in parts of India. It isn't that a whole country adopts it. What you see is where the market has allowed RT businesses to thrive, and that's what we need to do. We need to create those spaces where it's easy to follow RT.

If I look at India from outside, finding RT businesses in India is very difficult because the communication channels are dominated by the big players in the industry, so we need to create space... Just as we did with responsibletravel.com.

STEVE BORGIA

Do you think stakeholders or people related to the travel trade are taking more initiative?

JEREMY SMITH

It's inevitable. If more initiatives are taken, more things will work... Now, there is a large amount of responsible tourism, and then there is a large amount of extremely irresponsible tourism in India because of the size of this place.

HAROLD GOODWIN

The challenge is not the idea. The challenge is to find the market.

SESSION 3

THE BUSINESS OF RT

SPEAKERS

MANDIP SINGH SOIN (MODERATOR)
Founder and Managing Director of Ibex Expeditions and
Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society

MANISHA PANDE
MD, Village Ways

BELINDA WRIGHT
Executive Director, Wildlife Protection Society of India

SHOBA MOHAN
Partner, Rare India

SHEEL GUPTA
OST Public Relations

SUNIL KUMAR
President of TAAI

TAKEAWAYS

1. Support the growth of community-driven, owner-managed, small and sustainable properties. Educate about RT and employ locals
2. Facilitate better communication within the industry. Together, work with the government to monitor the situation on the ground
3. Better communication between the central and state governments and the industry also crucial
4. Focus on educating, empowering domestic tourists, since they account for nearly 80 per cent of business
5. Incubate and nurture micro and small businesses that grow in the wake of RT-centric initiatives and businesses
6. Train service providers
7. Create a model that works, display and replicate
8. Connect regular tourism and RT—make it interdependent

EXCERPTS

MANDIP SINGH SOIN

Shoba, you represent hotels, but you pick and choose, and you obviously have a slight slant on heritage and people who are more eco-sensitive, I presume. Where do you think that you can be a force to make sure that RT objectives are carried through?

SHOBA MOHAN

One of the key things we do in our audits when we select hotels is to ensure that these are largely owner-managed... Community involvement is very important so that is a key objective.

Also, we don't like very large hotels, we try to keep the keys of the hotel we take on board minimal... I would rather take four rooms in a 10-acre estate than 10 rooms in a four-acre estate.

MANDIP SINGH SOIN

Mr Gupta, would you like to say something about Uttarakhand, especially the rafting community that has burgeoned. Do you think there's a case for government monitoring or self-monitoring by the industry?

SHEEL GUPTA

Basically both are responsible, the government as well as the private operator. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the government that no construction has to be made within 200m of the river... The government is thinking about how to clean the Ganga, to keep the pollution away. So the government and the private operator should work together in this direction.

MANDIP SINGH SOIN

I'm glad to know that can happen. That brings us to the tiger crisis... Belinda, do you think the signs have improved since the crisis in terms of just the working partnerships between private industries? Are they showing more responsibility in your area or do you think there is a lot more work to be done at the government level?

BELINDA WRIGHT

I think there have been some huge steps

made, but there is still a long way to go. We need a lot more communication between the industry, and it is an industry with a very huge footprint, and the government. So in Madhya Pradesh, there is a big void there. But we're also part of the RARE India family, and I think that in that group, we try and communicate very closely with each other and have a sort of code of conduct. It does make a huge difference.

One of the things that I do to promote conservation is, to try and get people to not just say we'll ensure benefits to people, but to employ local people. If we have an area where we need somebody and there isn't a local person available to do the job, we train them...

We believe you should be very careful about architectural styles, be responsible with your construction, and the materials you use and how you use your property and fencing—it's very important that anybody who has a wildlife resort must use legal wood. Plant, create, protect. Be eco-friendly with your lighting, your sewage, your waste disposal, conserve water and avoid using mineral bottled water. Use good filtering systems. These are all fairly obvious things, but I think we need to actually put them in practice. Encourage people to walk locally, go birdwatching and so on. Have a strict noise policy.

I'm not hearing it today, but over 80 per cent of the tourism is not inbound tourism, it's actually tourism from India. Those visitors are very important because that's how we can improve the whole environmental conservation movement here, but they also need to be educated about the problems, and not throwing rubbish and so on. As an industry, we have a very important role to play in that.

MANDIP SINGH SOIN

...The same domestic traveller is also going abroad now. They know, that when they go abroad in certain cases they do behave differently, responsibly. Manisha, in terms of Village Ways, do you find you're able to encourage a lot of other people setting up micro or small businesses in the area?

MANISHA PANDE

Yes, actually on the basis of that is how

we have expanded. We started with that model in Binsar, which is a wildlife sanctuary and protected area. We have that experience of how things were before we started and after having worked there now for 10 years. I think when we did display one model, which was working, it was much easier for us to replicate it at other places. We also started working in Madhya Pradesh with the forest department where we are developing community-based tourism and bringing in tented accommodation, again run by the communities. We took at least one member from each house in the community to Binsar. When they saw this on the ground, they realised if it is possible in one protected area, it is possible to do it in their area as well.

MANDIP SINGH SOIN

Do you think TAAI members would react well apart from the Swachh Bharat cess that we all have to pay now, and our hope is that the Ministry of Tourism would get a larger chunk of that, Sunil?

SUNIL KUMAR

It's important that we make an investment today. I think whatever cess that we are paying today is nothing but an investment... We are not really talking about inbound tourism, there are so many domestic travellers too. You have a large industry base in this country, and we have these concepts [of RT]. I can't imagine putting up a stall in some exhibition; it won't work that way. It could be an interdependent project with regular tourism. Two, there have to be trained service providers and I don't think there are enough.

