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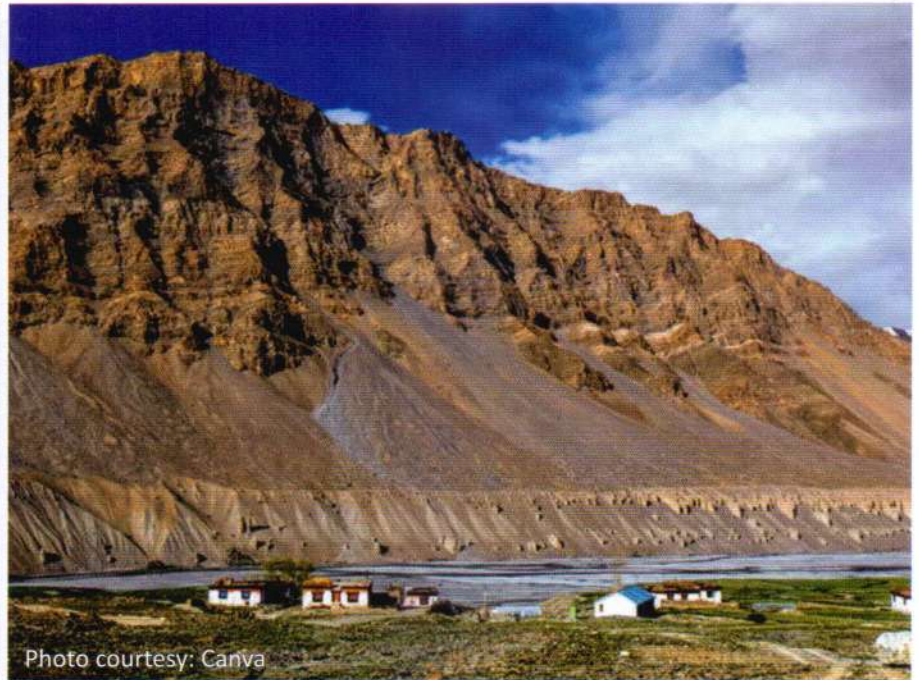


Photo courtesy: Canva

Newsletter

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## CAN RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN INDIA CHALLENGE PATRIARCHY?

By Shivya Nath, 7th February 2024



*I look at my past travels to examine if responsible tourism in India can challenge deep-seated patriarchy and lead to women empowerment.*

Over the course of my travels in India, I've found myself in some strange predicaments. Once, I was in the home of a middle-class family in the mountains, ready to pounce on delicious local food after a long, back-breaking journey. But

when I arrived in the dining area, I found myself joined only by the men of the family, as the women served, and then waited on us from a distance.

I sat in awkward silence, not sure if I should join the women in the kitchen and

further the house's patriarchal traditions, or eat with the men as the women waited. I could imagine the same scene playing out in hundreds of households across the country.

At the end of the awkward (though delicious) meal, the elderly male head of the household said to me with a disconcerting confidence: *I think I've figured out why you ate so little, it was probably because you were eating in my presence.*

As much as I hate to admit it, India is a country with a deep-seated patriarchy, that reveals itself in everyday life almost everywhere you look.

Ordinarily, I would've left the following morning in anger and hopelessness, but I was here wearing the hat of a responsible tourism consultant, assessing the place for its sustainable tourism potential (it fared well on the environmental friendliness scale) and advising on its marketing strategy. That made me stay and reflect on how a responsible approach to tourism could challenge patriarchy in India and elsewhere:

## Questioning age-old traditions



*Can responsible tourism bridge gender inequality in India?*

Let's take my current predicament as an example. It wasn't just that the women of the household ate leftovers by themselves in the kitchen, after the men were done. It was the way the head of the household constantly ordered them around, decided whose turn it was to speak and when (mine included), and proudly shared how his sons' futures were decided solely by him.

After a brief conversation with a friend, I decided to take a stand and bring up the issue with the family – but with tourism as the focus. I talked about meal times as the crux of a genuine homestay experience, when the whole family comes together as one and discusses the day's affairs. I talked of inequality in certain Indian traditions and how that's unacceptable to visitors from outside. I

### Homestays 'owned' by women



*Women empowerment meets responsible tourism in India: Women-led homestays in Sarmoli.*

tried to sow a seed in the mind of the somewhat irked elder that in order to bring responsible tourism to his beautiful village, something must change.

