



**Report on International Workshop on
“Sustainable and Ethical Travel: Practices and Prospects”**

On Wednesday, Mar 1, 2023

Venue: 18-A Satsang Vihar Marg, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi-110067

**Report Prepared by Tripti Soni, Abhayacitti Pandey, Tannistha Ghosh and Saumya, Masters students
at SHRM**

School of Heritage Research and Management (SHRM), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, organized a one-day workshop on “Sustainable and Ethical Travel: Practices and Prospects” as part of ongoing programs organized by the University in honor of India’s first G20 Presidency. It included 12 presentations by various speakers of national and international repute who brought forth their unique perspectives and topics in connection to the 2030 sustainable development goals, methods, practices, modes of transportation, emerging social, ethical, and environmental challenges, and new outlooks and entrepreneurial ventures in the field of tourism.

The program began at 10 am with Prof. Rukmini Sen, Dean, School of Heritage Research and Management, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University of Delhi, warmly welcoming the dignitaries and students. Sustainable travel, eco-tourism, ways in which mass travel to tourist destinations ecologically affect the places, methods through which local communities are involved in any travel venture, the ethics of traveling in an age of climate change are some of the guiding thoughts behind the workshop. As part of the Tourism Working Group meetings of G 20, the five thrust areas in connection to the 2030 sustainable development goals are Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs and Destination Management. Keeping this as background and connecting it to the Urban 20 engagement group mandate of G20, namely promoting environmentally responsible behavior; the concepts which the workshop would connect are community, sustainability and entrepreneurial imaginations.



Prof. Rukmini Sen welcoming the keynote speaker Prof. Sanjay Chaturvedi and the discussant Dr. Rohit Negi

The keynote address was delivered by **Professor Sanjay Chaturvedi, Professor, of the Department of International Relations and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, at South Asian University** on “Sustainable Tourism in the Anthropocene: Perspectives on and from the White Continent”. He began his address with an important piece of advice to young minds – “*Remain nomadic.*” From his personal experience borne out of traveling over 50 countries for academic pursuits, he realized how the location of a tourist spot dictates its geo-political stand in the world. He highlighted the importance of Tourism and the UN Sustainable Development Goals and acknowledged the opportunity presented by India’s Presidential term to the G20 Summit to resume engagement in the Arctic. According to him, humanity has become the most significant geological force to reckon with, ushering in an unfortunate age, in which human activities have impacted the environment enough to constitute a distinct geological change, known as the ‘Anthropocene’ The current climate change is making our world even more unequal where differences are not between rich and poor, but between the chance of survival and depravity of even basic livable atmosphere. This is threatening the ‘ontological security’ of our entire society. He gave insights into current and future challenges regarding managing tourism and shipping safety in Antarctica. He spoke about the imperative of climate universalism and how we no longer hold the homocentric view of the earth, despite the differences we share. He acquainted us with a brief history of ventures in Antarctica undertaken by various countries. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the importance of mapping the gaze of tourists and reminded us not to miss the “*Geography of Empathy*”

Dr. Rohit Negi, Associate professor, at the School of Global Affairs and Director, Centre for Community Knowledge, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi chaired this session and provided rich context to Prof Chaturvedi's presentation.

