



A practitioner's guide to responsible tourism

More from less

Ecotourism Society of India

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Ecotourism Society of India
DDA Flat No.98, 2nd floor
B-2 Block, Safdarjung Enclave
Opp. Ambedkar Market
New Delhi – 110029 INDIA
T: +91-11-45793028
Email: admin@ecotourismsocietyofindia.org
Website: www.ecotourismsocietyofindia.org

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Presentations made in the third workshop of the
Ecotourism Society of India on March 19-20, 2010
at Casino Hotel,
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Compiled and edited by Anna Mathews



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From
**The President,
Ecotourism Society of India**

On behalf of all of us in the Ecotourism Society of India, I have great pleasure in releasing our Society's first publication that contains the presentations and proceedings of our third workshop held in Kochi on March 19-20, 2010, with the theme 'Practicing Responsible Tourism'. This is a continuation of our journey with the vision to conserve our tourism heritage assets by establishing responsible tourism practices for all stakeholders, specially targeting inclusive growth, waste management, efficient energy uses and minimising the ecological footprint.

This publication is also intended to provide key reference sources to tourism entrepreneurs, managers, local communities, central and state government representatives, including the forest departments, training faculty and students.

For us, every workshop has raised the level of awareness, while being a learning experience as we incorporate local issues specific to the venue and region of the workshop. We are greatly encouraged by the response from our partners, resource persons and participants, who have enriched the outcomes with unique ideas, issues and solutions, thereby drawing appreciation across the tourism industry.

The summary and presentations are now available on CD.

This publication also contains a brief on the **Ecotourism Society of India** objectives, its founding members, and TRAFFIC India guiding principles for not buying or trading in wildlife.

The publication is the result of a specially created action plan by two of our founding members and convenors, Mr Jose Dominic and Dr Venu V., without whose support and initiative the Kochi workshop would not have been possible.

I thank our resource persons who offered their professional experiences to this initiative and contributed immensely. I urge all stakeholders in the tourism industry to obtain this publication, and to join our endeavour for strengthening sustainable tourism practices in India that can be replicated globally.

With best regards,
Mandip Singh Soin FRGS
President & Founding Member
Ecotourism Society of India

ESOI GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

Mr. Steve Borgia MD, Indeco Hotels, Tamil Nadu	President	steve@indecotels.com
Ms. Seema Bhatt Independent Consultant, Biodiversity, Ecotourism & Climate Change	Vice President	seemabhatt60@gmail.com
Mr. Krishna Kumar Singh Former-MLA, Madhya Pradesh, and Environmentalist	Vice President	churhatkk@gmail.com
Mr. Rakesh Mathur Director & Principal Advisor - Zinc Hospitality and Cross Roads Hotels, Speciality Restaurants	Honorary Secretary	mathurhospitality@yahoo.co.in
Mr. Suhail Gupta CEO, India Safari & Tours Pvt. Ltd	Treasurer	suhaile.gupta@indiasafaris.com
Mr. Mandip Singh Soin FRGS Managing Director, Ibex Expeditions Pvt. Ltd	Immediate Past President	mandip@ibexexpeditions.com
Mr. Jose Dominic MD, CGH Earth Hotels, Kochi, Kerala	Member	josedominic@cgheart.com
Dr. Venu V. IAS Jt.Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India	Member	venuvasevum@gmail.com
Mr. Anirudh Chaoji Director, Pugmarks Ecotours, Pune	Member	anirudh@pugmarksholidays.com
Mr. Ripan Dhawan Jt. Managing Director Le Passage to India Tours & Travels	Member	ripan@lpti.in
Mr. Rohit Kohli Jt. Managing Director Creative Travel Pvt. Ltd.	Member	rohitkohli@creative.travel

ESOI : WHO WE ARE

The Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI) was established in 2008 under the advice and support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, by environmentally responsible and sensitive individuals in senior positions in the tourism industry, as well as, in the government.

ESOI is registered under the Societies Act XXI, 1860, under Regn. No. 5/61047/2008 as a non-profit organisation. The mission of ESOI is to educate and sensitise tourism service providers in the organised and unorganised sectors to follow sustainable tourism practices. As the national body for responsible tourism the society's primary objectives are:

- (i) Advocacy for tourism service providers and visitors to adhere to sustainable tourism practices
- (ii) Facilitating the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies at the national, state and local levels that harmonise tourism with the environment, local communities, and
- (iii) Helping stakeholders with sustainable tourism certification

ESOI envisions tourism as a vehicle for furthering conservation and generating community benefits. In an effort to facilitate the practice of ecotourism, ESOI has been engaging with tourism stakeholders through discussion and dialogue, publications and training programmes.

Towards its initiatives for spreading awareness of sustainable tourism practices and their implementation with a code of ethics, ESOI launched a series of workshops. So far, ESOI has successfully conducted eleven workshops in six states, with the support of their state tourism departments and the PATA India Chapter, as well as, with WWF-India as a knowledge partner. The 1st International Conference on Sustainable Tourism (BICST 2013) was held in Bhopal in April, 2013 with overdo participants and international experts as speakers. The theme of the conference was "Tourism: An enabler for conservation, livelihoods and sustainable growth.'

The society will continue its series of workshops across various states. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has officially declared ESOI as their partner in helping them develop policy guidelines, code of conduct and ethical practices for sustainable tourism, to position India as a global ecotourism destination.

ESOI : FOUNDING MEMBERS

Mr. Mandip Singh Soin

Managing Director
Ibex Expeditions Private Limited
30, Community Centre, East of Kailash,
New Delhi-110065
Phone: +91-11-26460244, 26460246
Res: +91-11-26912641
Fax: +9111 26460245
Email: mandipsinghsoin@gmail.com
mandip@ibexexpeditions.com
Website: www.ibexexpeditions.com

Mr. Toby Sinclair

Wildlife Film maker and Director,
India Sari & Tours
8-36, Panchsheel Apartments
Panchsheel Enclave,
New Delhi-110 017
Phone: +9111-26497249
Email: tobysinclair@gmail.com

Mr. Krishna Kumar Singh

Ex-MLA, Madhya Pradesh &
Environmentalist,
Block I, 202, Ansal Lake View
Apartment,
Shamla Hill,
Bhopal 462013
Phone: +91-755-2660904
Email: churhatkk@gmail.com

Mr. Sarath C.R.

Naturalist and Environment Expert
Apt no. C-1011,
Windmills of Your Mind,
331, Road no. 56, EPIP Zone,
Whitefield, Bangalore-560066
M: +91-94808-85308
E-mail: kabiniman@yahoo.com

Mr. Rakesh Mathur

Director and Principal Advisor - Zinc
Hospitality, Cross Roads Hotels and
Speciality Restaurants Ltd.
A-57, First Floor,
Nizamuddin East,
New Delhi-110013
Phone: +91-11-24357994; 41825091
Email: mathurhospitality@yahoo.co.in

Mr. Prem Das Rai

Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha
13-E, Feroz Shah Road,
New Delhi-110001
M: +91-9013180208
E-mail: mpsikkim@gmail.com

Mr. Jose Dominic

Managing Director and CEO
CGH Earth Hotels
Casino Building, Willingdon Island
Cochin - 682003, Kerala
Phone: + 91 484 2668221
Fax: +91 484 2668001
Email: josedominic@cghearth.com
Website: www.cghearth.com

Mr. Steve Borgia

Managing Director
INDeco Leisure Hotels
56, 4th Street, Abhiramapuram
Chennai - 600018, Tamil Nadu
Phone: +91 44-24998121/24984114
Mobile: +91 94444-14369
Fax: +91 44-24998275
E-mail: steve@indecotels.com
Web: www.indecotels.com

Mr. Ravi Singh

Secretary General and CEO

WWF India

172 - B, Lodi Estate,

New Delhi-110 003

Phone: +9111 4150 4774

Fax: +9111 4150 4779

Email: ravisingh@wwfindia.net

Website: www.wwfindia.org

Mr. Niranjan Khatri

G.M. Environment

ITC Welcomgroup, ITC Green Centre

10, Institutional Area, Sector 32,

Gurgaon -122001, Haryana

Phone: +91124- 4171717

M:+gi 9818115512

Fax: +91124-4172222

Email: Niranjan.Khatri@itchotels.in

Website: www.itcwelcomgroup.in

Dr. Venu V. IAS

Jt. Secretary

Ministry of Culture, Government of India
and Director General, Museums

Room 334, C wing, Shastri Bhawan,
New Delhi-110001

Phone:+9111 23018159

Email: venuvasudevani@gmail.com

Mr. Avay Shukla

Former Addl.Chief Secretary, Forests

Govt of Himachal Pradesh

W-118, Ground Floor, Greater Kailash-I

New Delhi-110048

Phone : +91 95560793682, 9816020125

Email: avayshukla@gmail.com

Mr. Sudhir Sahi

Consultant-UNDP

170, Gulmohar Enclave,

New Delhi-110 049

Phone: +9111-26567615

Email: sudhirsahi@gmail.com

Welcome address

Eco-tourism is a much-maligned and much-abused term. However, it is accepted that the core values, which the so-called ecotourism sector espoused, are valued much more today than it was a few years ago. In the last 18 months, a few of us have been exchanging views about forming a body which is outside the realm of business organisations. So, a small beginning was made with the founding of the Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI), and the organisation is slowly finding its feet. The Society was envisaged with the aim of establishing the philosophy of ecotourism and related issues, getting this message across more strongly to the industry and exploring how we can establish relationships that can take this concept forward.

As part of reaching out to the industry, ESOI has planned a series of workshops; the first one, which was about raising knowledge of environmental laws, was well-received in Delhi. We had two collaborators for this: the WWF, whose agenda is raising environmental consciousness and the PATA foundation. The Government of India has been supportive and here at the second workshop, Kerala Tourism has come forward as partner.

While the first workshop concentrated on environmental laws, this one is more practitioner-oriented. In this one, participants can take back some concrete material learning, which can be put into practice in one's own businesses.

I hope the workshop will motivate participants to understand and to learn more about what responsible tourism is. For me, responsible tourism encompasses environmental tourism and what bodies like the WWF has been advocating. We, in Kerala at least, have started practicing responsible tourism and started incorporating responsible tourism practices in our businesses. So, this is useful to not only those attending the workshop, but we can also take this message out to our partners in the business.

It is with great happiness that Kerala Tourism welcomes ESOI to Kerala.

Dr Venu V.

Secretary

Department of Tourism

ESOI founding member

Introduction to the course

The third Eco-tourism Society of India workshop is on practising responsible tourism; our responsibility to the environment, to the community, to the enterprise and the traveller. In a workshop, which was organised by PATA in Kathmandu, I had to talk and made a controversial statement that it is a myth that customer is king. I believe that if you hold customer as king, you are putting on him the huge load of this kingship; for the provider, you are catching a tiger by the tail, because you lose control. So it is a difficult proposition to have, that on the one hand, while our business is guest-centric, to load him with kingship will be a big disfavour we do to him and on the other, it will disempower us.

This workshop is a model, in many ways quite unique, and follows on the international symposium on responsible tourism that Dr V Venu organised last year. So rather than get the principles annunciated, we want to hear from people practicing responsible tourism and in fact, share not so much the destination, but the journey, the difficulties they have been facing, the success they have had and the failure... and what has stopped them. That is what all of us too have faced.

I wish all of you a workshop of good learning, that will lead to you seeing the world differently.

Jose Dominic

Managing Director

CGH Earth

ESOI founding member

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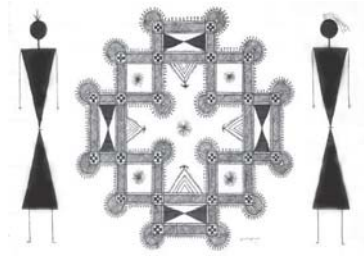
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OUR NATIVE VILLAGE

I am new to the world of hospitality, and I am going to share the learning from a very small period of time—just under four years—of our Native Village. Why did we name it Our Native Village? I hail from Thripunithura in Ernakulam district, and vacation time meant “*nattileku pokuanne*” (Taking a break in our village). And this whole habit of going back to the native village brought with it a lot of memories of coming back to Thripunithura, where it would be a month or so of great fun. So, we wanted to recreate a native village for everybody.

I am going to share what I have learnt through three main topics:

- Why should anybody choose sustainability?
- The pitfalls of going into the eco-tourism space (I’ll call it sustainability); the importance of delivery of experiences, and our leaning from there.
- And finally, the technological challenges.

Our Native Village has 24 naturally-cooled eco-rooms. It is on a 12-acre farm

in north Bangalore. We have a restaurant, we have a pond-style swimming pool, conference hall and meditation room. We have a full-fledged Ayurveda centre and a soul spa. We are 40 kms from the city centre, which is an hour’s drive from Bangalore. We are 30 km from the airport, 25 km from the Yeshwantpur Railway Station; which is relevant to us, because we are one of the check-in points of the Golden Chariot luxury train. And because we are in the north, we don’t have to get into the city to see places of interest.

I’ve been in the business only a short time, but I have observed something very significant; my background is in marketing and so, I can smell a marketing ploy a mile away. There are three reasons why people get into sustainability. One, because it is a lifestyle option and a deep-rooted choice. Second, because they believe in the cause; they think, “You have got to be responsible.” Third, it is only a cunning marketing ploy. While there is nothing wrong with any of the three choices, there are pitfalls in each of these.

It is important that you believe in the cause.

if you want to benefit from it. Sustainability is great for marketing only if it is applied in a sincere manner. Guests will see through any shallow application of concepts, because today, guests are intelligent, well-read and widely travelled, and familiar with the concepts of sustainability.

So, if you try and do a marketing ploy in sustainability, you will fail. There have been many people who attempted it as an initiative, but they do not live it. I know many places where they have painting competitions and educational programmes for children and staff on how to be sustainable in life. By themselves, they are not sustainable. You can do a marketing initiative if you have an enthusiastic marketing manager. But if he leaves and the next person is not similarly enthusiastic, your initiative will fail.

So, today there is a lot of talk and importance given to responsible tourism, and it is tempting for operators to think, "Ok, let's do some quick things; let's get the low-hanging fruit." The quickest things are marketing oriented. I call them cunning marketing ploys. But they are not sustainable. The global consumer, and even the domestic consumer, who is open to global concepts, will smell out a shallow ploy. My appeal would be to not attempt marketing gimmicks, as far a

responsible tourism is concerned. You have to believe in it.

My first learning is that one has to believe in the cause and course one embarks on. For us at Our Native Village, sustainability was a lifestyle option. We

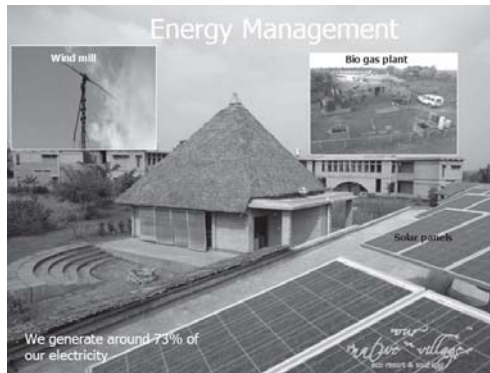
did not have the resources that one gets in the city; such as electricity, water and waste disposal resources. So, we had to make a call. We could buy diesel generators and generate our own electricity; buy tankers of water; for waste, there would be enough

contractors to buy it. But we chose not to go down that road.

We decided instead that we wanted to depend on nature for our resources. So, we turned to the sun, the wind and we have a biogas plant. Most of our water is rainwater. We have a zero waste attitude, and all our construction is with local material. It is total sustainability, not just eco-friendly.

In spite of this, there are times when you will ask yourselves the question that at the end of the day, we are in the hospitality business, who cares whether this electricity is coming from the sun or the wind or a diesel generator? The guest is not going to know. Which guest is going to think, "Wow, they are harvesting rainwater, how nice of them."

But you just have to ask yourself the question, "Do I believe in the cause?"



Our Native Village stands on a 12-acre farm. We had suffered the harshness of the land. I have watched our ragi crops dying because of the lack of water. It was not like we did not have enough ground water; we just did not have the electricity to pump the water up. We were in rural India, you get electricity for about one hour a day and it would not be three phase. This just seemed ridiculous. After so many years of Independence, after putting a man on the moon, we could not even pump water to feed our plants.

From a livelihood perspective, it did not matter to me; I had another job in advertising and marketing, and I was earning in dollars outside India. But I remember thinking that the small and marginal farmer was absolutely doomed. There was no way he could survive in this environment. So, then we decided—and it still remains a dream for our enterprise—to built a 360° self-sustaining model, which can be applied to the urban or rural space.

My chartered accountant said, “Who gives a damn?” But we had seen the suffering and we gave a damn. We had seen what it was to live in a land like that. We’ve seen small farmers suffer. So, we went down this road.

As far as energy is concerned, we have a 3.3Kva windmill and a 15Kva biogas generator. We use the biogas to cook, and also use it as fuel to run the 15 Kva generator to produce electricity. We have a huge bank of 200 batteries where all the electricity is stored. We also have 6.3Kva capacity solar panels.

Now, all this looks very complicated, but the fact is that I have no technological background at all. I am an English literature graduate. I am not a technology or hospitality person. But it is not complicated. We produce 73% of our electricity and next year we will go off the grid completely. For now, we need some electricity from the government, for refrigeration. But we are going off the grid there, too. The message is that it is all possible to do.

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Sustainability was a lifestyle option for us. Where we live, we do not have resources that one gets in the city – energy, water, waste services. So we had a choice...

Energy

~~Diesel generators~~
Sun, Wind & Bio gas

Water

~~Buy Tankers~~
Rain water

Waste

~~Use a contractor~~
0 waste attitude

Architecture

~~Brick & Mortar~~
Local material

So, not just eco-friendly, but total sustainability

We use solar water heaters. We also have, what is known as a Gujarat boiler, where we use small amounts of biomass, of dry wood and waste paper and in about 15 to 20 minutes you get 700 litres of boiling hot water. It is an optimised village heater, like the little tea-shop boiler in Tamil Nadu. Between these two, I have hot water 24/7. I don't have a single electric geyser. I can't afford it, because I can't generate that much electricity.

Most of the water we use is rainwater. We harness all the rainwater from all the roofs and store it in an 84,000

underground tank. My only regret is that I wish it was 840,000 litres. We also have recharge wells, to recharge groundwater that falls on the ground. I have a fully natural swimming pool. Usually, you need chlorine and chemicals to clean pool water. In ours, we use aquatic plants. It is a model from Austria that we brought into the country for the first time. The advantage here is that this water is rich in zooplankton, which is fantastic as far as plants are concerned. So, we can use this water again, unlike in the usual swimming pool water.

We have a zero waste attitude. And this is the easiest thing to do, and if anybody doesn't take responsibility for the waste they produce, it is pathetic. Reusing your waste doesn't require any technology. It requires very little, low-tech infrastructure. If you want to complicate it, you can call a waste management consultant, but otherwise it is an extremely simple thing to do.

Every single brick with which we built the resort is made from the soil in the land. So, we dig for the foundation and used that soil. We use handmade bricks, which were sun-dried for nine days.

We are self-sufficient for most of our food, because we have an organic farm. We use the Kerala *thortha* (cotton hand-woven towels), because they are much easier to wash; less energy and

detergent are consumed. Our shampoo bottles are terracotta, with handmade shampoos and soaps.

Apart from all this, to interest the guest, you have to deliver experiences, because sustainability is not yet a draw completely. We need to deliver a set of experiences. We have gone down the revivalist route. We have revived six forms of Indian arts through wall murals in our rooms. We are reviving interest in culture, with something called *veerakalle*. We have a little rock gardens. We are reviving old games; *gilli danda* (marbles), flying kites, spinning tops. We are teaching people how to milk a cow, old village rituals... rural stuff.



