

Two day Workshop on ‘Practising Responsible Tourism’ held in Jammu on April 6 & 7, 2011

RAPPORTEUR FOR INAUGURAL & TECHNICAL SESSION 1

INAUGURAL SESSION:

Mr. Toby Sinclair, VP ESOI, presented the welcome speech. He shared that Eco-Tourism Society of India (ESOI) organized workshops throughout the country. ESOI planned to organize three such workshops in J&K, one for each region of the state. He also shared his association with Leh and Ladakh since late 1970s. He concluded his speech with presenting the framed-photo of Save Indian Tiger Campaign which already published in the magazine some three years back. After that **Mr. Samir Sinha**, Head WWF Traffic India, addressed the workshop participants by sharing his views on the importance of Himalayas as a wonderful spot for adventure tourism activities. He focused on the awareness campaigns to educate the local masses as well as tourists regarding the sustainable practices to save the Himalayas from the various forms of pollution. He mentioned about the WWF Green Hiker campaign to save the Himalayas by organizing the various volunteer programmes. He concluded with one minute animation movie on WWF Green Hiker Campaign which was thoroughly appreciated by the dignitaries and the workshop participants. Then **Mr. Sujit Banarjee**, IAS (Retd), Honorary Member ESOI, shared his viewpoints regarding the ill-effects of human footprints leave behind after visited the landscaping areas. He emphasized on generating the awareness amongst the traveler and citizen of this country to contribute in the responsible tourism practicing. He concluded with the need to the formation of link between Tourism, Wildlife and Nature. Later **Mr. Nasir Aslam Wani**, MoS Tourism & Culture, Govt. of J&K, talked about the importance of such kinds of workshops for this state especially for this region. He said there are lot of disturbance occurred due to concrete jungle and there is need of the hour to preserve the ecosystem and sidewise also have to develop the infrastructure for tourism with in the eco-friendly guidelines. The other areas he covered are to develop the mechanism for the cleaning of water-bodies, disposal of garbage, sustainability of landscape etc. After that, **Mr. Nawang Rigzin Jora**, Minister for Tourism & Culture, Govt. of J&K, said that J&K State is driven by nature-tourism and there is a need to preserve it. He taken the points like to benefit the local people and local economy by sustainable tourism practices and also quoted the bad tourism example of Goa as compared with the good tourism practices of Bhutan. He also focused on the nationwide promotion of home-stays concept in Ladakh region. Then he talked about the concern of the government regarding the carrying capacity of the destination and quoted the example of Penang Lake where junk of tourist visit everyday which is not following the guidelines of carrying capacity concept. And then he concluded by sharing the government plans of introducing the Certification procedure for recognizing the Eco-friendly practices with in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry. After that the Hon'ble CM J&K **Jenab Umar Abdullah** addressed the workshop participants by appreciating the various agencies for this conscious attempt to organizing such events so that gap between humankind and nature is minimized. He showed the concern regarding deforestation, garbage dumping, plastic bags etc. and also talked about the destruction in Japan due to natural disaster. He focused on environment friendly and green forms of tourism, need to aware and educate the local stakeholders by quoting the organic food example in Kashmir restaurants where the actual meaning not known by the restaurant's people. He emphasis on changing the attitude of the tourists and behave like a responsible citizen by not writing their names on historical monuments, cable-car in Gulmarg etc. where such incidences of writing the names for remembrance presents a ugly picture of tourist behavior. The focus on quantity rather quality results lot of hic-ups like traffic jams in mountain tourism destinations and there is an immediate need to address such problems. He concluded his remarks by welcoming all the participants and delegates by quoting “environment survives, we

survives.” After that **Mr. Toby Sinclair**, present the saplings as mementos to CM and other dignitaries. At last, **Mr. Robin Singh Mehta**, Director Tourism, Jammu, presented formal vote-of-thanks with **Dr. Parikshat Singh Manhas**, Associate Professor, SHTM, University of Jammu concluded the workshop inaugural session proceedings.

