

# Responsible Travel: Does it Benefit Conservation and Local Communities?

Experiences from India

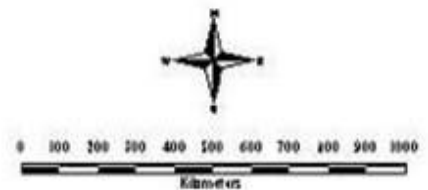
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3<sup>rd</sup> International Travelers'  
Philanthropy Conference  
July 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011  
*Costa Rica*

## Biogeographic Classification of India : Zones

	%
1: Trans-Himalaya	5.6
2: Himalaya	6.4
3: Desert	6.6
4: Semi-Arid	16.6
5: Western Ghats	4.0
6: Deccan Peninsula	42.0
7: Gangetic Plain	10.8
8: Coasts	2.5
9: North-East	5.2
10: Islands	0.3

\* Represents percentage of the total geographical area of India : 3287263 sq. km



India is home to over a billion people and represents a wide spectrum of biological, cultural and geographic diversity

It is one of the world's 17 megadiversity countries

India has identified 91 eco-cultural zones in India inhabited by 4,635 communities, speaking 325 languages/dialects



Tourism is the largest service industry in India, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India

In the year 2009, 5.11 million foreign tourists visited India while the domestic tourism sector saw 650 million tourists

# The Conflict: Tourism, Conservation and the Community



The background of the slide is a dense field of vibrant green leaves, likely from a tropical plant, with numerous small, clear water droplets scattered across their surfaces. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture and veins of the leaves.

## Economic Aspects

There are many less favourable economic effects of tourism such as inflation, leakages and dependency

Studies estimate that on an average, of every US\$ 100 spent on a vacation tour by a tourist from a developed country, only around US\$ 5 actually stays in a developing country destination's economy

A study of tourism 'leakage' estimated that 40% of all money spent by tourists ended up leaving India

## Social and cultural change



People living in remote, isolated valleys have generally preserved their cultural identities

However, improvements in transportation and communication, particularly satellite television are affecting traditional social and cultural structure

Tourism is linked to people and depends on people

However, the current tourism model is unable to develop into an economically and socially viable option for local communities

Tourism has played a significant role in privatization of common resources in tourism destinations, displacement of people and forest dwellers from their homelands to make way for hotels and resorts



Tourism-related activities have also made children vulnerable to sexual and non-sexual forms of exploitation

There are also problems relating to health, drugs, crime and trafficking of people



# Environmental Degradation

Deforestation in the country has increased as a result of demand for firewood, extensive tree trimming in order to feed livestock, and construction of roads in the border regions



A large, dark, polluted puddle of water on a dirt and grass area. The water is dark brown/black and contains many small white specks, likely trash or debris. The puddle is surrounded by dry, brownish soil and sparse green grass. The text is overlaid on the puddle.

Land, water and noise pollution are necessary fallouts of unregulated development in tourism locations.

Also due to unregulated tourism, the environment takes a toll bearing the brunt of heavy tourist traffic and use of natural resources often beyond its natural carrying capacity

Increasing pressure from tourism has accelerated pollution, and prime tourism destinations are now polluted with refuse and sewage



# Towards Responsible Tourism and Traveler's Philanthropy





*From Fugitives to Responsible Citizens*

**Periyar National Park, Kerala**



Community based ecotourism programs are generating around USD 133,656 annually and providing direct employment to more than 500 tribal families

In 2004, a public trust called the Periyar Foundation was established primarily to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives

The Foundation has so far been able to conduct 25 programs for the capacity building of the staff as well as EDC members

The Foundation has also been able to access funds (USD 33,414) from the Tourism Department towards improvement of tourism facilities

# Manas National Park, Assam



गावखौ दैदेननो थाखाय सोलोंथाय ला ।

फरायनाय ह्दाखौ बाराय ।

YOUR  
BLE VOTE  
UDHI  
ARTARY  
ROPLANE  
ANDIDATE  
RTED  
ABSU

**ABSU LONG  
LIVE**

**KNOWMANAS  
SAVE MANAS  
LOVE MANAS**



बाराय





MAHARAJA MANGALDURG ECOTOURISM SOCIETY

MP 28E 3119



A woman in traditional Tibetan attire, including a green headscarf and a dark brown jacket with pink and blue cuffs, stands in a wooden doorway of a white building. The background features a vast, open landscape with rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The foreground is a green, grassy field.

**Welcome to my Home!**

**Community-based Homestays in the Himalayan Region**

# Tso Moriri Lake, Ladakh



SONAM  
GENERAL SHOP  
KORZOK, TSPH 8181

ཨ། རི་བྱ་མ་གྲོལ་ཁང་།  
SNOWCOCK HOMESTAY  
KORZOK



# *Empowerment through Entrepreneurship*



**Hodka, Gujarat**

SHA AME SARHAD  
RESORT  
HODKA







Be Our Guest...  
SHAAAM-E-SARHAAD RESORT  
Hodka, Kachehhi

# Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh





# Dorjee Raptan with the first Vacations-for-Conservation group



*Bugun liocichla*



## **The Way Ahead**

- **External Support**
- **Strong Local Institutions**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Publicity and Marketing**

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- **Documentation**
  - **Traveler Orientation**
  - **Experience Sharing**
  - **Creative and Charismatic Individuals**



अतिथी देवो भवः