Bricks for the rooms were made from excavated mud from the site

As you progress you want to peddle back, as they say. People are attracted by all this, and not only because we are an eco resort. It is very necessary to ensure that

you have a rich set of experiences.

I claim that we are the first place to have issued a license for a bullock cart, with a package where you get a bullock cart driving license. I have a soul spa; it is the first soul spa in the world where they use techniques like past life regression and rebirthing breathwork, where we take you on a journey you perhaps never have been on.

Now for the technological challenges. Remember, sustainability technology is new. There is ample consultant knowledge available, but very little application knowledge, especially for the small and medium enterprise. So, it is extremely critical that anybody who wants to go down this path must talk to users, examine what are the on-the-ground services available and see that it is truly sustainable.

I had to get de-oil cakes for my biogas plant to generate ethane. Slowly, I realised that the supplier was increasing the price every six months by 60 paise a kg. Today, it is almost double the price of when I started. He knows I depend on him. It is not a very sustainable way

of doing things. So, much as I advocate biogas tech to people, I tell them, ensure that you have enough raw material. As soon as you depend on someone else, it is not sustainable.

It is very necessary that you do your due diligence when you get into the path of sustainability. I have tripped and fallen many times; you don't have to.

C.B. Ramkumar was with Saatchi & Saatchi in the Middle East before he decided to return to India and start a resort that would give people a sense of the simplicity of rural life. Our Native Village, a "100% eco resort" started in 2006, and is known for its "extreme" eco-friendly practices.



ORANGE COUNTY

We opened the first resort, Orange County, in Coorg, 15 years back and the second one about three years back in Kabani. These resorts were not built with the dictums of responsible tourism or sustainability, but as these words started coming up in the business, we realised that we were doing some of those things that was demanded of us, by people, or the concept called responsible tourism. We have not done major things; but small, I think, significant things.

We sat with some people, compiled all our initiatives and made it a policy—that

was important—the people who work with us, should buy into the philosophy; we have about 400 people working in the two resorts, so if we are not able to make them buy into the concept, this will remain in the boardroom.

Changing attitudes was a very slow process. In today's world, travel has become very short and less cumbersome, so each year new destinations with new experiences are opening up. Our planet has to pay for all this human movement; tourism, we must accept, is a major contributor to the defilement of our planet.

Restoring the natural ecological balance & minimizing negative environmental impact

- Water : We will recycle water and use appropriately
- Energy : We will emphasise on usage of alternate energy sources
- Sound : We will minimise noise levels within the property
- Air : We will minimise air pollution
- Light : We will optimise public lighting so as not to cause inconvenience to nocturnal wildlife. We use CFLs and LEDs to save electricity. We don't need to run through a responsible tourism course to know we have to use CFLs.
- Plastics : We will aim at responsible use of plastics
- Waste : We will implement effective waste management systems
- Paper : We will promote use of recycled, acid free & recyclable paper

I come from a family who has been planters for over a century, and the concept of responsible tourism comes naturally to us. In our traditional old families, we simply could not waste things. As a business, we practiced an extension of the vision and philosophy.

Even with our employees, the spirit of responsible stewardship guides the managerial practices of the hospitality division that we started 15 years back. A good number of our workers, drivers or labourers, worked a lifetime with us, and we used to “carry” them along, as part of our family.

Also, sustaining society as we know it in our traditional homes is important, and even today, we try to do so but are very often not able to do it. But we try to enhance the well-being of the host community and contribute to the revival of traditional culture, which Kerala has very successfully done. We try to employ local people as much as possible. For one of our properties, we have achieved 62% local employment. We have gone to extreme lengths to see that the maximum number of employment is from the local community.

In Coorg, we have not succeeded that much, because the community is different, but in Kabini, we have been successful. We have succeeded in bringing back tribals

who had left the area to work in small restaurants. Now many of them have come back to work in the resort.

We send old newspaper to two families who make paper packets, which is the only packaging we use for our products. Apart from the eco message, it provides livelihood for two families. We also ensure that employees are paid a fair wage, and suppliers a fair price. We purchase groceries from the local market, though it is easy to send our truck to Mysore and get everything that we need. It is slightly more tricky trying to source things at the local market.



Title pic: Recycled water for the gardens; Sludge goes into the organic plantation

When we started in Coorg, where the retail price of egg was 80 paise, the local vendor, would charge us Rs 1. He said, it was because we were buying large quantities! But we stayed with them and have developed them.

Conservation through education is a major area, so that by the time a guest leaves, the staff, the promoters and the guests should have moved one step forward in preservation of nature.

We take people on a tour of responsible tourism initiatives and by the time the guests come out of it, they are enlightened, and appreciate being part of the responsible tourism measures.

Managing food waste is almost impossible, so we try to reduce generation of such waste as much as

possible. Metal waste is sold. For plastic, we have identified a processor in Bangalore where, plastic is mixed with asphalt to tar roads, so every bit of plastic is utilised. Not that we don't generate plastic! But we collect every bit of plastic possible for which we get a little money that covers part of the cost. We have a very effective biogas plant. It needs constant maintenance. If that isn't done, we will have a plant that does not do its work. After segregation, the consumable waste goes to the piggery inside the property. A local family runs the piggery and does a neat job of it.

In both our properties, we have excellent, state of the art sewage treatment plants with test readings that are better than that of stream water. The sludge we get from the plant is also in great demand. We had 300 acres of coffee plantation, of which 150 acres are organic, here we use this sludge.

The waste that comes out of the toilet, when it is processed in the plant is absolutely odourless. Treated water goes into a special storage and then is used for gardening.

Every home in Coorg has TV, but in Kabini this wasn't the case. When we came here, people would come to the reception and ask if they could we watch TV. So, we located two places and installed TVs for them with TATA sky connections. Now villagers flock to these places when there is cricket, and there is interaction constantly with the villagers.

We have six hours—an incredible six hours—of

electricity in a day. Unfortunately, for the remaining 18 hours we work on generator. We decided to do something about this, so we acquired two windmills. One is in Gajendra Ghat, in Karnataka, and the other in Tenkashi, in Tamil Nadu. We follow a system called "wheeling and banking". We give the power to the grid and they are meant to give power to us, but since we don't get power for 18 hours a day, they pay us a part of that money. It is important to note that we produce enough power to run four resorts.

One of our major achievements is the reverse osmosis plant we have provided in each room. There is a spout where you press a button and bottled water quality water flows out. The guests can open the cabinet and see the reverse osmosis plant for themselves. And the bottom line is that we make a saving in both resorts together; generation of 150,000 plastic bottles in a year. And the opportunity cost is, we could have made a Rs 50 profit on each bottle, adding up to Rs 75 lakh of opportunity lost.

In our mini-bar—this took a little time to decide—we provide only bottles. There entailed much discussion about the quality of the property being reflected in the fact that we provide canned drinks.



Orange County, Kabani

But we felt that we could educate the guests. Sometimes the bottles we get are very dirty, but we have people to wash all the bottles, dirty or clean.

We have adopted a local school; we provided furniture—before that children were sitting on the floor—computers, books for a library and our staff go and teach there. Now, owing to the school's demand, we are sponsoring two teachers. All this has led to us receiving the "Asia's Responsible Tourism Award" for 2009. This is not an award we went after, but the organisers located us.

We need to change through learning from others and also teaching others through our own innovations. Walt Disney said, "there is no magic in magic; the magic is the details". And we have to

constantly innovate and create many, many new things. We must provide life-changing experiences for our guests; when people leave the resorts for home, they should say, "let us adopt these things in our life. Let us not live destructive lives."

Only passion can make us evangelistic. Let's go out into the world and start changing it.

***Cherian Ramapuram** is director of sales at Orange County Resorts & Hotels, which opened its first resort at Coorg in 1994 and then in Kabini in 2007. The group plans to have four new luxury resorts operational by 2015, at Hampi, Karwar and Kerala. Orange County, Coorg, is situated amidst three hundred acres of coffee and spice plantations, flanked on one side by the Dubare Reserve Forest and the river Cauvery on the other.*



CGH EARTH

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To introduce the environmental practices of CGH, I will have to take you through the CGH story. We were a regular hotel that was managed in the regular way of a business hotel. But when in 1988, we bid for Bangaram in the Lakshadweep, we took along with our financial tender a commitment to approach the island in an environmentally sensitive manner. It was a moment of change with the Casino group. Bangaram is a beautiful island, but it was more special because it was uninhabited and pristine, so we had to be extra careful in handling it. We were the first to “intrude” with a permanent development on the island.

So, using whatever materials available there, we erected our structures with very basic local material: coconut wood, coconut thatch and bamboo. What is important to remember is that being a remote island had its limitations; whatever power we needed had to be generated on the island, water was scarce, and most things you would need in a regular mainland hotel was beyond reach, literally. The staff we needed was limited to whoever was present on the

neighbouring islands. And of course, they did not have the skills of the hospitality trade. So, we decided to turn the situation on its head. We positioned ourselves on a concept that the absence of facilities would be key “attractions”. We said “no” to most things that a regular hotel would have as a matter of course; no hot water, TV, air-conditioning and newspapers. In the end, we found that it created a great experience for the traveller to be on this remote island and have the islanders to be working with them. The guest and islander interacted, giving the traveller a better local experience. The destination really fulfilled itself with all this strong positioning.

This concept became a philosophy for us and we knew that this was the way forward. When we bought the land for Spice Village in 1991, we knew exactly what we wanted to do. Without disturbing the land, we built what we envisaged to be tribal huts in a spice garden.

Again we built with simple, local material: elephant grass thatch done by a

local man. The windows are pine wood from packing cases for machinery from Cochin Shipyard. The entire resort was completed without using any hardwood. The flip side is that the price of pinewood has since gone up in Kochi!

Another issue that has come up and we have tried to find a resolution for was local unemployment. In 1991, the problem was rife in Idukki district and opportunities available were minimum, especially for the girls who were graduates. We thought it might be a good idea to employ, especially girls to work at the reception and in the restaurant. This has set a good practice all over Thekkady.

In Thekkady, the forest department had initiated a programme for the poachers of Tamil Nadu. They would be rehabilitated in such a manner that they would give up poaching and proudly take up jobs where they could sustain themselves in a better way.

We, for our part, helped the forest department acquire two bullock carts; a village ride handled completely by these poachers.

In Kumili, we also took up an initiative with the Eco Development Society and the tribal farmers, who were growing pepper

in an organic manner. We could enhance their value by getting a German market for them. German buyer Rudolph Bueller also got the pepper farm and the pepper certified as organic, and in that process the Kumili tribal farmers have achieved a greater value for their produce.

Then, of course, there are the more common issues that all hotels have to confront. **One big concern is water.** Water is not only difficult to get today, but also

to dispose off. Our commitment was that we would be a nil-discharge hotel. We have a simple sewage treatment plant, our BOD (biological oxygen demand) is under 10, ranging around four, and the water is perfectly safe for gardening uses.

Water is a precious resource that needs to be handled carefully. We have always tried to store as much as possible, whether rain or any other source. Even on a small piece of land, you can build small tanks. We have 25,000 litre tanks, which stores

water filtered from our roof. We practise an innovative rain harvesting method.

In Brunton Boatyard, in Fort Kochi, which has a high water table and ground water is saline, we have sent down fresh rain water into the saline water, and using the principle of specific gravity, the



A rainwater harvesting tank becomes a water feature at SwaSwara; (below) A cottage in Bangaram from local materials

saline water will get pushed out and fresh rain water will remain like a balloon, where you keep percolating the fresh water. Of course, you can retrieve this water for use later.

Local man Anto G. came up with this superb innovation. At SwaSwara, our resort in Gokarna, we hold 150 lakh litre of water in a plastic tank pitched with laterite.

The solid waste, especially from your kitchen, is a great fuel for your bio-digester, a large tank in which you hold the waste for about 45 days. In the meantime, the waste is broken down by bacteria, releasing methane in the process, which is a greenhouse gas, but is good fuel for your kitchen. In Coconut Lagoon and Marari Beach, 80% of the staff cafeteria is fuelled by the waste from the kitchen. There are plants that range from taking 5kg to 250 kg of waste. The slurry discharge from the tank is good manure for your garden.

Our technology partner, who developed the bio-digester is Saji Das of Biotech in Thiruvananthapuram. He has received an award from former US vice president Al Gore, for the commendable work he has been doing in Kerala, not only in hotels, but at the village level too.

In Thekkady, we tried out vermicomposting of kitchen waste, which is difficult to do. I don't recommend it anymore due to the inability to trap and burn the methane released. We've done it with the help of Peermede Development Society and it is one plant where you can convert all your kitchen waste—vegetables and meat—into vermicompost manure for the garden.

We have also now been engaging ourselves with conservation work. We try to step in and preserve buildings that would otherwise have been sold for their antique doors and windows. The Kollengode palace has been restored with the help of Intach, as has Visalam, the Chettinad mansion in Karaikudi. In Pondicherry, in the Tamil quarter, we have restored a Franco-Tamil structure, Maison Perumal.

A very interesting project that we took up in Coconut Lagoon with the Vechoor Cow Conservation Trust is to rehabilitate the once dying breed of Vechoor cows, which now roam around freely in the resort.

With George Mathew and TeamSustain, we have launched into another phase of renewable energy. In Coconut Lagoon we have launched the Surya boat, which is completely powered by the sun. It takes 25 passengers from the boat jetty to the resort. Spice Village will, hopefully, be off the grid and working only on electricity generated by photovoltaic cells in a couple of months.

Ideally, that will just be the first step of our group in this direction, to harness the sun's energy on a larger scale, thus bringing us closer to our ultimate aim of being a carbon-neutral group.

Thomas Dominic is director of projects at CGH Earth. He oversees the architectural and renovation work at the resorts. CGH, which has resorts in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, has received many national and prestigious international eco awards from bodies, including PATA and Skal.



RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING FOR HOTELS

Kudumbashree, which means “well-being of the family”, is a networked community organisation of poor women spread across the state. This community organisation is supported by the State Poverty Eradication Mission, which also goes by the name Kudumbashree. This community organisation is embedded and works in tandem with both governments. The main objectives are poverty eradication and women’s empowerment.

The areas we work in are food security, microfinance, micro enterprise, which includes anything from food processing to IT units. We have hardware assembly units, we serve in hospital paramedic units and we are involved in waste management. In a sense, our services include almost everything under the sun! We are into social housing and slum development; we are now coordinating a Rs 6,000 crore slum development

project for Kerala. We also work with children, the destitute, tribals, marginalised people, coastal populations, HIV and AIDS affected people... anyone who is vulnerable can find space in Kudumbashree.

Local self-governments include panchayats, municipalities and municipal corporations; there are 58 urban and 999 grama panchayats; totalling 1,057. Because of the size of some of these municipal corporations, we have more than one community development society. So we have a total of 1,061 registered community development societies. Area development societies are the ward level

structures of industry; that numbers around 17,000. This compares to 20,000 wards for the entire state. Neighbourhood groups number to 2 lakh odd; 37 lakh families are covered, represented by their women. These numbers might not mean much, unless you know that the population of Kerala is 68 lakh families. So, Kudumbashree



represents more than half the population of Kerala. That makes us the largest organisation; bigger than any political or community-based organisation in the state. And we are working with the bottom 50% poorer segments of society.

What does the Poverty Eradication Mission have to do with tourism and responsible tourism? As you know Kerala looks at a destination-based programme for responsible tourism, for which one component is economic responsibility. And it is in that component that Kudumbashree comes in. We came in primarily because when we looked at issues of eco responsibility in the area of employment, there was not much to be done; there was already local employment coming in. In the area of purchase by hotels, however, some kind of partnership could be worked out, where the local community could chip in as service providers to hotels, primarily to kitchens. Of course, we would like to branch out to do more.

There have been experiences in the four destinations chosen for responsible tourism. The experiences have been wide and varied, because we have multiple stake-holders and players. The programme has been productive in some destinations, not so much in other destinations, and we have also had to face up to some problems.

What were the openings that we were interested in at Kudumbashree?

Basically, anything that would increase the scope and quantum of enterprises, especially anything that would bring in linkages that would allow the enterprises to sustain themselves. The state and central government have been putting in lots of effort to build in self-employment practices in enterprises by the poor, but these practices are very dicey, and difficult to survive. Trying to bring out a model that will link it to an engine that will ensure survival has been an important area for Kudumbashree.

This will subsequently bring about an increase of enterprise and local production; we are already involved in matters of food security so that brings in added edge in local production. We are also looking at local market tie-ups, transformation from supplementary or incidental activity, or subsistence into becoming a responsible producer.

A result of this particular intervention supported by others as well, has been an increase in the cultivation of fallow land in the state. Kudumbashree has been greatly involved in finding fallow land, both private and public, and taking them up for cultivation, especially paddy and vegetables.



Paper bag making unit in Kumily

Kumily has been one of our problem destinations. It is right across the border from Cumbum valley, where you can get things cheaper, so there was a bigger challenge getting hotels interested in buying locally. Even the management group we set up to

procure and supply to hotels also found it far more convenient to go across the border, procure and deliver to the hotels. So, while you had regular hotels taking products from us, they were not taking products from our producers. They were just going across to a better market.

At this stage, we intervened and said we would throw them out, in an attempt to bring some responsibility to the group. But also, interestingly and while the project per se is not seen as taking off, because of the complications that have arisen, we have the largest number of producers hoping to associate with the hotel industry.

We have paper bag units. This is another eco-friendly industry in which we can work hand in hand. After the government took up its plastic-free policy, it had asked Kudumbashree to set up paper bag units. We went slow, because we did not want women to set up the units and not be able to sell in the face of mass-produced bags. Of course, it can be looked at as a special product and only in these areas, such as Kumily, has it been encouraged.

Vizhingam is yet another complex project area of operations because of the local politics. The dynamics of the panchayat, have interfered in the management of the project, but even here the numbers of producers who can associate with the project is big.

It helps of course, that we have a number of Samudra projects going on in these places, which are primarily for linking up local production and marketing networks, that is in the area of banana

and vegetable cultivation. So, there is a huge high-quality technology assistance; we have the agriculture university backing us and we have been able to both increase the productivity and quality of banana and vegetables in this area. It is unfortunate that our systems could not come into place, because a lot could have been absorbed here. But nevertheless, they have been able to find a market.

Kudumbashree mission has been providing support through our community development societies, these are our panchayat and village level societies, which help in bringing in community monitoring, monitoring by women themselves, and monitoring by their elected representatives. We have provided technical support in specific cases, as also financial aid and capacity building training.

When we talk about social institutions, what we are looking at is bringing in pricing regulations, quality checks and grievance redressal mechanisms. It is not smooth sailing; hotels complain about Kudumbashree, Kudumbashree complains about hotels. There has got to be some place where accusations and allegations are addressed. So we have created a grievance redressal mechanism where we can bring everybody to the table to fight it out.

Kumarakom has also come up with a tourism package where you look at not just production, but also of touring, where one can go around and see livelihood practices.

What are the issues we have faced with this project? Of course, one is the fluctuating demand created by the

“season” and “off season”, which is something we expected, Mumbai blast, recession; a lot of things that affect tourism in turn affect us directly. Even when the season is stable, there seems to be quite a bit of variation in monthly orders.

We have quality control problems, because these are dispersed units. The numbers may look big, but they are small to us.

These are not concentrated units in a single point, in which we can do regular quality checks. So, bringing in quality control has been problematic.