Whether that seed will nurture itself over time remains to be seen, but the way I see it, the promise of economic prosperity through tourism can change even the most deep-set beliefs.

In much of rural India, women go from their

father's house to their husband's house, and if they outlive their partner, their son's house. No matter their physical or economic contribution in the household, they seldom have land rights to their own homes.

That felt different in the village of Sarmoli, near Muniari, where I spent 3 weeks exploring the challenges and impact of community-driven tourism. In 2004, Malika Viridi, an avid mountain climber and an inspiring soul, set up a homestay

program managed by the village women. She deliberately positioned each homestay as the home of the female family member who would toil behind the scenes and pour in love and sleepless nights to welcome travellers from around the world.

Many husbands now assist the women in their homestay operations, but what warmed my heart is this: When you walk

around the village and ask a local for the way to someone's house, they know it better when you take the woman's name. Changing ownership mindsets slowly but gradually? I think so.

Responsible tourism in India can support women in roles traditionally held by men

In all my travels, I went hiking with a female guide only the second time in Sarmoli village. The women's self-help group encouraged her to undergo professional guide training in Mussoorie, and even though she manages her household like every woman in the village, she said she loves hiking more! We hitched a ride with some army guys, walked through old forests, made tea on a quiet hill, talked

### Responsible tourism in India can support women in roles traditionally held by men

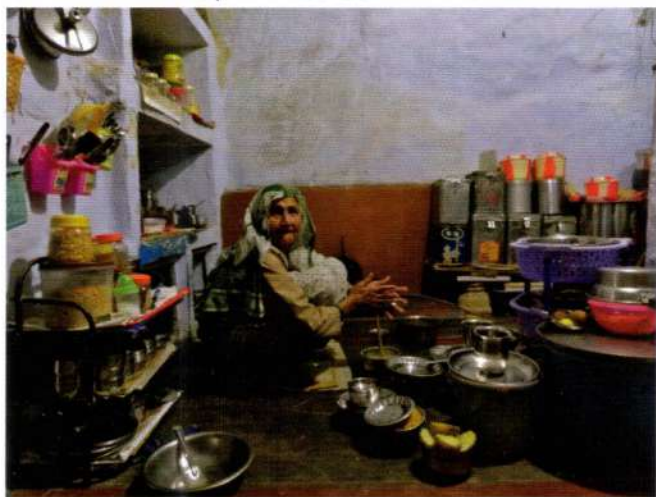


*Responsible tourism in India | My female guide and friend surveying the mountains.*

like long lost friends. It made me wonder, why haven't I hiked with female guides more?

The women guides of Ladakh and Bolivia (South America) have created their own initiatives, and while in Bhimtal, I heard of a young local girl who takes visitors on guided kayaking trips on the Sattal lakes. All these women are sending out a powerful message – that when tourism broadens mindsets, women who grew up in small Indian villages can compete with their male counterparts in strength, confidence and capability, in roles beyond household work.

Financial independence for women through responsible tourism in India



Responsible tourism in India | Chandra Nani, 70+, home entrepreneur in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

Buying and eating local is not just an important tenet of responsible tourism, but a deeper attempt to connect with the places we travel to. In the Jaisalmer Fort of Rajasthan, this attempt led me to the home-resto of Chandra Nani, aged 70+; in Jordan, to the women-led soap and biscuit house in Ajiloun; and in Karnataka, to the gypsy community outside Hampi. These enterprises are reviving old traditions, and enabling women to either live financially independent lives, or become the main bread earners for their families.

Studies have shown that when women achieve financial freedom – which can be actively encouraged when we, as travellers, insist on buying local products – the effects trickle down to their children's education and in

Empowerment through solo travel



Responsible tourism in India | Traveling solo – no longer just for myself.

opposition to patriarchal mindsets, create more economic opportunities for women of the next generation.

For a long time, I travelled solo for myself – to understand the ways of the world and my own limitations. I started blogging to share my (mis)adventures with others who longed for solitude and depth in their travels, but weren't sure if traveling alone was worth experimenting with.

