

# Embracing the Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India for the Tour Operator segment by

Mandip Singh Soin FRGS

Founder & Managing Director, Ibex Expeditions  
&  
Honorary President, Ecotourism Society of India



[www.ibexexpeditions.com](http://www.ibexexpeditions.com)

[www.ecotourismsocietyofindia.org](http://www.ecotourismsocietyofindia.org)

Ibex Expeditions established in 1979  
as an adventure travel company

The buzz words of  
Eco tourism

&

Responsible Tourism  
were unknown.





But the Ibex journeys were dedicated  
to those who choose to tread lightly...





The Nanda  
Devi sanctuary  
closed in 1982





The Nanda Devi Sanctuary closed in 1982. Foreign and Indian climbers & trekkers compromised the fragile ecosystem by burning juniper as firewood, leaving garbage and over grazing.



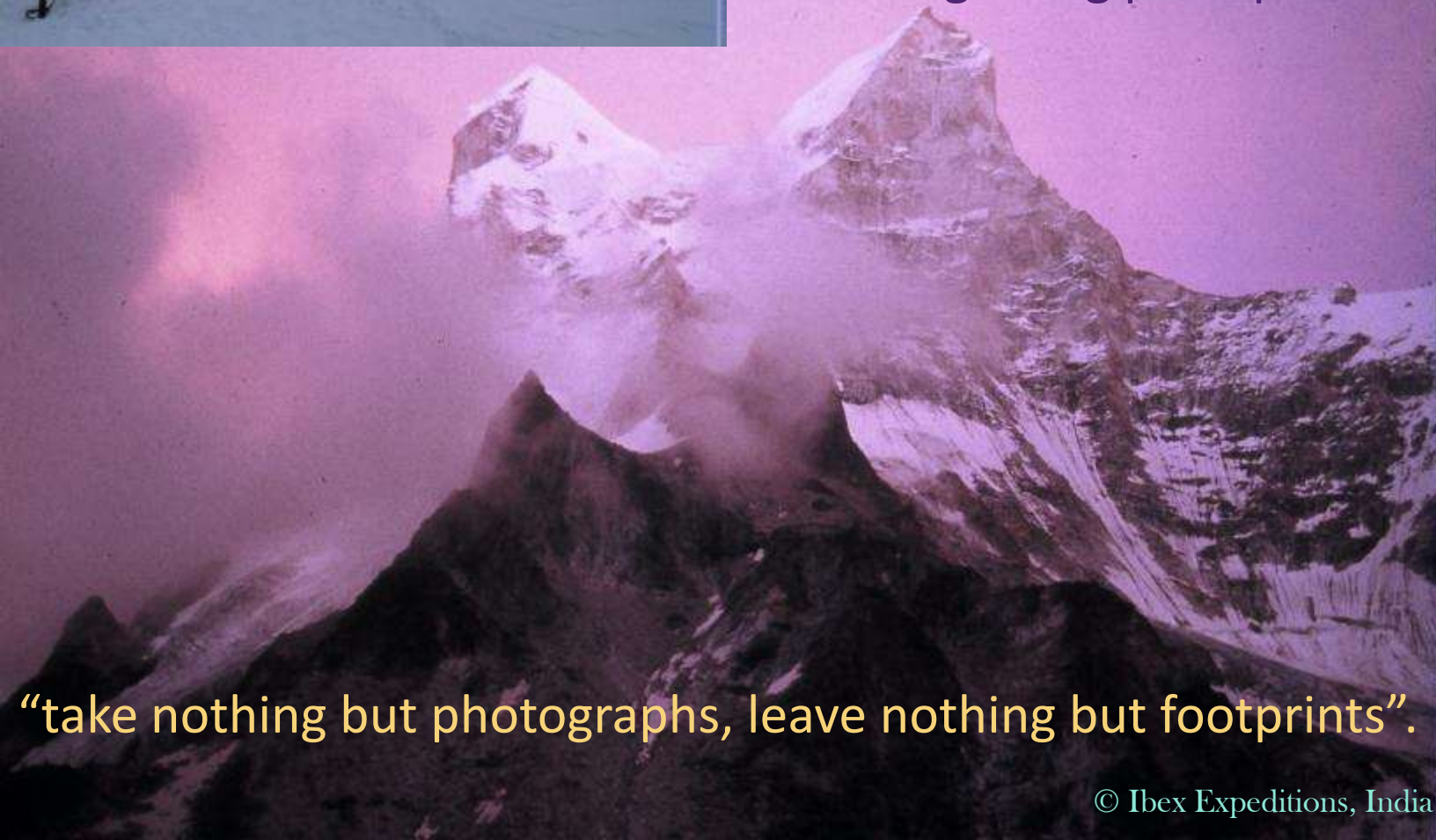
Nanda Devi National park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was out of bounds for mountaineers and trekkers – a grim reminder of tourism impacts !