Poor people, like anyone else, may think, “This is easy, let me cut my costs”; and somewhere along your third or fourth delivery, your product is no longer of the same quality. We have had pretty abusive response from hotels. We have tried many things, even changing the product that this unit is in charge of, but we find there is a problem of mindset which needs to be addressed. We are working on that.

Of course, there are pricing issues. What is interesting with this project is that the local production is costlier. You can go across, purchase in mass from somewhere and get it cheaper, but “going local” means you need to be prepared to pay a little more. That is from the point of view from the hotelier, but from the point of view of the producer, they are people without money, who don’t have the working capital and find constraints. So,

they sometimes spend months without orders and suddenly they are faced with a huge order and they just cannot instantly come up with the working capital.

The feedback from hotels has also been inconsistent. I’d like to highlight that sometimes we have genuine feedback and we understand that the product is flawed, but quite often the problem is not with the product.

There are other interests which go to say, “Ok, let us give this product a bad name, because we have a better offer elsewhere.” There are some practices that

happen behind the curtain that need to be looked at if you really want to take this programme forward. So, while irregular supplies are an issue, irregular orders are also an issue, and we need to look at whom we are working with; knowing the supplier is important.

These are people who are engaged in this for their livelihood. On the one hand, you are talking about multiple-crore investments that are willing to wait for five years or ten years to start earning returns. On the other hand, here are people who can’t even wait for two months, because they would be broke if they don’t get paid. Added to which, we are working with women, and when you look at the poverty profile of a family, women are poorer than the men in the family. There are constraints on the way they work, how they work, the time that they find to work, and for many, this is a secondary activity due to the gender constraints. And of course, there is a lack

Kudumbashree project	
Destination	Turnover (in Rs)
Kumarakom	15,47,279
Wayanad	4,71,579
Kumily	6,00,000

of awareness about the market; they don't know how to work the market.

How do we keep this going?

Communication is important, this forum is good, but we need to develop it further and have far more intense communication to improve quality, to handle contingences and to ensure that supplies are demanded and provided on a regular basis. We need to look at sustainable prices; we need to carry and understand the market on a regular basis.

And there should be a basic understanding of the supplier; we haven't just cobbled together a group of people who have nothing else to do. These are poor people who need this work. Their chance of sustaining themselves are much higher if we are able to link them up with regular clients and institutions. This is part of the social

and economic responsibility that we are trying to get more people to appreciate. That feeling should start with us. Quality issues can be tackled; what is important is a bit of nurturing.

What we are asking for is not charity; what we are asking is for everyone to chip in as ethical players in this market.

Sarada Muraleedharan is executive director of Kudumbashree, which was launched by the Government of Kerala in 1998 for eradicating absolute poverty from the State. Kudumbashree, which has won many awards including from the UN, is today one of the largest women-empowering projects in the country, built around micro credit and entrepreneurship. Sarada was earlier collector of Thiruvananthapuram. She is also a published poet; her book is called A Swish of Violet.



RESPONSIBLE LUXURY

What role does a technology guy play in ecotourism? Actually, technology plays a vital role in putting together the processes that create “responsible luxury”.

The Royal Gardenia is a new addition to the Bangalore cityscape. It is a five-star deluxe hotel situated in the heart of the city. It has been awarded the highest Leed Platinum rating, the only hotel in Asia and the largest in the world to be bestowed the honour. What is Leed? It is Leadership in Energy and Environment Design, and is a design standard for commercial buildings, hotels and offices.

When we considered building a hotel in Bangalore, we wondered about which green standards to follow. At that time, there were no guidelines available as a whole; there were just bits and pieces. We decided to follow the Leed standard. Of course, today BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) is available to build a green hotel. We applied for 58 credits, out of 70, in the Leed Platinum rating; we won 55 credits, apart from the statutory requirements. Now, this project complies with the conditions of Energy Conservation Building Codes of the

Government of India and other standards of Ashrae.

I'd like to present some of the technology that led us to the platinum certification. Frankly, when we build a hotel, we don't consider processes from day one. This lack of foresight can lead to ecological damage, erosion and sediment control. We did the landscaping with lot of grass, so that erosion will not affect the site.

The site is awarded for location for meeting the criteria of number of basic services available close to the site—the hotel is located 32 kms from the airport, 4 km from the railway station and we also have an helipad—and the fact of easy alternate transportation during the construction. A major percentage of the workers were supposed to travel using public transport and that was ensured during the entire project. Out of the building material 20% is regional material and 50% of the wood is forest department-certified environmental friendly wood.

This hotel has approximately parking space for 430 cars built into three basements. We have ductless ventilation

here, which has allowed us to reduce the height of the basement. The challenge here was to contain rainwater while carrying out this project, which we have successfully managed to do. To harvest rainwater, we have created percolation pits around the building. And to preserve groundwater, we have provided a subsoil drainage system, which collects subsoil water that we inject back into aquifers.

The entire hotel has water efficient landscaping over 8,000 sq m. It is watered through a state of the art drip irrigation system, which consumes about one-eighth of the water of conventional irrigation.

We have water treatment plants built into the hotel and entire sewage from the hotel is segregated into grey and black water.

Grey water comes from washing machines, bath tubs and shower cubicles, and is collected in a treatment section called grey, which has very minimal peony/dirt. It is put back into the system and used in fountains, air-conditioning cooling tower and for cleaning the floors. Approximately, 200 kilolitres (kl) is recycled through this system.

The other water system called black, which collects water from WC outlets, kitchen and laundry is treated through conventional treatment system. Here, we don't use any chemicals, instead, we put into work an enzyme called effective micro organism, which treats the water with low-energy inputs. We get about 180kl, which is more than our premises needs and we are trying to swap it with our neighbour, the Bangalore Club. They could perhaps use this for their

Investment in the latest environment friendly technology will provide all comforts of a 'Super Deluxe Luxury Hotel' yet will ensure lesser carbon footprints, near to zero solid waste and water discharge...

■ Evergreen Chillers - World's first integrated variable speed, variable flow, water cooled and environment friendly screw chillers with certified efficiencies to 0.33kw/ton (ARI IPLV).

■ Variable Primary Flow Chilled Water System - The chiller systems have only one loop that circulates chilled water through the Chillers and Building.

■ Ductless Car Park Ventilation (Basements) – Cost & Energy saving, Reduction of slab height, Better air quality and efficient dilution: CO < 100ppm.

■ Sewage and sullage treatment plants

■ Separate treatment for black & grey waste water and final treatment with UV, resulting in reduced maintenance cost.

■ Installed sub soil drainage system to control Ground water pressure. The water collected from this source will be used for daily usage.

■ Soil stabilisation by grouted nails to protect fully grown trees in the setback area.

■ Concept of vertical garden was introduced for the first time in India. It conserves water and is maintenance friendly.

■ Condensate recovery from AHUs and FCUs for cooling tower make-up.

■ Chilled water being used in the condensers of deep freezers and cold storages for improving energy efficiency, reducing operational cost (Cooling Tower Eliminated).

■ EUROVENT & ARI certified AHUs for energy efficiency and better IAQ.

■ Extensive usage of CO₂ sensors for better management of IAQ & Ventilation.

■ Extensive usage of VFDs on Fans & Pumps for the total energy approach.

List of Key Design Features as per LEED Credit Rating System

Erosion & Sedimentation Control

Hotel protected the landscape during construction stage. Pre-construction measures include timing of construction, preservation of existing vegetation to the possible extent and preservation of topsoil. Measures adopted during construction include nailing of vertical excavated surfaces and ESC plan conforming with NBC. Post construction measures include use of sedimentation tank and water harvesting pits, planting of trees, shrubs and ground covers over exposed surfaces.

Site Selection

This project is located within 800 m of 17 basic services including 2 services within the project site .

Alternative Transportation, Public Transportation

There are 2 bus lines within 400m of the project.

Alternative Transportation, Low Emission & Alternative Fuel Refueling Stations, Parking facility

The total parking earmarked for this building is 430 and 20 electric charging stations have been provided accounting to 4.65% of the parking capacity. 20 carpool parking spaces provided for 5.56% of building occupants.

Stormwater/ Rainwater Design

Rain water harvesting tank has been designed to collect 100% of run –off from site. Design will remove 80% of average annual post-development total suspended solids from the rainwater.

Heat Island Effect- Non Roof

A minimum of 50% of parking spaces have been provided underground.

Heat Island Effect-Roof

The project has proposed to use high albedo roofing material to cover 28,322 sq.ft of the roof area and

vegetated roof to cover 24,342 sq.ft of a net roof area of 71,165 sq.ft demonstrating credit achievement. Calculations provided state that criteria requirement roof area of 86,477sq.ft is greater than net roof area of 71,165 sq.ft. Water Efficient Landscaping/ No Potable Water Use or No Irrigation/

Air-conditioning

Potable water consumption for site irrigation has been reduced by 50% through use of treated grey water harvested from sewage treatment plant. High efficiency irrigation systems also deployed. The measures include use of hydroponic media, use of humus and coco-peat to retain moisture.

Potable water consumption for site irrigation has been reduced by 100% through use of treated grey water harvested from sewage treatment plant. Potable water consumption for air -conditioning make-up will be reduced by 50%. 100% of wastewater will be treated to tertiary standards on-site.

Water Use Reduction

Water use has been reduced by 33.9% through treated grey water reuse of 35,50,063 gallons/year and use of plumbing fixtures including flow regulators for washbasins and showerheads etc.

CFC Reduction/ Ozone Depletion

There are no CFC -based refrigerants in the HVAC&R systems for the project building. The submittal states that refrigerant R-134A has been used in chiller and R 404 refrigerant in kitchen air conditioning equipment.

Optimise Energy Performance

The project declares a 42.2% reduction in design energy cost compared to baseline cost. The project has submitted the comparative details between the base case and the proposed case. Some of the major ECMs incorporated include wall and roof

landscaping. We also have water restrictors and pressure reducing valves introduced everywhere, which reduces the consumption of water. The hotel has zero water discharge, we consume 550kl of water every day, out of that fresh water is 200kl, the rest is from the recycled system.

In our air-conditioning and refrigeration systems, we have not used any ozone

depleting CFC systems. We have used 134A in our cooling system, which is a mandatory standard anyway, and energy efficient. This is thanks to something we decided at the drawing stage, when we did energy simulation in this building. A hotel of this size would, under normal circumstances, consume around 35,000 electricity units. With this design, we decided, why not look at energy efficient plant and machinery?

constructional details for decreasing the U value of the assembly, high performance glass, efficient elevator system, sensor controlled Jet Fans system or ductless induction ventilation for parking ventilation as opposed to conventional ducted arrangement, heat recovery systems, specially designed kitchen exhaust system, displacement ventilation for chiller and H.T. panel room, micro processor based hydropneumatic system, etc.

Storage and Collection of Recyclables

A centralised collection area of 1473 sq. ft with individual bins for different waste has been provided in the basement.

Organic Waste Converter has been installed.

The project has achieved a combined recycled content value of 10.4% of the total materials by cost. Some of the materials used in this project containing recycled content include: structural steel, glass, copper roof, carpets, steel doors, vitrified & ceramic tiles, chairs and aluminum sections.

Materials: 20% Manufactured Regionally...

25.27% of the total project's materials by cost were manufactured within 800 km of the project site. The project has provided letters from the contractors and manufacturers for the materials procured such as concrete, structural steel, window glazing, concrete blocks, cement plaster, painting, ACP sheet cladding, vitrified and ceramic tiles, aluminum section works.

...50% Extracted Regionally

21.79% of the total project's materials and products by cost are extracted, harvested or recovered within 800 km of the project site.

... 5% of Building Materials

5.77% of the total materials used on the project were from rapidly renewable sources.

Certified Wood, 50% of wood based materials

74.19 % of the wood based materials & products certified in accordance with FSC principles & criteria were used for the wood building components.

Indoor Environment Quality

Project is fully compliant with ASHRAE 62.1-2004 for fresh air requirements.

Outdoor Air Delivery Monitoring

CO₂ sensors are located at every return air for every individual AHU.

Space wise occupant density indicates that the density factor is less than 40 sq.ft per person.

Fresh air provided is 30% more than ASHRAE 62.1 - 2004 requirements. This indicates that the fresh air quantity has been designed to exceed ASHRAE requirement for various space types by 30%.

Low Emitting Materials-Carpet/ Paints/Sealants/ Composite Wood

All carpet systems meet or exceed the current Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Indoor Air Quality Test Program requirements. All paints, including topcoats and primers, do not exceed the VOC limits of the credit requirement. The VOC levels in all adhesives & sealants do not exceed stipulated limit.

Composite wood and agrifiber products used in building do not contain added urea formaldehyde.

Innovations/ Green Practices

The policy on Green Housekeeping to protect health without harming the environment has been provided along with its benefits. Green cleaning training guide prepared for the facilities maintenance operation team has been provided. E-posters have been preferred instead of paper posters.

Project has rescued native and adapted plants prior to construction and relocated 26 no. of trees on-site.

When we now calculate energy consumption, it is 40% less than that of a conventional hotel, mainly from our HVSC system. We have state of the art energy efficient chillers, which consume about 0.67 electricity units, compared to a conventional air-conditioning unit of 1.6 unit to produce one tonne of refrigeration. There is no manual intervention required to operate this system. One can monitor this through PC

or mobile and operate this system accordingly. We can't imagine a luxury hotel lobby without air-conditioning. This is the first hotel in the city with an outdoor lobby and fully energy efficient lighting. We also have "green walls", which reduces the air-conditioning load inside the premises.

All of the roof area has a heat reflective system. We have used the albedo heat

roof system that deliver high solar reflectance (the ability to reflect the visible, infrared and ultraviolet wavelengths of the sun, reducing heat transfer to the building) and high thermal emittance (the ability to radiate absorbed, or non-reflected solar energy). Basically, it is a “cool roof” that prevents heat ingress into the building, which significantly reduces air-conditioning energy. While doing environmental energy study, we ensured that we met indoor air quality parameters, which helps improve occupational health condition. Since 45,000 sq m of this building is air-conditioned, we could not ensure ventilation. We followed a method called ozonisation and wasted air-condition air has been recovered through heat wheels and put back into the air-condition area. The air is continually monitored through CO2 sensors in various locations and the air is ventilated accordingly.

We have guest digital control systems in all the rooms, which ensures climatic control and at the same time, energy is not drained. Also, you can design personalised customer settings from a remote location. We don't use incandescent bulbs. Wherever possible, we have used LED and CFL fittings. Natural daylight is used to the optimum, so it straightaway cuts 70% lighting needs into the premises.

The project's material waste is collected centrally and 40% of it is recycled in the project itself. We generate about 850kg of biodegradable food waste, plus other waste. It is segregated at source and the food waste is brought to the organic waste converter, which converts it into manure in 11 days. Using a principle called first in first out, we store it in racks and at the end of the eleventh day, the first rack is pulled out and used in the garden. The Royal Gardenia is within touching distance of achieving near-zero solid waste.

We have used low Volative Organic Compound materials; carpets and paints, polish. We have five F&B outlets that follow a green concept. We use only 100% recycled paper as stationery. The toiletries are eco-friendly, and room cleaning products and laundry chemicals are 100% biodegradable. We have solar concentrators, which produces steam for cooking in our staff cafeteria.

And the entire hotel is powered by electricity from our windmills; we have two 2.5 MW windmills installed in Bellary. We are also looking at other alternate fuel for oil.

So, thanks to our eco practices, not only have been received the LEED certification, but also, guests at Royal Gardenia will have a reduced carbon footprint.

S. Arunaachalam is the chief engineer of ITC Royal Gardenia



RESPONSIBLE CUISINE

A retrospection into my career spanning 33 years took me back to the catering college days with the late Padmashree Thangam Philip. I found that the rules of engagement, from the responsibility perspective, have changed tremendously. Responsible tourism has been a topic for deliberation for the past decade, and food may or may not have been part of this discussion. It is good that we are making a conscious effort to talk about responsible cuisine.

From an Indian spirituality perspective, which is currently highly esteemed around the world; food is for body, for mind and more importantly, for the spirit. Food is healing, it is spiritual/divine. And most importantly, “you are what you eat”.

What does responsibility in cuisine mean? If it is about providing tasty food, then we the chef’s fraternity are all highly responsible in our duty to pleasing palates. Today, at CGH Earth, we feel that responsibility is not only about the end, which is providing healthy, tasty, scrumptious food, but it is also about the

means to the end. It is about ensuring that we are responsible about the environment, the community, the guests, and of course, the enterprise. Another integral part of responsible cuisine is the people involved in hospitality and the fact that they should be oriented in a natural and organic manner. In this discussion, I will illustrate with examples from our resorts and also my own experience in over a decade with CGH Earth.

Our main focus is in compiling a menu based solely on local and seasonal produce, considering the local ethos as the guiding point. We plan our menu after we have understood the seasonal harvest from the local farmer or our own organic garden, which we have in three of our locations; from the farmer’s market, which we have in two of our locations; or the other local market we depend on.

In other words, our menu is compiled with locally available, fresh, seasonal ingredients. This marks a change from the trend in earlier days where the menu is compiled first and we source exotic

ingredients from around the world. This is a paradigm shift in the thought of a modern chef, as well as food suppliers. **How do we meet our responsibility to the environment?** This should be an easy enough dictum: food should not travel.

Today, because of sophistication, food travels many hundred miles causing a subsequent increase in our carbon footprint. When we understand the true value of local produce, and apply it intelligently, it is not necessary to procure many ingredients from far places, and it cuts the carbon footprint greatly. We have tried this with the 50-Mile Diet restaurant in Spice Village, where, except for two or three items, we manage to procure all our ingredients from within a 50 mile radius. It has been a much-appreciated culinary experience.

At our restaurant in SwaSwara in Gokarna, vegetables and many of the cereals are procured from the farmers' market and fish directly from the fisherman there. That too, has been very successful. In Bangaram, the main ingredient is tuna in a different style

each day; the guests enjoy the fresh tuna catch. At Marari Beach, the Farm Kitchen restaurant ensures "farm to plate" of each day's harvest from our organic vegetable patch. Common ingredients like lacote, coccum, jackfruit, leaves of turmeric and pumpkin are uncommon experiential food for the vast majority of our guests. The "one rice-one fish" farming cycle at Coconut Lagoon is an enthralling experience, not only for guests, but also for us.

Our strategy is to establish resorts at places with potential but are lesser known. It provides us the platform to utilise the local food and experience, which directly results in better earnings for the community. Our concerted efforts to unearth local cuisine and transform it to international standards without losing originality encourage people of the area to revive forgotten recipes.

The chuttuli meen, for example, as made by the Pardesi Jews of Fort Kochi would have been lost to time. One of our chefs learnt the recipe from an old local Jewish lady and it has been a signature dish of Brunton Boatyard. It is a heritage which could have vanished with the dwindling Jewish community of the area. So too, the sand-baked fish of the Lakshadweep has been made a part of the experiential cuisine. Local traditional ingredients and methods, like the wild tomato and herbs of the Mannan tribes of Thekkady has made the spice cuisine at Spice Village a differential food. Sourcing food from local self-help groups is very much part of our working, but it needs some more concerted effort to coordinate the quality and supply chain aspects. We have learnt that using old recipes and traditional methods is ideal not only in improving

A guest picks snake gourd from the organic restaurant garden at Marari Beach



the self-esteem and confidence of the local people, but is also the more suitable practice for us.

In today's world, with awareness on environmental protection and sustainability, adopting these practices in business is a strong USP of the organisation. It provides a competitive strength by being a powerful differentiator. Today's guests are interested to try the local cuisine and let go off their existing patterns of food. It can be frightening both for us and for them, but it is challenging and if done properly it facilitates strong relationship marketing.