Truth is, when I travelled in rural India, I tried to keep my rebellious notions (on marriage, kids and independence for instance) to myself, for fear of corroding a conservative culture. My focus was always the stories of those I met along the way.

Then during my discussions with Malika in Sarmoli, I had an epiphany. I realized that the people I had broadly labelled as “conservative”, are people like you and me; people who have liberal ideas but are boxed into a conservative

way of thinking. I know from personal experience that ideas that go against societal notions are never readily accepted.

So, the next time a woman from the village asked me about my marital status, I didn't dodge the topic. I told her why I felt marriage was unnecessary in today's society, where women (her included) can be financially independent,

and even though I have a partner, I never intend to get married. She seemed to understand my choices after some hesitation, and agreed that if that's a choice her children made, she would accept it. At least it's food for thought...

And so is solo travel. The fact that a young, single woman can travel by herself, without relying on a man to keep her safe, carry her things, make decisions for her, or support her financially, is a message that I think every woman who travel can carry to our sisters in rural India.

I never realized the power of a small group of women coming together to confront an issue, until I observed for 3 straight weeks, the challenges taken on

Responsible tourism in India and women self-help groups



Responsible tourism in India | A village meeting under the Deodar tree, led by the women of Sarmoli.

by the Maati Sangathan in the villages around Munsiri. Among heart-wrenching stories of domestic abuse, alcoholism and caste violence in these parts, there were uplifting stories of women (from across economic backgrounds and religious faiths) fighting for each other's rights.

Where does responsible tourism factor in? While many self-help groups around the world rely on funding from donors, perhaps the most empowered ones are those that generate their own funds through community-driven tourism.

You've probably dismissed me as a feminist by now, but I think many men in

## Bringing ideas to forward-thinking men in rural India



*Responsible tourism in India | Are men the victims of patriarchal mindsets too?*

rural India are as much the victims of patriarchal mindsets as women. When you grow up in a household where you are worshipped given preference over your sisters by every adult around you, any ideas of gender equality probably feel alien.

Let me give you an example: While living at an organic farm in the buffer zone of Gir National Park, I became friends with a girl and a boy, cousins of about the same age, who grew up in a joint family under the same roof. Both had finished high school and enrolled in college (pretty progressive for rural India), but when we decided to stay in touch, it turned out that only the boy had access to a mobile phone, Facebook and WhatsApp – tools that, if used well, can bring opportunities to young adults in rural India. When asked why, the boy laughed and told me that the family feared that getting online or having a phone will lead the girl “astray”.

That led us to a serious discussion, where I shared how the internet had helped me carve out a job for myself that didn't exist until a few years ago – and afforded me the financial and physical freedom to be in Gujarat, talking to them. By the time I left, he confessed to me that even though he couldn't fight at home to get his cousin a phone, he would ensure his daughters have one when he became a father.

I have been lucky enough to meet several open-minded men on my travels across India – men who didn't assume that a woman traveling alone is desperate for male company, men who think it's normal for women to work outside the house, men who encourage their wives to follow their passion for art or hiking or even boxing (yes, I'm thinking of Mary Kom). If you ask me, honest interactions and discussions with men on our travels is an important step towards eliminating patriarchal mindsets.

Source: <https://the-shooting-star.com/responsible-tourism-in-india/>

## NATIONAL TOURISM DAY: INDIA'S MOST LOVED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Updated: Jan 25, 2024, 13:12 IST

National Tourism Day: India's most loved sustainable tourism destinations

National Tourism Day is celebrated annually on January 25th to promote the significance of tourism and its cultural, social, economic, and environmental benefits. The day is a reminder to all to explore and appreciate the diverse attractions and

destinations within our country. The theme for this year's National Tourism Day is Sustainable Journeys, Timeless Memories.

In India, we have several exemplary sustainable tourism destinations, and here's a look at what makes these destinations special.



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh

What we have in Spiti is called low-impact tourism. It's slow travel that directly benefits the local communities, and gives travellers the best of travel and cultural experiences. When in Spiti, spend time with the locals to understand community-based initiatives that are in place to preserve the local culture and environment.