The first session, post-tea break, was on "Ecological/Egalitarian Travel and Destination Management: Delhi as site chaired by Prof Krishna Menon, Professor, School of Human Studies. A very intriguing online session by the first speaker, Dr. Rashmi Sadana, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University, USA featured remarkable ethnographic research on the Delhi metro under the title "Metronama: Travel, Public Transport and Mobility in Delhi" The presentation featured Dr. Sadana's book *Metronama: Scenes from the Delhi Metro* as it offered a peek into the world of urban transformation using an intimate outlook. The speaker discussed the ways through which one can carefully study the anthropology of infrastructure. The emergence of the metro as a new social stage was a viewpoint, frequently raised by the speaker. The Ethics of Transport and continual problems faced by the public in the areas of public transport were also discussed. The role of the metro as a social leveler in Delhi was an interesting approach to the subject matter. The force of intersecting mobilities interplay with each other in this mode of public transport. The discussions around class are viewed from a gendered lens as well. The speaker integrated an ethnographic approach into her study as a practical and observational tool. Observing the mundane acts of life in the metro can act as a pathbreaking and transformational tool in the lives of the people. It enthusiastically excites curious brains who don't belong to the discipline of sociology, to ponder over this study. The role of sustainability and an increasing concern for safety issues were some of the significant pointers of the presentation. The session ended with questions and thoughts shared by Dr. Ishita Dey who sought to find the role the metro has played in the lives of transitory laborers. Furthermore, discussions around the impact induced by terrorist attacks on modes of public transport were also discussed.

As the second speaker of the session, Ms. Nitika Arora, Co-founder of Darwesh Taleweavers, hosted one of the most interactive and engaging presentations of the workshop titled "Monuments as Archives of a city's Metamorphosis". She started off her presentation with an emphasis on Rudyard Kipling's quotation - "*If history was taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten*". These words wonderfully presented the idea behind Darwesh's genesis in front of us. The organization is a melting pot of our culture, heritage, histories, and stories stunningly weaved with performative art. Through the performance-oriented heritage walks organized by them, the team aims at sharing knowledge about our past in the form of a sublime experience rather than through a tedious and monotonous monologue being delivered. Ms. Arora gave several illustrations of monuments and areas where the organization has successfully managed to humanize the heritage monuments, lanes, and bylanes in different parts of various cities. Heritage monuments and structures such as Jahanpanah Fort, Shahnara Bagh, and Roshnara Bagh have hoards of travelers, now interested in witnessing the theatricality pertaining to the lost stories of these sites. These monuments have been visited with the same outlook for ages. Now viewed as being juxtaposed with modern retellings, they link the city's history to the personal experience of generations who have lived around it, which adds to the listener's wonder. Be it looking at history, from a gendered perspective

through Begum Samru Mahal or examining the legacy that revolves around the local rituals associated with Begumpur, Ms. Singh gave us reasons to revisit these places of profound interest with a refreshing approach. The talk encouraged us as young minds to focus our attention not only towards the off-repeated mainstream narratives but rather towards what was happening alongside at the brinks as well.

Monuments were shown as archives of human struggle specifically during the partition era. Several interesting walks including the enactment of Ramleela from Hanuman's perspective and understanding of the city of djinns through the narratives of the natives were also discussed. One of the best impacts that such walks create is through creating awareness among the locals about the monuments and areas where they have been residing for generations on end, yet failed to gather enough awareness regarding the same. With a better understanding, the locals have now become increasingly sensitive towards their lost stories and built heritage.



Ms. Nitika Arora with Prof. Krishna Menon and Dr. Ishita Dey

The third paper of the first session was presented by Dr. Sima Yadav, Assistant Professor, School of Heritage Research and Management, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University. The paper was titled “Havelis in Delhi: A case study of the development of heritage tourism and entrepreneurship”. The paper aimed at the heritage havelis in the area of Shahjahanabad, Chandni Chowk, and Delhi, which are now getting lost with the ravage of time. The paper focused on the importance of conserving and preserving these chapters of history which do not reflect the

life of the royal class but the daily life of the common people living around during the Mughal era which covered around 80 percent of the area. It stated that originally the city of Chandni Chowk or Shahjahanabad was designed for a population of 60,000 which has now increased to the amount of around 2 lakhs, which is a terrifying situation for the area, and in between this chaos the havelis are losing their prominence. Thus the role of information technology, such as audio guides and GPS Systems is eminent. Within crowded areas they act as a guide to havelis, helping us navigate the overcrowded narrow lanes efficiently. The havelis are essential assets of the cultural heritage of the time, thus ensuring their protection is the ultimate need of today. The paper discussed various institutions and communities which got involved in the protection of these havelis. The government institutions which are involved are ASI, SRDC, DDA, MCD, and DMRC and some of the private institutions are INTACH, Digital Heritage, e- heritage, and UNESCO. As the city's landscapes changed in the years 1857, 1911, and 1947 the need for these initiatives consistently increased per year. Not only institutions but local communities and groups of household women have also participated actively in the act of protection. Till now around 800 havelis have been identified for conservation and preservation. Begum Samru ki haveli is the best example of the process of conservation and preservation. The next generation armed with new ideas has great potential to turn these heritage spots into booming locations for tourists.