Although from the  
early years,  
Ibex designed expeditions  
and treks  
with a guiding principle ...

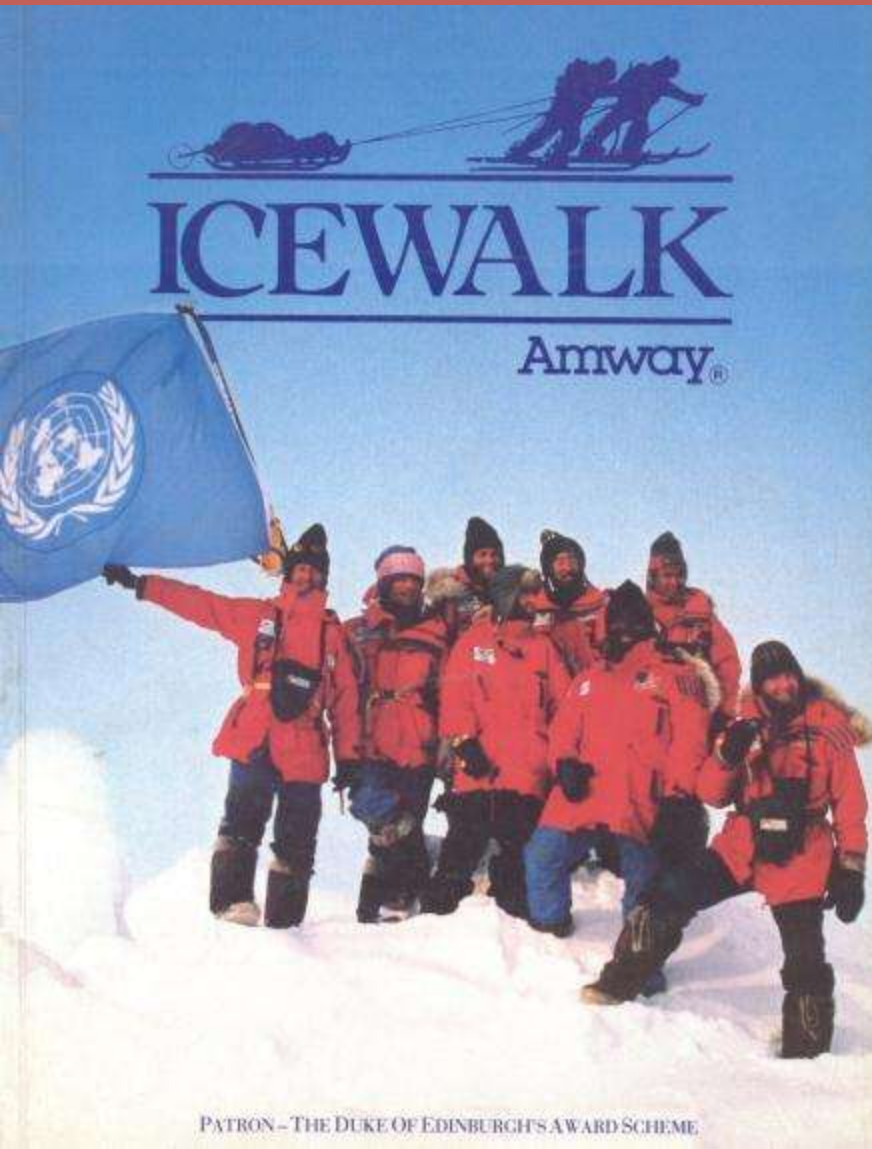


“take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints”.