Age old traditions of the local community, which has withstood time, when revived with passion can be unique and cost-effective. When we emphasise on the local, we are providing a natural, organic, untainted service and the costs will also be lower.

Responsibility to guests has been our primary focus, but today the focus has to change slightly. We have to think globally, but eat locally. Through our experience we have learnt that many of our guests are highly appreciative of this principle. The real luxury that we can offer to guests is experiential food made with ingredients that are free from hormones, antibiotics, pesticides and preservations or undue processing. In one word, food that is organic.

But even our journey is just beginning. Our efforts at CGH to go organic have yielded results only in small pockets like the kitchen at Marari Beach, Spice Village and Kalari Kovilakom. I think this ESOI should take a practical step to organise

Cooking in copper pans and stone vessels at Kalari Kovilakom



consensus among hoteliers to procure organic produce and arrange frequent farmer and chef meetings as done in many places.

Our chefs, like Narayanan Nair at Kalari Kovilakom, due to their great passion for pure and sattvic food, go to the village and identify reliable farmers and procure ingredients. Narayanan Nair is a role model, who serves food as medicine, because he believes that good, pure food has healing properties.

One of my favourite topics today is that of the farmer-chef. In our properties, it is one of our newest projects, where it is imperative for the chef to touch, feel and appreciate the earth, by participating in the kitchen garden starting from planting right up to harvesting. And more importantly, they must learn the art of compiling a menu from each day's harvest. We have faced resistance to this programme from catering college graduates, but it is important to blur the lines between chef and farmer, and make them feel that they are working towards the same ideal: providing fresh food for the body, mind and spirit.

A farmer chef culinary school is worth considering by the Ecotourism Society Of India. It has to be very different from today's culinary education, where factory made, processed food is used to cope with wanton economics.

This model has proved to be sustainable and is our way forward. Responsible food combined with Indian spirituality will be a lead in optimising tourism potential. CGH has focused its vision on responsible cuisine, but we have a long way to go. We have to work more closely with the rest of the industry in this sustainable practice and make destination India truly experiential. Our food should not be termed abnormal and exotic, driven by wanton economics.

We must ensure that holidays with us will take the guests beyond the beaches, backwaters, hills and historic cities to capture the quintessence of the land, offering responsible food that is pure, unexpected, inspiring and a pleasant new experience to the senses thanks to the new tastes they are treated to.

Chef Jose Varkey has worked with CGH Earth for 12 years. Jose, who has been a farmer and restaurateur, dreams of popularising the "farmer chef" concept. He is involved with children in inner transformational training for healthy eating. CGH Earth has an organic restaurant in Marari Beach, and a "50-mile diet" restaurant, where all ingredients are sourced within a 50-mile radius



PERIYAR EXPERIENCE

The word ecotourism evokes a great deal of passion. Not just from its supporters, but from its detractors as well. The moment you drop the word ecotourism, an intense debate is set in motion. I think it is because of the elements of idealism contained within the concept of ecotourism.

Now, let us look at the definitions of ecotourism and some of its components. Ecotourism is defined as a 'purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people'.

How do we define a community?

In this specific context, a community would be the people of the ecotourism destination who are directly dependent on its natural resources. So in the case of a forest, the community comprises those who are dependent on the forest; if it is a lake, people who are similarly dependent on the lake. They would also be involved in the distributive aspect of

ecotourism benefits and ecotourism is either their main or supplementary source of livelihood. Hence, the community comprises of people who depend on the ecosystem and benefit from it; not just anybody in the neighbourhood. Do they have any role in collaborative management of Common Property Resources (CPR)?

What is CPR?

CPR is collectively owned by a community or group with no private or individual rights and its access and benefits are controlled by a regulatory framework. Though it is a common resource, it is different from Open Access Resource (OAR). The atmosphere is OAR, so are the oceans. There are no controls in using both. But in the case of lakes, grazing lands or forests, there are regulatory mechanisms of state control, community involvement or traditions. The main difference between CPR and OAR is one of exclusion; members of a clearly demarked user group have a right to exclude non-members. In the case of CPR, there are rights as well responsibilities and regulations. CPR is governed by a set of rules and

regulations, written or traditional or accepted by consent.

Strictly speaking, the type of CPR that exists in many parts of the world is absent in Kerala. The specific resource that I would be focusing on, is the forest because I am part of the Forest Department. Almost all the forests in Kerala are being controlled and managed by the State. But as a policy the state is opening out and in spite of the state control, proximate local communities have begun to play an active role in the management of the forests.

I mentioned 'collaborative management'. The democratic space on this globe is becoming larger and larger. Invariably, in future, CPR like forests will have to be managed and protected by local communities and institutions. Nothing can stop this from happening. Present day state controlled management system might linger on for a few decades more but the evolution is towards collaborative management. Here, the state would form effective partnerships with local communities and local democratic institutions in managing resources.

With this backdrop, let us dissect the ecotourism experience within the context of Protected Area management. Protected Area (PA) is the general term for National Parks, Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves. They are presently state controlled but are slowly being transformed into collaborative management regimes involving local communities and panchayats.

Here, there are two major forces moving in the same direction. One is the implementation of the provisions of

Forest Rights Act enacted in 2006 by the Government of India. The rights and responsibilities of forest management are slowly being transferred to the local forest dwelling tribes. It will take time, but the process has started and no one can stop it. The second is that local grass root democratic institutions such as the panchayats are required to perform prominent roles in the management of forests in future. A new institution named Forest Development Agency (FDA) has been established all over India. FDA is a registered society, which is at present stewarded by the Forest Department. The idea is to channel all the development activities of line departments in the forest area in an integrated manner under the umbrella of FDAs. It is only a question of time, when the management of forests is going to be shifted to local communities and institutions through new arrangements like the FDA. So, one has to look into the future while designing plans for ecotourism in Protected Areas.

Protected Areas took to ecotourism guided by the alignment of certain conditions:

- 1) Need for providing livelihood for local forest dependent communities. Without the support of the local communities, resources cannot be managed.
- 2) The earlier state control model was proved to be a failure and the collaborative management principle has been accepted.
- 3) Necessity for growth in awareness among the larger public about environmental issues.
- 4) More well educated people with disposable income would like to go out into the wild and directly experience it. It is also related to awareness.

- 5) New demographic groups are coming up; social mobility depends on their level of interaction with nature.
- 6) Increased exposure of new remote places through media which creates an urge to go and experience these places.
- 7) Ecological interest: one reacts to green issues by wanting to be part of the group that is trying to save the earth.

Ecotourism in such a scenario would involve an interplay of three entities: the eco tourist, local community and the resource. In Periyar Tiger Reserve, ecotourism was used to solve some serious protection problems, but once the problems are solved, what next? The next step would be educating the visitor who enters the forest. When they leave, they should not only be aware of the importance of the forest and its conservation but also become prophets of conservation; or ecotourism will lose its relevance. Ecotourism should also bring local and regional benefits. It is a search for a balance between visitor enjoyment and conservation needs.



Periyar's experiment with ecotourism started with the launching of the '**Tiger Trail**' in 1998 (in pic). There was a group of poachers who were being chased by the authorities for many years. Finally,

when interaction with the community started, there arose a necessity for providing an alternate livelihood option so that they would stop poaching and ecotourism was seen as a possibility. It was found to be a viable option and thus, the Tiger Trail took off. Poachers would take visitors into interior poaching prone areas and camp in their old forest hideouts. Soon Tiger Trail became a model throughout the country. The concept became a success. The ex-poachers could earn respect in society and also an option for alternate livelihood.

It became a novel form of resource management; instead of forest officers going and camping inside the forest, this group was used for managing and protecting the PA resources. It became a replicable model for other such initiatives as well. The program was ideal, fitting perfectly into the concept of the ecotourism vision. It was an idealistic vision and practically effective also. And of course, when you start something new, there is a nascent energy, which keeps things moving. It was a fascinating new model that everyone wanted to become a part of. And the social capital of the community, which was a former criminal group, went up; they earned a new respectability. The initial impact of the program was that it created a means of livelihood for many and poaching was controlled. Looking at the program over a decade later, one finds that a certain complacency has set in. In my words, the group has become "middle-class-ised"; easy going and with visible paunches.

The inevitable aging process and "sedenter-isation"! They cannot be as agile as they were ten years back. It is

impossible for them to be physically fit as they were. Deviating from the ideal, their activities became 'ritualistic renditions'.

Now, what happens after ten years? In a bid to continue this successful model, it is not possible to make another group of poachers and rehabilitate them! So what is to be done? Finish off the programme?

These are questions that need to be asked. A lot of data was collected when the program was initiated, but then after ten years are we really considering issues that might have arose? Is there any change in the behaviour of the animal species? By trampling around inside the forest along with visitors are they creating problems? Is the program causing any erosion of bio-diversity? The timely monitoring process which is an extremely important component in ecotourism, especially in forest areas, is not as it ought to be.

The upshot of the success of the program was that 13 other programs were developed in Periyar; some of them were explicitly centred around the protection of the forest, especially one involving a group of poachers from Tamil Nadu, but many were focused on tourism per se. Is this a deviation from the primary objective of resource management? Protected Areas all over India are facing huge problems due to the growth of the tourism industry. The most serious problem is the galloping visitation levels. Munnar is a classic example. It was on the saddle of the Nilgiri tahr, a symbol of protection in Eravikulam National Park that Munnar was projected as a major tourism destination. Now, one group of tahr in the park is sighting an incredible number of 4 lakh people annually! When I

was working there more than 20 years back, annual visitation used to be below 1,000 people, now it is four hundred thousand! How will it affect their behavioural traits and evolution? No one knows. How can this the huge visitation level be controlled? That is not something the industry would like to do.

Another serious issue is the disappearance of local communities around PA fringes. Big money is purchasing up all the land around prominent PAs and other resource rich areas. Around Vembanad lake, for example, where is the local community? It has just disappeared. There are people, but no community. It is the same with Periyar, too.

Inside the PA, we have very strict regulations, but on the other side of the boundary line there is nothing. There is no guideline or set of regulations with a conservation tag. This becomes relevant because a decade back, PAs were considered as isolated standalone entities: areas that should be protected and managed. Now, new insight and imperatives of ecological understanding have altered the perspectives and conservation vision transcends PA boundaries: conservation at the level of landscapes. One small PA cannot have any impact on the sustainability of ecological processes over a long period of time. Take elephant or tiger, or even some birds which need a large landscape and any meaningful conservation effort would look beyond PAs.

But how is this landscape going to be managed? Consider a PA like Eravikulam; even if the entire area is well protected, there is no restriction or

regulation on activities outside its boundaries. Unfettered activities in the neighbouring Panchayats of Marayoor, Pallivasal, Munnar and Chinnakanal can have a negative impact on the conservation of the national Park. One has to think at the level of landscapes.

What can we do ? Nothing, at this point. PAs still exist as mere islands. At the same time, industry is putting pressure to open up more areas inside PAs. Visitation levels are going up and there is pressure from tourism industry to open up more places for jeep safaris. Fortunately, Periyar do not have jeep trails, but it is happening in Wynad. It has gone beyond what is permissible. Be it tourist or tribe, the vital issue is one of access to resources. Access rules have been formulated for local communities all around Periyar Tiger Reserve.

What can be done and what cannot, what time they could go in and where; it was a participatory kind of research which gave shape to the access rules. For example, those who are taking firewood from the forest can go in and come out at specified timings from a defined area, grass cutting can be done in a certain area at a certain period in a prescribed manner. It was a fine blend of ecology and participation; it was done through consent not coercion. What are the possible regulatory mechanisms for containing the deleterious effects of tourism on PAs?

There has to be two types of regulations- one is legal, instituted by the managing authorities and the other, ethical. From the side of the hospitality industry, the second one is not being practised at all.

There is an existing regulatory mechanism for the activities happening outside PA.

The National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016) that was released by the Prime Minister in 2002 in the meeting of the National Board of Wildlife is not a statutory document but recommends regulations for areas outside PAs. It looks into monitoring inside and outside PAs and also at carrying capacity. The document endorses the necessity of declaring 10kms around national parks and sanctuaries as ecologically sensitive areas under the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986. It does not prohibit but regulates activities. The carrying capacity question, though discussed for the last 10-20 years, has not yet been solved in any PAs.

Unless regulatory frameworks are developed for prime tourism areas, they are going to be doomed. What I have seen in the last 15 years in interactions with the tourism industry is the tendency for overkill. The bottom line is that tourism is killing its own potential. In the case of Munnar, you find an explosion of roads in the PA landscape and mushrooming of resorts and buildings. Who is going to regulate that? Non-adoption of ethical practices starts right from the construction stage.

There is a lot of sermonising and seminars, but nothing comes of it. Also, the industry restrains itself from building relationships with local bodies and communities. Now, it is imperative for the industry to have meaningful dialogue with local communities instead of turning its back on them. Though it is providing employment, straight talking with the

local communities has not happened. Capital wants to grow, that is the basic logic of capital. It has to grow, but how does it affect resources? Can it be made to grow in such a way that resources are protected and replenished? That is the question we should be asking. I don't know the answer. I only have one last question.

Where do we g(r)o(w) from here?

*James Zachariah has worked in the field of
conservation for three decades*

FULFILLING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

When we talk about eco-tourism, primarily, we must not forget the context in which the world is moving. Many Indian companies signed up to the UNGC Global Compact, which was launched in 2000. How they would deploy their resources, thereby being more responsible in their businesses, is defined by this reporting structure. So, what do these millennium goals mean?

We have RBI guidelines for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and there are a lot of flagship schemes under the 2010-11 budget that offer opportunities through which we can access government funds. A lot of the time, CSR and NGO activities tend to ignore the government platform, where money and resources are available. And often there is more money looking for good projects, but they don't seem to be formulated as required, so the money gets consumed in ways less than desirable. The same is the case with the private sector, as well.

One good example is Aircel's tiger campaign. A lot of money was spent on it and if it could have been diverted, with

the help of WWF or ESOI in a better manner, perhaps it would have led to a better outcome.

In what perspective can we view CSR and ecotourism? Just as in the case of ecotourism, CSR is not and cannot be a side activity where someone signs a cheque for a charitable organisation and continues to damage the world at large. We have to recognise that tourism is part of the larger ecosystem and that larger ecosystems needs to be taken care. The base needs to be enlarged; we need to embrace the larger universe.

Often, what happens is that people in the tourism industry tend not to talk to people from outside the tourism community. So, we are talking to ourselves and to people who are already aware, whereas the engagement of the larger community and mobilisation of larger resources is very critical. If Toyota NDTV does a Greenathon, are we involved? So also with the Aircel tiger campaign. How many people in the tourism industry will take a look at the curriculum of the Indian Institute of Tourism Management and other

academic institutes, and ask if sensitivity to the environment is a part of the syllabus.

Currently, I am on a panel to train volunteers to the Commonwealth Games. The environment is not a matter of concern in sensitising the 30,000 student volunteers who are going to be involved. The involvement of the tourism industry in areas outside their immediate business is very low. It just goes to show that our engagement needs to start at a different level. Currently, I think, unfortunately, a lot of what we talk about in the sustainable space is cocooned in the elitist niche and is not inclusive. The measurement criteria are largely undefined. And you can not manage what you can not measure. Do you define an improvement by the quality of water or by the quality of employability?

Morgan Stanley released a little green book to show how you can do 50 things to make a household more green and help tackle climate change, but they were also responsible for trying to fund 11 projects that would be like the equivalent of putting thousands of Cadillac Escalades on the road. This sort of "saying one thing and doing another" won't wash any more. Coca Cola is responsible for 4.9% of discarded trash in the UK. This morning there was a report about how Hindustan Coca Cola is causing ground water depletion where their plants are located. You just cannot have CSR as a side activity. Even very large, very reputable organisations will find that their image has to be sustainable at every level, particularly thanks to the increased transparency available through the media and the internet, especially social network sites.

There was a report recently about how India has the largest number of people who defecate outside; they don't have means to a toilet. Biocon has worked with a local initiative to try and create toilets in rural communities near Bangalore. Bharti have set aside Rs 236 crores to fund 136 schools and there are many such examples. Typically, today private enterprise has to spend roughly 0.5-2% of their profits after tax on CSR activities. PSUs too have large funds. So, how can there be dovetailing with ecotourism.

Wipro has entered into two new businesses; Wipro Water and Wipro Eco-Energy, to which they have committed 270 people. It is going to be one of their biggest sources of revenue, as Aziz Premji sees this as the next big change in Wipro as far as revenue streams are concerned. The engagement of our industry with companies like Wipro is important. Similarly, TVS and CII have a project called "Namma halli", asking corporates to adopt a village with the intention to improve potable water quality, sanitation, income generation etc.

My view of non urban tourism is different, in that when you go into a rural area, can you make the village itself a place where people can find it convenient to stay; whether domestic or international, because the standards of living in the rural environment has been improved adequately for them to receive a visitor from outside. This means focusing on potable water, sanitation and hygiene, energy, local supplies and cuisine, and encouraging vernacular architecture and this has happened in Kerala but not much elsewhere. Is there an enabling investment framework that

promotes responsible tourism? Is there access to capital management marketing skills at community level? Is there reinvestment of profit?

Let me share my own experiences in CSR. We have an initiative with the IIM Ahmedabad and IIT Kanpur. We try and focus on one key area of infrastructure and spend the whole year getting the best opinions from across India and sometimes from outside. We then publish a document, which is put on our website. The current document is going to be the impact of on climate change. So, the intent is to influence policy and embark on advocacy. My own interest is in finding out how much of a difference I can make in a finite period; in a three to five year perspective, for example at specific project sites.

One of the projects that we undertook was in Kumaon with an organisation called Himjoli, which tried to identify self-help groups. We essentially focused on marketing their products: fruit preserves and honey, and scarves and stoles. The self-help groups were, as is usually the case, dominated largely by women, many of them coming from backgrounds where typically, the men don't work and there is gender abuse. We decided to gift our employees and corporate clients **H i m j o l i hampers** for Diwali. This was a good way to take care of about 50% of what they produce.



TVS and CII Namma Halli initiative

CII members were invited to adopt a village. They would put up the money, but the work would be done by the Srinivasan Services Trust (SST), which, led by Ashoke JosMphasis, the IT company, was the first to come forward and adopt four villages in the gram panchayat of Doora. It has been followed by Shelk Software, Fowler Westrup and now Volvo.

Together these companies are pledged to putting up Rs 30 lakhs a year for three years. SST does the work on their behalf in the villages. Volunteers from the companies visit the villages according to strict schedules as the interest and commitment among employees grows.

Nineteen farmers' associations have been formed with 358 members. They are learning to follow scientific and improved agricultural practices such as testing and treating the soil, using quality seeds and manure and so on.

Sixteen veterinary camps have been held where 5,820 animals have been attended to so that livestock is free from disease. The result is that the milk yields from 1,069 cows have gone up.

Awareness has been created of the need for personal hygiene, health and sanitation. More than 200 toilets have been constructed. Young mothers have been told about the importance of immunisation. Assessments have been made of the nutrition levels of children

"In CII we would have examples of companies providing clean water or building a school or setting up a clinic. But it was all disaggregated. We were also not sure of the long-term and sustained results," says Viswanathan. "What we wanted was an activity which would be done within a certain time, have measurable returns on the money spent, and have a clear plan and feedback."

As the retailing space changes, with companies like Reliance and Food World getting into the business, finding space for a small producer of jam or honey, with no preservative and which has a shelf life of six months, is going to be a challenge. The cost of distribution and the cost of giving commissions are too high. So, gifting is a good alternative.

