

# Embracing Business Sustainability Through Innovation and Creativity in the Service Sector

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Grameen Bank has gained a significant position in the global microfinance sphere that ensures the presence of the poor in the mainstream financial scenario. The Grameen Bank microfinance concept has been adopted in over 40 countries and has had significant success in a variety of societies. This bank has served 9.44 million clients and 2,568 branches. GB provides services in 81,678 villages, covering more than 93% of the total villages in Bangladesh. In order to get a loan from the GB, rural women have to be extremely poor. This bank's intention is to remove poverty and unemployment through the business and make them economically self-sustainable. GB works in Bangladesh and developing countries. GB has drawn global attention because of its aims and easy money lending mechanism to the rural poor people for making themselves financially strong and diminishing the rate of poverty and unemployment.

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Conservation of intangible cultural heritage is important for any rural tourism destination. The rich intangible cultural heritage can be preserved using advanced digital technologies for future generations. Digital technologies provide the means of documenting, recovering, and presenting different components of the intangible cultural heritage of a rural destination. However, one of the challenges is finding appropriate forms, together with efficient methods, to document the ephemeral aspects of rural intangible heritage. Another barrier is finding effective ways to communicate the knowledge inextricably linked to people or communities. This chapter outlines state-of-the-art models, projects, and technical practices that have advanced the digitization lifecycle for intangible cultural heritage resources. The chapter further aims to identify the advancements and gaps in the existing conventions and to envision opportunities for transmitting embodied knowledge in intangible heritage.

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*Wendy C. Sealy, University of Chichester, UK*

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*Alice Jalley, University of Chichester, UK*

The scarce supply of labour and of a competent workforce in the hospitality sector has been researched and debated for decades. Although the sector is important to the UK economy contributing £130 billion pounds to the gross domestic product, the inability of the sector to attract and retain the best talent remains an age-old problem. This chapter is a commentary of the current debate on the recruitment crisis based on an examination of the most recent academic literature. The research finds that although many recommendations have been proffered by researchers to solve these problems, the issues and mistakes made by hospitality employers appear to remain the same. Possible best practice solutions are explored. Reviews of scholarly journals, books, and materials from the domains of marketing, human resources, hospitality management, and organisational behaviour were used to find evidence about the current trends of thought, research findings, and best practices in this field. The chapter concludes with three conceptual models that summarise the critical issues and possible solutions.

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*Salinda Weerasinghe, Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

*Darshana Sedera, Southern Cross University, Australia*

The present study aimed to explore the role of knowledge management practices in promoting creativity and innovation in the service sector concerning the banking industry. The study assumes knowledge as an intangible internal asset and innovation as a way to develop sustainable strategic capabilities that are difficult to imitate. This quantitative study tested five proposed hypotheses on 437 responses collected from banking employees through the PLS-SEM method. Light indicated that knowledge sharing, application, and protection directly contributed to firm innovation, whereas knowledge creation encounters complete mediation through employee creativity. The study combines RBV and KM perspectives in developing long-term strategic capability and strengthens the evolutionary view of economists that new knowledge is based on existing knowledge, conforming the effect of knowledge protection to knowledge sharing. The study develops a knowledge management framework incorporating working/operational knowledge protection as one of the main dimensions of the knowledge management process.

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*Amrik Singh, Lovely Professional University, India*

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The tourism and hospitality sector fosters growth, prospers the hosts, and also offers immense potential for employment in various sections. Innovation is a decisive process for the well-being of an organization. With economic crises after COVID-19 and the slow recovery that continues, the authors believe that a solution can be improving the capacity to research and innovate to achieve sustainable development. The purpose of this chapter is to develop a meaningful debate on the creativity and innovations in the forms of new ideas, methods, and technology to better meet the evolving requirement of the organization and

workforce sustainability. Further, exploring the future needs and circumstances rather than simply finding some responses to the situation, this chapter highlights challenges and prospects related to achieving creativity and innovation for business sustainability in tourism and hospitality.

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*Shaheed Khan, Dharthi NGO, India*

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Sustainable ecotourism, its promotion, and its impacts have a bearing on the world considering the fact that tourism, travel, and hospitality moved millions around the world and ensured a way of life for the local communities, governments, and businesses. But what drives sustainable ecotourism? Is it the destination, the product on offer, or anything else? It is the people, maybe the community, maybe one individual, who provides a phenomenal direction and ensures all others follow in the right spirit. The chapter is a tribute to four Indians who have contributed to sustainable ecotourism leadership and ensured various products that have helped ecotourism promotion and impacted the lives of the communities they have served. The work of these leaders has been mapped to two frameworks, which itself provide ample food for thought for the multitudes to adopt and move forward.

## **Chapter 7**

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*Mehmet Tekeli, Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, Turkey*

Today, while all countries worldwide emphasize the significance of environmental awareness, among the sector areas, the tourism sector is the one that should focus on this matter most. The current study aimed, with examples from the tourism industry, to reveal the perspective of tourism businesses on green innovation practices, their practices, and the results obtained. After giving information about the innovation concept, scope, and types in general, this study provided fundamental explanations about the green innovation concept, scope, and types and dealt with the concept of green innovation in tourism businesses. Finally, the current study that provided general information about tourism environmental awareness certificates assessed the tourism sector by presenting examples of green innovation applications.

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*Ebru Kemer, Nigde Omar Halisdemir University, Turkey*

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Rapid technological developments have affected business areas and caused differences in products and services. The tourism and hospitality industry has also been affected by these rapid developments, and the use and importance of new technologies have increased. In this context, this research aims to evaluate the use of artificial intelligence and robotic technologies in the field of tourism marketing with data obtained from secondary data. As a result of the research, it has been determined that artificial intelligence and robotic technology applications in the tourism sector offer personalized and new opportunities for tourists in their travel decisions. Within the scope of the research, it has been suggested that these opportunities offered through big data are important in reducing operating costs and ensuring personnel productivity

and competitive advantage. Therefore, using artificial intelligence in tourism marketing positively contributes to the systematic analysis of customer information.

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*Pramendra Singh, Amity University, Noida, India*

*Disha Sharma, Amity University, Raipur, India*

Technological innovations are bringing major breakthroughs and radical changes in the way businesses function. These technological innovations are helping all the industries to smooth their functions and provide better experiences to the customers. The tourism industry is also witnessing tremendous improvements in technological innovations. The chapter aims to study the different types of technologies that have emerged in recent times in tourism businesses. This study is conceptual in nature and uses various secondary sources for data collection along with the study of various cases to comprehend the usage of technology. The study concludes in supporting the statement made by world's largest and nodal tourism organization, United Nations World Tourism Organization, that technology and digitization are emerging, disrupting, and affecting our lives in such a way that augurs the begging of the next generation industrial revolution.

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*Md Sadeque Imam Shaikh, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London, UK*

*Anupam Mazumdar, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London, UK*

Innovation management is a prime concept of making changes and innovations in the business to make the business globally famous. The conceptual understanding of the innovative strategies has been covered in this book. Besides this, the discussion of key elements and the challenges a company might face to implement innovation has been discussed here. Identification and discussion, including the application of the innovation, have been covered here. The impact of the implementation of innovation-based managerial theories as well as practices have also been evaluated within the study to develop a critical understanding of business proceedings.

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*Peterson K. Ozili, Central Bank of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria*

This chapter examines the role of central bank digital currency for poverty reduction and sustainable development. In the chapter, the author argues that a CBDC can eliminate poverty by first increasing financial inclusion which then gives poor people access to affordable credit and other basic financial services which they can use to improve their welfare, thereby enabling them to rise above poverty. This argument is valid only if a central bank digital currency is specially designed to incorporate features that increase financial inclusion for poor banked and unbanked adults. The argument may not apply to cases where a CBDC is not designed to increase financial inclusion as is the case in developed countries.

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<i>Elmarie Kritzinger, University of South Africa, South Africa</i>	

The purpose of the study reported on in this chapter was to explore and attempt to answer the primary research question: To what extent can embracing business sustainability through digital transformation, implemented via unified communication and collaboration (UC&C) technologies, impact innovation and productivity in the global automotive sector? This will be presented against the background of embracing business sustainability through innovation and creativity in the service sector. Apart from creativity, collaboration, and generating savings featured in the subtitle of the chapter, changing work practices were also identified as a factor impacting innovation.

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<i>Manish Kumar Hooda, Semiconductor Laboratory, India</i>	

Digitalization of financial services has stimulated regulatory and regulatory concerns, technological progress, new capacities and client expectations, and has exposed the sector to competition. A dramatic, expensive, and risky turning moment challenged the conventional banking industry's viability. However, some safety and ethical difficulties still exist when it comes to the adaptation of business sustainability. Global transformation, harmonization, and convergence will be expanded, turning financial services into intelligent services in the services sector. The editorial argues that for digital transformation, we must first expand our understanding of the interactions and interrelationships that contribute to knowledge, creativity, and value creation among society's participants. Cybersecurity is a modern topic that is becoming a major concern owing to the epidemic in the industrial and service sectors. This research exposes cybersecurity strategy, formulation, management, sustainability issues, and organizational and corporate culture management in digital transformation.

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<i>Jana Deprez, KU Leuven, Belgium</i>	
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Organizations need to innovate to stay relevant, for example, through the innovative work behavior of employees. Previous studies highlighted how different innovative phases may require other leadership behavior. In the present study, the authors aim to discover which type of transformational leadership behaviour best encourages employees in which innovative phase, both from the perspective of the manager and the employee. They conducted interviews with 42 leaders and 43 followers within four innovative companies in the e-tailing sector. They use thematic analysis and quantization of the data.



The results show that not every subcomponent of transformational leadership has the same influence on each phase of innovative work behavior, nor with the same magnitude. The most prevalent relationship is between intellectual stimulation and idea generation. They report specific actions by leaders that promote innovative work behavior in followers.

## **Chapter 15**

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*Rajwinder Kaur, Chandigarh University, India*

Artificial intelligence in human resources plays an important and crucial role in the 21st century. It is helpful in gathering, analysing, and presenting data in such a way that is more helpful for the HR professional to use. As technological advancements happen in the era, artificial intelligence helps to fulfil organisational demands as well as employee demands. Artificial intelligence eases the work of HR as well as effectively provides efficient work. Therefore, the present study explores the implementation of artificial intelligence in human resource functions. It further explores the various benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence in human resource functions. Finally, the study concludes that the work of artificial intelligence can be used in all areas of the HR functions. No doubt in the initial stage of artificial intelligence implementation the HR professionals and organization can face some challenges, but after its successful implementation, it is considered the best tool for HR functions.

