



RAJASTHAN

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN IT ALL



Outlook
Responsible
Tourism
Skill
Development
Workshop

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Outlook Responsible Tourism Skill Development Workshop
Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur
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indian responsible
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Foreword



Khamma Ghani! Welcome to Rajasthan— a state that has defined the very contours of Indian tourism over time. Vibrant and versatile, its living traditions and cultural symbols are almost synonymous with the idea and image of India. It's hardly surprising, therefore, that it continues to be among the top 10 states in terms of domestic and international footfalls in this country, decades after the first tourists knocked on its beautifully carved doors.

And yet, Rajasthan refuses to rest on its laurels. It chooses instead to march forward towards new milestones; it chooses to be future-ready—reinventing and reimagining itself in ways that are in sync with international trends and movements. It is only befitting, therefore, that this colourful, culturally rich state also seals its position as 'Responsible*sthan*', a natural leader in this space of responsible tourism—a global movement that aspires to build better places to live in and better places to visit. A business model that is sensitive to the needs of guests and hosts.

Resurgent Rajasthan was a crucial step in this direction, as it worked towards skilling, and leveraging tourism for sustainable development in the state. And now, I'm happy to note that the Outlook Responsible Tourism Skill Development Workshop in association with Rajasthan Tourism is taking this initiative further ahead. Not only is it training and educating local business owners about responsible tourism and digital communication to attract more conscious, evolved travellers, it is also highlighting case studies of some of the most culturally immersive experiences in the state.

Marked by both palaces and mud huts of nomadic tribes, by tigers and near extinct Great Indian Bustards, by new farm stays and old home stays, by traditional local festivals and contemporary literature and music festivals, the diversity of Rajasthan deserves to be celebrated. It also deserves to be adapted and showcased through the lens of responsible tourism so it can stay relevant and attractive to the modern tourist! Come be a part of this endeavour in 'Responsible*sthan*'.

With all the best wishes,

Yours sincerely

NIHAL CHAND GOEL
Additional Chief Secretary (Tourism, Art & Culture)

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What is RESPONSIBLE TOURISM?

Responsible Tourism is tourism that creates better places for people to live in and better places to visit

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access for physically challenged people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides enjoyable experiences for tourists through meaningful connections with local people, and greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence | |



It's time to bring responsible tourism out of the margins, and to secure Rajasthan and India's position as a natural leader in this space.

2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

We believe that the future is conscious travel. A future that the United Nations—which declared 2017 as the year for Sustainable Tourism for Development—is working towards as well. The aim is to raise awareness on how inclusive and environment-friendly tourism can lead to positive, lasting changes across the globe, and contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) highlights how tourism can be a catalyst for change by encouraging:



Cultural values, diversity and heritage

- Revives traditional activities and customs
- Empowers communities and nurtures pride within them
- Promotes cultural diversity
- Raises awareness of the value of heritage

Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction

- One in every 11 jobs globally
- Largest export category in many developing countries
- 57% of international tourist arrivals in 2030 will be in emerging economies
- Almost twice as many women employers as other sectors

Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change

- Committed to reducing its 5% of world CO2 emissions
- Raises financing for conservation of heritage, wildlife and the environment
- Can be a vehicle for protecting and restoring biodiversity
- Must sustainably manage an expected 1.8 billion international tourists in 2030

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth

- 4% or more annual increase in international tourist arrivals since 2009
- 7% of total world services exports and 30% of world exports from international tourism in 2015
- US\$ 1.5 trillion in exports from international tourism in 2015
- 10% of world GDP

Mutual understanding, peace and security

- Breaks down barriers and builds bridges between visitors and hosts
- Provides opportunities for cross-cultural encounters that can build peace
- A resilient sector that recovers quickly from security threats
- A tool for soft diplomacy

12 things to think about

Rajasthan may be known as the land of palaces and dunes. But its greatest asset is the inherent hospitality of its people—and it must be leveraged more and more through responsible tourism models. With less time to spare for vacations, travellers want richer experiences and better service in shorter breaks.

Globally, sustainability is a growing concern—even for large, mainstream tourism companies. It contributes as much as 40% to the bottom line of businesses in some markets of Europe. Tourists have begun to expect and demand the basics in terms of natural resource management and carbon offsets. India is bound to head in that direction too.

