



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM MISSION

*Making better places for people
to visit and better places for people to live in*





CONTENTS

What is Responsible Tourism?.....	1
Responsible Tourism in Kerala	2
First Phase	2
Second Phase	2
Third Phase: Responsible Tourism Mission	3
Awards	4
RT Destinations	5
Kumarakom	5
Kovalam	5
Vythiri	5
Thekkady	5
Vaikom (PEPPER Destination)	6
Bekal	6
Ambalavayal.....	6
PEPPER	7
Experiential Tour Packages	8
Village Life Experience	8
Native Experience	9
Cultural Experience	9
Other Initiatives	10
Gallery.....	11



WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM?

Envisaged with a 'triple bottom-line' mission which comprises economic, social and environmental responsibilities, Responsible Tourism (RT) as a concept came forward in 1996.

A meticulous picture of Responsible Tourism highlighting its aims and factors evolved after the Cape Town Declaration of 2002. Besides minimising negative economic, environmental and social impacts,

RT also aspires to foster better economic benefits and the wellbeing of local people and communities. Conservation of natural and cultural heritage and preservation of the world's diversity are its key aspects.

The 2nd International Conference on RT was conducted in Kochi in March 2008 and the Kerala Declaration of Responsible Tourism was signed during that conference.





RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN KERALA

Kerala initiated Responsible Tourism in February 2007 with the State level consultative meeting titled 'Better Together'. The activities of the Responsible Tourism were implemented in a phased manner in the State.

First Phase

FIRST PHASE

As a pilot phase, Responsible Tourism (RT) was implemented in four destinations viz. Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady and Vythiri between 2008 and 2010 in which Kumarakom was developed as a successful model. Thus RT became a milestone in the tourism sector of the State in its first phase itself. The first phase was launched on March 14, 2008.

SECOND PHASE

The second phase of Responsible Tourism was launched in Kumarakom in March 2012. In the second phase that is between 2011 and 2017, the four destinations selected in the first phase successfully continued their journey and besides this three more destinations were added to this phase. The destinations were Kumbalangi in Ernakulam, Ambalavayal in Wayanad and Bekal in Kasaragod. The destinations worked as business units. From 2011 February, RT cells were placed at all destinations for taking up RT activities and were facilitated through KITTS.



THIRD PHASE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM MISSION

With its overwhelming successes, the government of Kerala decided to spread Responsible Tourism all over Kerala.

Aimed at the development of local communities and growth of tourism in the State, Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala launched the Responsible Tourism Mission on 20th October 2017, thus began the third phase of Responsible Tourism.

Making tourism a tool for the development of village and local communities, poverty alleviation and women empowerment are the main aims of the Responsible Tourism Mission. We aspire to provide an additional income and a better livelihood to women, farmers, traditional artisans, and marginalised people along with creating a social and environmental equilibrium. As part of the Mission around 50,000 local residents will get trained in several activities and productions and also hopes to provide direct and indirect employment to around 1,00,000 people in the tourism sector.

RT Mission is the nodal agency for implementing Responsible Tourism all over Kerala. Kerala Tourism Policy has RT principles as its base. It is vital to the Department to establish the RT activities. This can be done by taking the principle of RT to the entire field of tourism activities and motivating the tourism service providers to take up the RT principles in their businesses





AWARDS

Responsible Tourism of Kerala has received many awards and recognitions. The Mission received seven National Tourism Awards (2007-08, 2008-09, 2011-2012, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-2015, 2015-16) for various categories. Kumarakom being a major RT destination received the UNWTO Ulysses Award for the Innovation in Public Policy and Governance category and the PATA Gold and PATA Grand Award and WTM Highly Commended Award. RT also got the Indian Responsible Tourism Outstanding Achievement Award in the year 2018. Thekkady received PATA CEO Challenge Award. Wayanad too received National awards for its tourism initiatives. Wayanad Responsible Tourism Project bagged the National Tourism Award in the year 2018 as well.