The fourth paper of the first session was based on the topic: Sustainable cycle tours in a Mega City, an initiative of "Delhi by Bicycle". This paper was presented by Mr. Himanshu Shekhar, CEO, and Tour Leader. The paper presented the importance of the cycle as the best option to explore a city through its length and breadth. Urban tourism is an important component of the tourism world today, but it has to be done in a sustainable manner so that it does not harm the environment, thus cycle becomes the first and foremost option for it. Cycles are not only the best green traveling option, but also provide us a different perspective of the urban centers which we experience locked inside a car window. This campaign of Delhi-by-cycle was started in Shahjahanabad and covered around 6000 kilometers of cycling along with guests from around 50 + countries. The speaker mentioned the active interest shown by foreign tourists in this initiative, mentioning the CEO of the giant OTT platform Netflix participating in his tours. He also mentioned the challenges he faced while leading a cycle tour in Delhi -lack of proper cycle lanes and proper manufacturing of cycles, mismanaged traffic, pollution, and the prevalent social stigma about cycles. He concluded his presentation by encouraging young minds to develop more socially and environmentally conscious ideas to revolutionize and introduce innovations in the field of tourism.



Members of audience listening intently as Mr. Himanshu talks about combating the stigma around riding a cycle around the city

The fifth paper of the session was on the topic 'The Curated Landscape of Imperial 'New Delhi'' presented by Shalini Awasthi, Assistant Professor, School of Heritage Research and Management, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University. This paper presented an extraordinary view of New Delhi, designed by the British East India Company to create it as the Imperial city of their rule. The paper discussed the aspects of Imperial Ecology across the area of New Delhi. Some of these aspects were the superb layout, roads laid out with trees on both sides, and the wealth of flowers. The British planned to plan the city with wide roads and encouraged afforestation along the roads. During the time period of 1919 to 1925, the British planned to introduce around 10,000 trees to create green routes. The paper focused on three main areas of Delhi which were planned with trees, for example, the restricted residency area which is the Lutyens, Bungalow Zone. This had around 47.86 percent of green cover which is the maximum in Delhi. This is the place where we find the Bombay Ebony trees which are native to Delhi's soil. The next place was the Viceregal Gardens to Arogya Vanam, which was earlier a classic English garden that is now converted into an herbal garden or a spiritual garden. This garden is now designed in a way of Yogic postures for medicinal and aromatic plants. The last part is the Central Ridge which was planned and executed in 1912, the Raisina hills. In 1914 and 1939 the entire ridge was planted. She ended the session with an emphasis on non-consumptive and non-extractive tourism. She was of the opinion that we should collectively strive to create ecological awareness and ecocentric values along with the development of a better curated knowledge-based tourism.

The post-lunch break session was on "Sustainable Travel, Tourism, and Entrepreneurship" chaired by Prof Rukmini Sen, Dean SHRM. The first presentation was by Prof. Kiranmayi Bhusi, Professor, School of Social Science, IGNOU on Experiences of Fiddleheads Farm, a food practitioner's laboratory in Uttarakhand. She began her presentation by acknowledging Prof Chaturvedi's keynote address about the age of the 'Anthropocene', the creation of the great Himalayas out of tectonic activities, and highlighted how geological factors play a key role in tourism. Hence, sustainable tourism practices are of paramount importance. She shared interesting facts for a common Delhite- their favorite Mother Dairy booths and Safal stores source the majority of their products from Uttarakhand. Her experience with the food lab and interactions with the local