I went to a WTTC conference in Khajurao where all the jam served there came from Austria! The cost of the imported preserve or honey costs them Rs 32 per preserve. The cost for delivering Himjoli, as long as the minimum order is 5,000, is Rs 13; the cost of the bottle is Rs9 and the cost of the preserve is about Rs 4. Of course, you need to address issues about whether it will meet FPO approval. On the other hand, an airline will now serve the Himjoli jam on one day of their flight out of Delhi; the production does not suit for it to be served any more than this, and you don't want to scale it up to a level more than which the community wishes.

Also at investor meets we give away the shawls to 150 guests. By doing this, we are doing a good act on the one hand, but also engaging 120 other rich people, who could become part of a chain marketing system. So we are increasing the footprint of this alternate distribution system. This is one of the places that the hospitality industry can step in. The industry can out of choice buy their products at a higher cost, and strengthen their brand.

This would be preferable to compartmentalising publicity, promotion and marketing away from operations. In the Sangla valley corridor, which is

four hours driving time from Simla to Tibet, is the beautiful Batseri village, where Banjara Camps have been operating for 12 years. It is well preserved, because of its inaccessibility. Now, there are two hydro-electric projects coming up on the way; one is a PPP called Suttlej, the other is by the Delhi-based Jaypee Group. This is going to change the footprint, because roads are going to get wider and access will improve, whatever was preserved is under threat. Already, the amount of plastic waste has increased.

Banjara Camps is interested in finding a way to regulate and control solid waste. I visited the village and found that while we were focusing on a cleaner looking village, as far as the villagers were concerned, they did not think the village was particularly dirty and they were earning good money from apples. They



wanted to improve their homes, but they were building concrete houses, because they could not mine for slate and they could not fell timber. So, the architectural fibre of the environment is altering.

Anyway, in conversation it emerged that what could help them most was an ideal way to store their apples and get better

prices, out of which they were willing to deploy monies for waste management. The main cultivation season is September, while the apples from Simla and other places came into the market a little earlier, which meant that they did not get the best price. So we went about trying to find the appropriate technology to preserve 40,000 crates of apples. The perseverance it took to go through NAFED, Nabard, APEDA finally paid off though there is a lot of wading through all the mechanisms.

You will be surprised to know the funds was available, and the entire cost of the cold storage, which was to be done through a company called Intracool, could be met. Intracool have done a lot of cold storages in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The cost works out to about Rs 3 crore, but the entire money is available through a grant by APEDA, as long as a percentage of the apples could be exported.

There is a lot of complexity in the information; how do you reduce that complexity to help the farmer in Batseri? The basic equation was translated to “it will cost you Rs 20 to store a carton for a month from September to May; are you willing to bear it?” Most of them are willing to pay that. The real cost works out to only Rs 25 for the five months. The rest of the money goes into CSR activity for the community through a community development fund, which will be managed by them.

If the government grant of Rs 3 crore were not available and they were willing to pay Rs 20 a carton, the project would still be viable. The Batseri project will roll out quickly, because it is a fairly small

group of 100 people, who are committed to the idea.

Anegundi presents a different story. The UNDP has done 36 projects under the Ministry of Rural Tourism initiative and much of this has happened with a Rs 40 lakh grant over three years and many of the projects are deemed a success. But an enabling environment is not there in the community to ensure continuity. We have tried to find out what we can do. Most of the visitors are backpackers, so the villagers think that if they provide noodles, it will bring a boom. But we have to change their mindset—a time-consuming exercise—to understand that promoting the low-end budget traveller is not that desirable. What is desirable is the high-end visitor, for whom the local experience is more important.

The other thing that we did here was to examine the quality of water. Anegundi does not have good potable water and the government has given individual grants of Rs 5,000 to built toilets; However the septic tanks have been inadequate and actually spoiling the ground water. So, the quality of water has deteriorated, thanks to a sanitation drive under the government. This is not a first, the same has happened in Haryana. Now, how do you make sure the villagers have potable water and that sanitation is good, so that their life is enriched and the visitor has a good experience? That is the dialogue that needs to be undertaken.

On the other hand, there are good examples of private entrepreneurship. Bas is an interesting exercise outside Delhi. Bas Foundation was created by Martin Howard, who was a Naval

Commander in the British High Commission. He retired in India and has started a resort called Tikli Bottom. It has just four rooms, but whatever is produced on the farm is what is supplied to the guests. He has adopted a local school under his Foundation and is running it on land provided by the gram panchayat. We went there and provided a drip irrigation system and planted saplings, and placed solar panels and cookers. And this will hopefully get adopted by the parents of the children who attend school.

Jaipur Rugs run by Nand Kishore Chaudhary is another good example of entrepreneurship. They are featured in C.K. Prahlad's book *Bottom of the Pyramid*. They have created a dispersed model of providing localised employment backed by training and guaranteeing income generation. The



whole cycle of providing raw material, design specifications and collecting the finished product has been developed. We are now looking at an initiative where we can create a homestay at the place of manufacture at Narket in Tahangazi as a model, to roll out across all the places that Jaipur Rugs operates from.

The bottom line is, if you are socially responsible, you can be commercially

viable, because the consumer feels that he is helping a community by making an informed purchase. It is a good marketing story.

Engagement with non-tourism partners in fulfilling their objectives while meeting ecotourism goals is possible. Linking campaigns with walking shoes manufacturers, camera/binocular brands, SUV companies, health foods and so on can be forged to create win win scenarios. While at BTA, I managed to work with Britannia for the Britannia Khao, World Cup Jao effort to promote sports tourism and other non tourism partners included Kodak, Cadbury Schweppes, Ray Ban, Sunsilk Shampoo, MTR Foods, Titan, Enchante Jewellery amongst others.

I would like to make a couple of suggestions to ESOI. Karnataka Darshan a scheme of the Karnataka government takes groups of less privileged schoolchildren on a tour of Karnataka. There is a budget available for it from the HR ministry. This has been supplemented by the Tourism Ministry and over 30,000 children will spend 5 nights discovering their own state. ESOI could bring about sensitivity to the environment as part of the tour programme and help roll this out in other states. The impact over a decade would be impressive.

There is a Centre for Renewable Energy in Sector 29 of Gurgaon. It is managed by an NGO called Advit and has a café that runs on renewable energy. You might consider shifting your office there. If you are in a space with renewable energy and lots of similarly inclined people, the engagement of companies like Bharti

Foundation and ITC will increase and the entire MNC base could be tapped.

Ernst and Young have already signed up to be carbon neutral by a social forestry programme with a NGO which will also have volunteerism programme, encouraging tourism to the areas. There are at least another 500 who could be on your “hit list” to influence behaviour which is truly sustainable.

Prem Subramaniam is advisor of the newly created CSR division of the Infrastructure Development Finance Company. He was previously chairman of CII Uttaranchal Tourism Committee. A mechanical engineer by training from IIT Madras, Prem has worked with Godrej and Boyce, Cox and Kings, Kanoo Holidays in Saudi Arabia and the British Tourist Authority. His mandate at IDFC is to drive private capital into commercially viable infrastructure projects in the tourism sector.



ECO THINKING FOR CREATION OF A HOTEL

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When I started the INDeco business, I did not have an entrepreneurial background. Thank God for that. I therefore chose to set my own standards and define hospitality within the framework of my knowledge; I think, that is one of the reasons that the INDeco hotels are not only creative, but also rural centric and unique. I had not stayed in many hotels, so I did not have an ethos of another place that I wanted to copy. I just said that we should do things in the way they were done in my grandfather's house, because I was at peace at his house, which was in a small village near Salem. My grandfather's house in my native village meant so much to me. And I chose to give that to all.

At INDeco, because we are not experts, we have translated "eco-friendly" into a simple word: harmony, meaning "as things were". We do our work without causing hurt to anybody, particularly the native residents there, whether people or creatures. In fact, when a German sued me for a mosquito bite, I wrote to him saying that all I was trying to do was to get more people to enjoy the

beauty of a place that I found beautiful. I was sorry that he got bitten, but he should have kept his windows closed; and if he still felt there was just cause, he could sue me in an Indian court. He didn't follow it up! We try to follow the patterns of an old world when things were more natural. And we have packaged all this in a simple way, without any waste. I like the word "Eco" and I am proud of my country, which is how we adopted the name INDeco. INDIA ECOLOGY.

For me, all this is like playing a game that I enjoy playing. I feel, it is a game that anyone can play, if you put in the effort, passion and the ideas. I started an eco hotel, because that is the way I like to do it. The thing is, you then start to love the concept; it is the only way you then want to do things. And finally, you graduate to becoming an expert. And people around confirm it.

This day
I Stopped
looking for an
Experience
or the Expert, and
just started Doing
and Living Life

It's as simple as that.

The three INDeco hotels grew from different experiences.

Swamimalai was a spiritual experience. I was visiting a house in Thanjavur and loved the ambience of the place. I bought it immediately and got the resort up and running in three months. We used local material and local labour; 60% of the money stayed in the village. Our Mahabalipuram hotel was built in 30 days, with 30 volunteers. We sell the rooms for \$100, at the same time as the Taj was doing the same in Chennai. By the time that I was building the third hotel in Yercaud, I graduated and became an "expert"...we made zero purchase of wood. Our hotels never use engineers or architects.

So, how did we go about setting up an eco resort? The thought had to start at the pre-project stage; right from choosing the land. The choice of land and carrying capacity of the place are vital factors to take into consideration. We could not buy two acres next to a water body and built 200 rooms. We had similarly to consider what were the natural resources available in the area; most hill stations don't have water. Again, we could not build 200 rooms and suffer. Then, we had to think of the appropriate design, technical services, available material and the impact of our existence on the local neighbourhood.

We said that the first right should be to the son of the soil, which is the local man and your neighbour. Tell him that this is his land, "we also want to come in and share, and these are the conditions under which we come". Of course, the



Give me a resort where the deer roam... in the lobby

trees, the rocks, the roots, the views... they have the first right. We have a street in Yercaud, which says that the first right of way is for the insects and bugs, and we have not tarred the roads.

A bit of an understanding of sustainable tourism had to be obtained and this is when some complications sprung up in the team. We got to work with the local people, we trained them, they knew exactly what and how to do things, without damage. So, primarily INDeco restores heritage and transforms hospitality from mere shelter to unique experiences.

My motto always is to keep things simple, but give the guests the feeling that you care for them. We learnt many things at our first hotel in Swamimalai and then duplicated many of the things there. Swamimalai was a typical 1896 Tamil Nadu house—probably one of the last houses—because they are pulling down a lot of these houses, like they are doing with the tharawads in Kerala. In 1996, we opened the hotel with eight rooms and today it has 32 rooms, and it has won the Global Ecotourism Award.

Our concerns were sewage, rubbish, gas, coal, wood, oil and electricity, among other things. When I created the hotel, I put in many eco-friendly technologies, but I think there is 30% deterioration. It could have been because my managers were not able to pull through for a lack of commitment, or due to cost effectiveness, or because the supplier does not deliver. But I am going to re-invoke the enthusiasm and pursue a big wish list.

At Swamimalai, the swimming pool looks like a temple tank. A typical pool did not gel with the place. We have deer roaming freely in the property. The decorations are traditional, in keeping with the ambience of the place. We filled up the rooms with antique furniture, because it was cheap. Old cots from Chettinad or Tanjavur would cost only Rs 5,000 or Rs 10,000. Now, the furniture value of the hotel is probably more than the hotel book value. Every hotel of ours has a museum; to preserve that area's culture, habits, practices and games. We revived old, local festivals, food, games, lifestyle etc.

Very early in life
An Indian
Guruji from Pittsburgh
Taught me that
Desires
are to be Manifested

**Now how do
we protect
and preserve
all this?**

Through the
museums.
We have an
old press that
was said to

have been gifted by the queen to the Dutch emperor. It came to Tharahambadi to print Bibles, to convert Hindus. Our museum are spread around the hotel and the history is written all over the place.

Of course, we follow a lot of local practices, such as drinking from the tender coconut without plastic straws.

We have revived old menus, which existed before idli and dosa, like the "stand idli", and redone those old vessels, and sent them to our favourite guests.

Hard work
Honesty
Effort
Are initials for
Success

The manufacturer of the stand idli vessels has had a thriving business; we ordered about 250 vessels, and people also order directly with him. He has supplied about 5,300 vessels since doing business with us!

For every 25 rooms that we built, we built a primary school for girl children, because the villagers are orthodox and they don't like their girl children to go to school in the next village. For every 50 rooms, we built an old age home. For every room we have a cow, but we take only 50% of the milk; the rest we give away, with the first priority going to expecting mothers.



A resort that wakes to the sights
and smells of coffee

While Swamimalai was a spiritual experience for me, Mahabalipuram, which was an old British army camping site, was a challenge. It belonged to the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, from whom we leased it and while they used to sell it at Rs 200 a night, we did some work on it and sell it at \$100 a night. A beautiful tree grows into the restaurant, so we have named the restaurant after the tree; Pongamiya glabra. What is beautiful about heritage and eco tourism is that—like the tree—it offers perpetual opportunities. The restaurant with the tree growing in it seems more outdoor than indoor. We have many enthusiasts coming here to see this. Even the French ambassador came to see the tree that survived inside the restaurant.

Our “museum” here comprises of 82 chairs of the East India Company collected from in and around Chennai. When it was decided by the government to demolish the beautiful Madras Central Prison building, I tried to get a court stay. The government squashed it, but I bought the main gate of the prison and it is a part of our museum now. It has acted in more than 200 movies!

What I want to show is how simple it is to build such hotels, with the “power to manifest”....If you have a desire, you must manifest, you have no option. I believe that a desire is a thing given by god and you have no option to fail. I asked for 30 volunteers to create Mahabalipuram; my accountants, my vice-president; guys who deal with pen and paper. These 30 guys did a great job with the engineering. View our website www.indeco.com, if you want to see how this happened.

When they invited the global tender for Mahabalipuram, they said that we could not build new rooms, because of the coastal regulations. But they had huge 20sq ft toilet blocks. I took out the closets and converted the toilets into bedrooms. Simple! Everybody bid for the six rooms that were there, I calculated ahead, there were 28 toilets, so I bid for 35 rooms instead. This is how we won it.

Our Lake Forest Hotel is a property of opportunity. It is right on the lake on Yercaud. There was no possibility of building a hotel, but there was an old chalet, built by Henrietta Charlotte Rosario in 1820.

It is in a verdant coffee plantation. We restored the old house built in the Anglo-Indian architectural style. No two rooms are similar, because we thought we would not cut a single tree, but instead built only where there is the space. We have waterways and rock, where birds have nested. On some streets, insects and birds have “right of way”. There are no manicured lawns or artificial landscaping. We just used coffee plants; it’s like a little jungle with some buildings, and again the interiors are flushed with antique furniture. We have long-stay clients like writers and film-makers who like to cut themselves off and do some writing in lovely Yercaud. We even have a golfing putt in one room, because it is too small to make into two rooms, but very big for one room. So, we kept it big and added whatever we wanted.

All the wood is recycled, bought from the old government building, Clive House, which was broken down to build the new Secretariat. Again, I tried to get a stay to stop the government from

pulling it down, but wasn't successful and lost the case, so we bought all the beautiful old doors and windows, and it is all documented.

So, our business isn't too complicated. I don't know what money we make. But I have money to spend and I am enjoying spending it and it's as simple as that. It is a great business for anyone to do, who has the passion, the idea and can make the effort. Pursuance is the key. Good luck.

Steve Borgia is chairman and managing director of the INDeco Leisure Hotels, which has resorts in Swamimalai, Mahabalipuram and Yercaud, all heritage destinations with its own resort museums. INDeco Swamimalai is the only Indian hotel to win the Global Eco Tourism Award. Steve has worked with the UN, Government of India, and in the media, apart from authoring several management books.



CONSERVING THE BUILT HERITAGE; SHOWCASING INTACH INITIATIVES AT PUDUCHERRY

If you have to pinpoint one driving force behind making ecotourism initiatives a success, it is passion. I, too, have been lured into this field by a passion. In fact, I can say from my example, that anything is possible if you have the passion, the interest and the drive. I work closely with the government in heritage restoration, preservation, urban development and urban environment management.

Working with the government is not the easiest thing to do. You learn to be patient; a quality that I never had when you are young, you just want to get things done. You don't like the inertia and slow pace of the government. I would be called for government meetings, where they would make you wait for a couple of hours.

Now, I go to meetings, and patiently wait two hours. Sometimes, even when the meeting doesn't take place, I come back undisturbed. So, these are qualities that one needs to inculcate in these fields. In our work in heritage reservation, restoration, urban planning and development, Intach acts as an interface

with the government, under whose purview this falls. Apart from renovation and restoration of public buildings, we also have educational programmes and seminars; and provide consultancy. It's been an interesting journey and wonderful experience. I tell everyone that there is no reason why anyone cannot repeat anywhere else in the country the work that we do in Pondicherry.

When you talk of heritage, people say, go to Europe. But look around you, there is not one place in India that is not rich in heritage. The problem, however, is the same everywhere: bad management, bad planning, lack of initiative and a lack of interest. The good news is that things can be turned around; we have made small efforts and have been rewarded with small successes. If someone says to us that we have done great work, I'm the first to say that it's not true. Lots more can and needs to be done, but what has been a big learning experience for us and for those who have been involved with us is that Pondicherry can serve as a model that other cities can replicate. Lot of middle-class people have beautiful

heritage buildings, but don't have the funds to restore their homes. So, we do a lot of the works for free, because otherwise many of these people will never think of restoration.

We help frame conservation guidelines, architecture control guidelines and most important, improve the urban environment; we

may have beautiful heritage buildings, but like everywhere else in the country, we have garbage lying all over the place, sewage flowing into the sea, unplanned roads, traffic, noise. So, we realised that just conservation is not enough, we need to work on the urban environment and urban planning.

Recently, I was in Goa with some young friends who formed an association called the Goa Heritage Action Network, which seemed a very dynamic and charged group. But when I went there, I was disappointed. Goa annually receives 2 million tourists.

Goa has great heritage, particularly in old Panjim, but how many people visit those old heritage buildings and precincts? Goa has one of the best museums in India, but somehow it has not been promoted. It is

known only for its beaches. No effort has been made to look at other aspects. It would be enough if 5% of the two million visitors could be turned for a day or two from the beach to the history and heritage of Goa.

It is not like we had it easy in Pondicherry, we too, had to start from scratch. In fact, we didn't have a "product"; we didn't have tourists coming in. When I first started working in the field of tourism and heritage over a decade back with a travel company, I asked the general manager in Chennai, to please send some tourists to Pondicherry.

I said that we could with the local government to develop a good destination. He was not keen, saying that there was nothing to see in here. Pondicherry was a drive-through destination. People

complained about not having a good hotel to stay in.

Today, we have ample hotels. We did a survey recently with the tourism department which revealed that there are 25 new hotels under various stages of construction. So, we are now going to the other extreme and becoming a hotel and restaurant joint. We need to move—learning from Goa and Kerala—from



Before and after renovation

mass tourism to class tourism, because Pondicherry is a small place. It does not have the carrying capacity of these other destinations. We cannot have one million tourists; that would just ruin the place. We have been able to engage the Central government to pay for a lot of our projects; any state can do the same. At Intach, we propose the projects to the government, and since they don't have the people, and the initiative or the passion, we do all the back end work.