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Khonoma, Nagaland

This village is small in size but very big in what it teaches the rest of the world. Once a hunters' village, Khonoma is India's first green village. The people of Khonoma have embraced community-led conservation efforts, and because of that, this small village leads the country when it comes to ecotourism, responsible travel, and preservation of biodiversity and traditional practices.



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Mawlynnong, Meghalaya

Few years ago, Mawlynnong was declared Asia's Cleanest Village. It has successfully inspired several other places not only in India, but all over the world, to follow in its footsteps. Mawlynnong showcases strong community involvement in maintaining cleanliness and greenery, and promotes sustainable practices among villagers.



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Coorg, Karnataka

When in Coorg or Kodagu, travellers get to see the world of organic farming practices in many homestays. Since it is located in the Western Ghats, one of the most important things to keep in mind is to be mindful of the conservation efforts to protect the Western Ghats biodiversity.



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Agatti Island, Lakshadweep

With Lakshadweep so much in the limelight these days, it's time we look into what this remote destination teaches us. The archipelago has strict regulations on tourism activities in order to protect the coral reefs. We cannot ignore the fact that Lakshadweep is one of the last pristine places in the world. The waters surrounding Lakshadweep are home to vibrant coral reefs and have fragile ecosystems.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/national-tourism-day-indias-most-loved-sustainable-tourism-destinations/photostory/107137972.cms?picid=107137981>



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Sundarbans, West Bengal

What can you learn from the world's largest mangrove forest? Conservation of mangrove forests and wildlife, community-based ecotourism initiatives, and how to practice responsible tourism to protect fragile ecosystems. The wetlands and mangroves are some of the planet's most important ecosystems, and conservationists, along with the local communities have worked tremendously to protect what they have in the Sundarbans.



Photo courtesy: Canva

### Kutch, Gujarat

This harsh region and its salt flats are surprisingly some of the richest places to explore for handicrafts and traditional arts. The community-based tourism initiatives have helped the semi-nomadic tribes of Kutch and neighbouring areas to put their traditional skills into practice.



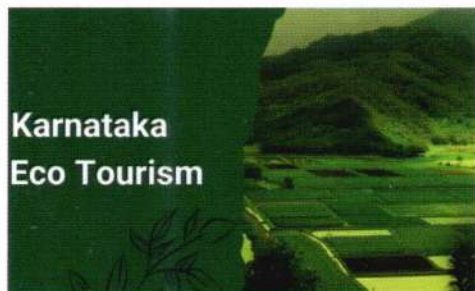
Photo courtesy: Canva

### Tirthan Valley, Himachal Pradesh

When in Tirthan, the most obvious tourist attraction is the Tirthan River. From controlled fishing/angling activities to conservation of surrounding ecosystems, one gets to see and experience several community-based tourism initiatives. There is also a lot of emphasis on responsible trekking and outdoor activities.

# Karnataka Eco Tourism Skandagiri to Bandipur National Park

by Kamal Dangwal on January 04, 2024 in Ecotourism, Travel Destination



Karnataka, a land of diverse landscapes and rich biodiversity, invites nature enthusiasts to embark on an unforgettable journey through its eco-friendly destinations. **Karnataka Ecotourism Skandagiri to Bandipur National Park** goes beyond the ordinary, offering travellers a chance to explore the state's natural wonders while promoting sustainable practices.

In this Blog we Explore Karnataka's eco wonders with the **latest objectives and updates** of the **Ecotourism Board**. From the tranquil Skandagiri Hills to the misty Coorg and the adventurous Ramadevara Betta, discover sustainable treasures. Trek through Bidarakatte, delve into history at Makalidurga Fort, and marvel at Savandurga Hill's geological splendor. Immerse in Kudremukh's biodiversity, witness wildlife at Nagarahole and Bandipur, and enjoy urban greenery at Cubbon Park. Uncover a green adventure with Karnataka Eco Tourism!

**The Updated objectives of the Karnataka Ecotourism Board are as follows:**

- Raise awareness about the importance of conserving forests and wildlife, focusing on the general public, especially children and youth.
- Promote and support tourism activities at both the national and state levels, with a specific emphasis on Karnataka.
- Encourage active participation of local communities in ecotourism, providing increased job opportunities and economic benefits for the locals.
- Aid in the formulation of policies, laws, and guidelines for the organized development of ecotourism activities within the state.
- Conduct research and impact studies in ecotourism areas to ensure sustainable practices.
- Position ecotourism as a primary non-consumptive activity of the Forest Department.
- Develop and promote best practices for ecotourism operators.