Newsletters may be old-fashioned, but they are still effective. WhatsApp is a good place to share them. Use Instagram more. Identify hashtags that are trending when you post—top hashtags keep changing every few hours. Pick popular travel hashtags—streamline by looking for travel in India, by region and/or terrain.

Micro-travel is a growing segment. Every region in Rajasthan is different and marked by unique micro-cultures—musical heritage, food, art, culture, wildlife and architecture. Evolved responsible travellers are interested in the details, in the minor differences, such as how does the music of western Rajasthan differ from that of the south. They already know enough on Kalbelia and Manganiyar music. Neighbourhood tourism is also on the rise. The idea is to encourage tourists and locals to engage more deeply with their immediate surroundings, even in urban spaces.

Eventually, hotels of all sizes and price brackets should feel obliged to have fewer rooms, apart from a strong social, economic and environmental policy. Sustainable, small hotels have higher customer satisfaction, repeat rates and quality. Besides, luxury usually means more emissions. So whether through national and local-level policies or market forces, luxury hotels and travel operators will have to be made more accountable. Eventually, the aim is to make responsibility a part of the DNA of every tourism provider.

When it comes to tourism, Rajasthan has always led from the front. So it's time now to use innovative, responsible ways to celebrate its cultural heritage and terrain. Celebration is a powerful tool for conservation—to foster local pride and safeguard culture, crafts, languages, heirloom crops, biodiversity, and knowledge systems, which touch upon everything from medicinal plants and traditional architecture to predicting or managing natural disasters. This can also help repair the self-esteem of locals, stop migration and even initiate reverse migration.

Some industry leaders and experts believe that new disruptive models are being created as we speak. The future is yours if you can work towards removing as many (spatial) boundaries as possible between local communities and travellers, wildlife and travellers, without significantly altering the local socio-cultural or ecological fabric.

Google is not the only search engine—in fact YouTube has a larger reach in India right now. Everything from Instagram to Facebook is searchable too. Use that to your advantage when you target potential customers.

Storytelling is a powerful device, especially on digital and social media. And Rajasthan has always had a wealth of stories to tell. Subtly highlight in all communication why responsible tourism offers richer, more immersive experiences; don't harp on 'doing good' or making sacrifices—moralising is counterproductive.

Some responsible tourism operators are designing trips for corporate clients too. They don't believe in overprotecting communities and driving away mainstream guests without making any attempts to engage them in intelligent, yet responsible ways.

Consistent, equitable socio-economic growth for the community cannot be achieved by generating low-skilled jobs. If private and public stakeholders want their businesses to survive longer and the destination to thrive, they have to work towards solving local employment issues.

Both in urban and rural settings, operators are now designing tours around a single skill.