The history of Pondicherry is very interesting. The Dutch, the Danes, the French, the British have had a presence here, and that's what makes Pondicherry so special. But the first job is to educate the people of Pondicherry about Pondicherry's history and architecture. Very often, the local people would say, "Yeah, we know everything", but when we started doing the programmes, a lot of people realised that they don't know much. A first step towards attracting tourists is to make the city attractive for its residents; then the tourists will come. We need to make our cities livable and people need to be proud of their city. That is our experience in Pondicherry.

Pondicherry was the only place under the French, unlike the rest of the country which was colonised by British, and we still have those influences visible in town, and that is what has created the impetus for developing tourism. When we first started working with the government, we were dubbed anti-development, because we talked about history, about restoration and preservation.

In the late 1970s and 80s, development meant industrialisation. Pondicherry was

a low tax haven; a "billing centre". If you bought a car in Pondicherry, you paid 2% tax, the same car in Chennai notched a 12% tax. So, the place had all the big companies with a small office and one person making bills. There was no revenue coming in.

It was a regime fraught with danger, because it brought in a lot of bad polluting industries. Then, over a period of time, with the uniform sale tax, it is now gone. The local Pondicherry government realised that it was losing revenue. And they realised that the only thing that could sustain the economic development of Pondicherry was tourism.

That is when they acknowledged the work that we were doing and asked us to join them. Our mandate was to promote heritage tourism and the French connection, and to make Pondicherry into a national destination. It took us nearly 10 years to achieve. I must admit, today the Government of Pondicherry looks at us as an important partner in the development of tourism.

We don't have big industries here, and if you want to engage in big projects, you have to work with the government; they have the money. Today, India is no more a poor country; 90% of the proposals that we make for the government is funded. But the first thing the bureaucrats are taught is to look at people with suspicion. What we realised is that the government also needs good organisations to work with.

Today, they call us for any important decision on tourism, heritage, urban development and environment planning.

We undertook to renovate the park in the heart of the French quarter. It was a government project, and we prepared the estimate and did the design as per government norms.

Actually, the government had invited bids and we later found that the company that had won the bid had a very unattractive design for the park. We realised we had to intervene and so, we came up with a counter proposal. The tourism secretary said that it was too late, but we went to Delhi and lobbied with the government. It was a learning experience for us. We have now started bidding for projects, a first for us.

The local government, through the Pondicherry government's Department of Tourism, sent the proposal to the ministry of tourism, which did not have a problem funding it. For these kind of projects, Rs 3-4 crore is not a big amount. In fact, the chief minister has forwarded a Rs 450 crore "Renaissance Pondicherry" project that we presented to the planning commission! The other interesting thing is that a lot of the beautiful buildings belong to the government. We have been telling them that the government needs to set an example, and they have not been demolishing buildings. Pondicherry has Tamil and French quarters. In the Tamil part, you have Christian and Hindu and Muslim quarters. The French quarter is of course, more beautiful, thanks also to its proximity to the sea.



The Tamil quarter

But the Tamil quarter also has its charm, which we pointed out to the government and the local people. Today, we have a beautiful resort (CGH Earth's Maison Perumal) in a Tamil house. It has been a trendsetter, with its slanted roofs, thalvarams and thinnaish, in terms of developing beautiful Tamil properties. Then, we have the Franco Tamil architecture, a unique style, where the ground floor is in Tamil style and the first floor in French.

But things are not all hunky dory. A lot of ugly things continue to happen; a beautiful old building was pulled down to build the chief secretariat building, a government building. We did not have the voice then to stop it, as we do now. From 2001-02, the number of buildings being demolished has reduced. People are becoming aware that heritage buildings are not only something to preserve, but beautiful in its history, and it is becoming fashionable, both in the Tamil and French quarters. Why are these buildings demolished? For the same reasons across the country: land pressure, development, lifestyle, lack of heritage awareness.

We have done an arduous task over two years in making a listing of all heritage buildings in Pondicherry, and put it on a CD. This was funded by the local government. We have a card for each building, explaining why it has been graded. In India, they are typically Grade 1 (the most beautiful historically

and architecturally), 2a, 2b and 3. This is something we need to do in the all cities in India.

We also have a familiarisation walk around Pondicherry, which is a great experience. Initially, we did it on request, but with support from the tourism department, we started doing it every Friday and Saturday. It has been a big success for which we have trained a couple of young people, and today, we have four five people working on this full time.



Hotel Orient (of the Neemrana group) was one of our very first heritage restoration projects. People said it was not going to work. We started work in 1998 and it took us two years to restore. We were told that it could be a spot of fun, but it would not be a commercial success. To everyone's surprise, it has been a huge success; it had eight rooms to start out with and then merged with another to make 14 rooms.

We have created a team of contractors, stone masons and carpenters, who do exclusive work in conservation. Earlier, they did not have enough projects. They are untrained, they don't look at drawings, but they could go to the spot and do a good job. Today, we have three such teams doing exclusive projects.

We are in a project funded by the European Commission, where we needed to have two European city partners. We chose a city in France and one in Italy and we had to do a few pilot projects: introduction of non-polluting transport, city signages—Pondicherry still has old French signage which you will see in Paris, blue enamel board with white letters—the walks, solid waste management, and the project paid for the restoration of the exterior of a Tamil street. We make the elevation and façade for new buildings, which is in harmony with the streetscape. You see this all over in Europe, where there is a continuous sense in its architecture. This project got an award from Unesco, because we had to engage the local people.

First, the people said that they did not want to work with us and the municipality because they were afraid that after a year, the municipality would acquire their houses. When something comes free, people are always sceptical. It took us a year to convince them. Today, they have become our ambassadors in the Tamil quarters. We believe in simple interventions. We don't believe in massive changes and decorative work.



The battery-powered Mahindra Bijlee public transport

Also, through the Asia Urban Development Fund, we built a battery charging station for Mahindra Bijlis, public transport system, ideally suited for Pondicherry, which can seat ten. We convinced the municipality to

give the land; it is like a petrol station and the vehicles can go and charge their batteries, which give them 80 km of charge. They have two sets of batteries, so they can charge one while driving on the other. It is again easily replicable anywhere else in the country.

Finally, I would like to conclude by giving a wonderful example of PPP, where we are working with a Danish company and the government to do some restoration work in Tranquebar. This has been a great project because apart from the restoration, we have

provided employment, restored ancient crafts and built a craft centre. We have also worked on the solid waste management here. It was a dead village after the tsunami. Today, it has been restored to a new life.

Ashok Panda is co-convenor at Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), dedicated to heritage conservation and awareness. Headquartered in New Delhi, it has more than 140 chapters all over the country, with a team of architects, planners, engineers and environmental activists.



EDUCATING THE GUEST

Wildlife tourism brochures around the world will usually advertise the same sort of things; sightings, tigers, lions...etc. In Africa, they talk of the big five. They talk of the resort, its facilities and the luxuries on offer. But there is something important that is often missing: ethics, values, tolerance, beliefs, religions; these things are rarely mentioned in travel brochures.

As a part of the Pugmarks's programme, I take students into jungles. One morning, in the Kanha National Park, the children were waiting their turn of the tiger show. Early in the morning, the mahouts take elephants into the jungle and converge at a place where the tiger is spotted. Four or five elephants corner the tiger and ensure that it does not run away. Two hours later, the tourists will transfer on to the elephant, go "spot" the tiger, followed by some click, click, click, and they are happy.

This particular day, however, played out a little differently. The tiger was not in a mood to be sedentary and decided to walk off. To ensure that the tourists got

to see the tiger, the mahouts chased the tiger on their elephants. There was chaos.

The poor tiger ran as if there was someone was out to kill it. Meanwhile, in the four-wheel drives, the kids were furious and started shouting, and they were fighting with the forest department official. And finally, they told him plainly that they were not interested in the tiger show if the tiger was going to be troubled. We drove off into the forest.

They proudly took home a very strong message: we did not go for the tiger show where a tiger was tortured. What is the difference between the usual tourists and these kids? At Pugmarks, we realise we all have an impact by going

It was only after a village visit that I realised how difficult it is to earn. I had a cool time cutting grass and feeding the cows. The local people were really cool and prepared excellent food for us.

Divya Dagalia, 15 years

into a place. We impact the eco system, the ecology, the environment and the local community. **How can we reduce the impact?**

Through a sense of empathy. When a city bred tourist visits a rural or tribal area, he just looks down on the people. This insensitivity generates a lot of antagonism.



Learning through the experience

Goa is a prime example. If it were up to them, the Goans would rather have their peaceful life than the thousands of tourists. We have to try and ensure that tourism does not cause overkill. Probably the best solution for this is education. When a tourist visits a new place, he needs to be educated. At Pugmarks, when the kids start from Pune or Mumbai, we educate them a little about waste disposal, respecting the customs and traditions, and more importantly, not to make collections in wilderness areas. This “no collections” and “no waste disposal” lectures are for sensitising the kids.

And they do make a real impact. On a trip to the Lakshadweep about eight years back, some class 8 kids reprimanded the captain for throwing waste out of the ship into the sea, saying that a shark or tortoise could choke on the plastic bags and tin cans. Last year, two kids came back and pointed out to the stickers on the ship—there are very stern norms now against throwing waste into the sea—and were proud of the fact

that they might have had something to do with it.

Another bad trend as tourists is our fanciful idea of gifting, without realising the impact; such as giving a pen or a smoke to the Jarawas in the Andamans. And a lot of the time, we gift not only to people, but also to animals. Bandipur National Park

had 17 gangs of macaques (red-faced monkeys). In an interesting observation, they have preferred to move away from the jungles and instead take over the Mysore to Ooty highway, which passes through Bandhipur; where cars stop and people give them biscuits and other eatables. Monkeys are very intelligent and they will stop in front of your car to get a snack. This habit of gifting is neither kind nor amusing, just patronising.

On the other hand, **tourists who are “educated” cherish the good learning experience that they get on a visit.** You can go on package tours, you are taken to a 1,000-year-old monastery in Ladakh at 12:30 pm and are given seven minutes to look around. Instead, try and get more out of the experience. Go at your pace. Visit the monastery at 7:30 am, when the Buddhist lamas are just walking in. Sit peacefully; spend a couple of hours there. You will go into a trance when they chant, and the hymns begin. That is the experience to savour.

We were on a walking trail with a bunch of children and a local youth from the village in Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary in Nagpur, Maharashtra. Suddenly, we heard the alarm calls of a langur. We went in search of a predator – instead heard a sloth bear calling. Soon we saw a sloth bear, walking up the hillside. We listened, stayed calm and went back to the original place and saw the pugmarks of a leopard. *This* is an Indian forest. You don't see everything every time, but you need to experience it. It was an unforgettable moment. In Kenya, you can see an elephant herd 10km ahead and you can tell the driver to drive you up there. In an Indian forest, behind a lantana bush which is 10m ahead of you, there could be an elephant. *That* is an Indian forest.

These experiences and learning become more pertinent in today's industry conditions where you have so many more destinations and travel operators competing with you. Why should that guest come back to you or send someone back to you? Give them a little extra. Impart little useful nuggets, such as the fact that in a Shiva temple, the Shivalingam always points to the north. If you are ever lost in a forest, and come across a sivalingam, you can get a sense of direction.

At our rafting camp for children at Rishikesh, we do a jump off a cliff. The thing is, Indian kids are always taught to be scared; "don't do this, you will get hurt", "don't go there". We tell the child to "overcome your fears" and jump off a nearly 20-ft high cliff. The flip side is that once they get started, they won't stop! They suddenly realise that they are capable of much more than they think

I didn't expect to like the birdwatching because on a school trip, I got horribly bored just taking down a list of bird names. But here, I like it very much as the instructors knew what they were talking about. And from now when I see a pretty bird on a phone wire, I am going to find out more about it

Shruthi Darbhamulla, 14, Kanha

they can. We also teach them to work as a team, develop their personalities; we do the sort of thing you see in corporate training. So, there is value addition in our rafting camps, as compared to the ones done by other operators at the same place. And the Pugmarks camps are always full. This is probably one of the reasons.

Overcrowding in our national parks is a cause for concern, but that is because people visit Bandhavgarh and Kanha only for the tiger safari. Along with the tiger safaris, why not take them to the homes of the local community, so that they can see that these people are happy without air-conditioning, fans and cars? On one of our programmes, called Cloud Nine, we take children to a village in Mukteshwar. Here kids work in homes there, in fields and in cowsheds and they earn their lunch. In the afternoon, they work on a social project with the same community. That learning is something they cherish forever.

Pugmarks's strength is the 170 volunteers, who are regularly trained on the field. One of our youngsters, Amod Zambre is *Sanctuary Asia's* "young ecologist of the year". We also train local youth who come from the neighbourhoods of protected areas. So,

the Pugmarks story is about bridging the gap, and we have made a small difference and it is easy and important to replicate at other places.

Anirudh Chaoji is the chief promoter of Pugmarks, which offers camping experience to youngsters in wildlife, trekking and adventure. It covers a mix of heritage sites, wildlife sanctuaries and spectacular landscapes. Anirudh is deeply involved in ecology restoration and environment education. He is a member of the state committee for Public Hearings on Industrial Pollution and spearheads the movement for Hospital Waste Management at the national level



TAJ SAFARI EXPERIENCE

I would like to share our journey in wildlife tourism that Taj Safaris has undertaken in the last nearly five years. We are a young, small company, and we are constantly learning. We have four lodges in Madhya Pradesh. It is a joint venture between the Taj Group of Hotels and And Beyond, which was formerly CC Africa. One of our key distinguishing features is the interpretative wildlife safari, which is imparted by And Beyond-trained naturalists.

We are the country's first and only branded wildlife circuit—the first time that a corporate house has gone into wildlife tourism. All the resorts are small and intimate, with a light footprint. The resort have a maximum of 12 cottages that accommodate 24 guests. In Kanha National Park, we have two independent camps of nine tents each.

The first camp, known as Mahau kothi, opened in Bhandhavghar in October 2006. The second one, Baghvan, started in Pench in February 2007. The Panna and Kanha properties are our newest ones. They are all linked by air, because the

Madhya Pradesh government decided to have air strips in every district and we managed to convince a flying company to start flying small planes, because charters are quite expensive. There is a flying school located in Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, so they were convinced by the business model, but because of the recession, we don't have these flights every day. But they have really improved connectivity and the experience of the guests.

Mahau kothi is set in 45 acres, which connects one side of the wildlife park to the other, so there is a bit of wildlife movement even in the lodge campus. The first thing I would like to highlight is the architecture. We have followed local ethos and even highlighted aspects of the particular area, which is perhaps being lost or forgotten slowly—with a little bit of prosperity in the villages, they built regular concrete houses. We have built *kutiya*—as it is known in the local parlance. They are mud-walled, cow dung-rendered with simple coir cots. Each courtyard has a thulsi altar, so it gives the look and feel of a traditional home.

In Baghvan, the Pench-based resort, we have done something interesting. We had taken over the lodge from another company and made some additions, like a new toilet block with *machans* (rooftop, open-to-the-sky bedroom). Each room has a private *machan*. This land, while only 14 acres, is very beautiful with a lot of tall, old trees and a *nulla* (small stream) flowing by every room. On the other side of the nullah is the buffer zone of the national park. Once again, there is a lot of wildlife movement and a lot of rich bird life. Guests who like to sleep up on the *machan* can enjoy the cool fresh air, and wake to birdsong in the morning.

The lodge in Panna is named Pashan ghar, after the style of architecture there. Pashangarh means stone house. It was a local tradition in Bundelkhand to make houses of stone, so we attempted to recreate the same kind of architecture in the 12 rooms there. No cement has been used, only mortar for the walls. It is set in 200 acres of land, so it is like a private forest. It is again on the buffer zone, so we have plenty of wildlife and birds, and very good nature walks in the morning. We also offer activities in the night, if guests want to see some nocturnal animals. In the morning, we go back to see the tracks and signs of animals.

Our fourth camp in Kanha comprises two independent camps of nine canvas tents each. The tents are ideally suited to the

ambience of the place and also being in keeping with the eco-sensitive zone guideline. It is a “guideline” now, but if it becomes law, we can pack up shop and leave. There are no permanent structures, as we are barely 50m away from the national park; it is on the other side of the banjar river.

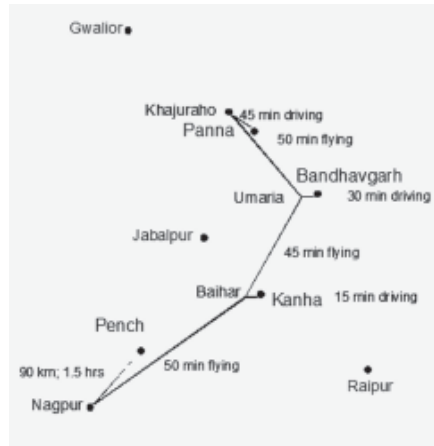
The two tented camps are supported by services like engineering, back of the house and kitchen, which are brick and cement structures, but they are about a kilometre away from the tents.

Even with the cuisine, we make attempts and research to restore local recipes. In Panna,

for example, there is a local dish served called *kunde ka bhatta*, which is roasted garlic stuffed in aubergine and cooked in a clay pot. It is slow food; it takes a lot of time to cook in a clay pot. Similarly, there is *murar ka kabab*, which is steamed lotus stem mixed with boiled chickpeas, and shallow fried. Wonderful old-world food!

The main focus is locally procured ingredients and freshly prepared food.

All of the lodges have kitchen gardens; some of them are spread across one-fourth of an acre. The vegetable patches are weather-dependent, because it gets very hot in central India in the summer. We procure most of the vegetables and fruits from local villages or from the local market. There are two local strains of rice, kodu and kutki, which are almost extinct. After a lot of research, we sourced them from a distant place.



Hardly anyone grows it now and it is used only for festivals. We wanted to

use them on a daily basis, and hopefully, we can once we find a good source.



Every lodge has theme for the cuisine. In Panna, it is Bundel-khandi. In Bandhavgarh, the menu comprises Baghelkhandi dishes. In Kanha, it is Chattisgarhi, because of the proximity to the

state. In Pench, we are right on the border with Maharashtra, and we wondered what we would serve, because Madhya Pradesh does not have its own distinct cuisine, and we finally settled on Vidharba, because we are on the border. The idea is that when a lot of our guests do the entire circuit, they should not be stuck with the same style of food.

Currently, nearly 80% of our guests are from overseas and it is easy to give them something that their palates are more familiar with and serve western food, but we wanted to showcase Indian food. So, we have a three-day rolling menu. We also offer unique dining experiences. In Panna, guests are seated in a two-seater palanquin and served under the starry sky. In Mahua kothi, dinner is served once in three days, depending on the number of guests, under a mahua tree dining and the area with lit with lanterns.

An interesting extension of the cuisine we made recently is that we compiled

the best of our recipes from the Taj Safari menu and introduced them in the coffee shop in Delhi's Taj Mahal hotel. By coincidence, the coffee shop, Machan, had a jungle theme 25 years back. Importantly, proceeds from sales here go into a local community programme.

We are also conscious about our responsibility to employees. We try and do a lot of capacity building. There is an interesting story about a chef from the local area, a Gond tribal from Pench. He was washing dishes and was a helper in the kitchen, when we first took over three years ago. We sensed a skill and passion in him. During the monsoon, when the lodges close, we try and send promising employees to other Taj hotels, an advantage we have as a hotel chain. So, he went to two of these training sessions and is now a lodge chef; in fact number two in the lodge in Pench. It has been a great growth.

Raj Kishore is another success story. He was from a village near Bhandhavgarh National Park. He was working in the park as a driver. He was very amiable and we decided to train him as a naturalist. He was initially very diffident, because he was not sure about his communicative skills, but we slowly convinced him. We trained him for about 14 months, and the whole of Bhandhavgarh was surprised and he is a role model today.