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Airbnb in the Local Neighbourhood: Innovation vs. Disruption..... 249

*Vipin Nadda, University of Sunderland in London, UK*

*Markéta Pospíšilová, University of Sunderland in London, UK*

Airbnb is a platform allowing a peer-to-peer accommodation option for people sharing their own extra space. As simple it sounds, there are many challenges behind its implementation. It is crucial to look at both sides of the coin to understand not only what it brings but what it causes as well. Airbnb is a comparatively new phenomenon of the modern times and changes the traditional tourist behaviour as well as accommodation situation in the market. Initially, the general perception was that Airbnb is not a threat to the traditional accommodation as it attracts completely new customers. It is a big part of sharing economy and brings both advantages and disadvantages. The sharing economy is a new dimension of economy, and the classic structure is rapidly changing. It is a sustainable form of service provision and contributes to inclusive destination development. On the other hand, as Airbnb lies in providing accommodation by non-commercial residents, there is an overall lack of control of whether the host is reliable and if it is secure.

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Managing the Service in a Small Hotel by Self-Service Technology Adoption: The Customer  
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Modern technology is creating customer experience. Its algorithm could remember, predict, and provide customized needs of customers. The self-service technology (SST) is a service innovation that communicates with users through either internet-based social media or applications. Yet, the hotels in Thailand are like other businesses that applied SST. The employees could better communicate, create human relationship, and understand profoundly customer needs than technology. Therefore, the adoption technology in hotels, especially small hotels, must be efficient and effective. This study aims to assess the SST components that serve the small hotel customers' needs and evaluate electronic service quality and technology adoption leading to satisfaction and repurchase intention. This study mainly used quantitative method by structural equation modelling. The scope of the study is customers who experienced using small hotel in Nakhon Ratchasima Province in Thailand. Nakhon Ratchasima is the fifth biggest province in Thailand and one of the top destinations of Thai people.

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## Preface

With the ever-increasing pressure and rivalry in the global business environment, businesses must develop sustainable practices that set them apart from the competition. Innovation and creativity are critical aspects of business that must be implemented in all areas for companies to not only survive but thrive.

*Embracing Business Sustainability Through Innovation and Creativity in the Service Sector* provides comprehensive research about sustainable business through innovation and creativity in the service sector and aims to contribute to the knowledge of various sustainable business practices. Covering key topics such as tourism, hospitality, wealth creation, and entrepreneurship, this premier reference source is ideal for business owners, managers, industry professionals, researchers, scholars, academicians, practitioners, instructors, and students.

The brief about various chapters is as follows.

The first chapter provides insight as to how Grameen Bank has gained a significant position in the global microfinance sphere that ensure the presence of poor in the mainstream financial scenario. The Grameen Bank microfinance concept has been adopted in over 40 countries and has had significant success in a variety of societies. This bank has served 9.44 million clients and 2,568 branches, GB provides services in 81,678 villages, covering more than 93 percent of the total villages in Bangladesh. To get lone from the GB, rural women must be extremely poor. This bank intention is to remove poverty and unemployment through the business and make them self-economic sustainably. GB does not only work in Bangladesh it also working developing countries. GB drawn global attention because of its aims and easy money lending mechanism to the rural poor people for making themselves financially strong and diminish the rate of poverty and unemployment.

The second chapter is about digitally sustaining the rural intangible cultural heritage. Conservation of intangible cultural heritage is important for any rural tourism destination. The rich intangible cultural heritage can be preserved using advanced digital technologies for future generations. Digital technologies provide the means of documenting, recovering, and presenting different components of the intangible cultural heritage of a rural destination. However, one of the challenges is finding appropriate forms, together with efficient methods, to document the ephemeral aspects of rural intangible heritage. Another barrier is finding effective ways to communicate the knowledge inextricably linked to people or communities. This chapter outlines state-of-the-art models, projects, and technical practices that have advanced the digitization lifecycle for intangible cultural heritage resources. The chapter further aims to identify the advancements and gaps in the existing conventions and to envision opportunities for transmitting embodied knowledge in intangible heritage.

The third chapter highlights the recruitment crisis in the British hospitality industry: a case for more sustainable practices. The scarce supply of labour and of a competent workforce in the hospitality sec-

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tor has been researched and debated for decades. Although the sector is important to the UK economy contributing £130 billion pounds to the Gross Domestic Product, the inability of the sector to attract and retain the best talent remains an age-old problem. This paper is a commentary of the current debate on the recruitment crisis based on an examination of the most recent academic literature. The research finds that although many recommendations have been proffered by researchers to solve these problems the issues and mistakes made by hospitality employers appear to remain the same. Possible best practice solutions are explored. Reviews of scholarly journals, books and materials from the domains of marketing, human resources, hospitality management and organisational behaviour were used to find evidence about the current trends of thought, research findings and best practices in this field. The chapter concludes with three conceptual models that summarise the critical issues and possible solutions.

The fourth chapter is aimed to explore the role of knowledge management practices in promoting creativity and innovation in the service sector concerning the banking industry. The study assumes knowledge as an intangible internal asset and innovation as a way to develop sustainable strategic capabilities that are difficult to imitate. This quantitative study tested five proposed hypotheses on 437 responses collected from banking employees through the PLS-SEM method. Light indicated that knowledge sharing, application, and protection directly contributed to firm innovation, whereas knowledge creation encounters complete mediation through employee creativity. The study combines RBV and KM perspectives in developing long-term strategic capability and strengthens the evolutionary view of economists that new knowledge is based on existing knowledge, conforming the effect of knowledge protection to knowledge sharing. The study develops a knowledge management framework incorporating working/operational knowledge protection as one of the main dimensions of the knowledge management process.

The fifth chapter is about fostering creativity and innovation: tourism and hospitality perspective. This sector is the most progressive and fastest-growing not nationally, even globally. The tourism and hospitality sector fosters growth, prospers the hosts, and also offers immense potential for employment in various sections. Innovation is a decisive process for the well-being of an organization. With economic crises after COVID-19 and the slow recovery that continues, we believe that a solution can be improving the capacity to research and innovate to achieve sustainable development. The purpose of this chapter is to develop a meaningful debate on the creativity and innovations in the forms of new ideas, methods, and technology to better meet the evolving requirement of the organization and workforce sustainability. Further, exploring the future needs and circumstances rather than simply finding some responses to the situation, this chapter highlights challenges and prospects related to achieving creativity and innovation for business sustainability in tourism and hospitality.

The sixth chapter relates to the innovative practices in sustainable ecotourism promotion and impacts: changes through dynamic leadership. Sustainable Ecotourism, its promotion, its impacts have a bearing on the world considering the fact that tourism, travel and hospitality moved the millions around the world ensured a way of life for the local communities, governments and businesses. But what is that drives Sustainable Ecotourism in a way it happens; is it the destination, the product on offer or anything else? It is the people, may be the community, may be one individual, who provides a phenomenal direction and ensures all others follow in the right spirit. The Chapter is a tribute to four Indians who have contributed to Sustainable Ecotourism Leadership and ensured for various products that have helped in Ecotourism promotion and impacted the lives of the communities they have served and still continue. The work of these Leaders has been mapped to two frameworks, which itself will provide ample food for thought for the multitudes to adopt and move forward.

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The seventh chapter focus on the green innovation in tourism businesses. Today, while all countries worldwide emphasize the significance of environmental awareness, among the sector areas, the tourism sector is the one that should focus on this matter most. The current study aimed, with examples from the tourism industry, to reveal the perspective of tourism businesses on green innovation practices, their practices, and the results obtained. After giving information about the “innovation concept, scope, and types” in general, this study provided fundamental explanations about the “green innovation concept, scope, and types” and dealt with the concept of green innovation in tourism businesses. Finally, the current study that provided general information about “tourism environmental awareness certificates” assessed the tourism sector by presenting examples of green innovation applications.

The eight chapter is about the application of artificial intelligence and robotics in tourism and hospitality marketing. Rapid technological developments have affected business areas and caused differences in products and services. The tourism and hospitality industry has also been affected by these rapid developments, and the use and importance of new technologies have increased. In this context, this research aims to evaluate the use of artificial intelligence and robotic technologies in the field of tourism marketing with data obtained from secondary data. As a result of the research, it has been determined that artificial intelligence and robotic technology applications in the tourism sector offer personalized and new opportunities for tourists in their travel decisions. Within the scope of the research, it has been suggested that these opportunities offered through big data are important in reducing operating costs and ensuring personnel productivity and competitive advantage. Therefore, using artificial intelligence in tourism marketing positively contributes to the systematic analysis of customer information.

The ninth chapter provides insight about technological innovations in tourism businesses: a study on contemporary trends. Technological innovations are bringing major breakthroughs and radical changes in the way businesses function. These technological innovations are helping all the industries to smoothen their functions and provide better experiences to the customers. Tourism industry also witnessing tremendous improvements in technological innovations. The article aims to study the different types of technologies which have emerged in recent times in tourism businesses. This study is conceptual in nature and uses various secondary sources for data collection along with the study of various cases to comprehend the usage of technology. The study concludes in supporting the statement made by world’s largest and nodal tourism organization “United Nations World Tourism Organization” that technology and digitization are emerging, disrupting and affecting our lives in such a way that augurs the begging of next generation industrial revolution.

The tenth chapter relates to management of innovation: theories and practice. Innovation management is a prime concept of making changes and innovations in the business to make the business globally famous. The conceptual understanding of the innovative strategies has been covered in this book. Besides this, the discussion of key elements and the challenges a company might face to implement innovation has been discussed here. Identification and discussion, including the application of the innovation, have been covered here. The impact of the implementation of innovation-based managerial theories as well as practices has also been evaluated within the study to develop a critical understanding of business proceedings.

The eleventh chapter focus on central bank digital currency, poverty reduction and the United Nations sustainable development goal. It examines the role of central bank digital currency for poverty reduction and sustainable development. In the paper, I argue that a CBDC can eliminate poverty by first increasing financial inclusion which then gives poor people access to affordable credit and other basic financial services which they can use to improve their welfare, thereby enabling them to rise above poverty. This

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argument is valid only if a central bank digital currency is specially designed to incorporate features that increase financial inclusion for poor banked and unbanked adults. The argument may not apply to cases where a CBDC is not designed to increase financial inclusion as is the case in developed countries.

The twelfth chapter's purpose is to explore and attempt to answer the primary research question: To what extent can embracing business sustainability through digital transformation, implemented via Unified Communication and Collaboration (UC&C) technologies, impact innovation and productivity in the global automotive sector? This will be presented against the background of embracing business sustainability through innovation and creativity in the service sector. Apart from creativity, collaboration and generating savings featured in the subtitle of the chapter, changing work practices were also identified as a factor impacting on innovation.