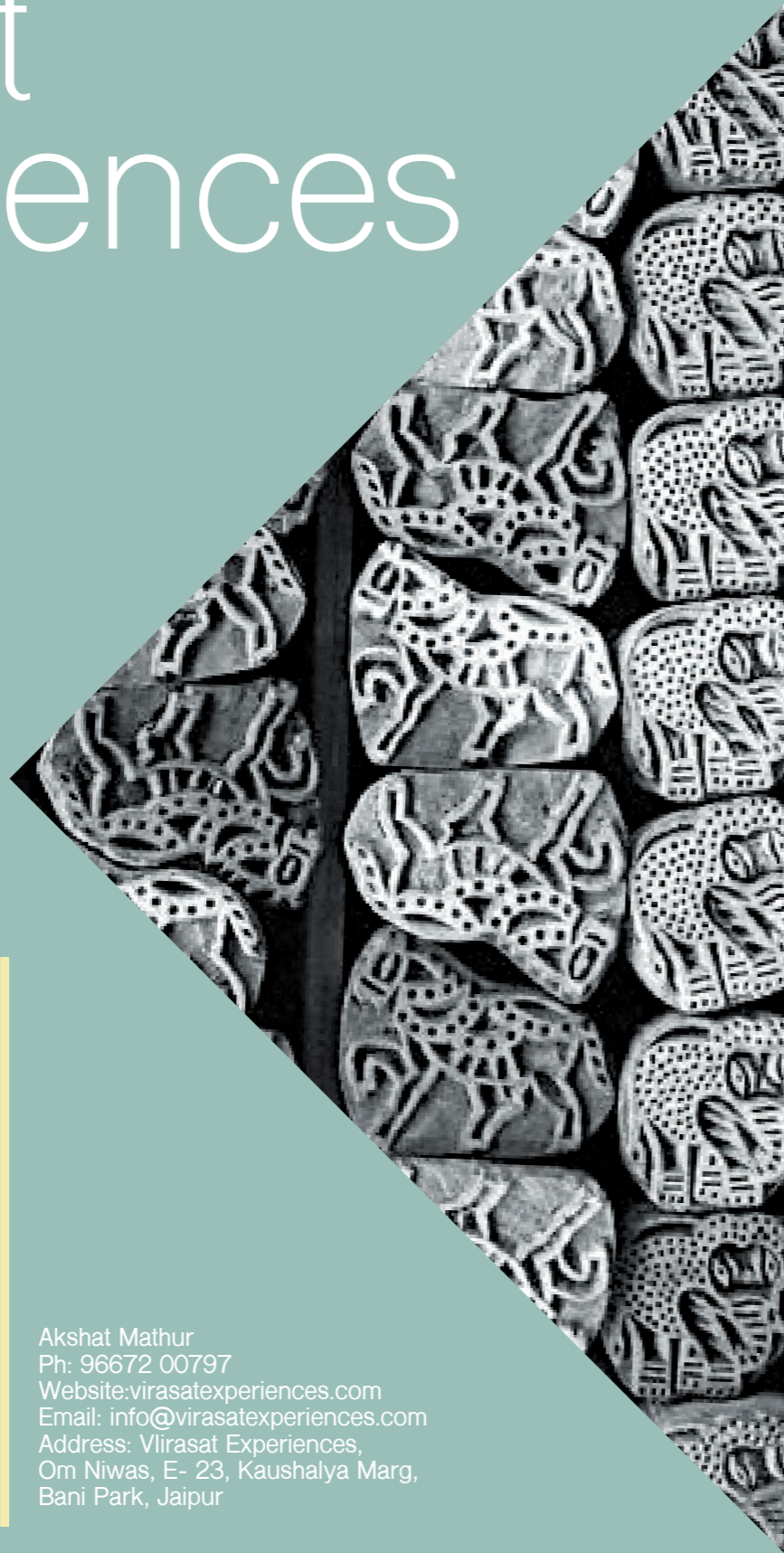
Virasat Experiences

Walking tours in Jaipur by Virasat Experiences encourage local cottage industries by taking travellers straight to the local artisans, who organise workshops for them. Visitors can cook with a rural host family using local ingredients and learn recipes handed down over generations. Such efforts have ensured that the indigenous rural and urban population feels secure and participative in tourism programmes. The company includes Vipul Kumar, who has been in the Tourism Industry for over seven years; Akshat Kumar, who quit his corporate job to follow the passion of telling stories; and Kuldeep Syala and Vishal Singh who strives to unveil undiscovered parts of his state to travellers.

WHEN IN BAGRU, USE A PAINT BLOCK

The art of block printing is the only source of livelihood for nearly 7,000 families in Bagru. During a visit to the village, visitors can see artisans carving intricate patterns on wooden blocks. These are dipped in vibrant natural dye and pressed on cotton cloth to leave impressions. During an early morning stroll through the village, visitors can see reams of the printed textile drying in the sun. In a workshop with practitioners, visitors can also learn the art.

Akshat Mathur
Ph: 96672 00797
Website: virasatexperiences.com
Email: info@virasatexperiences.com
Address: Virasat Experiences,
Om Niwas, E- 23, Kaushalya Marg,
Bani Park, Jaipur



Sound Travels

Sound Travel's expeditions to Rajasthan, Assam and West Bengal celebrate India's musical heritage. Music-loving travellers get a chance to visit hand-picked folk musicians around the country. The company is the brainchild Georgie Pope, a harpist and ethnomusicologist from London, who wished to share her love for India's varied musical traditions with other travellers. People can learn directly from the performers themselves, while the latter get the opportunity to gain greater patronage.

Sound Travel's core trips take place in Rajasthan, where researcher and cultural activist Gopal Singh Chouhan is always on the lookout for new and upcoming musicians.

SING TO LOCAL TUNES

At Mandawa, musicians play the *Shekhawati chung*, a Rajasthani drum, while Bhopa artists sing to regional deities to the beats of *deru*. They call this assembly *jagraata*, a night dedicated to music. The trip includes a visit to renowned *nagada* player Nathuji, a teller of stories who also holds a workshop. Another stop on the trail is Ajmer Sharif, where travellers can relax listening to the sound of soulful sufi music.