# The Turning Point

## 1989 – Arctic Environmental Expedition



Instructor with the international environmental 'Ice walk' expedition.

To study the ozone hole and the pollutants in the Arctic.



UNEP supported this  
Environmental  
Expedition.

Findings were alarming.



- Ozone Hole enlarging
- Industrial pollutants in the Arctic ice



Made an Earth pledge...

...after the learning that  
each of us can make a  
difference.

A thousand mile journey  
begins  
with  
a single step.



# Ibex Expeditions signed the “Environmental Pledge” of the Himalayan Environment Trust.

Uniquely, allowed our clients  
to audit our environmental actions during their journey.

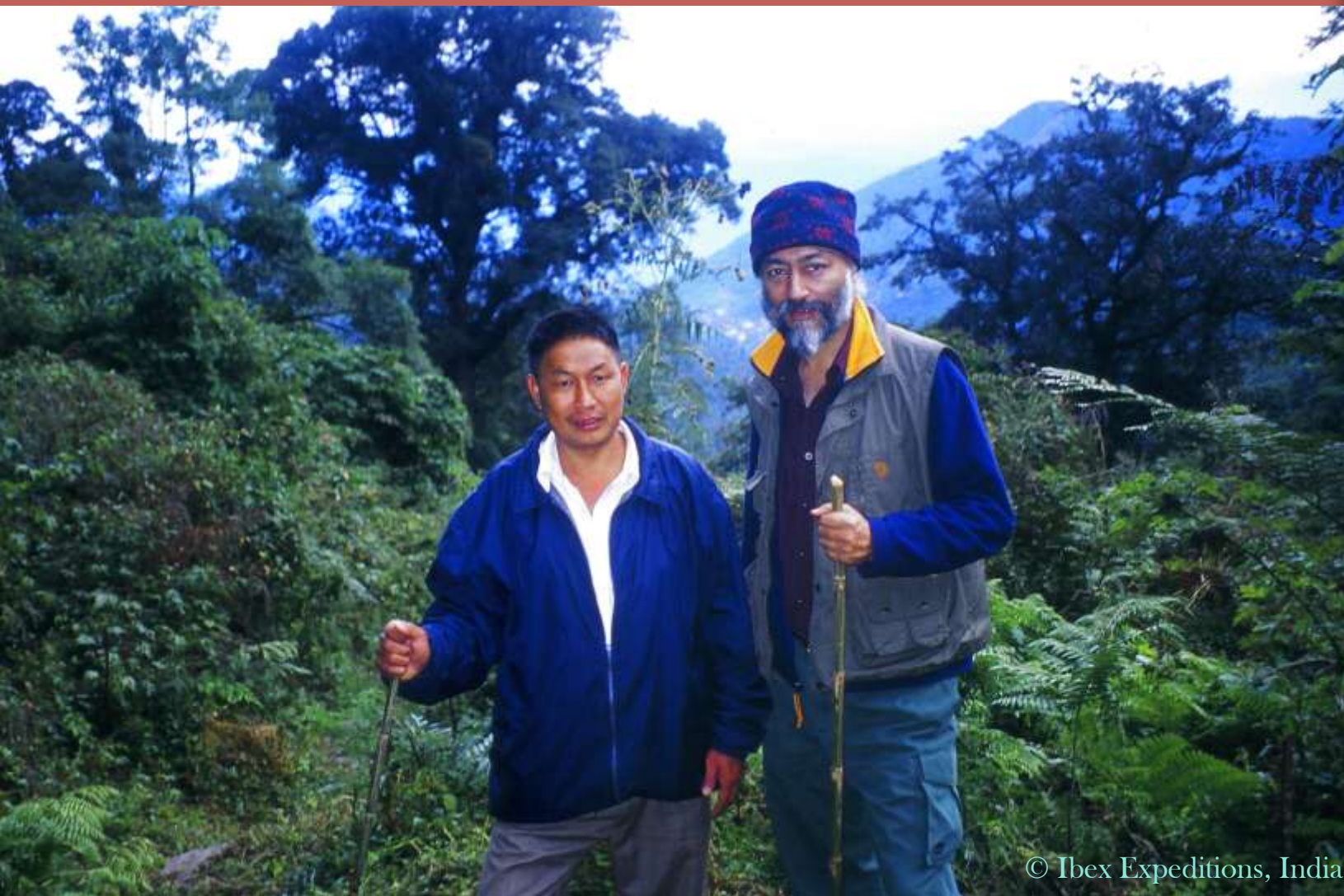


# Campfires never allowed



Ibex disallowed the use of firewood  
on any Ibex trip,  
even if it is waste firewood  
as the local villagers need for this is greater.





© Ibex Expeditions, India





2002 – Converting local Tragopan Pheasant hunters in Konohma, Nagaland to Naturalists.

Pledge taken jointly by Local community, State Government and NGO's.



Based on the Tiger trail experience at Periyar, Kerala, where poachers have turned into naturalist guides.