The thirteenth chapter is about cybersecurity strategy, formulation, management, and sustainability issues in digital transformation and sustainability. Digitalization of financial services has stimulated regulatory and regulatory concerns, technological progress, new capacities and client expectations, and has exposed the sector to competition. A dramatic, expensive, and risky turning moment challenged the conventional banking industry's viability. However, some safety and ethical difficulties still exist when it comes to the adaptation of business sustainability. Global transformation, harmonization, and convergence will be expanded, turning financial services into intelligent services in the services sector. The editorial argues for digital transformation., we must first expand our understanding of the interactions and interrelationships that contribute to knowledge, creativity, and value creation among society's participants. Cybersecurity is a modern topic that is becoming a major concern owing to the epidemic in the industrial and service sectors. This research exposes cybersecurity strategy, formulation, management, sustainability issues, and organizational and corporate culture management in digital transformation.

The fourteenth chapter relates to transformational leadership and innovative work behavior of employees: two sides of the story. Organizations need to innovate to stay relevant, for example through the innovative work behavior of employees. Previous studies highlighted how different innovative phases may require other leadership behavior. In the present study we aim to discover which type of transformational leadership behaviour, best encourages employees in which innovative phase, both from the perspective of the manager, and the employee. We conducted interviews with 42 leaders and 43 followers within four innovative companies in the e-tailing sector. We use thematic analysis and quantization of the data. The results show that not every subcomponent of transformational leadership has the same influence on each phase of innovative work behavior, nor with the same magnitude. The most prevalent relationship is between intellectual stimulation and idea generation. We report specific actions by leaders that promote innovative work behavior in followers.

The fifteenth chapter analysis artificial intelligence in human resource management: the next generation of technology for business excellence. Artificial intelligence in human resources plays an important and crucial role in today's time of the 21st century. It is helpful in gathering, analysing and presenting data in such a way that is more helpful for the HR professional to use. As technological advancements happen in the era, artificial intelligence helps to fulfil organisational demands as well as employee demands. Artificial intelligence eases the work of HR as well as effectively provides efficient work. Therefore, the present study explores the implementation of artificial intelligence in human resource functions. It further explores the various benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence in human resource functions. Finally, the study concludes that the work of artificial intelligence can be used in all areas of the HR functions. No doubt in the initial stage of artificial intelligence implementation the HR professionals

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and organization can face some challenges but after its successful implementation, it is considered the best tool for HR functions.

The sixteenth chapter is “Airbnb in the Local Neighbourhood: Innovation vs. Disruption.” Airbnb is a platform allowing peer-to-peer accommodation option for people sharing their own extra space. As simple it sounds, there are many challenges behind its implementation. It is crucial to look at both sides of the coin to understand not only what it brings but what it causes as well. Airbnb is a comparatively new phenomenon of the modern times and changes the traditional tourist behaviour as well as accommodation situation in the market. Initially, the general perception was that Airbnb is not a threat to the traditional accommodation as it attracts completely new customers. It is a big part of sharing economy and brings both advantages and disadvantages. Sharing economy is a new dimension of economy and the classic structure is rapidly changing. It is a sustainable form of service provision and contributes to inclusive destination development. On the other hand, as Airbnb lies in providing accommodation by non-commercial residents, there is an overall lack of control whether the host is reliable and if it is secure.

The seventeenth chapter helps to understand the management of service in small hotel by self-service technology adoption: the customers’ perspective from Thailand. Modern technology creating customer experience. Its algorithm could remember, predict, and provide customize needs of customers. The self-service technology (SST) is a service innovation that communicates with users through either the internet-based social media or applications. Yet, the hotels in Thailand are like other businesses that applied SST. However, the employees could better communicate, create human relationship, and understand profoundly of customer needs than technology. Therefore, the adoption technology in hotel especially small hotels must be efficient and effective. This study aims to assess the SST components that serve the small hotel customers’ needs, and evaluate electronic service quality and technology adoption leading to satisfaction and repurchase intention. This study mainly used quantitative method by structural equation modelling. The scope of study are customers who had experienced using small hotel in Nakhon Ratchasima Province in Thailand. Nakhon Ratchasima is the fifth biggest province in Thailand and one of the top destinations of Thai people.

On behalf of all the authors, we hope that you enjoy this book and that it will enhance your quest to develop in your field of endeavour.

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## Chapter 6

# Innovative Practices in Sustainable Ecotourism Promotion and Impacts: Changes Through Dynamic Leadership

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### ABSTRACT

*Sustainable ecotourism, its promotion, and its impacts have a bearing on the world considering the fact that tourism, travel, and hospitality moved millions around the world and ensured a way of life for the local communities, governments, and businesses. But what drives sustainable ecotourism? Is it the destination, the product on offer, or anything else? It is the people, maybe the community, maybe one individual, who provides a phenomenal direction and ensures all others follow in the right spirit. The chapter is a tribute to four Indians who have contributed to sustainable ecotourism leadership and ensured various products that have helped ecotourism promotion and impacted the lives of the communities they have served. The work of these leaders has been mapped to two frameworks, which itself provide ample food for thought for the multitudes to adopt and move forward.*

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## ***Innovative Practices in Sustainable Ecotourism Promotion and Impacts***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sustainability thinkers agree that sustainable development requires a change in the way we think (Marshall et al. 2011). Mackey and Sisodia (2013) mention that ‘Conscious leaders are usually strong individuals who possess exceptional moral courage and are able to withstand constant scrutiny and criticism from those who view business in a more traditional and narrow manner’. It is true that the Leaders who in India have focussed on Sustainable Ecotourism promotion in a direct or indirect sense have had difficulties, impediments which only shows the apathy that was exhibited towards the Leaders, whose only efforts have been to ensure sustainability and sustainability options. Today, when we look at the contributions, one clearly knows the efforts that were placed, and the ‘circumspect suspicion’ that the Management of these Leaders if they were in a formal environment of the Government or even the Private Sector would have had to go through. But come what may, these Leaders ensured for themselves, their conviction and their ability to stay ahead of the rest of us, move ahead, and contribute to the success in the domain of Sustainable Ecotourism, its promotion and the impacts that had larger ramifications on the community and the country.

### **ELEMENTS OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP**

Tideman (et al., 2013) put forward a framework of Sustainable Leadership (SL) which implied the development of three new mind-sets (Context, Consciousness and Continuity) and three new skill sets (Connectedness, Creativity and Collectiveness); which became the elements of SL in their research paper.

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*Table 1. Sustainable leadership elements adopted from Tideman (et al., 2013) to the indian scenario (Column 3)*

	SL Elements	Concepts (Economics and Business)	The Indian Context from a SL perspective
	1	2	3
	<i>Mind-set</i>		
1	Context	Recognising interdependence; complexity; ambiguity; interconnectedness; resource constraint; regulators; mega-trends	Regulations and complexity of law is multitude in India. How the Leaders are to figure out the nuances of managing change is a critical aspect.
2	Consciousness	Mind-sets; world-views; beliefs; mental models; attitudes	The <i>mores</i> and <i>folkways</i> contribute to much of the thought process and at times there is a fixation in the belief system, that will not move forward. How the Leaders make amends is critical to the scenario.
3	Continuity	Long-term horizon; courage; strength; common purpose; centredness; change processes	It is not about initiating a change or ushering in a thought process, it is how one can connect to the local scenario and move forward with strength on a continuous basis.
	<i>Skill set</i>		
4	Connectedness	Serving needs of all stakeholders; both long-term and short-term influencing; collaboration; trust; fairness; altruism; relatedness; needs instead of wants	With a myriad of stakeholders coming various economic, social and cultural background, the Leaders need to get to a better understanding which will ensure for themselves and the people with whom they are engaging.
5	Creativity	Innovation for sustainable shared value creation; sustainable business models; new value measurement models; flow	With multiple agencies and authorities, the Leaders in question need to ensure a creative connect with all stakeholders and business combinations for value creation on the short and long run.
6	Collectiveness	Scale up for collective impact; embedding sustainability in business structures; sustainable consumption	Considering the size of the nation, the Leaders need to ensure a community and societal connect which will ensure cumulative impacts of Economic, Environment, Socio-cultural, political as relevant to the geography and the community.

Roberts (2012) mentions, in order to be successful in the current context, transformational leaders typically exhibit the following five competencies:

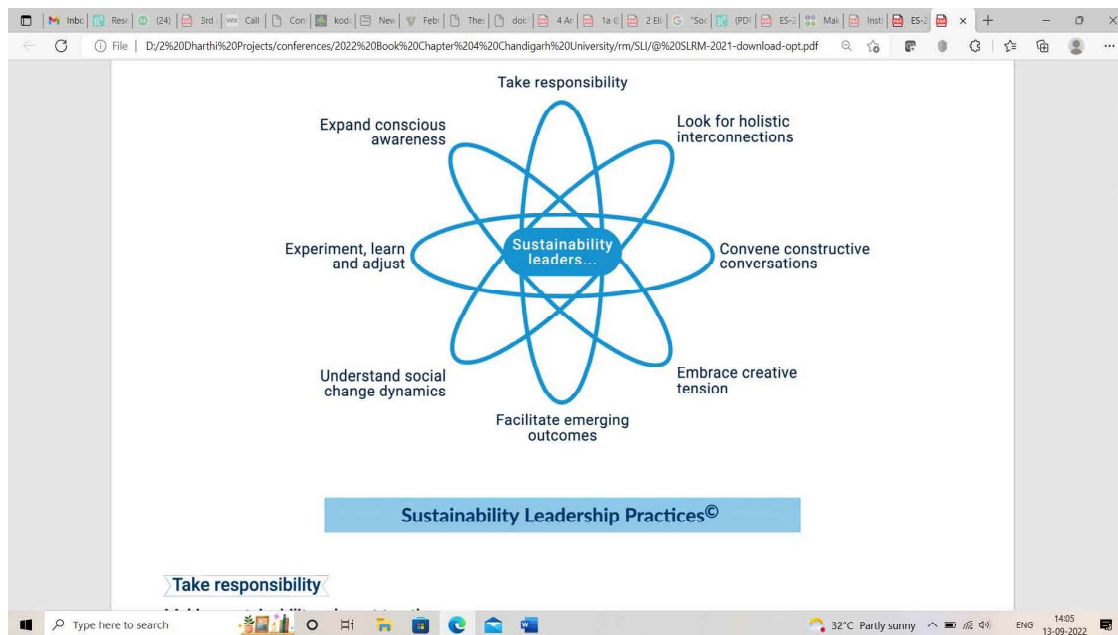
1. **Holistic thinking.** They tend to see the ‘whole’ or big picture and avoid getting bogged down in siloed thinking
2. **Systems thinking.** They see relationships between parts of the organisation that others miss, fostering breakthrough innovation
3. **Humanistic thinking.** They are able to sense the emotions of others and connect on a ‘heart’ level when dealing with groups and teams
4. **Social optimism.** They can authentically envision today’s big problems being solved, and use this vision to overcome cynicism
5. **Authentic filtering.** They quickly discern others’ motives and react appropriately in complex social situations

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The research team maps the five competencies to each of the individuals who have been considered for their Leadership Roles that have donned and still don, providing an opportunity for all us to have peek into their work, and unlearn/learn, how a Leader evolves in a difficult subject like Ecotourism, where everyone stands up and bats for the fact that with Ecotourism and its interventions, the earth, loses its pristine glory; but then these Leaders have stood against the odds and ensured a movement forward for others to emulate and take up the cudgels of a difficult subject to deal with and provide, strong, committed and vibrant Leadership, which will become a learning for all of us, as it is the legacy that we note and make an effort to understand.