- Standardize and oversee the certification process for ecotourism operators.
- Provide training and certification for nature guides to enhance their skills.
- Produce literature and electronic media materials for nature education and the promotion of ecotourism.
- Facilitate connections between public and private operators in support of wildlife conservation efforts.
- Coordinate and collaborate with national and international bodies, experts, and funding agencies, receiving contributions and funds from various sources.
- Continue encouraging local community involvement in ecotourism initiatives.
- Manage and facilitate ecotourism activities within parks and forest areas.
- Foster Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in ecotourism, adhering to applicable laws and regulations.
- Develop trekking trails and operate wildlife safaris in designated "Protected Areas."

**Latest Updates:**

According to the latest update, authorities have identified 10 eco-trails within the Western Ghats region, and the relevant departments have been duly informed. The forest department will now implement a fee for all eco-trails, ranging from ₹600 to ₹1,200. This initiative aims to not only promote a connection with nature, especially among the younger generation but also to curb illegal treks in the woods.

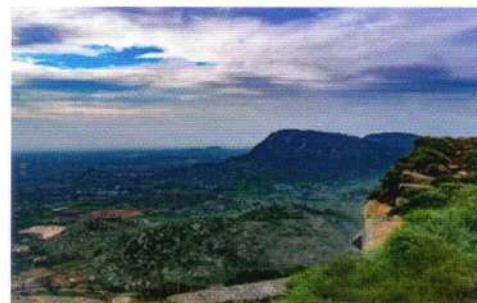
Karnataka Ecotourism Places Skandagiri to Bandipur National Park in Karnataka, ecotourism Skandagiri to Bandipur National Park is not just a trend; it's a way of life. The state is adorned with a plethora of eco-friendly destinations that cater to every nature lover's dreams. From the tranquil hills to the dense forests, each spot promises a unique and sustainable adventure.

Discover the ecological marvels of Karnataka while aligning with the recent goals of the Eco Tourism Board. Experience the serenity of Skandagiri Hills, the mist-kissed landscapes of Coorg, and the thrill of Kalawara Betta. Embark on a trek through Bidarakatte, explore the historical echoes at Makalidurga Fort, and marvel at the geological wonders of Savandurga Hill. Immerse yourself in the biodiversity of Kudremukh, encounter wildlife at Nagarahole and Bandipur, and

relish the urban greenery of Cubbon Park. Unveil an eco-friendly adventure through the realms of Karnataka Eco Tourism!

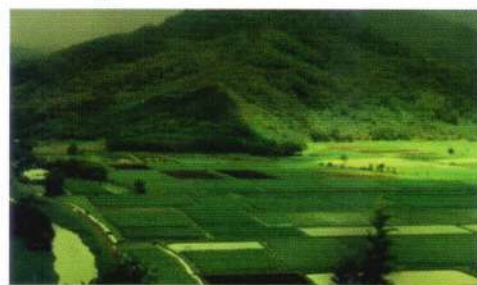
Here's The List of top **Karnataka Ecotourism Places Skandagiri to Bandipur National Park** is given below.

## 1. Skandagiri Hills



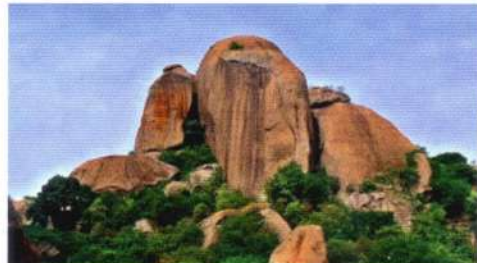
Skandagiri Hills, also known as Kalavara Durga, is an idyllic spot for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike. Located approximately 70 kilometers from Bangalore, this hill range offers a perfect setting for a day trek. The trek to the peak is a moderate challenge, rewarding trekkers with a breathtaking sunrise view. The surrounding lush greenery and the historic ruins of an old fort add to the allure of Skandagiri.