1994 – Ibex opened winter tourism thus Ecotourism through Ice Trek –  
Joint action between Ibex Expeditions, Ministry of Tourism & State Govt.  
of Jammu & Kashmir. Giving the local community  
an income in the winter months.





# 2002 – Year of Mountains & Eco tourism declared by the United Nations.

Commemorated by an Indo Pakistan Friendship Expedition  
in the Swiss Alps.  
Supported by the UIAA & IUCN.



To commemorate Swiss Aletsch glacier as a World Heritage site.

To champion the protection of Siachen Glacier as Peace Park.

To allow eco tourism to flourish in the region.





# 2003 – Led the International Volcano & Eco Tourism expedition to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Aimed at visiting rain forests, marine life and local tribes and exploring Eco Tourism potential.

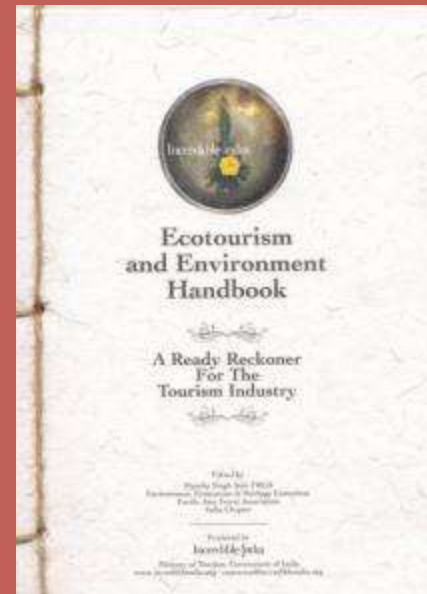




# The Environment & Eco tourism handbook for the Industry

Edited three editions  
published by the Ministry of Tourism  
in collaboration with  
the PATA India Chapter  
Environment Committee

Aims at giving practical educational information about eco tourism and good environmental operations.





Founder President, Ecotourism Society of India

The National body for Responsible Tourism  
In India.