TECHNICAL SESSION 1 – PRESENT SCENARIO

Ms. Ragini Letitia Singh, Regional Communications Officer, coordinated the Technical Session 1. It was started by the introduction of the dignitaries resided on the dice **Prof. Deepak Raj Gupta**, Director SHTM, University of Jammu; **Mr. Sujit Banarjee**, IAS (Retd), Honorary Member ESOI and **Mr. Krishan Kumar Singh**, Executive Member ESOI and the workshop participants consist of Academicians, NGOs, Research Scholars, WWF people, Local and National stakeholders. **Mr. Sujit Banarjee** in his presentation on the Role of Tourism in conserving National Parks & Sanctuaries – Guidelines, focused on the sustainability of ecology of our nature. He quoted the examples of Jim Corbett National Park and carrying capacity concept. He said that the concept of carrying concept should also be implements on the other National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries for sustainability of nature. The local people and the tourists should know about the guidelines of these sensitive areas while the enforcement agencies should move further to implement the mechanism of following these guidelines. Then the balance between tourism and environment can be developed for the responsible tourism practices. Then, **Mr. Krishan Kumar Singh**, in his presentation on The way ahead: Need for guidelines for Responsible Tourism, again focused on framing and implementing the guidelines regarding the tourists visits in National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. He explained that why eco-tourism practices called good-tourism practices and the benefits of following the guidelines for the long survival of nature and ultimately it benefits the humankind. The role of intermediaries are very crucial and some incentives should be given to the service providers who effectively following the eco-friendly guidelines. He concluded his presentation by focus on the need of introducing the certification process for eco-friendly stakeholders. After that, in open discussion several question were asked and issues were raised like the proper dumping process for garbage in these National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and need to aware the local people and tourists regarding the ill-effects of throwing the garbage here and there. The heavy vehicle movements in the National Parks were also been discussed and the points regarding that were well-taken by the panelists. The recycling of garbage should be promoted further so that the burden on nature would be minimized, is the last point of discussion. The session was concluded by presenting the mementos to all the three dignitaries by J&K Tourism Director, **Mr. Robin Singh Mehta**.

Technical Session II

Technical Session II was based on **Responsible Practices** and was moderated by **Prof. S C Bagri**, Director, Institute of Tourism & Mountain Studies, Uttarakhand. The session was started by introduction of the dignitaries residing on the dice **Prof S.C. Baghri**, Director, Institute of Tourism & Mountain Studies, Uttarakhand, **Mr. Pankaj Chandan**, Programme Manager - WWF India, **Mr. Asit Neema**, Environmental Engineer, Foundation for Greentech Environmental Services, **Ms Jodie Underhill**, Founder, Mountain Cleaners, Dharamshala and **Dr. A. K. Sehgal**, Director, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India.

Four key note speakers presented their presentation of papers on their specific fields of study, which are as under:

1. Mr. Pankaj Chandan, Programme Manager - WWF India presented his paper on the topic Community Based Homestays in Ladakh

And he stressed upon the the importance of wetlands for local population and the role of local population in promoting responsible practices in these wetlands. He also presented his work done on some of the wetlands of Jammu and Kashmir state. He also pointed that Tourist season coincides with peak biological activity like birds breeding and making their nests and it should be kept in mind. Adding further he said lack of coordination between different departments like Tourism Department & Wildlife reduces the chances of proper development

2. Mr. Asit Neema, Environmental Engineer, Foundation for Greentech Environmental Services presented his paper on Tourism Related Solid Waste Management in High Altitude Areas

He discussed that how this problem can be solved at grass root level and the local population and institutions take it further. The main points covered by him were Challenges of waste management at High altitudes, Importance of waste management, Stakeholder's responsibility, objectives and Favourable factors for Solid Waste Management

3. Ms Jodie Underhill, Founder, Mountain Cleaners, Dharamshala presented her presentation on Waste Management Experience in Himachal Pradesh

She was of the opinion that people in the eastern part of the world are not environmentally educated and do not know how to handle the waste generated out of the human activities.

Dr. A. K. Singhal, Director, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India presented his paper on Viable Alternatives to Conventional Energy in High Altitudes

He stressed upon why renewable resources of Energy should be used.

He gave the message to make the tourism industry greener in the interest of the local population and the stakeholders as well as the tourists visiting such destinations.

TECHNICAL SESSION 3

The third technical session was chaired by **Prof. Shashi Kant**. In the first paper presentation **Ms. Aditi Chanchani** from Equations in her study on "Check and Balances on Eco-Tourism," focused on three main areas of eco-tourism like capture the trend of eco-tourism, policies and trends in eco-tourism and need to set up the balances between tourism and environment. The problems faced by the highly sensitized area due to the large junk of tourists visits and she also quote the example of Uttarakhand where 200 such guest houses are already constructed which hampers the flora and fauna. She shared the fact that very few eco-tourism practices are carried on the ground level and also less benefits to the local people. She also come up with the key components of eco-tourism like address site specific issues, involvement of local people, contribute to conservation of natural resources and the responsible behaviour towards the environment by the stakeholders. She concluded with the discussion on the policy framework of various acts and guidelines framed by the central and local governments. After that **Ms. Sneha Khullar**, a Delhi based Eco-friendly Architecture, presents her study and work on the eco-friendly structures. She focused on the eco-friendly and responsible architecture and also shared her various projects on the eco-friendly architectures across India. The projects like Heritage Village Revitalization in a place called Garli and other projects like Architecture for Humanity and her ongoing project in Ladakh named "Kargyak Learning Centre," where the primary school for local children are set up at such high terrain by using the natural and recycle resources. While