Another Sustainable Leadership framework that the researchers would like to consider is the one put forward by Ferdig (2009); aptly titled the Sustainable Leadership Relational Model/framework, which will surely endear to the leaders that have been considered for the study.

*Figure 1. Sustainable leadership relational model framework (Ferdig, 2009)*



Ferdig (2007) further mentions that emerging discoveries in the complexity sciences viz., quantum physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, and social sciences point us toward a much different view of leadership that holds extraordinary potential for a powerful shift in our collective consciousness and actions. It ushers in a worldview that will challenge and lead towards to an alternative narrative. This view Ferdig (2007) further assumes that:

1. Anyone can choose to become ‘a leader’ and take responsibility for fostering sustainable conditions in workplaces, communities and even on a global scale; [the leaders portrayed in the chapter felt the need to usher in change in their workplaces and communities; true they had a worldview perspective; but they worked relentlessly from the local perspective. True in this genre, Legends like Jane

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- Goodall exist as global Leaders who give all of us the inspiration to create the small revolutions are a localized level];
2. The role of a Leader includes capabilities beyond those we currently attribute to Leaders, primarily, learning what it means to be a Leader ‘with’ other instead of Leader ‘of’ or ‘over’ others; [The traits the leaders have exhibited is not one to be recognized as a leader over many others; they just wanted to do the work on hand with complete commitment to the cause of the stakeholders and that inspiration lead the society, the community to recognize them as leaders. One can say that it was the love for the work that they professed, they contributed, leading one to refer to them and emulate their achievements]
  3. A Leader cannot effectively operate outside of the holistic interconnections that exist among and between people and natural systems; [Well the question is where is the leader located? The Leader is with the people, the community, ensuring that they are in a position to provide for sustainable leadership which ensure a long-term factor for achievement and a way forward]

Clearly one can see that there is arbitrage or an argument to speak about sustainable leadership and the way it has helped in the ushering in sanity to a community, its people, the job at hand, the task at hand and the way we can move forward with elan and ensure a learning has happened by understanding the contributions of the four leaders we have identified as hero’s who have contributed selflessly.

### **MANOJKUMAR IFS, AN INSTITUTION BUILDER**

From the 1997 batch of Indian Forest Service Officers, Manojkumar, an individual who grew up under the mentorship of his mother Smt. Sarojini came from a quaint village, Tajlapur in Bidar District of Karnataka and came to learn of the hardships of the people and how to find solutions early on. These formative years of personal development ensured a qualitative understanding of the people, the community, and the administrative systems that he was part of.

Speaking with Narasimha Bhatt (Bhatt, 2022) an entrepreneur in the Joida area of Karnataka, who was motivated by Manojkumar as a Forest Officer in the area during his early career days, which led to Narasimha Bhatt creating a team of locals who would enact street plays (*Beedi Nataka*) to encourage conservation and preservation of the forests and also was instrumental in the creation of Kali Tourism Association (KTA) in Joida which focused on the local community and their involvement in tourism. Manojkumar, known to be an Institution builder provided the necessary encouragement, by providing inputs, training, network opportunities which has ensured a development and growth of the tourism system in the area as we see it today. Narasimha mentions, “the turning point came when Manojkumar conducted a workshop in the Kulgi Nature Camp which was the main source of inspiration and then on there was no looking back” Narasimha continues “he was with everyone, would sit with each one of us and ideate, it was the people connect that ensured the success of Manojkumar Sir in our area.” One of the important aspects that Manojkumar helped build was to tell people about the wealth of the region and how to grow with it. Bhatt (2022a) recalling an episode as if it had happened yesterday, mentions, “Manoj Sir spoke of forest, and how visitors will come to see and enjoy the beauty, hence, we will have to develop Ecotourism, bring in sustainability, and thereby the forest itself will be saved...the way he focused on the Syntheri Rock, an important formation in the area of Dandeli, was phenomenal.” Narasimha adds further, “Manoj Sir wanted a system in place, information to be provided to the visitors,

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which was a learning to the locals as well.....and he even got a Ecodevelopment Committee run by the Local community members, supported by the local Forest Staff created.” This act of Manojkumar is a clear indication of his thought process that ensured the local community owns the institution and build upon on it in the future. Jagadeesh (2022) makes a mention of the fact that, the Kali Tiger Reserve (KTR) which is part of the Dandeli area, “had a logo, that was sees the creativity of Manojkumar...it was his involvement with the local community that ensured a connect and thereby the far reaching success.”

Whilst discussing with the researchers, Manojkumar made a mention, “that he encouraged the local community members to come out with ideas, and helped to build upon them.” Manojkumar mentions how when the Kali Tourism Association (KTA) conducted a workshop in a non-descript town called Hudsa in the Dandeli area, he invited Jungle Lodges and Resorts (JLR) (<https://www.junglelodges.com>) a leading provincial Government organization in Karnataka that promotes ecotourism and destinations, which are world renowned and engaged them with the local community, and encouraged how communication, information will support Community based ecotourism (CBE). Bhatt (2022) mentions, “this meeting ensured, the community stood together as one and joined in the movement to start the homestays in the area, homestays that are eco-friendly.” “Today, the KTA has 25 permanent and 20 normal members in its group, and the meeting that were encourage from more than fifteen years, are conducted every month on the 25<sup>th</sup> without fail” mentions Narasimha.

SL Jagadeesh, a roommate of Manojkumar, and whom Manoj considers as a best friend; who currently works with the Provincial Horticulture University in the state of Karnataka as Associate Director of Research mentions, “Manojkumar would challenge himself not only academically and he has grown ensures that the work also challenges him and he stands up to the challenges and achieves the goal that is to be achieved” (Jagadeesh, 2022). An officer from the Indian Forest Service Santhosh Kumar, who worked as a team member with Manojkumar, confirms the same, “challenges, yes, he accepted them.....he has his own way of solving issues and problems.” Kumar (2022) goes on to add, “it was his farsightedness that would ensure the challenges are solved...his focus on the ‘process’ than the ‘person’ would ensure success.”

Going back to the challenges Manojkumar faced a Leader of a one of the oldest Zoo in India, the Mysore Zoo as its Executive Director (2004-06), Jagadeesh mentions, “in my view it would have been one of the toughest times in his career...I saw him as a change-maker, when he took on the food contractors for feeding substandard food to the Zoo animals...he ushered in so many changes to ensure good feed reaches the animals in the Zoo, that the mafia with a strong underbelly in the system, even poisoned an elephant that was being gifted by the then President of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam to the Russia, one-day before it was to start its journey...this shook, Manojkumar...but he continued with the work... he worked with his inner strength...received necessary support from his superior officers and even the political elite.” The researchers also gather from Jagadeesh that, “during these moments of his career Manojkumar even stopped reading newspapers, watching television, and despite all the pressure and tensions, carried on with his work, as a ‘challenge’ and ensured that communication which was the key to the success was done, and the Mysore Zoo became as we know of it today, one of the best in India and also financially sound.”

Jagadeesh (2022) who has followed Manojkumar as his best friend, spoke of the fact that, “he never worked for his name, fame and success...he simply worked for society, the people, the community...in every post that he had adorned till date.” “Though we have grown in age and experience and feel we are mature.” Jagadeesh continues, Manoj is still the same as I saw him as a Forestry Student who moved ahead to pursue Master in Forestry in the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu...

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where he majored on Teak Wood.” Then one he was back as a Research Associate at the Agricultural University, Dharwad, Karnataka where he came under Prof. Nadagouder, who inspired him further and brought about the element of discipline. Jagadeesh mentions, “then on with his eyes set on Indian Forest Service Examination Manojkumar cleared the coveted examination with phenomenal scores in 1997 as a topper and moved to the Academy in Dehradun for the training and was later posted to Karnataka.”

His work in the Research Wing of the Forest Department of Karnataka, his contributions as Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) in Kodagu (Madikeri District) and Chamrajanagar have been exemplary. His work as CCF in Kodagu in managing the challenging Human Wildlife (Elephant) Conflict (HWC) that stands out. Getting the local community involved ensured that appreciation of the fact that, the issues need to be solved and not accentuated to unnecessary proportions. Considered as a HWC Zone of high intensity, Manojkumar was able to create community constructs, that helped manage the compensation based on the HWC and educate the difficult but unique scenario that the district in Karnataka faced. By creating the Kodagu Foundation to manage the issues, Manojkumar has ensured what many would not be able to do over years. To make a mention Kodagu/Coorg/Madikeri the land of the brave Kodavas and the land of Cauvery River, is home to Ecotourism that visitors not only flock from Karnataka but other parts of the India and the world.

Whether it was his work as the Head of Project Elephant or currently as Managing Director of Jungle Lodges and Resorts (JLR); Manojkumar has led from front in a silent way and ensured the necessary success that has to come in an organization. He always believes that people are important, but the process too has to be given equal importance; if not things fall apart. Jagadeesh (2022) mentioned about the most recent happenings when Manojkumar was on a field visit to Kabini an important destination of the JLR group; “he was able to solve minor and plaguing issues with an open hearted discussion with the employees...by asking for suggestions...and letting them to follow them with...which ensured success without any hindrance.”

The researchers whilst engaged in a face-to-face discussion with Manojkumar brought out of the best of emotions in him, when he spoke about the strength his mother gave him as a child, which continues to stay with him as he performs his duties to the forest, the society, the people, the community. The researchers who have worked with Manojkumar and admired his acumen to solve issues amicably, without any distress or distraught speak about his simple ways of communication with people, here in case children of the Dandeli area; which led to the protection of the Hornbill, an endangered species by then on account of the fact that they were being killed for the meat by the locals. By targeting children who would visit the Dandeli area for sightseeing and camping; Manojkumar got an opportunity to interact and ensure a change in the minds of the children, whom he feels are the most important catalysts in ushering in change (NSJ, 2017). His story on the male Hornbill taking care of the female Hornbill who is the partner for life as they take care of the new born chicks in the cavity of a tree which is covered with mud and the female Hornbill would have shed its feathers to warm the chicks and is unable to fly. The Male Hornbill brings in food and the irony is that the locals kill the Hornbills for food, resulting in the family of Hornbills dying and yes, the Hornbills becoming extinct. The mere fact that the story told by Manojkumar is in a way is emotional and the children not only stopped eating the meat, but forced the adults in the house too; leading to the preservation and conservation of the Hornbill in the Dandeli area; leading to the area of 52.5 Sq. Km., becoming a Hornbill Conservation Reserve by a notification of the Government of Karnataka under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 in 2011 (Chandra, 2011). This was the single most effort of Manojkumar which ensured the Hornbill received protection and the place was aimed at protecting, propagating, and developing the flora for the breeding and survival of the Horn-

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bill; in fact, the Hornbill Conservation Reserve was the first of its type in the country (Chandra, 2011). Since the launch of the hornbill trail by the Tourism department of Karnataka, the wood depot located in Dandeli midtown attracts hundreds of tourists every day. This will now be a part of the conservation reserve to protect the rare birds characterised by their long, down-curved bill. Now a days Bird Festivals are being organized in the area leading to promotion of Sustainable Ecotourism and the destination has become a Birders paradise, all to the efforts of Manojkumar and the community that worked with him.