## **Our Vision**

- \*ESOI to become the nationally recognised apex body on Responsible Tourism with strong global links.**
- \*ESOI will engage in Advocacy, Creation of guidelines & Certification.**
- \*Provide comprehensive support to the Government & travel service providers in India.**



## FOUNDING MEMBERS

<b>Mr. Mandip Singh Soin FRGS</b> Founder & Managing Director, Ibex Expeditions P Ltd.	<b>Mr. Prem Das Rai</b> Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha
<b>Mr. Rakesh Mathur</b> Director & Principal Advisor – Zinc Hospitality, Cross Roads Hotels and CIE Hospitality	<b>Mr. Jose Dominic</b> MD, CGH Earth Hotels
<b>Mr. Toby Sinclair</b> Wildlife Film Maker & Director – India Safari & Tours	<b>Mr. Ravi Singh</b> CEO, WWF India
<b>Mr. Krishna Kumar Singh</b> Former MLA, Madhya Pradesh, & Environmentalist M. D. Taj Safari Lodges, Bandhavgarh, M.P.	<b>Dr. Venu V. IAS</b> Jt.Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India
<b>Mr. Steve Borgia</b> MD, Indeco Hotels	<b>Mr. Avay Shukla</b> Former Additional Chief Secretary, Forests, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh
<b>Mr. Sarath C.R.</b> Naturalist and Environment Expert	<b>Mr. Niranjana Khatri</b> General Manager – Environment, ITC WelcomGroup Hotels
<b>Mr. Sudhir Sahi</b> Consultant, UNDP	



## Objectives

- To help develop policies and a code of conduct for promotion of sustainable tourism.
- Encourage low pollution-generating practices – minimize carbon footprint.
- Encourage energy saving practices, water harvesting, use of solar and other natural energy sources.
- Encourage good waste management practices – especially non-bio degradable materials.
- Encourage use of appropriate local practices, materials, art, craft, architecture, food.
- Work with Service providers to enhance quality of their product and services to a level so they can be sustainable and eco-friendly.
- Document the features of eco-sensitive areas.



**1<sup>ST</sup> WORKSHOP**  
**ORIENTATION PROGRAM ON ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & TOURISM**  
**TO ENSURE RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES BY TOURISM SERVICES PROVIDERS – TO PROTECT**  
**THE NATURE AND COMMUNITIES**  
**SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2008, NEW DELHI**