discussing this project, she shared the technical aspects and various renewable energy-related issues while constructing such eco-friendly school at the high altitude. She concluded with the pledge on constructing the eco-friendly structures with the involvement of local community and practicing the sustainable and responsible tourism practices. The next presentation was presented by **Mr. Samir Sinha**, Head Traffic India, on “Wildlife Trade & Eco-tourism.” He particularly focused on the ill-legal practices of poaching the wild animals for generating the high profits. He also highlighted the various flaws in Acts and Guidelines and due to this the poachers able to do the narrow escape. He also discussed the depletion of wildlife rare-species and aware the workshop participants regarding this alarming effects. He concluded with the comments and suggestions on framing and implementing the right kind of policies and the governing agencies should be more accountable while dealing on such issues. At last, **Mr. Rakesh Mathur**, VP ESOI, President WelcomHeritage group, quoted the iceberg principle case of what we see upwards and the actual case in downwards. He focused on need to create the ecological balance through cycle of sustainability. The relevance of sustainable development for hotel sector, need to enhance the benchmarks are some of the issues were discussed in his presentation. He concluded with the need to conserve the environment without compromising the guest experience.

Technical Session-4

Started at 11:00 a.m. and concluded at 1:00 p.m.

The session was moderated by Mr. Ram Deo Tiwary, IFS,PCCF J&K.

The First paper on the role of tourism in preserving cultural heritage was presented by Mr. Praveen Sharma, Convener INTACH, Uttarakhand. His presentation majorly focused on revitalization of heritage through tourism and using Uttarakhand as case study, he was very instrumental in putting across how he and his team restored a dying culture which was depleting through the intrusion of modernity. He also spoke about the confidence building of local people through tourism and shared a personal experience and talked about the restoration of an old house symbolizing the local culture and how they revived this unit by incorporating local artifacts

The second study on, “towards certification in eco-tourism,case study of certification of community-based ecotourism in Ladakh” was presented by Ms. Seema Bhatt,ESOI Governing body member and Consultant Bio-diversity. She began her presentation by sharing her experiences I n Ladakh an WWF initiative. Sh underscored the need for developing and field testing a green certification scheme for eco-tourism in community based home stays in Ladakh. She highlighted the need for setting standards and certification for management social nad eco-tourism undertakings. She also said that there has to be a monitoring mechanism in place that can ensure all standards are met. She also reffered to various certification programs operational in various parts of world for sustainable tourism. She also highlighted the requirement for Home – grown Certification Program.

The third paper on “estimating Carrying Capacity” was presented by Ms. Archana Chatterjee, Head, Regional programme on Himalayan Glaciers, Rivers and High Altitude Wetlands,WWF-India. She highlighted on various tourism carrying capacity issuses particularly relating to mountain destinations and the need for certifications. She spoke about the importance of detmining tourism carrying capacity in environmentally sensitive areas and the requirement for restricting negative impacts. She also spoke about limiting the demonstration effect and the need for preserving the local culture across Himalayas.

Then there was a discussion around in which various issues were raised regarding developmental controls and about controlling the induction of number of people required to run an enterprise and monitoring over induction.

The fourth paper on “Policy and Legal framework on eco-tourism in India” was presented by Mr. Ashok Sharma, Lawyer, Indian Council for Enviro-legal action, J&K. In his presentation, he spoke about the pros and cons of eco-tourism and how the sustainable development slogan has been struggling for the last two decades. He also highlighted on various policy and legal frameworks and said unless we confine ourself to traditional way of life and restrain intrusive development, it is very difficult to control the damage.

Technical session V

Session V started at 2 p.m. The session was moderated by Dr C. M. Seth, chief WWF India J&K. Therefore 5 speakers in this session, who presented their notes in the session, Ist speaker Mr. Toby Sinclair, Vice President ESCOI, Wildlife film maker, commented on his topic Ethics of Wildlife Tourism & Short comings. He talked about the broad connotations of eco tourism and violation of ethics. He also talked about the code of conduct in Eco tourism and about the various eco tourism exercises

2 nd speaker Mr. Jigmat Takpa, IFS, Regional wildlife Warden, Ladakh. Presentor has comments on the responsible tourism. He talked about the work implementing in Ladakh through a beautiful picture presentation. He also stressed upon the instrumental enhancement of Eco diversity and flora and fauna. He also presented his work on local guide teacher training for eco friendly practices and also talked about the cultural variation and bio diversity.

3rd speaker Dr. Anil Raina Head of Department Enviromental Science University of JAMMU presented his views on his presentation topic content and method to educate student. He raised a question on the necessity to educate youth? And he also emphasized on the awareness and importance of enviroiment through literature and various movements and need to educate youth to work for betterment of enviroiment and eco system.

4th speaker Ms. Ragini Letitia Singh commented on Importance of Communication to tourist. She started with basics of communication and stressed upon using all kind of media to communicate with all kind of media such print and other ways. She stressed upon using of social networking sites, posters and magazines, spreading message through rally, through photo workshop competitions and other mediums.

5th speaker Ms. Anjali Bhartari commented on the fact that the interpretation of all the heritage sites irrespective tourist friendly or eco friendly should properly be interpreted with the help of guide training, brochures, signage and guides.