MAJOR RT DESTINATIONS

5

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KUMARAKOM

With the alluring emerald green waters of Vembanad Lake polka-dotted by green lands, Kumarakom in Kottayam is a paradise indeed. This small sleepy hamlet nestled on the banks of the largest freshwater lake in Kerala offers you the opportunity to watch the making of coir, backwater cruises, net fishing, palm leaf weaving, and many more. Enticing tourists from far and wide with its picturesque beauty, Kumarakom was declared as a Special Tourism Zone by the Government of Kerala in 2005 and is currently a major Responsible Tourism destination of the State.

VYTHIRI

In Wayanad Responsible Tourism was first initiated in Vythiri village on 1st Sept 2008 almost six months after its launch in Kumarakom. The Village Life Experience of Responsible Tourism in Wayanad ranges from savouring native cuisines to the making of indigenous tribal percussion instruments and handicrafts. Apart from its scenic beauty, Wayanad holds much historical significance too.

KOVALAM

Apart from the shimmering waves and the alluring shores, Kovalam bestows one with the best Village Life Experience too making it a perfect spot in which to implement Responsible Tourism. Enriched with various traditional and prestigious ingredients, the handicraft village of Thiruvananthapuram assures a unique ethnic hangout spot. The tradition of Kerala exquisitely crafted with beauty renders a calming experience for visitors here. Besides this, the city is famous for its handloom industries as well and the place offers the travel junkie a chance to witness the weaving process for real.

THEKKADY

Thekkady located in Idukki district is an overwhelmingly beautiful place scented with the aroma of spice plantations and dotted with views of the vibrant wilderness. RT was formally inaugurated in Thekkady on 14th December 2008. RT Mission offers many Village Life Experience packages, awareness programmes and many more tourism related programmes in Thekkady.



6

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VAIKOM

(PEPPER Destination)

Vaikom, located in Kottayam district allures tourists with its rich natural beauty and spiritual significance.

A people's participation tourism mission named PEPPER (People's Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment Through Responsible Tourism) was first implemented in Vaikom on an experimental basis. Surrounded by the Vembanad Lake, Vaikom embraces travellers with its beautiful water bodies and serene village life.

BEKAL

Responsible Tourism was launched in Bekal in the year 2012 and works like training and workshops continue to this day. Trainings were also conducted for paper bag and cloth bag making as well as pappad making. Bekal also offers innovative Village Life Experience packages.

AMBALAVAYAL

Ambalavayal is a developing RT destination. Several programmes and training are conducting in the region to develop it into a successful RT destination. A number of micro-unit meetings were also held which helped in the formation of several units as well. These units carry out sales worth around Rs. 50 lakh per year.

RT Mission conducted training to make paper bag and cloth bag, sample soaps, colourful, perfumed and water candles, souvenirs for Wayanad, "Chuthumani Kammal" (rosary pea) Pappad and so forth.



PEPPER

A first of its kind initiative in India, PEPPER is an effort at spearheading a movement that will safeguard the rights of the local community, preserve the ecological and cultural fabric of a destination and ensure its holistic development. PEPPER will reinvent the way the local community is involved in tourism. Special Tourism Gramasabhas will be conducted in each destination and it will have a major say in framing tourism policies.

The project was launched at Vaikom in Kottayam district. The State level launch of PEPPER was held on 3rd November. In a

‘People’s Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment Through Responsible Tourism’ (PEPPER) is an attempt towards establishing 100 percent structured RT destinations. Envisaged at turning the face of tourism, it pictures the sustainable development of a destination by bringing the local community also into its fold. The main objective of PEPPER is discovering new zones or unexplored destinations that are rich with tourism potential and developing them in a hundred percent sustainable fashion with the active involvement of the local community. It is a process of finding out lesser-known tourist destinations that should be developed with people’s participation.





8

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EXPERIENTIAL TOUR PACKAGES

Currently Responsible Tourism Mission offers 35 experiential tour packages.

VILLAGE LIFE EXPERIENCE

The concept of Village Life Experience in the tourism sector was first introduced by the Responsible Tourism. It was brought forward with the aim of protecting the native crafts, traditional jobs and the village life of Kerala. The main highlight of this idea is that it ensures public participation for tourism development thereby supporting farmers, small-scale entrepreneurs, traditional artisans and so forth. Currently, RT Village Life Experience is an ideal model that has received praise and appreciation from all over the world. The Mission offers half day and full day Village Life Experience packages.