**Environmental Law & Sustainable Tourism for Stakeholders**  
**2ND WORKSHOP**

**DECEMBER 12 – 13, 2009, NEW DELHI**



**3rd WORKSHOP**  
**Cochin, KERALA, MARCH 19-20, 2010**



**Environmental Law & Responsible Tourism**  
**4th WORKSHOP**  
**APRIL 30 – MAY 1, 2010, Bhopal, MADHYA PRADESH**





**Practising Responsible Tourism  
5th WORKSHOP  
NOVEMBER 26- 27, 2010, Mahabalipuram, TAMIL NADU**



**Practising Responsible Tourism  
6th WORKSHOP  
Jammu, J&K, APRIL 6 & 7, 2011**





## MAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

### 7<sup>th</sup> Workshop

Yercaud, Tamil Nadu

September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011



## Practicing Responsible Tourism

### 8<sup>th</sup> WORKSHOP

September 26 & 27, 2011

SRINAGAR, J&K



**Practicing Responsible Tourism  
9th WORKSHOP  
September 30 & October 1, 2011  
LEH, J&K**



**Responsible Tourism –Issues & Practices  
10th WORKSHOP  
March 23-24, 2012, Guwahati, Assam**





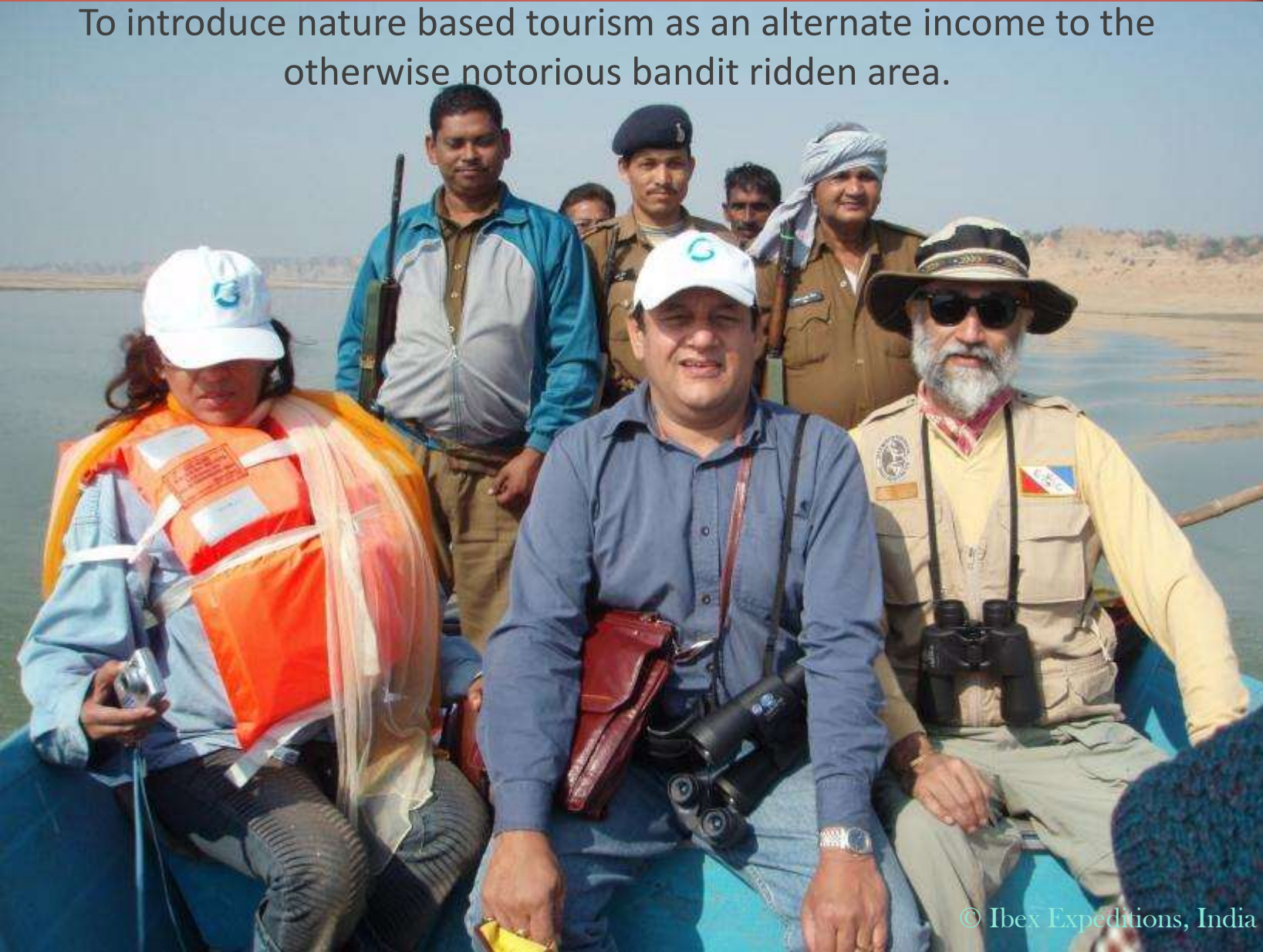
**Responsible Tourism – Issues & Practices**  
**11th WORKSHOP**  
**Aurangabad, Maharashtra**  
**April 27-28, 2012**