## 2. Coorg Ecotourism



Nestled amidst the Western Ghats, Coorg, also known as Kodagu, is renowned for its coffee plantations, mist-covered hills, and diverse flora and fauna. The eco-friendly practices in Coorg include organic farming, waste management, and community-driven conservation projects. Visitors can explore the Dubare Elephant Camp, Abbey Falls, and the Namdroling Monastery for a holistic ecotourism experience.

## 3. Ramadevara Betta (Kalawara Betta)



For those seeking an adrenaline rush, Ramadevara Betta (Kalawara Betta) is the go-to destination. This offbeat trekking spot offers not just panoramic views from the summit but also a chance to witness the region's unique biodiversity. The Ramadevara Betta (Kalawara Betta) trek is known for its challenging terrains and dense forests, making it a favourite among adventure enthusiasts. Conservation efforts focus on maintaining the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

#### 4. Bidarakatte Trek



Bidarakatte Trek takes you off the conventional trails into the heart of Karnataka's wilderness. This hidden gem offers a less-explored trekking experience, providing a serene atmosphere surrounded by lush greenery. The region is rich in biodiversity, and trekking through Bidarakatte allows visitors to encounter various species of flora and fauna. Conservation initiatives aim to preserve this natural haven.

#### 5. Makalidurga Fort



Steeped in history, Makalidurga Fort is a testament to Karnataka's architectural and cultural heritage. The trek to the fort is not only a journey through time but also a chance to appreciate the region's natural beauty. The fort stands at an altitude of 1,117 meters, offering panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Visitors can engage in activities like rock climbing and bird watching, all while being mindful of the environment.

#### 6. Savandurga Hill



Savandurga Hill, standing tall at 1,200 meters above sea level, is a geological marvel and a paradise for rock climbers. Apart from its adventurous appeal, the hill is home to diverse flora and fauna, including rare orchids and endemic species. Conservation initiatives focus on preserving the delicate ecosystems of Savandurga, ensuring that visitors can witness the natural wonders while minimizing their impact.

#### 7. Kudremukh



The name "Kudremukh" translates to "horse-face," resembling the shape of the peak. This biodiversity hotspot is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcasing a variety of ecosystems. Visitors can explore lush forests, meadows, and waterfalls, making it an ideal destination for nature lovers. Sustainable tourism practices in Kudremukh include responsible trekking and wildlife conservation programs.

#### 8. Nagarahole Tiger Reserve



Nagarahole, often referred to as Rajiv Gandhi National Park, is like a paradise for folks who are passionate about wildlife. The reserve is home to a variety of wildlife, including elephants, tigers, and numerous bird species. Safari experiences within the reserve offer a glimpse into the untamed beauty of nature. Conservation efforts focus on maintaining the delicate balance between wildlife and their natural habitats.

#### 9. Cubbon Park



In the heart of Bangalore, Cubbon Park is a green oasis providing respite from the urban

hustle. The park, spread over 300 acres, features numerous walking paths, landscaped gardens, and historical monuments. Cubbon Park encourages eco-friendly practices, and events like nature walks and bird watching enhance the overall eco-tourism experience within the city.

#### 10. Bandipur National Park



Bandipur National Park boasts the second-highest population of Tigers in India. Situated in Gundlupet taluk, Chamarajanagar district, it is a vital part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, making it the largest protected area in Southern India and the primary habitat for Wild Elephants in South Asia.

Sharing borders with Nagarahole National Park, Wayanad National Park, and Mudumalai National Park, Bandipur enforces a traffic ban from 9 PM to 6 AM, aiming to reduce wildlife fatalities during dusk to dawn.

Home to Tigers, Indian Elephants, Leopards, Dhols, Sambar, Sloth bears, Chital, and various other wildlife, Bandipur National Park offers a rich and diverse experience for nature enthusiasts.

Bandipur National Park, part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, is a testament to Karnataka's commitment to wildlife conservation. The park is home to a wide range of fauna, including elephants, tigers, and gaurs. Safari experiences allow visitors to witness the diverse ecosystems within the park while contributing to conservation efforts.