Currently as Managing Director of Jungle Lodges and Resorts, he mentions, that his task is to ensure the employees are empathized with, and managed well, who in turn will provide for a good experience to the visitors. He has ensured that changes are made in a subtle fashion that are acceptable to one and all, and they in turn ensure ownership and help the organization to be successful. Of course, being a core conservation and preservation of ecology, environment and forests officer, Manojkumar says, that we should move away from Tiger-centric tourism and ensure the visitors gets to enjoy every bit of the forest and its ecology, the flora, the fauna, the experiences that one can derive and ensure that they protect the environment and carry the message forward not only to the younger generation but the older ones as well.

Manojkumar marches on providing leadership to the conservation and preservation of the forests in Karnataka, creating benchmarks, for other to follow, and at best in a silent manner, and a silent person he is no noise, but work, the connect, the commitment, the communication, the people and to the process. People of Karnataka in a petition to retain Manojkumar had this to say, with more than two decades of service as an Indian Forest Service officer, he has had an unblemished record. Only a few IFS officers can place their hands on their heart and profess sincerity (Change.org n.d.). It is the ability of Manojkumar IFS to think from a holistic perspective, think humanely, and evolve social optimism, to usher in systems thinking, wherein institutions and processes will take precedence over people and plans and reacting appropriately to people and situations (Authentic Filtering) as mentioned by Roberts (2012) that ensures Manojkumar as a Dynamic Leader.

### **KIRAN CHAVAN, THE MAN WHO BROUGHT IN GREENERY**

In the world of marketing, we always believe in Customer Delight and feedback. Reading one such feedback from a customer will help us to understand what a destination or a tourism product would look like.

“We went to Grape County for my birthday and I think this would be one of the most memorable birthdays I had. 250 acres of land with hills, 3 lakes, forest areas, natural flora and fauna, wild domestic animals and birds and so much more. We stayed in the lake view rooms which were so beautiful one of a kind. You can see the greens of the hills and lake on the foothills from the room and you can also enjoy boating and kayaking in the lake. Next day we went for Nature Trail and early morning walk in the greens and deeper areas. We also went around for property tour to take a look at their other properties like their forest stay rooms which are surrounded by lush trees and visited by certain wild animals as well, quite an adventure” (TripAdvisor, 2022). One read of the feedback would motivate more prospective visitors to travel to Nashik and sojourn at an Ecoresort called Grape County, which many consider to be one of the finest resorts in the state of Maharashtra.

Well Grape County was not all that is mentioned in the TripAdvisor feedback. To a perspective right, we have heard of areas that were green becoming deserts; we have heard about deforestation, concrete jungles coming up; but when we here of a place that was arid once upon a time and one individual on mission mode, ensured that, with his actions, support of a individuals, a buoyant community, turns an area

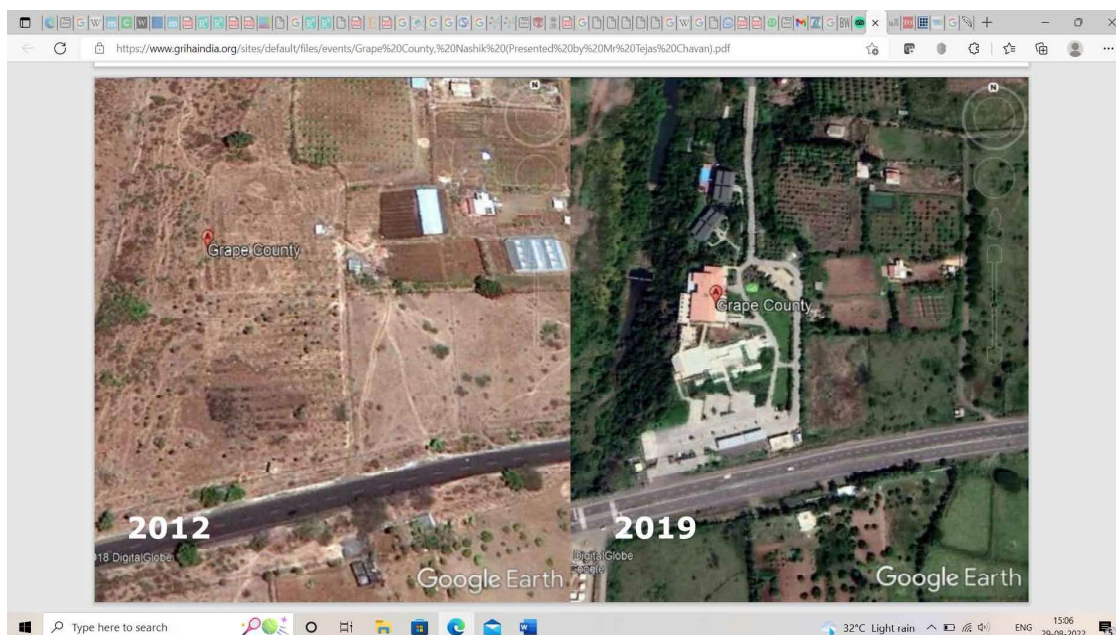


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into a green area; that in short is Kiran Chavan of Nashik, Maharashtra for you. Kiran not only planted saplings, but transplanted trees that were to be cut for road widening and brought them to the Grape County are which was part of 270 acres of barren land, adjacent to a Reserve Forest (As per Kiran more than 60,000 saplings were planted). Illustration 1 clearly demonstrates the way Grape County, famously known as GC has come about. Right to say, the vision of one man, Kiran Chavan, who wanted to blend the five elements of nature such that each and every ecotourist would get to connect with mother nature and learn as much.

Kiran was inspired by the fact that he wanted ‘continuous growth’ as a *mantra* that would ensure a success in his project. He just focused on the facet of the area being barren, it should have its Biodiversity and the elixir of life, water. Do whatever possible, that will ensure a change. Kiran also got an opportunity to travel to Mumbai and pursue a course through the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) ([www.bnhs.org](http://www.bnhs.org)), which further inspired him to focus on bio-diversity and what it could do the environment. Besides, the peer interaction at BNHS, a book by Shiv Khera, ‘You can win’ inspired Kiran to move ahead, when everyone was pessimistic. Kiran simply believed in the facet of doing things differently and ensuring that it is done. Besides, he ploughed back to his network, that was to give Kiran his net worth over a period of time.

*Figure 2. Satellite pictures of grape county (Chavan, 2022)*



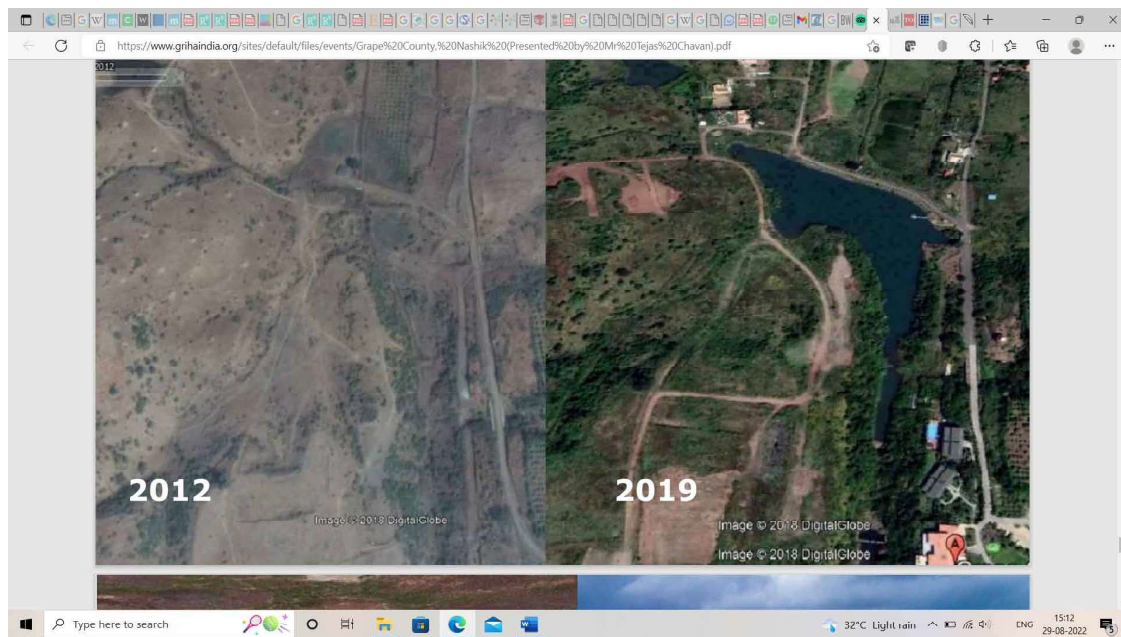
Luxpresso Magazine (2021), reported that visiting Grape County would be stepping into the wide-open luscious space and beautiful wooden landscapes. The stay at Grape County can help you reconnect with nature as well as yourself. Enjoying the sunrise over the mountains, simmering in the calming water, and indulging in different activities surely comes through as an exciting weekend getaway, where the



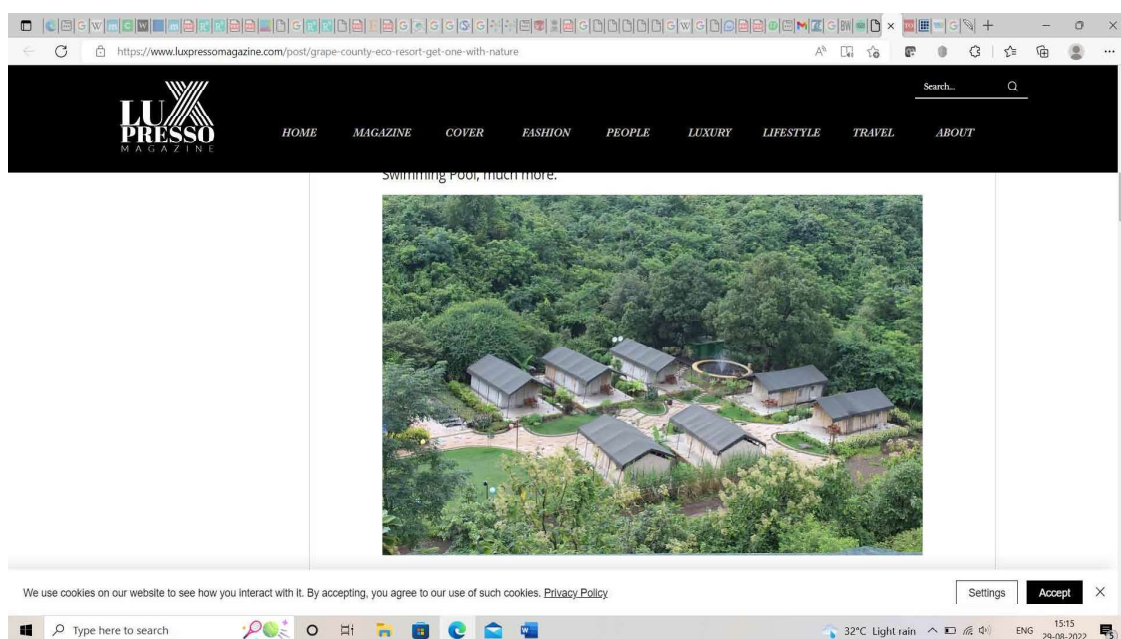
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only rule to follow is to take care of nature. The satellite images shown in illustrations (2 and 3), clearly provide an understanding as to what was done Kiran over a period of time.