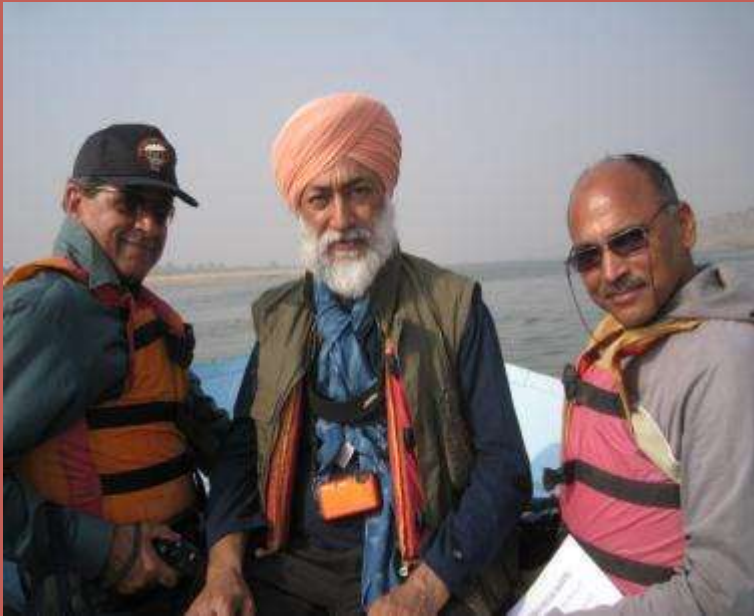


# Chambal River Ecotourism Expedition

To introduce nature based tourism as an alternate income to the otherwise notorious bandit ridden area.



**Second expedition in 2011 with Chairman of World Heritage Sites Committee, Sujit Banerji and CEO, MPEDB, Ajoy Bhattacharya to propose Chambal as a World Heritage site**





## Other Milestones

- Founding Members a part of the **Core Committee for developing the Sustainable Tourism Criteria (STCI)** of India based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC).
- Officer bearers part of the Committee to develop the **12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan on Tourism** with regard to Sustainable Tourism Policies.
- Principal Partner of **Workshop on wildlife tourism organised by CII** in Bhopal, October 2011.
- Members serve on **National Tourism Advisory Council**.
- Members involved in pioneering project of trying to **rehabilitate dacoits into naturalists** in the region of Chambal along with the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board.





# GSTC Principles

1. Effective sustainability planning
2. Maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community
3. Enhancing cultural heritage
4. Reducing negative impacts to the environment.



So what can the Travel fraternity &  
Governments do ?

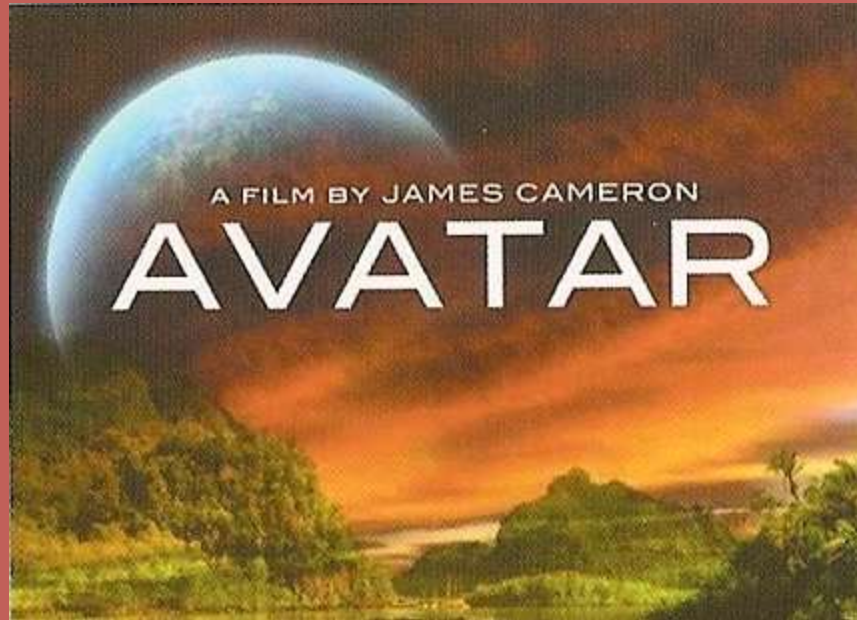
A LOT !

We are the spearhead of the change that  
tourism can make.

If we are thinking about Change,  
then lets believe WE can be it.



# Avatar, the movie



The film's environmental message  
is set against a spiritual backdrop.

The trees, the forests and everything in them are not merely  
part of a natural ecology,  
but a spiritual one.



The Tree of Souls  
is us sitting here in the audience.

We need to undertake some  
healing and worship.