Gopal Singh
Ph: 99285 22992
Website: soundtravelsindia.com
Email: gopalbkn1@gmail.com



Arna Jharna Desert Museum

Arna Jharna Desert Museum showcases the living traditions of those who live in the Thar. Far from industrially produced products, local communities here use objects available in their immediate environment to make desired materials of subsistence. The museum houses traditional brooms, pitchers and pots made by the locals. Komal Kothari, oral historian, ethnomusicologist and finder of material culture in the region, runs the museum with his friend Vijaydan Detha, who acquaints himself with folktales of the land and adapts them to ensure preservation.

DOCUMENTING A SWEEPING DISCOVERY

The structure of Arna Jharna uses local building methods to ensure cool interiors. It showcases the many creative solutions that local residents have to common problems. For example, the different types of brooms fashioned from waste materials at the farm that are used to manage redundant vegetation on crop fields. There is a range of differently designed pots to carry oil, water and other fluids. The museum introduces travellers to a humbling sense of how limited means have led to refreshing innovation!

Kuldeep Kothari
Ph: 94141 36361
Website: www.arnajharna.org
Email: rupayansanathan@gmail.com
Address: Arna Jharna: The Desert Museum of Rajasthan, Village Moklawas, Jodhpur



Tijara Fort Palace

(Neemrana Hotels)

Standing inside the restored Tijara Fort instantly transports visitors to another age. Nestled amidst an abundance of bougainvilleas, the Rajput structure is peppered with Afghani and colonial influences. The fort was unfinished and left in ruins until Aman Nath and Francis Wacziarg took on the task of restoring it in a public private partnership, giving this important bit of Indian heritage a second lease of life.

REINVENTION OF A 19TH-CENTURY DREAM

Work on restoring the fort began in early 2011, and nearly 40 local residents were employed for the task. The fort was engulfed with hammers, stones, rocks, lime plaster, mortar surfaces, cement and stained glass. Its majestic door came from a dissembled haveli in Punjab. A Persian technique that uses a special cement, was used to refurbish its bathroom floors. For travellers who seek respite in historic art and architecture, Tijara now stands complete in all its glory.

Arjun Singh
Ph: 99990 01735
Website: www.tijara-fort-palace.neemranahotels.com
Email: hrd@neemranahotels.com
Address: Gram-Hasanpurmafi, Tehsil Tijara, Tijara



HaCRA

On trips organised by Gernar Singh, the founder of HaCRA, travellers get to experience the life of a desert dweller. Taking visitors far away from crowded urban environments, the journey shows travellers different aspects of life in the desert around the Rajasthani town of Osian. Visitors retire to Gernar's guest hut after sunset for dinner prepared by Mewa, a talented cook who makes local dishes. Dinner conversation inevitably has Gernar patiently answering a host of questions about traditions and cultural practices in the desert.

A DAY WELL SPENT IN OSIAN

The night sky over Osian is a star-studded bounty, with no tall buildings to bar the view or light pollution to blur it. Morning begins with Mewa bringing in a pot of warm ginger tea. The first spot on the itinerary is the village of Kheechan, about an hour away, which is known for the hundreds of demoiselle cranes that visit it between September and February each year. The huts are made from local stone and plastered with clay to keep them cool. Back at Gernar's home, visitors interact with his family and settle in for a delicious meal cooked by Mewa.

Gernar Singh
Ph: 94605 85154
Website: www.hacra.org
Email: guideddesert@gmail.com
Address: Hacra Dhani, Kerli-Nadi,
Bhikankor (Osian), Jodhpur



Art of BicycleTrips

Explore Rajasthan's diverse terrain astride bicycles like the locals on a trip with the Art of Bicycle Trips. A popular ride winds through Udaipur's local markets and narrow alleyways, and takes an easy loop around the lake. The itinerary is customised according to visitors' capacity to peddle across Udaipur. And the trip is punctuated with visits to local tea stalls and road side vendors for fresh sugarcane juice. Pankaj Mangal, head of local specialists and CEO of the organisation, enjoys nothing more than some village gossip along with tea when he is not training tour guides.

CHOOSE YOUR RIDE, MAKE YOUR MARK

Peacocks play peek-a-boo from behind scrub trees as langur monkeys hang off their branches and wild parrots fly overhead. See this and more on a ride of the Lakecity Loop, one of the most popular tour packages. Riders have to navigate mixed traffic that includes mopeds stacked with milk containers and cattle. No one is complaining though! The activity keeps one alert and on constant look out.