We have wonderful wildlife in our country; sometimes I compare it to the biodiversity in Africa, because Africa is considered as the premier wildlife destination in the world. But sometimes, it would seem we have richer biodiversity. In India, for example, we

have 15 different cats, among the big and lesser cats. In Africa, there are only seven.

To give guests a good experience of this, we started with a comfortable vehicle. Until now, the standard vehicle used to be the Gypsy. It is a Japanese vehicle that seems to be made for the Japanese; only two people can sit comfortably. We felt that if we stuck to this trend, each of the lodges would have to send 12 vehicles into the park. It did not seem like a “responsible” thing to do, so we developed the Tata. It was being exported, so we customised it and converted it with six comfortable, forward-facing seats, with a sort of grid seating, so that everyone could get a comfortable viewing of the jungle and birds. Now, we can do with just four vehicles going to the national parks. We can reduce the impact and yet deliver a comfortable experience to the guests.

When we first modified the vehicle four years back, we got criticism from other users of the national park who said that it was too big. We took their concerns into consideration and today, our vehicles at Kanha still seat six, but are sleeker. And of course, despite the criticism, like we predicted, two other lodges in Pench followed suit with getting the same vehicles for themselves.

The cost isn’t much; a new Gypsy costs Rs 5.5 lakh and another Rs 50,000 to modify. This costs just Rs 7.5 lakh, including the modification.

The qualitative experience by our extremely well-trained naturalists is one of our key strengths. After all, the guests come to our place not for the food or the room, but for the experience. And how do you deliver that? The interpretative safari is at the heart of how our business is distinguished and this is delivered by young naturalists, who undergo rigorous training and play different roles. They are guides, hosts—they spend up to six hours with the guests on morning safaris—sometimes they host a cocktail or even join guests for dinner, depending on how many days the guests might stay. They “educate” the guests about India and about the culture. They are drivers and cultural ambassadors, apart from which they undergo butler training, and also take on the roles of baby-sitter and safety expert, for which they undergo a two-day training in wilderness medicine.



Pashan garh at Panna National Park

And beyond is well known for its quality of guiding. South Africa is a highly evolved wildlife market. In fact, And Beyond’s guide training is considered a few notches

higher than the national standards of guiding, known as Fogasa, in South Africa. So, guides who are trained by And Beyond do not need a Fogasa certification.

I underwent six weeks of training with them. It is ten times tougher physically than the Indian training that we go through. We have taken the essence of that training and adapted to Indian conditions. The training lasts from eight months to a year. Even first aid training certifications are vital. Initially, we did it through US-based Wilderness Medicine Institute. Only the certified naturalists can handle first aid for guests, who have insurance policies, otherwise their insurance gets rejected.

We have created checklists and eco-guides about the local area to make the experience easier for guests. We have an interesting programme called “Star Birds” where we highlight ten birds, which are different for different parks. We have colourful illustrations with small descriptions on the back of the card.

The idea is to popularise birding, rather than focus on just the large mammals. On the other hand, if you show the average guest, who is not interested in birds, the big book of Indian birds with 1,250 birds, the typical reaction is they feel literally very weighed down. So, we cull out ten birds, and we have a contest on how many birds they have spotted in the day, with the hope that they go back excited about birding. They can tick off on the checklist the birds that they see in each park and keep it as a souvenir.

Of vital importance in all this is the responsibility towards local laws. When Krishnakumar Singh started his first camp in 1980, it was a business backed by a passion for people and wildlife. The camps were small and intimate, and run

like their homes. When the business became more popular and lucrative, we had all sorts of people zeroing in on the “market”; that intimate touch was lost.

As part of the Tata group, we are quite rigid on regulations. In the first lodge, the general manager went through a harrowing 45 different clearances, in a small district like Umaria. When we went to get something like a food clearance, they would ask if we really needed that. No one had bothered with it until then. When we started our camp in Bandhavgarh, there were 35 other lodges. Today, there are about 50.

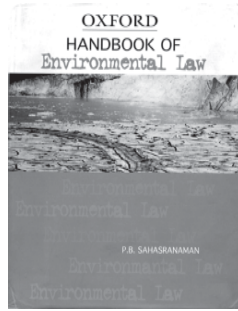
Except for Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department lodge there, no one else went through any of the processes. Even to get the bar license, we struggled a lot—starting out with temporary licenses—because the MP government does not issue licenses to places with a population of less than 50,000. But we knocked on government doors and finally the government amended the law, so that license, which costs Rs 2.5 lakh, could be issued in places with less than 50,000 population. Then, the excise guys started going after the rest of the lodges, so we are the “bad boys” to the industry. The same was the case with health and employee insurance.

Also, the other camps used to pay the employees only for the nine months that they worked, and not for the rest of the three months, when the national parks and lodges were closed because of the monsoon. Our employees are paid for the whole year and get an annual leave of a month and a half during the monsoon. The rest of the time they undergo training.

We also have community programmes and eco lessons for local school children, who are also taken on visits to the national parks. At least 80% of school children in the neighbourhoods have not been in the national park, because they don't have access or money. So, we take classes eight, nine and ten, because they can understand the experience better. So far, we have covered 1,500 school children in the area around the four parks. They also come back from the safari, see the lodge, have a meal in the cafeteria and have a little eco lesson using simple charts on the importance of conservation. Guests buy a Rs 200 "wild

child" band, which sponsors the eco lesson of one child. Not that we wait for the guests to buy the bands; we just go ahead with the safaris. This is the difference that we are trying to make.

Sarath Champati, a sociology postgraduate from the Delhi School of Economics, dabbled in many professions including, stock broking, before he started life as a naturalist with the Taj Group. He is the founder-president of Kabini Foundation, an NGO for wildlife conservation through the local community, in Kabini. Sarath was with CC Africa-Taj joint venture in 2006. He is now based at the lodge in Kanha NP, Banjaar Tola.



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN RELATION TO TOURISM SECTOR & CASE STUDIES

Environmental law is a vast subject that I have been practising for over two decades. In the Kerala context, I would like to speak about a couple of things.

Waste management: The law on this issue was settled in 1980, when it was stated that it is the duty of the municipality to manage waste. They cannot say, “We don’t have the money” or “we don’t have the land”. In 1980, a landmark judgement passed by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, known as the Ratlam Municipality case, stating that municipal authority cannot escape responsibility with the excuse that they don’t have the money. It is their duty to clear it. Private parties can manage the waste only in their property; if it lies on the road, it is the responsibility of the municipality to do something. The judgment is even quoted in Australian courts.

Most of the municipal laws contain the clause that the municipality is the owner of the waste. So, the general pub-

lic cannot treat it as they like. It is for the municipality to see that it is properly treated.

The Pollution Control Board in every state must say what type of waste treatment plant has to be established; what are the systems to be adopted, and how it has to be treated. The Biomedical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 and Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000 have to be implemented in its letter and spirit. In Kerala, we have a Kerala Water and Sewerage Management Authority and we don’t even have sewage. We have only drains, where we discharge even hospital effluents and toilets.

Under a board that says “Swagatham” (welcome) at the entrance to the Kalpathy Heritage Village, there is waste mounted

up. It is a typical scene in many places in Kerala. Education is not the only remedy. In our state with its high education levels, even the

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M.S. Swaminathan report

- Common man must understand the law
- Panchayat level implementation
- No blanket 500 metre restriction
- Sustainable development

elders pack all the waste into a cover and throw it off a bridge. We need stringent laws to be strictly implemented, and a cultural change. Bad waste management is the responsibility of the local self-government authority.

Local newspapers carry news of dengue fever and chikengunya and tourists are afraid. There are many independent private organisations willing to handle the waste, but the municipality does not grant them the permission, saying that they will do it, though nothing gets done. I think the remedy is, like alternate energy, to start a waste management unit in every district. The Singapore model is worthy of emulation. They have trucks that collect waste in the night, and they have a separate road for it.

Recently, a case came up in Kerala, where the Railway culverts had not been cleaned in 20 years. Finally, the court gave orders for a private agency to clean it, and the process was monitored by the court with the help of ten advocates. Interestingly, the Railway has records to show that it had been cleaned. What had been happening was that it had not been cleaned through from one end to the other, and that was causing the flooding. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) is another sensitive law which affects a lot of development. But does everyone has the full awareness on the laws regarding CRZ? The CRZ notification is a subordinate legislation, because under the environment protection act passed by the legislature, the subordinate government has been given authority to make laws. As per this, no construction is possible within 500m from high tide line on the seaside. In the case of backwaters,

it is 100m or the width of the water body, whichever is less. If the width of the water body is 50m, then the distance need only be 50m. There is a Coastal Zone Management plan, which will show whether an area is CRZ-I, II, III or IV. There is an implementing agency named the Coastal Zone Management Authority.

CRZ is classified into sensitive zone, developed area, rural areas and islands. Sensitive zones mean ecologically fragile area, categorized as CRZ I. Developed area, or CRZ 2, the restriction is limited; if there are roads, you can construct only on the land-wall side, not on the sea-wall side or the beach side. In Kerala, the rural or panchayat area comes under CRZ III, while all municipality comes under CRZ II, unlike in a state such as Karnataka, where they go to the place and check if it is developed or not. The problem in Kerala is panchayats which are close to Municipal areas. For example, the Maradu panchayat in Ernakulam is near Cochin Corporation, where there are a many huge buildings, and it is a developed area. As per the law, such constructions are within the CRZ areas. This is a typical problem in any parts of Kerala, where the CRZ classification is not done properly. According to CRZ, none of the small islands in Kerala are in CRZ IV. There a lot of litigations in this regard in Kerala High Court. The court left the matter to the discretion of the government of Kerala. The government has yet to decide.

The Dr M.S. Swaminathan Commission, which was given the task of reframing CRZ law, says that the law has to be practical, only then can it be implemented. There is much confusion in the

law, because the Centre amended CRZ from 100m to 50m. The Supreme Court struck it down. Several panchayat who want to reject a building permit will throw away the application citing the excuse that it is a CRZ violation. The Swaminathan report said that there should be panchayat level implementation of the CRZ law. Now, people need to go to Thiruvananthapuram and get a sanction from the Coastal Zone Management Authority. Then, they must go to the Centre for Earth Science Studies to prepare the status report of their property. The whole process takes more than one and half years. It is for these reasons that Swaminathan suggested that the sanction should be available at the panchayat level. The report also suggests that the blanket ban of 500m is wrong.

There will no other country which has fixed a 500m restriction; even in Sri Lanka it is only 50m. Swaminathan suggested that there should be sustainable development principle, so you do not damage the ecology while making a construction.

The protection of rivers is another issue which is particularly vital in Kerala, a state with 44 rivers. In the old days, people used to take a dip in the river to wash away their sins. Today, one will think twice before doing that. We are not able to make our rivers tourism-friendly. One of the reasons is the fact that everyone discharges untreated effluents into the river.

Our boats too, are unsafe. Authorities should put their foot down on safety aspects. On the insistence of the High Court, where a lot of public interest litigations were filed, there are now



A typical scene; “welcome” and waste at the same spot

stability tests, where even if 100 people move to one side of the boat, it will not tilt. In Singapore, there is a canal boat ride, where you are compulsorily made to wear a life jacket and the boat carries only six people. Even if you take a child as an extra seventh person, they will not allow it.

We need that kind of strict implementation. We also need monitoring, like Pollution Control Board inspectors coming in a deep and apprehending people. In fact, that will probably save the situation. It is vital to take steps to protect nature, without which the tourism industry will not survive. More importantly, people will not survive. Athirapally waterfall, one of the beautiful areas of the State, where most popular films like *Raavan* were shot, is under threat in view of the proposed construction of a Dam. Environmentalists argue that the waterfall will vanish when the dam is built. Now the litigation is on the third round. A glance at the waterfall will help make up your mind about the need for protecting it.

Can we consider alternate energy sources, like solar and wind? We are not even harnessing wind power. Nature has also unleashed its fury on us through a disaster like the tsunami, we do not want that to happen again. We want the beauty of nature to be kept intact. We have to deal with problems based on the principles of sustainable development, so that we can have a resort without damaging the ecology.

P.B. Sahasranaman has practised environmental law for over two decades. He has compiled several books on the subject and is the founder of Environment Law Research and Guidance Foundation and winner of Bhoomi Mitra Award, 2001, in recognition of his contribution to the environmental protection.



VOICING CONCERNS

Equations is a non-profit organisation established in 1985. We look into the impacts of tourism, do a lot of research, advocate sustainable tourism policies with the government, and network with many partner organisations for having a sustainable tourism policy in the country.

Tourism is very important; it is one of the fastest growing industries. It provides alternate and supplementary income, and provides opportunities of employment.

The state gets lots of benefits in taxes. People can learn about different cultures and it has the potential to preserve the environment and heritage. But when you look at tourism closely, you will see that the sector is built on natural capital, i.e. human, as well as ecological capital.

Tourism is highly resource-centric and there are many concerns that need to be addressed. When you start practising responsible tourism, it is important that you understand its impacts closely and you acknowledge that there are adverse impacts; without that, it is difficult to move forward.

In 2007, when the Kerala Department of Tourism started the initiative, probably for the first time a state tourism department had acknowledged that tourism has impacts and that we need to address that, and a meeting of different stakeholders of tourism was called for. So, what are the main impacts?

Economic: There are the usual problems like increasing cost at destinations, and leakage of money. It is from leakages that we thought about sourcing from local people, so that revenue is retained within the village or the destination. We see a shift in many destinations in employment patterns, where labour is changing from agriculture to construction. We need to evaluate the dependence of the local economy on tourism, considering the fact that tourism is very sensitive to external

A mother from Goa shares her experience

I am pained and scared as a mother to see how tourism has affected our values, culture and tradition in Goa. I dream of a day when our daughters will be seen as sisters and not as objects of sexual desire.

influences like tsunami, chikengunya or economic slow down. Then, we have models like the “enclave model”, where there is a special tourism zone or resort islands that are all inclusive, and where you have everything, with a high concentration of tourism activities in a closed geographic space.

Recently, the Confederation of Kerala Tourism Industry had requested the finance minister to allow special tourism zones in the state in the budget. We need to think about whether alienating local communities can create a sustainable model.



A blatant CRZ violation by a resort

Diversion of resources: In Kevadia, the government acquired over 1,777 acres for the Sardar Sarovar Dam project under “public purpose” evicting 2.5 lakh people in the 1961-63 period. Even now 1,400 acres of the evicted land is unused and this area is now being proposed for tourism, a golf course and amusement parks. The villagers haven’t been rehabilitated and resulted in a fight with the local community.

In Methran Kayal, near Kumarakom, about 430 acres of good yield paddy fields has been bought by different

people and left uncultivated for three years. Now, a mega tourism project which includes the golf courses is being proposed. It is a hot biodiversity area, with many migratory birds coming in. The Kumarakom grama panchayat has written to the district collector for permission to start cultivation there. The project requires reclamation of these paddy fields. I am not sure if this is a sustainable model of tourism development.

In Kumbalangi, the grama panchayat reclaimed four acres of backwaters to build “Kala Gramam” as part of the model rural tourism project. They partially reclaimed it, but with opposition from the local communities and organisations like us, they have not been successful. The same panchayat had also given license for a resort group to

Environmental: In Madhya Pradesh, the Maple Resort is constructed in farmland along the Banjar River. They built a water body in the resort and are pumping water from the Banjar, resulting in the level of water decreasing in the last couple of years, thanks also to the lower monsoon.

In Kerala, there are a number of water theme parks and there has been demand for golf courses. The average demand for water in the former is 10 lakh litres per day and for an 18-hole golf course, it is about 50 lakh litres per day. In Plachimeda, which has witnessed serious struggles on the water usage by the Coca Cola factory, the per day consumption was only 5 lakh litres, so we need to compare and see whether this is a sustainable model.

construct cottages in the Pokkali paddy fields. Luckily, the local self-government, who has been sensible had asked the panchayat to cancel the license and the project was shelved.

Privatisation of common property resources

Kovalam is perhaps the first privatised beach in the country. There was a move by the District Tourism Promotion Council, Idukki to lease grasslands out to private parties in Vagamon. Fortunately, it did not go through.

In 2004, the mangroves at Kumarakom were cut down to make it easier for tourists to observe birds by the local tourism officer. In fact, the officer was more concerned on the tourist satisfaction rather than the ecological importance.

Violations of legal restrictions: We see rampant violations of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification by the tourism industry.

In Kovalam, you will see 1,500 unauthorised construction and CRZ violations as detected by the Vigilance wing of the local self government. In 2009, the local self-government ombudsman directed the panchayat to take action against 233 unauthorised buildings in Kovalam. When you move to Cherai, there are resorts being constructed really close to the beach. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India's report in 2006 on the country's tsunami relief and rehabilitation plans has held the Ministry of Environment for Forest accountable for failing to ensure strict implementation of the rules and regulations in the country, and allowing considerable expansion of industrial activity on the country's coastline.

Local communities lose power of local ownership regulation: In scheduled areas in Madhya Pradesh, it is the right of the grama panchayat to decide on the approval of projects and the acquisition of land. But land is being sold out for tourism, which is purely unconstitutional. In Kerala, the Kerala Tourism Conservation Act (2005) has actually taken away the powers of the local self-government, although the act by its name is for conservation and preservation of the tourism destination. You now have bureaucrats making decisions on tourism areas citing this Act.

Sociocultural: In many places, tourism has not been sensitive to the culture and values of the local people, and has in fact, led to the commodification of culture. People's identities are being shaped by what tourism promotes, and private spaces of people are being dragged into the public domain. In Kumarakom, women say, the backwaters where they bathe and chat has been invaded because of the presence of hundreds of houseboats.

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"Our coasts were violated; sand dunes cut to make it easy for the tourist to get an unobstructed view, coastal vegetation destroyed, traditional communities (farmers and fisher folk) displaced to make way for tourism enterprises. Beaches I played on while I was a child are now the private property of hotels and resorts! In our case, the CRZ was a mere piece of paper. They threw it out of the window and now our coasts are on sale to the highest bidder!"

Deposition by Geraldine Fernandes, resident of Benaulim, Goa to the jury of the Independent People's Tribunal on the World Bank Group in India held on September 21-24, 2006, New Delhi

There are also increased cases of sexual abuse against children in Mamalapuram, in Tamil Nadu, Kovalam, Puri-Konark coastal area in Orissa. In May 2009, we had a meeting organised by Kuoni in the same venue where many of the tourism practitioners acknowledged that this problem exists and needs to be addressed in the Kerala context. Apart to that there are drug related problems and other crimes. Women face risk of sexual exploitation and misrepresentation in advertisements, which sometimes the tourism department promotes.

The tourism industry in India banks a lot on natural resources, biodiversity hotspots, coasts, backwaters, forests and mountains. Many of the forest dwelling people are displaced and tourism is being pushed into the forests in the name of eco-tourism. Green concerns are emerging. The providers are talking about and adopting sustainable practices, but the concept of sustainability in terms of economic and social issues needs to be built in, rather than just environmental practices. Stakeholders in tourism have to be responsible and accountable.

Everybody has to take responsibility.

Our call to the government, planners and private tourism providers is to have a tourism that is built on local aspirations and contexts and delivers local benefits. If the community doesn't want tourism, we should not force it on them. We should ensure a process of consultation and prior informed consent on all tourism projects, and the local community should be given a space for decision-making. We should have tourism that is ethical and non-exploitative and regulated and respects local people's rights and that complies with the laws.