*Figure 3. Satellite picture of another space of GC (Chavan, 2022)*



*Figure 4. Tent accommodation closer to the Reserve Forest (Luxpresso Magazine, 2021)*



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As the area was being converted into a green zone and water harvesting measures were being taken, Kiran ensured that the construction of accommodation spaces gelled with the environment and ecology and would make it sustainable. Besides, creating tent accommodation (illustration 3), accommodation built on cantilevers, which did not interfere with the accommodation provided a phenomenal value add to the eco-tourist. iCraze (2021) reported that GC offers an unparalleled combination of a luxury resort and a first-class experience of nature. Any ecotourist would lap up the tourism product and get to understand nature better. Nidhi (2022) an eco-traveller had this to say in a review about GC. "...it is a home away from home, amidst the cradle of nature surrounded by well-maintained dense forest, three man-made lakes, which would collect the water during the rains..." The aim of Kiran was clear, ensure that the property takes care of itself without much of human intervention. The idea of bringing in a balance between humanity and nature by creating an ecosystem where all can co-exist is what Kiran and family thought of whilst establishing GC (Malhotra, 2021).

Looking at the sustainability initiatives of GC, it can be said it not only appears as a pledge, but as a prayer, "the core of GC functioning is centred around NATURE. Be it our eco living concept, the wellness retreats and our organic farm, GC believed that nature always takes care of us, so we need to take care of it. Our commitment to everything nature friendly can be seen in our ambition to always lookout for innovative and sustainable options. We take pride in our employees and all the members of our team in their enthusiasm towards sustainability."

With this bent of mind, Kiran has ensured that all attempts are made to put forward what Roberts (2012) mentions about the Holistic picture for GC, which would mean to ensure get to the bigger picture, working in a silo environment will not lead us anywhere; hence, a combination of facets that are put forward at GC has helped the ecotourist, to get to the best of nature. Kiran's ability to think from a Systemic relationship of the organization, here in case GC and how to get to innovate ways of working around with existing resources has to be much appreciated. In GC one can see an emotion and each one of us get attracted to the emotion of preservation and conservation with a larger dimension of ensuring all the Eco visitors get to know new aspects and take it forward in their respective lives. Kiran, also mentioned in his discussions with the researchers, one of whom worked as his Sustainability Advisor for two quarters, that he was only surrounded by cynics, but it was his optimism that took him far and ensured what we see today. His whole idea was to ensure, ideation and a solution to every issue that came about whilst working on GC over the years. Kiran also feels that he has surprised everyone with his actions, and those believed that he will fail, have actually appreciated him for his vision, that had a right mission and an objective that was strong to achieve. So much so, Kiran Chavan will live as a phenomenal Leader who had a vision to move on and move fast, deliver the best possible Ecotourism product in a land that was barren and get people to think and apply his thought process to other places and ensure for the preservation and conservation of the environment and ecology, however, small it may be and contribute to the betterment of the Ecotourism.

### **RAKESH MATHUR, A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER**

Rakesh Mathur, speaking at the Expo 2020 Dubai, India Pavilion, mainstreaming sustainability for future of tourism (India at Expo 2020, 2022), mentioned that "...70% of India Tourism is in the informal sector and bringing them under the umbrella of sustainability is important for all the stakeholders..." The aspects expressed by Mr. Mathur are real, and organizations like Responsible Tourism Society of

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India (RTSOI) (<https://rtsoi.org>) (earlier known as Ecotourism Society of India-ESOI) which he helped found along with other doyens of Indian Tourism, Travel and Hospitality business, will play a dynamic role now and in the future to usher in the changes in Responsible Tourism in general, Ecotourism in particular and also bringing into the ambit certification and ecolabeling which will ever so important when it comes to standards which the world is adopting in a fast scale. RTSOI's game changer is the initiative of the 'responsible traveller,' will create a major buzz in the domain of sustainability, leading to the stakeholders to opt for ecolabeling and certifications. Rakesh led from the front to bring in a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between RTSOI, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (MoT, GoI) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) which will ensure a 'Responsible Traveller' campaign to sensitize domestic travellers on the value of Responsible Travelling (Kumar, 2021). Rakesh has brought forth the finer aspects and mentions, "any Sustainability certification or eco-labelling should be 'practical' for the local environment; which will ensure for the stakeholders of tourism...in fact, it will become a collective responsibility to proceed towards sustainability with the Tourism and Hospitality service providers and most importantly the tourists playing a dynamic role in ushering in sustainability and Sustainable Ecotourism in particular."

For a person who practices what he preaches (Indian Express, 2011), Mr. Mathur sees sustainability in the eyes of the customer, who would like to focus on, "the positivity of Environment, the community, the weaker sections, women, the issues of waste and its management...thereby creating a responsible citizen and of course a Tourism organization that approaches Tourism and Hospitality with utmost sensitivity." Mr. Mathur is of the firm belief that Sustainability and its Certification in the Tourism system should not, "lead to 'whitewashing' by the tourism and hospitality stakeholders, but should be a movement towards a motivated business, an industry that will focus on the good of the world through Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism."

Rakesh and his work have focused on ensuring that the carrying capacity of tourism at the destination is one that we all should take seriously. Rakesh adds, "there is no doubt a need for right auditing of the carrying capacity of the destinations, especially in the hill destinations in India which promote Ecotourism in a big way." Rakesh goes on further, "the Government at the Centre and States have to evolve and develop newer destinations to reduce traffic to the traditional destinations" Giving examples, Rakesh makes a mention of and comments, "how many of us have heard about Abbot Mount in Kumaon Hills...there are so many unexplored destinations in Pithoragarh, Almora, Kumaon Hills to mention a few which have to be developed and opened to promote quality Ecotourism and reduce the stress on the popular hills stations (Kumar, 2021a).

In order to promote Tourism in general and Ecotourism in particular which is a much more sensitive business proposition considering the fragility of the ecosystem, Rakesh believes that "we need to protect the places we love while receiving benefits that help us transform with our impact on the destination." Taking further inspiration and with a stoic determination, Rakesh exemplifies and elucidates that, "one needs various approaches to be taken, be it voluntary, statutory, or even punitive if necessary to ensure a motivation of the travellers and visitors to embrace the 'I am Responsible Traveller' initiative into a movement that will bring in the elements of responsibility to tourism and hospitality business" (RTSOI, 2021). Always available to speak to the concerned community or stakeholders of Ecotourism, Rakesh makes it a point to address them, whenever, wherever and, however. When he spoke to the remote communities and Forest Officers of Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR) on the dynamics of Ecotourism promotion and the way it is to be done; the communities, the Village Heads (*Pradhan*), the Forest Officers, got a feel what is to be done to ensure quality in Ecotourism (RTSOI, 2022).

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Rakesh was also instrumental in ensuring a thought process towards Sustainable Tourism in all its dimension when he was part of a team that helped in the creation of the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) (GK Today, 2014) based on the framework as established by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) (<https://www.gstcouncil.org>), a Global body with a footprint in most of the countries of the world. STCI were formulated by a committee constituted by the Ministry of Tourism of which Rakesh was a part of. STCI has been launched to develop tourism in India based on principles of sustainability and minimizing carbon footprints. While talking about sustainability, one should not only talk about conservation of resources but also our culture and heritage. All the stakeholders in the Tourism industry were to be made become eco-sensitive and implement the STCI (PIB, 2016). The principles of STCI included conservation of water, energy, culture, heritage, revival of ancient architecture, involvement of communities, protection of wildlife and non-exploitation of women, children and weaker sections (GK Today, 2014). Rakesh constantly makes a mention, the idea is not about creating a framework for implementation by others, it how we ensure that it is understood STCI and followed by each of the stakeholders to the last word possible. In his efforts to demystify the to the tourism and hospitality stakeholders especially in the Ecotourism Sector, Rakesh put forward these guidelines (RTSOI, 2018) for Natural and Wildlife Lodges which were well received.

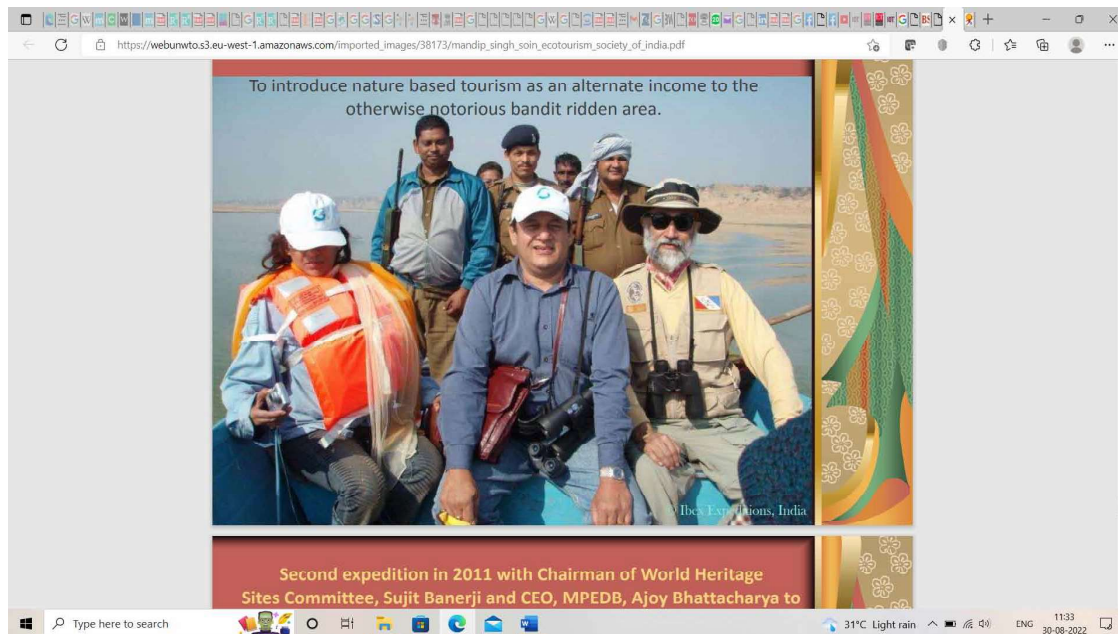
1. Rainwater harvesting
2. Use of Renewable Energy
3. Local Food products
4. Engaging local community

Rakesh who ensures his thoughts are articulated with elan, says these are need of the hour and the requirement to ensure for the tourism and hospitality that is focussing on Ecotourism. Clearly the intent of Rakesh was to ensure a qualitative framework for the working of the Tourism and Hospitality domain, and a way forward to sustainable options for one and all.