Qutubuddin Habshi
Ph: 87698 22745
Website: artofbicycletrips.com
Email: qutub@artofbicycletrips.com



Bagheera's Camp

Bagheera's Camp enables visitors to witness the wilderness and natural inhabitants of the Aravallis. Walking safaris with Padmaja Rathore attempt to help tourists spot leopards, sloth bears, small cat species and crocodiles. The door-less camps are guarded by an interesting fence made out of thorns and cactus. The former royal family of Mewar welcomes visitors with customised meals. Maharaja Rajendra Singh cooks a special dish for the visitors using a recipe known only to him!

INTO THE WILD

A curtain doubles as the door for the tents at Bagheera's Camp. It can be chilling to slide the curtain aside in the morning to find a fresh paw marking of a wild visitor on moist soil. But explorers of the wild don't seem to mind. After a day of walking, as night begins to fall, visitors head back to the camp with torches, moonlight and Padmaja guiding their steps. Most of the produce for the delicious meals is sourced from a local farm.

Padmaja Rathore
Ph: 96720 69880
Website: bagheerascamp.com
Email: bagheerascamp@gmail.com
Address: Bagheera's Camp,
Kameshwaree Road, Raghunathpura,
Bera, Pali



Apani Dhani

Apani Dhani eco-lodge creates a very quintessentially Rajasthani environment during their evening cultural programmes. They also work actively towards making the mechanisms of the homestay environmentally friendly. Photovoltaic solar panels are used to heat water; while 3.3 acres of farmland surrounding the premises grow wheat, millets and lentils. Their Code of Ethics for the visitors is printed on brochures made of recycled paper with the assistance of TARA, an NGO that specialises in the craft.

FUELLED BY ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Every room has two garbage disposal containers, one for compostable waste and the other for non-biodegradable material. Their farmland boasts of groves of guava and other fruits. The land is fertilised with natural compost, avoiding the use of pesticides. Local cuisine is served in disposable plates made out of locally procured sal leaves. A store of water conserved from paved courtyards and roofs suffices to irrigate their fields.



Ramesh C. Jangid
Ph: 15942 22239
Website: apanidhani.com
Email: apanidhani@gmail.com
Address: Apani Dhani Eco Lodge,
Nawalgarh, Shekhawati