community of Uttarakhand made her realize the tacit and inherent traditional wisdom passed down from generations of natives of Uttarakhand which has the immense potential to be capitalized on. She was of the opinion that tourism should be experimental and immersive ways of traveling should be adopted. She drew parallels between berry-picking activities in Europe as a tourism experience to connect more to local culture to fiddlehead harvesting by cutting the produce close to the ground as a way to experience Uttarakhand's natural heritage. She mentioned challenges faced by small farmsteads, evidenced by the lack of cold storage and processing facilities and innovative agro-culinary input by states or individuals. She also noticed how gender discrimination manifests itself in the form of labor-intensive farm work done by women as alcoholism in men remains a rampant issue in Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand is the first state to allow the cultivation of large-scale industrial hemp seeds. She informed us about the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation to declare 2019-2028 as the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDIFF). She ended the session with a warning that we will all be 'ecological refugees' in the future if we do not start taking action toward sustainability.

The next speaker was Mr. Abhishek Chandra, Ph.D. Scholar, School of Liberal Studies, Dr . B R Ambedkar University Delhi, presented a portion of his research paper in which he focused on the negative impacts of mass tourism and suggested an alternative aspect when it comes to dealing with the problem of the aforementioned problem. The title of his paper was Sustainable Travelling and Homestays: Development Practices in Nainital, Uttarakhand. He highlighted his concerns regarding the increasing number of tourists visiting small villages in Uttarakhand every year and how these numbers are negatively impacting the locals and the locations. While explaining the two main aspects of alternative tourism which are Ecotourism and Responsible tourism (sustainable). As part of responsible tourism, he highlighted how the concept of homestays can actually help the environment and the locals, and create a better experience for the travelers as well. He spoke about the benefits of homestays and helped us understand how homestays allow the guests to experience the lifestyle of the locals and allow them to observe the most authentic experience of the destination. Homestays are also being promoted by the government with the outline of Self Employment Schemes through which we can understand the impact of homestays as it not only plays its role in sustainable tourism but also helps create self-employment opportunities for the locals. He concluded his session by emphasizing the importance of understanding how tourism has become a crucial facet of the state's economic boom. Mr. Chandra further emphasized the need for travelers to prioritize nature conservation and focus on low-impact, non-consumptive, and ethical travel alternatives. The session concluded with the discussant for this session Dr. Budhaditya Das, Assistant Professor, School of Human Ecology, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, questioning the perspective of the homestay owners with regards to the government taking action and promoting the concept of homestays to raise awareness for sustainable tourism and traveling.

The next presentation was titled 'INTACH: Development and Planning for rural tourism in Raghurajpur, Odisha'. The presenter Dr. Divay Gupta, Principal Director, Architecture Heritage Department, INTACH started off the session by presenting some startling facts and statistical data about the heritage tourism status and potential of India. The country ranks 4th/189 in the tourism assets and diversity index and 40th/136 in the Tourism Competitiveness Index. Dr. Gupta discussed a particular case study with us focussing on the