#### Conclusion

Karnataka Ecotourism Skandagiri to Bandipur National Park is a tapestry of diverse landscapes, each destination woven with a commitment to sustainability. Skandagiri's tranquil hills, Coorg's misty coffee plantations, Kalawara Betta's adventurous treks, and the historical charm of Makalidurga Fort are just a glimpse of the eco-friendly wonders Karnataka has to offer. As you traverse these natural havens, remember that every step is a contribution to the conservation of these pristine landscapes.

Source: <https://www.kamaldangwal.in/2024/01/Karnataka-Ecotourism-skandagiri-to-bandipur-national-park-latest-objectives-and-updates.html>

**Sustainable tourism progress: a 10-year bibliometric analysis**

Pawan Kumar, Bindu Aggarwal, Vinod Kumar & Harish Saini

Article: 2299614 | Received 07 Oct 2023, Accepted 20 Dec 2023, Published online: 03 Jan 2024

Sustainability in tourism has become one of the concerns of the travel industry. More research is required to establish a scientific basis for Sustainable Tourism (ST). In order to develop the field structure on sustainable tourism from 2013 to 2023, the study examines the existing situation using bibliometric analysis. The 'Scopus' database was explored on the 'sustainable tourism' theme in order to achieve the goal. The original search yielded a total of 701 papers, which were subsequently filtered to 619 documents. For the articles relating to ST, the most cited papers, significant authors, co-citation of references, and sources were all looked into. This study found that research into sustainable tourism has grown recently. Three research with 1512 citations were found by the authors, and they also found two publications with over 500 'Scopus' citations. The study highlights the gap and identifies the conceptual sub-domains, such as biodiversity, economic, environmental issues, and local community engagement, which might be crucial in subsequent studies.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, citation analysis, Co-citation analysis bibliometric analysis, VOS viewer

Source: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2023.2299614>

**Promoting Eco-Tourism to Conserve Wildlife Corridors: A Strategy for the Kanha-Pench Landscape in India**

Chinmaya S Rathore, Yogesh Dubey, Anurag Shrivastava, Prasad Pathak and Vinayak Patil

Ecotourism has attracted considerable attention in developing countries during the last few years. The attempt has been to sell nature destinations to high paying foreign tourists in a bid to earn valuable foreign exchange. While this might have been successful in generating revenues, key ecotourism core values of promoting nature conservation and supporting local livelihoods have been too often sacrificed leading to disillusionment of the local people. If ecotourism has to evolve as a sustainable activity in the long term in India, revenue generation must be appropriately balanced with the conservation agenda and support for local livelihoods. The present study highlights the possible opportunity of building such a model in the Kanha-Pench corridor in southern Madhya Pradesh, India. For meeting corridor conservation objectives and ensuring long term habitat sustainability however, it is important that local communities directly benefit from ecotourism. The study has identified six possible locations in the corridor area that can be developed as ecotourism destinations. It has been argued that there is considerable scope to evolve a Community Based Eco-Tourism initiative in the area such that the wildlife corridor can be protected in the long term.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Wildlife Corridor, Community Based Ecotourism, Conservation.

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236658242\\_Promoting\\_Eco-Tourism\\_to\\_Conserve\\_Wildlife\\_Corridors\\_A\\_Strategy\\_for\\_the\\_Kanha\\_-\\_Pench\\_Landscape\\_in\\_India](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236658242_Promoting_Eco-Tourism_to_Conserve_Wildlife_Corridors_A_Strategy_for_the_Kanha_-_Pench_Landscape_in_India)

**Invitation for Article/Research paper**

Dear Readers,

Research papers / Articles related to ecotourism, climate change & mitigation are invited for free publication in the EIACP newsletter. The same will be uploaded in the EIACP website with due courtesy of the author.

**Terms and conditions for publication:**

- Closely related with ecotourism related subjects or climate change.
- Full paper with abstract notes.
- 1,000 words in English language.
- High resolution pictures (3,4 nos.) of the topic.

**Note:** Publication of the research paper/ article will be decided by the editorial board of the Newsletter.

Please send your valuable suggestions, queries, comments and articles to:

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This newsletter is aimed at disseminating ecotourism information and its related subjects among, environment enthusiasts, ecotourism stakeholders, students, researchers and public at large.

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