Outlook

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM INITIATIVE

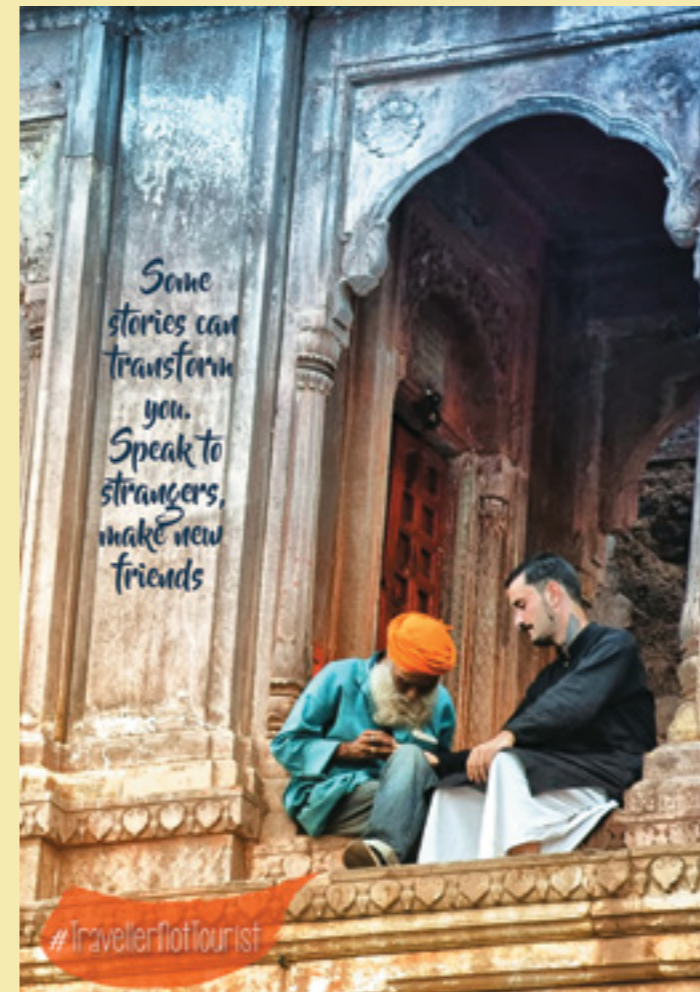
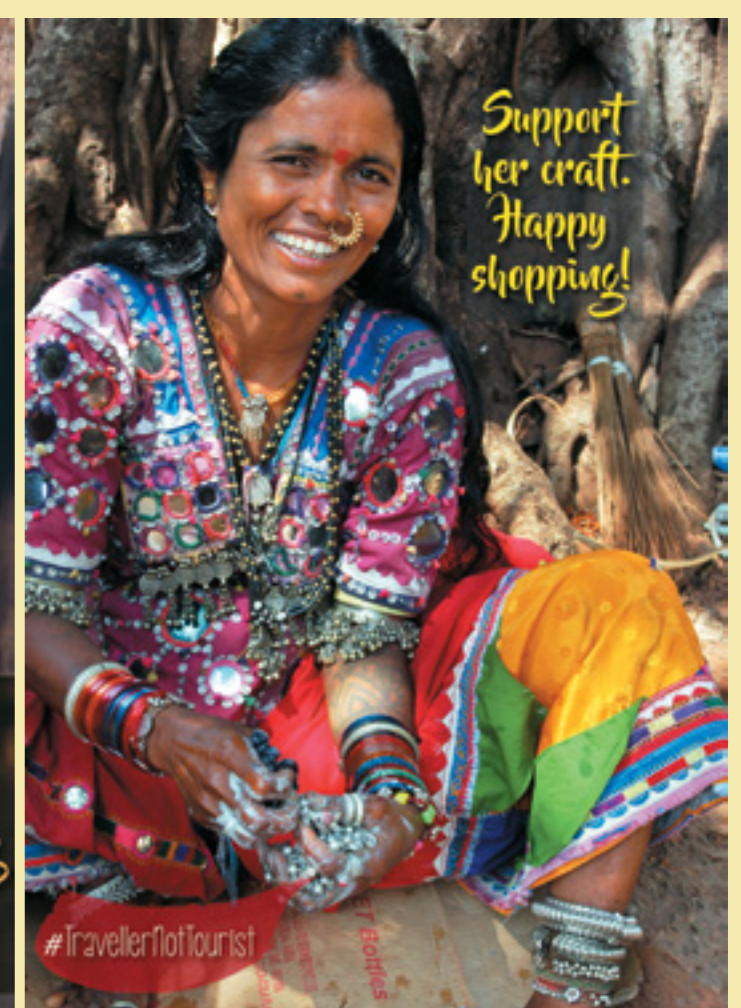
Joining the dots of culture, community and environment!

For nearly two decades, the Outlook Group's travel magazine and guide books have endorsed slow, green travel as a matter of course, and encouraged best practices in India before 'responsible tourism' became a global movement. It was only in 2015 though that we decided to formalise our commitment to local communities and to sustainability by creating a platform for conversations on ethical travel—the Outlook Responsible Tourism Summit, a fantastic crucible of ideas and a great way to meet others from the fraternity. Besides the annual summit, we're starting numerous other initiatives in our attempt to create a better ecosystem for hosts and guests throughout the year.

The pit stops so far...

- Hosted *two major conclaves* in New Delhi to connect and celebrate the fraternity
- Mapped responsible tourism practitioners in every state to create an extensive, one place *network/database*
- Published *two collectors' issues* on responsible tourism, and up to two stories on the subject every month in *Outlook Traveller*

- Constantly working towards *gathering and disseminating knowledge* through reports—free to download from the website— and social media channels
- Felicitated best practices and gave them *national and international exposure/recognition* through the Indian Responsible Tourism Awards, a regional partner of the World Responsible Tourism Awards, held at the World Travel Market, London. Winners were selected by an eminent jury of experts over five months
- *Engaged with and amplified the work* of several practitioners across categories through our magazine, websites and social media handles
- Currently *revamping responsibletourismindia.com* to make it easier for end users to find the best Indian operators/accommodations in the responsible tourism space in India
- *Curating workshops* using a timeline-based, problem-solving approach
- Connecting with the best RT *practitioners in South Asia*-from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Maldives and Pakistan, to expand our knowledge base at the Summit 2018



www.responsibletourism.com



Responsible Tourism



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Credits: Shreya Jain & Garima Pura