

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORKSHOP

REPORT



TOFTigers India Office

Travel Operators For Tigers India Wildlife Association

A1/76, 1st Floor, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110029, India

+91 11 4100 6608 | admin@toftindia.org

Introduction

Chhattisgarh Tourism and TOFTigers collaborated to organize a workshop on Sustainable Tourism and Best Practices in Raipur, held at New Circuit House. It aimed to promote sustainable tourism as a conservation tool and brought together stakeholders including accommodation providers, travel agents, and NGOs.

Inaugurated by **Vice Chairman Chitrarekha Sahu** and **MD Anil Kumar Sahu**, the event was graced by **Chairman Atal Srivastava**, who emphasized the workshop's role in fostering sustainable tourism and creating livelihood opportunities for locals.

Speakers **Ritu Makhija** (Director of Sustainability, TOFTigers) and **Chindu Chandran** (Green Team Member, TOFTigers and Research Scholar) shared their expertise and showcased successful case studies of sustainable tourism projects. They highlighted the integration of sustainable practices within the hospitality industry and the pivotal role of certification in driving responsible tourism.

The workshop witnessed the participation of approximately **80 attendees**, comprising officials from different ranks of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board, along with staff members. Tour operators and accommodation providers from various Raipur-based organizations, such as Balod Eco Tourism, Travel Mltan, Rural Yatra, 36 Montane, Sayaji Hotels, Hotel Citrus Prime, among others, actively took part in the event. Notably, NGOs like Conservation Core India and educational institutions like IHM College also contributed to the workshop, making it a diverse and inclusive gathering of stakeholders.

Highlights of the Workshop

A sustainable tourism workshop conducted by TOFTigers can be highly beneficial for tourism stakeholders in Chhattisgarh in tapping the sustainable tourism potential of the state.

Here's how such a workshop can help:

Awareness & Education:

Among tourism stakeholders about the importance and benefits of sustainable tourism practices. It can provide insights into sustainable tourism principles, including environmental conservation, community engagement, and economic viability. Participants can learn about the specific challenges and opportunities related to sustainable tourism in Chhattisgarh.

Best Practices & Case Studies

Showcase successful case studies and best practices from other regions or countries that have implemented sustainable tourism initiatives. Participants can gain inspiration and practical knowledge about strategies, policies, and initiatives that have worked effectively elsewhere. This can help them adapt and implement similar approaches in Chhattisgarh.

Networking & Collaboration

Provide a platform for tourism stakeholders to network and collaborate with each other. Participants can interact with experts, professionals, and peers in the field of sustainable tourism. This networking opportunity can facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences, and resources, leading to potential partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders.

Capacity Building

Offer capacity building sessions on various aspects of sustainable tourism, such as waste management, energy conservation, biodiversity preservation, and cultural heritage conservation. Participants can acquire practical skills and knowledge to implement sustainable practices in their respective tourism businesses or organizations.

Policy Recommendations

Initiate discussions and brainstorming sessions focused on sustainable tourism policy recommendations for Chhattisgarh. By engaging tourism stakeholders, local communities, and government officials, the workshop can contribute to the development of comprehensive and effective policies and regulations that promote sustainable tourism practices in the state.

Marketing & Promotion

Emphasize the importance of marketing and promoting sustainable tourism initiatives. Participants can learn about effective marketing strategies and techniques to highlight Chhattisgarh's sustainable tourism offerings to a wider audience. This can help in attracting responsible travelers who are interested in supporting destinations with strong sustainability practices.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Highlight the significance of monitoring and evaluating sustainability efforts. Participants can understand the importance of measuring the impact of their initiatives and tracking progress towards sustainability goals. This can help identify areas for improvement and ensure the long-term success of sustainable tourism practices in Chhattisgarh.



Overall, the sustainable tourism workshop conducted by TOFTigers can provide valuable knowledge, tools, and networks for tourism stakeholders in Chhattisgarh. It can empower them to implement sustainable tourism practices, enhance their competitiveness, and contribute to the preservation of Chhattisgarh's natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of both visitors and local communities

The untapped potential of Chhattisgarh Tourism

Chhattisgarh, located in central India, indeed possesses significant untapped potential in terms of tourism. While the state is known for its rich cultural heritage, tribal communities, and natural beauty, there are several aspects that can be further developed to enhance its tourism industry.

1. Ecotourism - Chhattisgarh is blessed with abundant natural resources, including lush green forests, wildlife sanctuaries, and waterfalls. Promoting ecotourism initiatives can attract nature enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and wildlife lovers. Developing infrastructure, trails, and accommodation facilities in lesser-known areas like Kanger Valley National Park, Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary, and Chitrakote Falls can boost tourism.

2. Tribal Tourism - Chhattisgarh is home to numerous indigenous tribal communities known for their unique traditions, art, and cultural practices. By promoting tribal tourism, visitors can have an immersive experience, interact with tribal communities, witness their rituals, and explore their handicrafts. Bastar region, with tribes like Gond, Maria, and Muria, has immense potential for cultural tourism.

3. Heritage Tourism - Chhattisgarh has a rich historical and architectural heritage that remains largely unexplored. Revitalizing and promoting historical sites like Sirpur, the ancient Buddhist center, and Raipur's Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum can attract history enthusiasts. The state also has several forts, temples, and ancient ruins that can be developed as tourist attractions.

4. Adventure Tourism - Chhattisgarh's diverse topography offers opportunities for adventure tourism. Developing adventure sports facilities like trekking, rock climbing, river rafting, and paragliding in regions like Koriya, Surguja, and Bastar can attract adventure enthusiasts and promote the state as an adventure tourism destination.