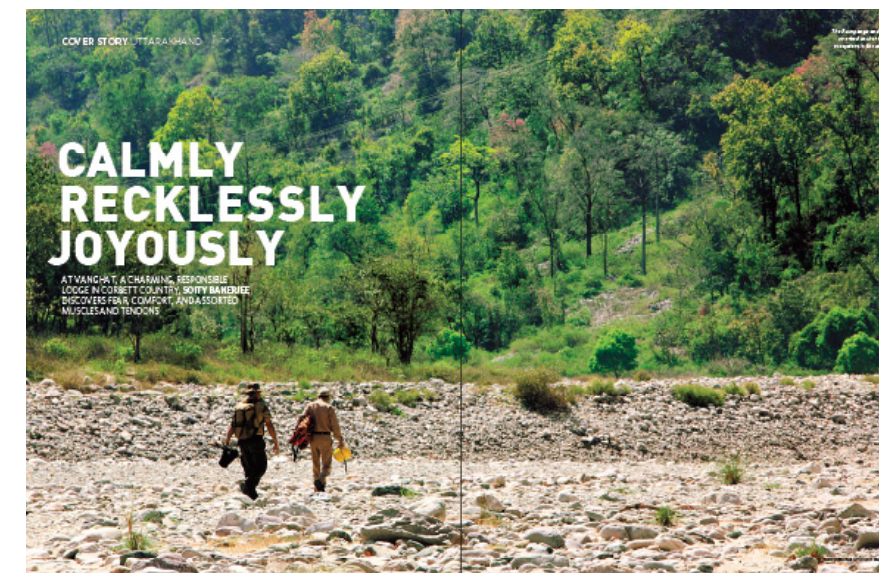
BELINDA WRIGHT

In order to achieve that we need better dialogue between the government, both central and state, and the service providers. The perfect example is in places like Ranthambore, Bandhavgarh and so on. We've got hundreds of resorts—I think Bandhavgarh now has nearly 80 resorts around it and only something like 35-40 vehicles are allowed in a day. That is ridiculous and it doesn't benefit the local stakeholders at all.



OUTLOOK TRAVELLER HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTING THE GOOD WORK OF THE CHANGEMAKERS USHERING IN THE AGE OF RT IN INDIA

What's the point of good work, if no one knows about it? A champion of properties and practioners who eschew package tourism, *Outlook Traveller* is taking it a step further this year by running a sustained print campaign to promote and encourage responsible tourism initiatives across the country. The idea is to bridge the knowledge gap between the operators and the tourists, to raise awareness, and to finally start undoing the damage done to the ecology and local communities by ill-considered, consumptive tourism.



Responsible tourism-related articles featured in the magazine; and (facing page) the Responsible Tourism Special Issue in February 2015





IN ITS VERY FIRST YEAR, THE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM SUMMIT'S PROMOTIONAL DIGITAL CAMPAIGN SAW A GREAT RESPONSE

OUTLOOK
traveller
5,00,000

BBC
DATA UNAVAILABLE

Outlook
7,00,000

CNN
4,13,415

OUTLOOK INDIA'S NO.1 PERSONAL FINANCE MAGAZINE
MONEY
50,000

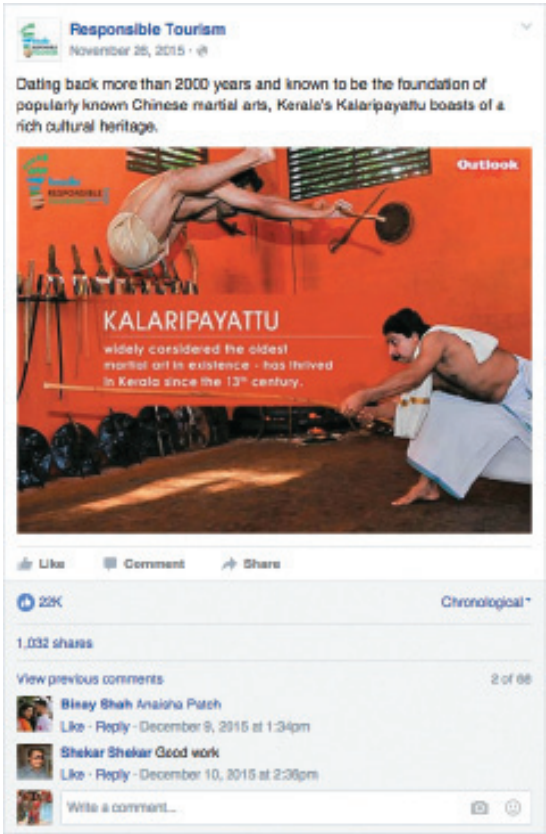
OUTLOOK
BUSINESS
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NDTV
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DATA UNAVAILABLE

Total Impressions
59,13,509



The Responsible Tourism website and social media pages continue to support the best practices in the industry, and reach out to the most crucial cog in the wheel: the tourist; actively engaging with and educating travellers about their cultural and social responsibilities on the road.

Facebook: /ResponsibleTourism/

Twitter: @oltraveller_RT

Instagram: /responsibletourism/

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

RT & SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ARE NOT THE SAME THING

Responsible Tourism is about what you do to achieve sustainability.

Sustainable tourism is the objective, and RT is what you do about it.

The problem with sustainability is that it's extremely vague. It defies all precise definition. We talk about leaving the world in a better way for our children but what that means is very unclear. It defies in my view any technical definition. Responsibility by contrast demands that you act, that you respond, that you take action—and it seems to me that that's critical to the process of creating change.

We have at the moment a serious ostrich problem with people just sticking their heads in the sand and hoping that somebody else will solve the problem.

DR HAROLD GOODWIN
*Director, International Centre for RT,
Professor of RT, Manchester Metropolitan
University*



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