As part of the Village Tourism Experiences, Responsible Tourism Mission introduced many innovative tour packages incorporating pottery making, coconut leaf weaving, farm visits, coir making, handicrafts, various Theyyams, visits to agricultural areas, traditional fishing techniques and so forth.

RT Mission currently offers Village Life Experience packages all over the State.





9

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CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Responsible Tourism offers four packages to experience the cultural life of Kerala. The centuries-old history and tradition can be enjoyed with the support of the Responsible Tourism Mission. The RT Mission offers packages to experience the ritual arts Garudan Thookkam, Theyyam, Theyyattu and the temple festival Attuvela Maholsavam and so forth. Besides this, Onam, the harvest festival can be experienced through the *Nattinpurangalil Onam Unnam Ona Sammanagal vaangam* package.

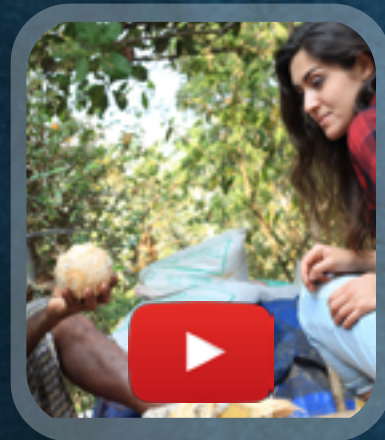
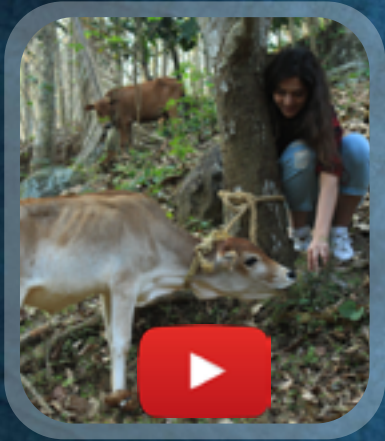
NATIVE EXPERIENCE

The villages of God's Own Country are blessed with many small-scale traditional industries and skilled artisans such as the handicrafts village of Thiruvananthapuram or the Bell Metal Heritage village of Kunhimangalam. The tradition of Kerala, exquisitely crafted with beauty, renders a calming experience for visitors here. RT Mission packages inspire travellers to engage in many interesting activities that are part and parcel of typical village life. The Mission offers packages in such a way that travellers coming to Kerala leave with the warmth and compassion of the village life of God's Own Country embedded deep in their hearts.





OTHER INITIATIVES



- Clean Vembanad Initiative
- Jalayanam
- Accessible Tourism
- Positioning of Tourism Resource Persons
- Waste Free Tourist Destinations
- Tourism Resource Mapping
- Special Tourism Grama sabhas
- Awareness Programmes and Training
- Toilet Mapping
- Responsible Tourism Classification
- Carbon Neutral Initiatives
- Carrying Capacity Study in Backwaters and Implementation of Green Protocol
- Code of Conduct in Tourist Centres
- Tourism Clubs
- Model Responsible Tourism Village Project
- Responsible Ayurveda
- Waste Management with the Support of Tourism Stakeholders
- RT Art and Cultural Forum
- Forest Conservation Based on Miyawaki Method
- Drinking Water Friendly Network
- Project to Promote Eco-friendly Constructions
- Carrying Capacity Study of Tourism Centres
- Meals at Home, Café Kudumbashree and Designer ‘Thattukada’ Programmes
- Packages to Publicise Traditional Sports and Games
- Short-term Cooking Programmes in Homestays
- Waste Free Ashtamudi Programme
- Local Products - Production, Procurement and Supply Mechanism
- Micro Enterprises Training
- Destination Safety Study
- Homestay, Farmstay and Tent Accomodation

GALLERY





12

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ADMINISTRATORS

Sri. Kadakampally Surendran

Minister for Tourism

Smt. Rani George IAS

Secretary, Kerala Tourism

Sri. P. Bala Kiran IAS

Director, Kerala Tourism

Sri. Rupesh Kumar K

State RT Mission Coordinator



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God's Own Country

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