Rakesh was part of the Chambal River Ecotourism Expedition, where the effort was to introduce nature-based tourism as an alternate income to the dacoit/bandit ridden area in central India. The Chambal Expedition was one of the practical initiatives that he undertook to create and ensure a tourism product that was sensitive, in a multitude of things that he has over the decades along with the Co-founder of RTSOI Mr. Mandip 'Mandy' Singh Soin, who was the founder of Ibex Expeditions. They floated the idea of Sustainable Tourism to the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board (MPEDB), then led by Mr. AK Bhattacharya IFS as CEO and did the initial reconnaissance. Though the project has not seen the light of the day, if implemented, one of the major aspects of the proposal is employing former dacoits as tour guides, which would go a long way in making the region safe and rehabilitating dacoits with the promise of a stable, legitimate income. Tourism would also infuse much-needed money into the conservation of Chambal's heritage and biodiversity (Sood, 2019).

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*Figure 5. Rakesh Mathur (Center) along with Mandip 'Mandy' Singh Soin (Ibex Expeditions, n.d.)*



The researchers have interacted with Rakesh Mathur Ji on multiple occasions and comes out to be a Leader who wears Sustainable Ecotourism on his sleeve and masquerades the same to ensure the best for the Tourism and Hospitality businesses. His approach to taking along people, from across the businesses is a learning by itself, and his ever-willing support, a that lit pep talk, will ensure even most pessimist of individuals, will stand motivated to move ahead and do good for self and the business one is holding on to.

Juxtaposing the five competencies of Roberts (2012) with Rakesh, one can see that he clearly understands the larger picture of the issue being addressed and ensures an understanding for the team and the way forward. Very innovative in approach, Rakesh ensures every issue is addressed by the concerned individual or stakeholders, which ushers in the facet of systemic thinking that ultimately brings in creativity to the project. All those who have interacted and got to work with Rakesh, consider him to be 'man of the heart' which clearly means, his approach is no doubt strict and straight forward, but when required, he ensures that the individuals and groups are taken into confidence as the groups move forward with the task at hand. His humane approach has endeared him to many in the tourism and hospitality business. It is the optimism in Rakesh that helps each one around him to move ahead and achieve the necessary success; it is the quick connect that he establishes, the leads one to accept the way of thinking, for the organization or the project concerned and move ahead. Facing complex situations on a day-to-day basis has ensured that Rakesh makes the best of difficult situations, being a phenomenal negotiator himself. In any complex situation, the right person to have as part of your team, is Rakesh Mathur, and he continues to contribute to the Tourism scenario in general and Ecotourism in particular as a Leader who is takes along a team of equals.



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## **AKB, THE FOREST CRUSADER**

Dedicating his life to Forestry, Environment, Ecotourism and Bamboo, Dr. Ajoy Kumar Bhattacharya, All India Topper (Concept, n.d.) of the 1983 batch of Indian Forest Service, who served in Madhya Pradesh and continues to work for the communities and the Foresters even to this day. Dr. Bhattacharya was a rare Civil Servant who had a Doctorate and a Post Doctorate (TERI, 2018) in the field of Ecology and Environment and used all his knowledge and experience to further the cause of Ecotourism more so based on the Community and the benefits they can accrue and the support they can provide to the forest department. He has been engaged as expert and consultant with many leading organisations and corporate including TERI, IIFM, Somaiya Group of Industries. He has wide range of overseas exposures, including University of Tasmania, UNFCC in New York, Universities of Syracuse and Vancouver, Universities of Yale and Washington, Marrakech (CoP 22) (TERI, 2018).

Though there have been many bureaucrats in the Forest Departments across India, but, AKB as he is popularly known as, is a unique blend of Research and Administration, something he did with elan, as observed by Mohamad Nahar a Ecotourism Consultant who was a student of AKB, when he taught at the famed Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) (<https://iifm.ac.in>), Bhopal. Nahar (2022) was a student of AKB and learnt the nuances of Ecotourism, Community Development and Forest Conservation. Nahar mentions that, “AKB was a very popular Professor who carried with him, his students who respected him for his knowledge and ability to communicate in a succinct manner.” “AKB introduced me to Ecotourism at IIFM and when he became the Founding Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the First Ecotourism Development Board, that was set up in Madhya Pradesh, took me on rolls at the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board (MPEDB) where my learning continued and continues till date.” “He is a visionary in his own right and is a known Institution Builder with his out of the box thinking.” Nahar categorically mentions, that whenever there was a difficulty in getting the support of the administrative machinery, he introduced the private public sector participation (PPP) which ensured continuity of the flow of thought and the administrative requirements for any project that was the need of the hour.”

In the many discussions that AKB has had with the researchers of this article, he mentions, “throughout my career I have always tried to deliver. I believe in outcome and outputs with systems approach. I give my 100% to work in the existing situations, without blaming system, try to improve the system from within. For me, forestry has been a tool for sustainable development. I have successfully used Ecotourism and Bamboo as tools for sustainable development” and continues to do so even after retirement after he found the Integrated Development Organization (IDO) of which he is the Chairman. Shailendra Kumar, the CEO of IDO, who has seen and interacted AKB for more than two-decades mentions, “..... Bhattacharya Sir will study the finer aspects of the work that is being done, the impacts that it has on the community, how to bring in resources, however difficult, and once he has made up his mind, there is no looking back to any force on earth...he will ensure executing the job at hand, with multiple follow ups, with superiors, prodding the junior, talking to the forest staff, like a friend but at the end of the day ensuring that the work is done with elan” (Kumar, 2021).

It was his pioneering work in the domain of Ecotourism, that is remembered by one and all. His format years as a young forest administrator ensured the learnings and the interactions with the communities, administrators, non-governmental organizations (NGO) which ensured, he was able to implement the best of thoughts at MPEDB, that became a benchmark for other provinces in India to start specific operations on the front of Ecotourism by creating the Ecotourism Development Boards (EDB) on the

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lines that AKB had established in Madhya Pradesh. Acknowledging the contribution of AKB a forester in Karnataka, who wanted anonymity, mentions, “Bhattacharya really made use of the situation provided to him in MPEDB and created Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) which were to be implemented on the i) communities, who were part and parcel of any Ecotourism canvas, ii) the Resorts that were mushrooming in large numbers across Madhya Pradesh and the way to manage them, iii) the role of the Foresters, especially the ‘cutting edge’ staff, who only knew about preservation and conservation, and could not deal with the commercial activity of Tourism, iv) the Ecodevelopment Committees (EDC) that were formed to engage the communities, with the Foresters acting as Administrators...Bhattacharya had his hands full...but he managed to set a benchmark for many of us to follow across India, and we bettered the EDB set-up in Karnataka by creating a legal entity, which has augured well for the system at large.” This really means much to the contribution of AKB, who always, mentions, that, “trials and tribulations of any job, is a challenge in itself, and MPEDB was a baby that I had to nourish and ensure it is cherished for posterity.” Arun Rai, a contract employee of MPEDB, who was recruited by AKB during his tenure at MPEDB whilst discussing with one of the researchers at a program in Kanha mentions, “he was and is a task master; once if a decision is taken to implement an administrative decision... AKB will ensure...if we as executives in the MPEDB, were not able to understand some aspects of the work and interventions being done, he would step in, work with us, help us to understand and ensure, we carry on; though a task master, his humane approach is liked by one and all (Rai, 2022). The team at MPEDB, with whom the researchers have interacted, mention, that the main contribution of AKB to the field of eco-tourism includes organizing capacity building workshops and training courses for the local officers not only of the forest departments but other units of the Government as well. There was an instance of a training program, wherein the forests of Kanha and the Ecodevelopment Committee (EDC) members interacted and created artefacts to ensure quality ecotourism in the area. Based on the suggestions from one of the Range Forest Officers (RFO) who spoke of banks not providing loans and funds for the local communities to start enterprises in ecotourism and even agriculture related activities; AKB during the tea-break of the capacity building program, picks up his phone and calls the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in the area, speaks with him and the next forty-five minutes the Manager is present addressing the gathering of Forest Officials and the Local Community, and believe it or not the NABARD officer was able to provide for loans for at least three individuals, based on which others would follow, and then there would be a movement. Those were the effective ways in which AKB ensured traction for the community and the Foresters and the forests.

AKB always believed in ensuring that documentation has to be done to ensure the future is aware of what was attempted and tried. The researcher in him ensured the writing continued, which led to much documentation throughout his career and still continues to do so. Some of the work that AKB published has been listed out for one to see the wide canvas he adopted and ensured people, bureaucrats, administrators, communities, activists got to know about the happenings.

Bhattacharya (2005) wrote a book, *Ecotourism and Livelihoods* which primarily were his experiences in the field, i.e., the forests of Madhya Pradesh. He wrote his book when he was on deputation as a Professor at the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) (<https://iifm.ac.in>) in Bhopal. The book focuses on capacity building For Local Authorities Tourism which is the most rapidly growing and biggest industry in the world and Ecotourism forms the largest proportion of the present tourism. His focus was on the fact that, since ecotourism involves maximum number of stakeholders, from local Communities to the Corporate world, proper capacity building of the major stakeholders for effective planning and management of ecotourism has become a prerequisite for the sustainable ecotourism devel-

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opment. This book attempts to fill in this gap. The book addresses the key issues concerning ecotourism management, with special focus on community participation. It deals with a range of Topics including the basic concept, forms, potential assessment, planning and case studies of ecotourism. At the same time, it discusses the New Concepts and techniques of ecotourism, viz. carrying capacity, community participation and auditing. The book has been a useful field guide for practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders in planning and implementation of ecotourism.