Saroop Roy is programme coordinator with EQUATIONS, a research, campaign and advocacy organisation. He focuses on ecotourism, its impacts on ecosystems and communities, and advocates for sustainable tourism policies in Kerala. EQUATIONS was founded in 1985 to understand the impacts of development, particularly in the context of liberalised trade regimes, the opening up of national economy, new economic policies and structural adjustments.



HAVE AN EMPATHY WITH NATURE

I don't think I will be satisfied with expounding merely the thoughts of a "tourism secretary". Ecotourism is an issue that is very dear to me. I would like to point out a couple of things that have happened; some good, some bad, some hopeful, and some promising. Let me share them, because all of it impacts where we are going and the manner in which things are unfolding.

I was fortunate enough to be at a recent meeting of the National Board on Wildlife, which was chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. All the big guns of ecotourism and wildlife tourism were there; each one could have their say. At the very end, in a couple of minutes, I summed up the essence of the ten meetings on tigers that I had convened in the ministry. I feel that it had an impact on the PM and all the other participants. A decision was taken at this meeting; the Ministry of Environment and Forest will now have a separate Department of Forest and Wildlife. So, there will be one Secretary looking into environmental policy and another one for forest and wildlife. Renowned conservation activist Valmik

Thapar, who sounded desperate about the dwindling number of tigers, put this point through very vehemently and I think it is a forerunner of good things to come.

We talk about responsibilities and ecotourism, but I see that there are things happening in the country which impact tourism and over which we have no say. I was recently in Meghalaya after 55 years, excited about reliving the memories I had of the "Scotland of India". Instead, I was shocked and saddened by what I saw. The highway passes through the city and there are hundreds of trucks passing through. No bypass has been constructed; a proposal has been pending since 1980. Tourism is suffering, people are inhaling only smoke.

Then, there is the Shillong countryside with a beautiful green forest, but suddenly you see that the forest has been cut in two. There is an unbelievable amount of mining that is taking place there. The chief secretary pleaded helplessness because this is under the jurisdiction of the district council, which

is autonomous. It was hard hitting. The same thing—cutting of mountains and countryside—is going on in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. We conduct seminars, and sit around and talk about responsible tourism. But what are we doing about this plunder and pillaging? Doing something involves different departments, it involves law, it involves changes in the constitution; I feel helpless about how to take it forward.

When we think about eco and responsible tourism, we think as individuals. We consider the tourist, tour operator, cab driver, boat operator, forest guard.... I think the time has come when we should think in terms of how the animal, the bird, the leaf, the flower and the tree feels.

I also recently visited Kaziranga. I haven't seen a park that is so big; 55km in length and in breadth it varies, because it is bordered by the Brahmaputra River. But it is split by the NH 37, then comes the lodges and the boundary walls and the hills. Now, think in terms of the poor rhinoceros and the elephant; when the water rises in the park and he is looking for a way into the hills. How would you feel if water came up to the doorstep of your house and you have nowhere to run? The poor creatures stand at the edge of the highway with millions of trucks moving fast. Worse still, the NH Authority of India is going to convert the highway from two lane to four lane. How will the animals pass? They say that overpasses will be

built, so they can go underneath it. The construction of the overpasses will take ten years; there will be heavy equipment that will dig up the whole road for ten years. Kaziranga will be finished. Forget about eco and responsible tourism! The forest officer here said that 18 types of mammals that are on the brink of extinction here. I wondered, "Where are we going?"

Nothing will happen unless we built up synergies to talk to any part of government, any law that has to be seen to, anything that needs to be done has to start with codification. Put the issue that needs to be highlighted on paper and bring it to the National Board on Wildlife and to the attention of the PM. That is the only way to do it. I have realised that there are people capable of doing it; it has to be done. We cannot say, we will run our business, with those incremental things so that people will say that we are eco and responsible; let things happen as they are happening. This will not do.

There is no way to measure what we are doing. Can you measure and say on a scale of one to ten where we stand?

Where do we stand on a lodge that has come up in Bandhavgarh? What is the eco rating of that lodge? Everyone will just claim to be "eco". I saw an "eco park" in Meghalaya. It was a concrete structure, that did not have any sign of being eco, not even spelt with a small "e"! If we don't have



codification, and if we don't have a way to measure standards, we will never get anywhere. Talking about reusing water and non-conventional energy won't do. You have to measure your eco or responsibility index. We are trying to push forward the Global Sustainable Tourism criteria so that some amount of credibility comes into the ecotourism business.

As tourism secretary, what can I say? Yes, we can have more lodges, but architecture must be friendly. Can we have lodges with no boundary walls, so that the elephant and the tiger can move through the lodge? It doesn't matter if he encounters a cook. Let him just go through to his corridor.

How do you bring out the love for the surroundings? Through "being educated". You might be an economist, a management expert, or a historian, but you won't know about the beauty of nature unless someone speaks about it to you. Make that same commitment for your guests. When I was at a jungle lodge in Bangalore a young naturalist took me for an hour's walk, and explained and showed me breeding birds and a caterpillar changing colour, among other amazing things. So I told him to send me these things in my email from time to time.... I have become a naturalist. I will take up this study and do things, because he changed my outlook.

Apart from the pillaging of nature, there is another worrying thing that I noticed on a trip to Tamil Nadu. A city was being ravaged as if by Tamerlane or Muhamed of Ghazni. People were stripping away doors and taking away columns from old homes in Chettinad. Is this tourism? On one hand, you develop tourism and on the other, you let a whole part of your country go downhill?

Kerala's tourism secretary Dr V. Venu took me around the state recently. It is now getting into phase 3 with the restoration of beautiful 2nd and 3rd century synagogues and beautiful old mosques and churches; the whole Muziris circuit is a fantastic project, when the Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Christians lived in harmony. It will be a national integration kind of circuit. It was a satisfying visit.

I hope we will learn some lessons. There is corporate social responsibility, but there are human social responsibilities, as well. Each one of us has a social responsibility. We have to go beyond our spheres of work; each one of us has to think like extraordinary human beings. Only then can we save this beautiful country of ours.

Sujit Banerjee
Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LAWS IN INDIA

Wildlife conservation has been an article of faith for India since times immemorial. Reverence to nature and to wild animals and plants are an integral part of our culture. India, in every sense is as incomplete without its tigers, elephants, birds and other forms of wild plants and animals as without its very people! Amongst the first historically recorded reference to wildlife conservation is from the edicts on the 5th Pillar edicts inscribed by King Asoka in about 3rd century B.C.

Kautilya's "Arthashashtra" also makes references to various aspects of wildlife conservation, especially with respect to elephants, as elephants were considered an important tool for the king. Modern India has seen several legislations that aim to regulate the

exploitation of wildlife. These included the Madras Wild Elephant Preservation Act, 1873 (The Madras Act No.1 of 1872), the Indian Forest Act, 1878 (Act VII of 1878), the Elephant Preservation Act, 1879 (Act VI of 1879), the Bengal Act 5 of 1898, the Mysore Games and Fish

Preservation Regulations, 1901, the Wild Birds and Animals Protection Act, 1912 (Act VIII of 1912), the Indian Forest Act, 1927 (Act XIV of 1927) and the Bengal Rhinoceros Preservation Act

of 1932 which laid the foundations of some legislative control to the exploitation of wildlife in modern India.

In 1936, India's first national park, Hailey National Park, later to be renamed as Corbett National Park was created under the provisions of the recently enacted United Provinces National Parks Act. With the enactment of the Wildlife



(Protection) Act in 1972, the legislation relating to protection and conservation of our wildlife were consolidated under one special legislation.

By an amendment brought in 1976, the Indian Constitution also included specific references to the conservation of forests and wildlife of the country. Article 48-A says: "The State shall endeavour to protect & improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country." Article 51-A (g) states: "It shall be duty of every citizen of India to protect & improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures."

To conserve the range of natural diversity bestowed upon it, India has established a network of Protected Areas, which include 96 National Parks and 509 Wildlife Sanctuaries.

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, enacted in 1972 is the umbrella legislation for wildlife conservation in India today. As enacted in September 1972, this was "An act to provide for the protection of wild animals and birds and for matters connected therewith or ancillary and incidental thereto."

In its original form, the WLPA 1972 initially included provisions of hunting of "wild animals" specified in schedule II, III and IV as per a license granted under relevant provisions. Hunting licenses included Special game hunting licenses, big game hunting licenses,

small game hunting license and wild animal trapping license. However, there was a complete prohibition on hunting of any species in Schedule I since the very inception of the Act.

In accordance with changing norms of society, the Wildlife (Protection) Act has also been amended several times since its original enactment. Accordingly, the objectives of the WLPA have also been since amended.

By an amendment in 1991, the objectives of the WLPA were amended to include plants also and now read, "An act to provide for the protection of wild animals, birds and plants and for matters connected therewith or ancillary and incidental thereto."¹

By another amendment in 2003, another radical shift was made in the objective of the WLPA, to now include a

reference to the ecological security of the country! In its present form, as amended by Act 16 of 2003, w.e.f. 1.4.2001, it reads as follows, "An act to provide for the protection of wild animals, birds, plants and for matters connected therewith or ancillary and incidental thereto with a view to ensuring the ecological and environmental security of the country." While appearing semantic, this change in the objectives of the WLPA 1972

(Footnotes)

¹ As amended by Act 44 of 1991 w.e.f. 2.10.1991



resemble a major shift in that wildlife conservation being acknowledged as integral to ecological and environmental security of our country rather than just being about conservation of species of plants, animals and birds.

In its present form, the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 affords protection to various species of wild animals listed in Schedules I to IV and also to plants in Schedule VI, irrespective of where they are found. It also affords protection to the habitat of such species inside Protected Areas.

Permission to “hunt” wild animals can be granted only by specific officials and under certain strict conditions.

As per the Act, “Animal” includes mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, other chordates and invertebrates and also includes their young and eggs; Thus, the young and eggs of animals are also treated equally as animal in their own right. Similarly, “hunting”, includes;

killing or poisoning of any wild animal or captive animal and every attempt to do so;
capturing, coursing, snaring, trapping, driving or baiting any wild or captive animal and every attempt to do so;
injuring or destroying or taking any part of the body of any such animal or, in the case of wild birds or reptiles, damaging the eggs of such birds or reptiles or disturbing the eggs or nests of such birds or reptiles;

“Weapon” includes ammunition, bows and arrows, explosives, firearms, hooks,

knives, nets, poison, snares and traps and any instrument or apparatus capable of anaesthetizing, decoying, destroying, injuring or killing an animal;

In effect, the Act sees hunting as anything that can cause injury or death to a wild animal (i.e. any animal listed in Schedule I to IV of the Act). It is also important to note that any attempt to commit an offence is also seen as an equal offence under this Act.

The Act also places a lot of significance on protection of habitats. Thus, entry into a National Park or Sanctuary without a permit is prohibited, except for officials on duty and for certain other categories of persons as specified. In addition, there is a blanket prohibition on destruction, exploitation or removal of any wildlife including forest produce, destruction or damaging or diverting the habitat of any wild animal or diverting, stopping or enhancing the flow of water into or outside the sanctuary except as per a permit by the CWLW.

In order to strengthen protection, the Act provides that any forest officer or any police officer not below the rank of Sub Inspector or any authorised officer may, if they have any reasonable suspicion, **stop** any vehicle or vessel to conduct search or inquiry or enter upon and search any premises, land, vehicle, or vessel in the occupation of such person, and **open and search** any baggage or other things in his possession; **seize** any captive animal, wild animal, animal article, meat, trophy or uncured trophy, or any specified plant or part or derivative etc. in respect of which an offence against this Act appears to have been committed, in the possess-

on of any person together with any trap, tool, vehicle, vessel, or weapon used for committing any such offence, unless he is satisfied that such person will appear and answer any charge which may be preferred against him arrest him without warrant and detain him.

Such a person may also be arrested without warrant, unless he furnishes his name and address, and otherwise satisfies

the officer arresting him that he will duly answer any summons or other proceedings which may be taken against him.

Penalties under the Act:

For infringements, the law provides for very stiff penalties.

The following penalties are prescribed for violations of the Act:

- 1) For any general offence under this Act:

Imprisonment up to 3 years **OR** with fine up to twenty five thousand Rupees **OR** both.

- 2) Offence committed is related to any species listed in Schedule I or Part II of Schedule II of the Act, or hunting in a National Park and Sanctuary or altering the boundaries of a National Park or Sanctuary. :

Imprisonment not less than 3 years up to 7 years **AND** also with fine not less than ten thousand Rupees.

- 3) For second and subsequent offences as above:

Imprisonment not less than 3 years up to 7 years **AND** also with fine not less than twenty five thousand Rupees.

- 4) For violation of provisions relating to trade in animals specified in Schedule I or Part II of Schedule II of the Act:

Imprisonment not less than 3 years up to 7 years **AND** also with fine not less than ten thousand Rupees.

- 5) For violation of Sec. 38-J relating to teasing or molesting animals in a zoo and littering etc. in a zoo:

Imprisonment up to 6 months **OR** with fine up to two thousand Rupees or both.

For any second or subsequent offence in a zoo, the punishment would be enhanced to Imprisonment up to 1 year **OR** with fine up to five thousand Rupees.

- 6) For offences in relation to the Core area of a Tiger Reserve or hunting in a Tiger Reserve or alteration of boundaries of the Tiger Reserve:

Imprisonment not less than 3 years up to 7 years **AND** also with fine not less than fifty thousand Rupees which may extend up to two lakh rupees.

For second and subsequent offences, the imprisonment could be not less than seven years **AND** also with fine not less than five lakh Rupees which may go up to fifty lakh Rupees.

Tourism and the Wildlife (Protection) Act

Sec. 28 of the Act prescribes that the Chief Wildlife Warden may grant a permit to any person to enter or reside in a Sanctuary (also applicable to a National Park as per Sec. 35) for various purposes including tourism. Thus, tourism is one of the legitimate activities that can be carried out within such Sanctuary or National Park. However, such tourism is subject to strict regulation and any conditions as may be laid down by the Chief Wildlife Warden.

While the Chief Wildlife Warden is the authority who is responsible for control, management and maintenance of all sanctuaries & National Parks, he does not have the authority to construct any *commercial tourist lodges, hotels etc. inside a National Park or Sanctuary* except with prior approval of the National Board of Wildlife. This is an example of the regulation that has been placed on tourism activities in the Act itself.

As such, it becomes mandatory for any tourist or any such person or agency associated with tourism activities in such National Park or Sanctuary to make sure that their activities are completely in accordance with the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and the conditions as may be prescribed by the Chief Wildlife Warden or his representative. Thus, adherence to prescribed routes, timings, code for

observing wild animals without causing any disturbance, not causing any disturbance or damage to the habitat etc. are some basic tenets that must be followed by all such persons.

It is to be reiterated that the protection to “wild animals” i.e. species listed in Schedule I to IV of the Act extends to them wherever they are found and as such, it is important that lodges, camps etc. even outside the Protected Area be sensitive to their conservation needs and not carry out any activity that may be detrimental to such animals. For example, sometimes lodges may indulge in

providing baits or creating water points, ostensibly to help wildlife but also to facilitate “Sightings”. Improperly disposed kitchen waste may also attract several species and at times may cause injury or death. Clearly, such things would be an invitation to action under the Act.



The Nature Tourism industry in India has picked up recently and it is important that the industry is careful about meeting statutory legal requirements in their day to day operations. While that is just the legal part, managing water, energy and wastes with greater efficiency and focusing on reducing their footprint will also set a good example, given that an experience with nature is the primary product that the industry offers.

India's wildlife is our shared common heritage. While the Forest Department is the primary custodian of our wild

wealth, it's for all of us to contribute our might to ensure that what we have borrowed from future generations goes back undiminished to them. Laws can lay down the ground rules, but then they can only be as effective as we all want them to be. As such, it is imperative on all of us to understand the law, more in spirit in this case than just the letter, so that we can all continue to cherish, protect and enjoy our wild heritage.

***Samir Sinha**, an Indian Forest Service man from the Uttarakhand Cadre, is the head of TRAFFIC India. He has served in 11 Protected Areas, including at the Corbett Tiger Reserve and as Director of Rajaji National Park (2002-04) and Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (2004-06). He is a Member of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), IUCN- The World Conservation Union as well as the Advisory Committee, National Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Govt. of India. He is also a recipient of His Excellency the Governor's Trophy for Excellence in Wildlife Management in 2003.*

ARE YOU COMMITTING A CRIME? THINK BEFORE YOU BUY

Can't resist that Shatoosh shawl or those ivory bangles? Think twice before buying that exquisite coral showpiece!

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the survival of many species. You might be violating the law and also endangering wildlife. Most of the trade in wild animals, plants and their derivatives is illegal in India under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which covers over 1800 species. Under the convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), trade in over 830 species of wildlife is banned internationally while trade in over 33,000 species is strictly regulated.

Don't Buy Trouble!

When you buy or acquire an illegal wildlife product or souvenir, you may actually be buying trouble for yourselves.

Hunting of a protected species of wildlife or possession of and trade in them or their derivatives is illegal and severely punishable under the law. Wildlife products made from endangered species bought outside India would require permits for their import to India. Your souvenirs could be confiscated on your return and you could face strict legal action.

Buyers Beware!

When in doubt don't buy. Ignorance of law is not an excuse. Given below are some of the most widely traded illegal wildlife products.

Marine products: Reef building corals, orange pipe corals, Black corals, Fire corals and Sea Fans are some of the highly endangered marine species offered on sale in our coastal regions and islands. Many endangered species of molluscs such as Nautilus, Horse's hoof and Horned Helmet may also be offered.

Ivory items: Ivory figurines, carvings and jewellery may be offered for sale at the tourist spots.

Live Birds: All trade in wild Indian bird species is prohibited. Species on offer may include parakeets, falcons, Hill Myna, Great horned owl and munias. For every bird that reaches its final destination, several die en route.

Reptile skins: Trade in skins and other products of protects species of reptiles such as Marsh and Salt water crocodiles, Yellow Monitor lizard, Cobra and Rock python is banned. Handbags, belts, wallets and other products made of these reptile skins may cost you much more than you bargained for.

Shatoosh Shawls: These shawls are tainted with the blood of Chiru, a highly endangered

Antelope. Three to five Chirus are slaughtered to obtain the wool for one shawl.

Skins, bones, derivatives and products fashioned from them: All trade in skins, bones, claws etc of Leopard, Tiger and other endangered species and derivatives such as Bear Bile and Musk Poks is banned.

Medicinal plants and Orchids: International trade in 29 species of orchids, timber species and medicinal plants in the raw form such as logs, whole plants, crude drugs, oil extract and resinoid is prohibited under EXIM policy. Only value-added products such as medicines derived from a cultivated variety of specified species may be allowed for export.

Collection or sale of plants or derivatives of Scheduled species such as Kuth (Saussurea costus), Red Vanda, Blue Vanda, Ladies Slipper, Orchid, Pitcher plant and Beddomes Cycad is prohibited under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

How can you help?

- ✗ Do not buy illegal wildlife products. Also discourage your friends and family from doing so.

If you come across any information on illegal wildlife trade, you may please contact the following:

- ☞ Local forest or police officials.
- ☞ Customs at airports, seaports and other international transit points.
- ☞ Regional offices at the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau at:
Delhi -011-233 84556 Chennai –044-249 16747
Mumbai –022-268 28184 Kolkata- 033-228 78698
Traffic India – 011-415 04786

For further information, contact:

TRAFFIC India, WWF- Secretariat, 172-B Lodi Estate, New Delhi –110003

Tel: 011 415 04786 Email: trafficind@wwfindia.net

Website: www.traffic.org , www.wwfindia.org/traffic



National Body for Responsible Tourism

www.ecotourismsocietyofindia.org