Raghurajpur Village of Orissa. The village presents one of the remarkable examples of how INTACH has played an instrumental role in developing a sustainable and lucrative rural tourism plan. What was once a service village of the Jagannath Puri Temple has now successfully been transformed into an Arts and Crafts Village. The organization had successfully joined hands with the funded pilot rural tourism scheme, in 2005 under the Government of India. Almost all of the approximately 110 households have owned the reputation of artist studios in the village area. He highlighted though the village had a rich history of tangible and intangible heritage, it had still lost its status despite tracing a rich legacy. Thereafter, the work conducted by INTACH in the area with respect to the revival of the radically fading art forms such as Gotipua, and Pattachitra accompanied by the much wonderful Guru- Shishya Parampara is absolutely remarkable. Through the Mural Paintings program, the organization managed to attract investments and opportunities from business houses, hotels, and private individuals and directed them successfully toward the generation-old successors of the art form. The Mural program has also enabled the skilled women of the village to now involve themselves in the art of painting Pattachitra, which was formerly prohibited to exercise the art form. Through such schemes, the tourism potential of the village increased along with the generation of employment opportunities, strengthening infrastructure, and targeted marketing promoting the vernacular. Several rural tourism facilities such as the integrated development program incorporated plans with reference to Heritage Interpretation Centers, tourist cottages and food outlets run by local communities, street signage, open-air theaters, nature walks, and so on. The vibrancy and artistic charm of Raghurajpur, have achieved success in the form of several national awards being awarded to local artists as well. So much so, that the Odisha Tourism Tagline itself states: *To experience India come to Odisha, to experience Odisha come to Raghurajpur.*



Dr. Divay Gupta talking about the rich cultural heritage of Raghurajpur

The next paper was presented by Dr. Riddhi Bhandari, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities, Sonipat on “Of Touts, Fraudsters, and Commission: Thinking through The Travails of Travel and Tourism Entrepreneurship (in Agra). She proposed that ethical tourism practices cannot be discussed without acknowledging unethical practices prevalent today. Her paper began with a list of practical advice and tips shared by various tourists who have been to Agra to marvel at the beauty of the Taj Mahal, only to realize there is an ugly but realistic aspect of saving oneself from harassment, fraudsters, touts and ‘lapkas’ (local goons). She had consulted various sources such as official state records, traveler accounts in digital public forums such as TripAdvisor, media reports as well as personal accounts. People have reported that auto-rickshaw drivers charge as high as 45% commission for coercing tourists into staying at a hotel or bringing them to a store. Many tourists have also recalled encounters with Lapkas escalating to violence. Tour guides have long been looked down upon by the authorities as a public nuisance. The episodic ‘dharpakad’ and clearing of out of touts when national and international dignitary visits lead to loss of jobs. It raises important questions regarding the political economy’s aspect of tourism and even provides a background to question the legal right to work. The session was followed by questions from students and they learned Jaipur and Mathura stand second on this list of tourist spots where people have faced similar issues.



Dr Riddhi Bhandari talking about her in depth research in Agra and raising questions around (un) ethics of travel

The last session to conclude the workshop was presented by Ms. Ruchi, Ph.D. Scholar, School of Global Affairs, Dr. B R Ambedkar University Delhi who presented her research paper on Urban Political Ecology of Mass Tourism and Water: A Case Study of Dharamshala (smart city), Himachal Pradesh. It focused on the negative effects of mass tourism with a special focus on the current status of the water resources in Dharamshala. In her session, she emphasized the negative impacts of overcrowding on fragile environments and on the water logging system of the destination. The focus of the presentation was on the increasing water scarcity in Dharamshala. The water demand has increased by approximately 3 times from 2001 to 2013 and is expected to increase more by 2046, raising concerns among the locals, as due to shortage of water dozens of hotels have been closed off and in turn affecting the livelihood of locals. The discrimination in the allotment of water in Dharamshala was evident in a map displayed during the presentation, which clearly indicated more quantity of water being received by hotels hosting rich tourists. On the other hand, impoverished areas of the city could only receive water for a short and fixed duration of time. The presentation ended on a positive note with the speaker highlighting how the government has taken action by controlling the distribution of water to all the regions equally and also undertaken steps to manage the tourist inflow. Such solutions can help in fixing a discriminatory water distribution policy.

With this last presentation, the One Day Workshop on Sustainable and Ethical Travel: Practices and Prospects held by the School of Heritage Research and Management came to an end. The session was packed with new information, which opened doors for new discussions among students and scholars alike. It stirred intellectual debates among audience members and encouraged them to examine the discipline of Tourism and its many facets critically.



Speakers, discussants and Chairs at the Workshop



Full participation from students of SHRM till the end of the Workshop