Bhattacharya (2001) worked on communities and how to ensure they get to activity that is sustainable in the forest. The book, *Community participation and Sustainable Forest Development, Global perspective* has been a sincere attempt to examine the phenomena of community participation, sustainable forest management, sustainable development with reference to the forest policies, forest acts and other relevant and necessary documents not only from India but from other countries. The focus of the book are the communities and how to engage them in a better for sustainable forest development.

Forests in India are under the exclusive control and management of the Federal/Central and State Governments. Speaking of public people private partnership in the forest management was something, that was dreaded by many for a long time, and some even dread it today. However, Bhattacharya (2007) edited a phenomenal work titled: *Public People Private Partnership for sustainable forest development* which the researcher would consider as a bible of sorts to managing the intricate forest ecosystems in India, despite all the difficulties and Laws that are at hand which will ensure stoppage of any work that one will envisage; as a path breaking contribution by Ajoy K. Bhattacharya, who people in the know fondly address as 'AKB.' The book is a compendium of research papers and articles that were presented at the IIFM workshop, and are of a great support to policy makers, conservationists, students and researchers of environment, ecotourism and ecology and even the environmental activists who can get a peep in the happenings on the front of the forest, ecology and environment. The compendium focuses on issues pertaining to participation of communities, individuals, and corporates in sustainable development of forests and wastelands. The authors of each chapter discuss at length the stakes of the i) Local communities, ii) leasing of forest land based on the Forest Conservation Law, iii) how to share the profits from the produce and iv) socio-economic and ecological implications. The work also identifies the issues, the problems, the constraints and makes an effort to suggest remedies and action that would have impact on the long run.

People, communities, *Gram Panchayats* through the Local Self-Government (LSG) mechanism play a pertinent role in Ecotourism and how it impacts not only the ecology and environment, but how does it impact the conservation and preservation methods. The Bio-diversity of an area or region has always been a question. Bhattacharya (2005) through his field experiences brought out a book titled: *Training manual on People Bio-diversity Register*. Though a small book; it had all the documents and relevant action plans that the people at ground-zero had to make to ensure collation of data according to the Community Bio-diversity Register (CBR). The work actually encourages people at the village level to collect and collate data and ensure the way the impacts are recorded from across all angle, environmental, economic, social, cultural and even political. A contribution that has been considered as *crème de la crème* in Indian forestry is a work that he rendered by editing two volumes with a total of fifty-five papers, of which fifteen focused on Ecotourism. Bhattacharya (2007a) addresses the emerging issues in forestry, and focuses on five contemporary themes, viz., Ecotourism agroforestry, joint forest management, non-timber forest products and his favourite topic; public private partnership in forestry. So much was his vision, that the way he documented has ensured it becomes a primary read to anyone involved in Ecotourism in particular and forestry in general.



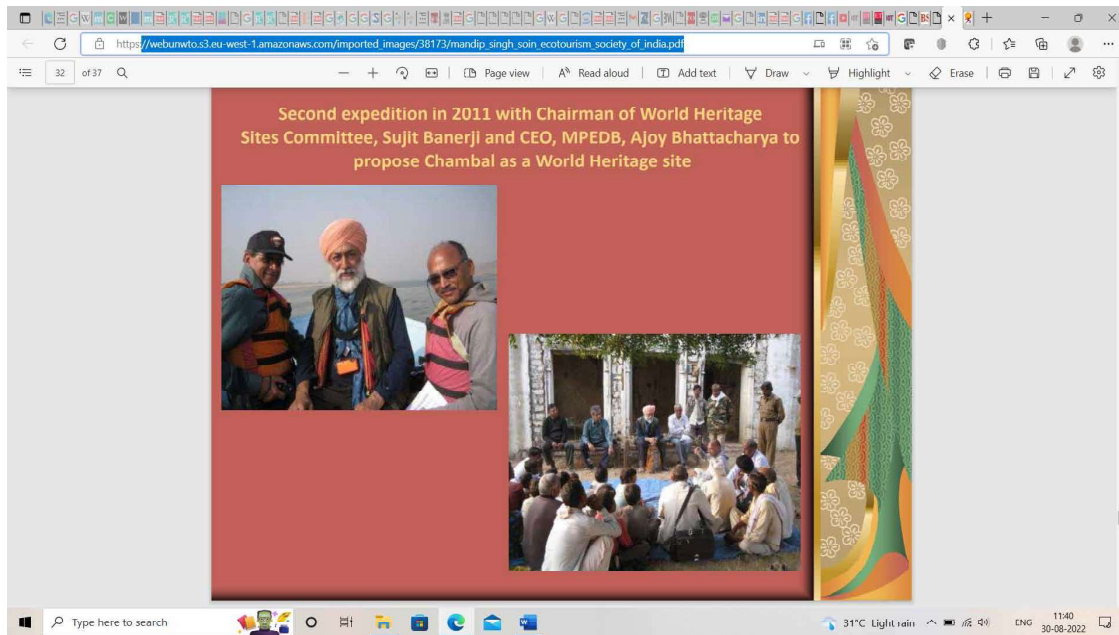
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AKB always believed that, in accordance with the prime spirit of eco-tourism, the shape of tourism will have to be such as to make the forest-dependent communities' partner in the benefits of tourism, along with conservation of natural resources, environmental protection and social adaptability (MPEDB, 2005). This was many is a heady concoction, but if one were to gauge the impacts on the long run, on Ecotourism, it is a legacy that individuals like AKB leave behind for posterity. He looked beyond forests and ecotourism and collaborated with Mandip 'Mandy' Singh Soin FRGS, the legendary Adventurer from India, who was instrumental in establishing the Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI) and made an effort to work out a Tourism Product in the River Chambal that was dreaded once upon a time on account of its dacoits; but today, the River with all its pristine beauty, the flora, the fauna and the yes, the various heritage sites that abound around the banks of the rivers and the ravines which still give an eerie feeling to at least one generation, and can evolved as a story line that falls into the cusp of the Wild West, but in an Indian parlance. But for various reasons the project never kicked off. Recently when the researchers were speaking to AKB he was recalling the splendid time, the ideation that was there, during the discussions on the river Chambal, spoke immensely about the flora and fauna and the intrigue that exists with the river and how we should promote the life-giving River as a tourism product and ensure the communities living on the banks of the river are taken care with quality employment and the visitors get an experience of a life-time.

Applying the framework of Roberts (2012) to the close to four decades of work done by AKB on the domain of Ecotourism one can mention that, the holistic thinking that AKB had in getting the larger picture and ensuring all elements of the Government machinery work in tandem along with other stakeholders, more importantly the Community, is something that he saw in the right spirit. His ability to work on the PPP initiative very early on in his career and at a time, when private sector participation in the Governmental works was seen as an impediment, AKB ensured phenomenal relationship that augured well for the system. Though AKB has been considered as strict in his approach towards administration; his ability to understand the emotion of the stakeholders has been seen in the way his associates vouch for him. He always approached pessimism, cynicism with strength, that ensured he was able to overcome the negative and work positively towards the cause of ensuring success for the project at hand. He never put down anyone or any organization. All were important in his view, and each had a role to play; the timing of his reactions in complex situations and scenarios ensured a forward movement in the projects undertaken. This makes AKB a Leader par excellence which each of us should adopt in our day-to-day life.

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*Figure 6. (Left to Right): Mr. Sujit Banerjee, Chairman of World Heritage Sites Committee, Mr. Mandip 'Mandy' Singh Soin, FRGS and AKB. Second Expedition in 2011 to propose Chambal as a World Heritage Site (Ibex Presentation, n.d.)*



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*Table 2. Tideman (et al., 2013) framework of Sustainable leadership (SL) and its application on the four leaders*

	Sustainable Leadership Elements	Concepts (Economics and Business)	The Indian Context from a SL perspective	Manojkumar	Kiran Chavan	Rakesh Mathur	AK Bhattacharya
	<i>Mind-set</i>						
1	Context	Recognising interdependence; complexity; ambiguity; interconnectedness; resource constraint; regulators; mega-trends	Regulations and complexity of law is multitude in India. How the Leaders are to figure out the nuances of managing change is a critical aspect.	Understand the set up well	Clear understanding	Quick to understand any issue at hand, dealing with the Government and Private Sector	Very well defined. No ambiguity
2	Consciousness	Mind-sets; world-views; beliefs; mental models; attitudes	The <i>mores</i> and <i>folkways</i> contribute to much of the thought process and at times there is a fixation in the belief system, that will not move forward. How the Leaders make amends is critical to the scenario.	Has a clear mind set which is to work with the people and put a process in place	Had a clear mind set and worked towards the goal	Plenty of clarity, mind maps what is to be done, short-term and long-term	Conscious of the fact what is to be done.
3	Continuity	Long-term horizon; courage; strength; common purpose; centredness; change processes	It is not about initiating a change or ushering in a thought process, it is how one can connect to the local scenario and move forward with strength on a continuous basis.	Work should go on even without my presence is the moto of Manojkumar	Work should go on. Educated the team of the requirements	Ensures follow-up for successful outreach that brings in success of the projects on hand	Follow-up was one of the successful postulates of his career
	<i>Skill set</i>						

*Continued on following page*

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*Table 2. Continued*

	<b>Sustainable Leadership Elements</b>	<b>Concepts (Economics and Business)</b>	<b>The Indian Context from a SL perspective</b>	<b>Manojkumar</b>	<b>Kiran Chavan</b>	<b>Rakesh Mathur</b>	<b>AK Bhattacharya</b>
	<i>Mind-set</i>						
4	Connectedness	Serving needs of all stakeholders; both long-term and short-term influencing; collaboration; trust; fairness; altruism; relatedness; needs instead of wants	With a myriad of stakeholders coming various economic, social and cultural background, the Leaders need to get to a better understanding which will ensure for themselves and the people with whom they are engaging.	Always connected to the ground realities and the people	Knew what is to be done and by whom	Understand the needs of the stakeholders, and collaborates well by supporting the stakeholders	Connected to the ground realities and will to collaborate and ensure for the success of the project
5	Creativity	Innovation for sustainable shared value creation; sustainable business models; new value measurement models;	With multiple agencies and authorities, the Leaders in question need to ensure a creative connect with all stakeholders and business combinations for value creation on the short and long run.	Ability to solve issues in a creative way and ensure success for the system	Can be seen in bringing in people of all hues to ensure success	Believes in Value creation and works well with all stakeholders. Goal and the path to the goal is considered important	Always thought out of box and ensured brainstorming that led to success in every project undertaken
6	Collectiveness	Scale up for collective impact; embedding sustainability in business structures; sustainable consumption	Considering the size of the nation, the Leaders need to ensure a community and societal connect which will ensure cumulative impacts of Economic, Environment, Socio-cultural, political as relevant to the geography and the community.	Always with the community, a typical team player, never leaves anyone behind	Work together at all odds	Believes in the <i>mantra</i> of TEAM, together everyone achieves more	A true team player, knowing the strengths of each of his team members who come from diverse ways of life

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