5. Wellness and Ayurveda – The state can tap into the growing wellness tourism market by promoting its traditional healing practices and Ayurvedic treatments. Establishing wellness retreats, spas, and Ayurvedic centers in serene locations like the foothills of Maikal Range or along the banks of the Mahanadi River can attract tourists seeking relaxation and rejuvenation.

6. Festivals and Cultural Events – Chhattisgarh boasts a vibrant cultural tapestry with various festivals and cultural events celebrated throughout the year. Promoting these events such as Bastar Dussehra, Rajim Kumbh Mela, and Boramdeo Mahotsav can draw tourists from across India and abroad, showcasing the unique cultural heritage of the state.

7. Infrastructure Development – Improving connectivity, developing tourist-friendly infrastructure, and ensuring the availability of quality accommodation and dining options are vital for attracting tourists. Enhancing road networks, expanding airport facilities, and promoting eco-friendly accommodations in scenic locations can contribute to the growth of tourism in Chhattisgarh.

By tapping into these untapped potentials, Chhattisgarh can position itself as a well-rounded tourism destination, offering a blend of nature, culture, adventure, heritage, and wellness experiences. Strategic planning, collaborations with stakeholders, and effective marketing can help unlock the tourism potential and boost the state's economy while preserving its unique heritage and natural resources.

Media Links:

<https://bwhotelier.businessworld.in/article/Chhattisgarh-hosts-sustainable-tourism-workshop-for-stakeholders-in-collaboration-with-TOFTigers/07-06-2023-479491/>

<https://bottindia.com/bott-shots-june-8-2023/?fbclid=PAaAYDV4epy77W8VAokfulaWEOanAta7KyMT2ccMHAIBK0PFieGwK3ZkhrZ9o>

<https://www.eventfaqs.com/news/ef-19427/chhattisgarh-tourism-along-with-toftigers-hosts-sustainable-tourism-workshop-for-its-stakeholders>

<https://www.toftigers.org/news/workshop-on-hosted-sustainable-tourism-and-best-practices-in-the-hospitality-industry-hosted-by-toftigers-chhattisgarh-tourism/>

<https://www.traveltrendstoday.in/chhattisgarh-toftigers-host-workshop-on-sustainable-tourism/>

<https://travelbizmonitor.com/chhattisgarh-tourism-toftigers-organise-workshop-on-sustainable-tourism/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cs5uKNNR1Yr/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

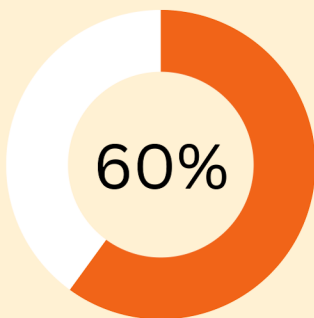
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cs6yM2arZUH/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>



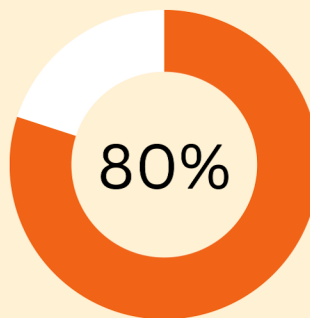
Feedback Received



The best thing for us in this workshop was that you invited tour operators from all over Chhattisgarh, this was the first time we got to learn a lot. There should be more such workshops in which all of us tour operators N.G.O and the government should work together and learn from each other. Only then, we will be able to give a better dimension to tourism and sustainability in Chhattisgarh.



Participants
rated the
workshop
10/10



Participants say
the knowledge
and expertise of
the speakers is
EXCELLENT

Valuable aspects and takeaways of the workshop:

- Deeper understanding of Sustainability – start small like kitchen garden, waste segregation, water harvesting, etc.
- Use of ZEER pots instead of refrigerators to control carbon emissions.
- Giving hands-on experience to the visitors for local products and practices.
- Deciding the carrying capacity of visitors as per the convenience of natives.
- Initiatives like 'Goat Village', 'GHE', 'Pay as you like'.

Measuring Progress

The workshop on sustainable tourism left the participants feeling inspired and motivated to act.

District of Kabir Dham

Where tourism development will prioritize sustainable practices, such as employing locals, minimizing electricity usage, implementing kitchen and herb gardens, and offering authentic experiences of local tribes.

Balod Eco Tourism and IHM, Raipur

Believe that the workshop helped the team realize the importance of promoting sustainable tourism without harming the environment, even with limited resources. They understood that small individual or organizational steps, like forming Green Teams, maximizing natural light, implementing rainwater harvesting, practicing zero waste and vermi-composting, utilizing solar panels, and banning single-use plastic, can collectively bring about significant positive changes.

“For a one day workshop, it was informative with some very good real- life examples of NGOs practicing sustainability. Giving Back to Mother Nature is essential for future.”

– Ms. Priya Sharma, HOD, IHM Raipur.



Suggestions

While the workshop was a great success, we received some great suggestions from our enthusiastic participants.

As they got to know about a lot of examples involving free education, health checkups, solar panels, e-rickshaw etc., and that the govt is already providing these facilities; **lodges/tour operators should coordinate with the govt to strengthen the mechanism than to spend an entire amount on the same services.**

Also, Digitalization definitely reduces the use of papers and makes things easier, but the radiations caused by use of technology has a negative impact on the environment that we are trying to conserve and hence suggested **use of sugarcane/cow dung-based papers, use of cloth-based printouts for flexes and pamphlets etc.**

While showing appreciation for the workshop, participants suggested **conducting the future workshop in the midst of nature**, among the natural resources, as immersing participants in a natural environment, they can better understand and appreciate the importance of preserving nature. This will enhance their learning experience and foster a deeper connection to sustainable practices.
