



SHANTINIKETAN DECLARATION

30th March 2010

Workshop Backdrop Banner


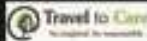

The banner features a black background with white and yellow text. On the left, there is a red square logo with a white geometric pattern. To its right is a circular logo with a green and yellow design, labeled 'Estd. 1961'. The main title is written in a white, cursive font. Below the title, a grey horizontal bar contains the dates. The bottom left section lists the organizing institutions. The right side of the banner is dominated by a photograph of a herd of elephants in a savanna, with the text 'अतुल्ये! भारत Incredible India' and 'www.incredibleindia.org' at the top. Overlaid on the bottom right of the photo is the slogan 'WE STILL BELIEVE IN THE JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM.' in large, bold, yellow and white letters. At the bottom right, there are several logos for partner organizations: 'act' (Association for Conservation and Tourism), 'Travel to Care', and 'IIP' (International Institute for Peace through Tourism).

*Peace through Tourism in
historically changed Cross-borders*


Shantiniketan 29th & 30th March 2010


Organized by
Department of History, Visva-Bharati University & Help Tourism
with ICRT-India, Travel to Care, IIP, ACT, WBTD, India Tourism
& V. B. Study Circle.

*अतुल्ये! भारत
Incredible India*
www.incredibleindia.org

**WE STILL BELIEVE
IN THE
JOINT
FAMILY
SYSTEM.**

 Association for Conservation and Tourism
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE THROUGH TOURISM
INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL POUR LA PAIX PAR LE TOURISME

 International Centre for Responsible Tourism - India

Attendance at the Policy Workshop 'Peace through Tourism in historically changed Cross-borders' at Museum Hall, Department of History, Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan on 29th & 30th March, 2010. Organized by Department Of History and Help Tourism.

- 36 participants from all over India, specially Northeast, West Bengal and Orissa with delegates from Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- Included Government officials, NGOs, Academicians, tourism industry representatives, tourism activists, film makers, social activists and travel writers.
- 30 Students of the Department of History, Visva-Bharati.

An AV documentary based on this theme was released.



The Cross-Border description

- Borders are human-made, both physical and in the minds.
- Capitals far away from the borders should understand and address the sentiments, livelihood and basic needs of the people living in the borders and constantly seek cooperation of neighboring countries.
- Tourism should be seen as meaningful tool to bring our borders and communities out of isolation and create better people to people participation along the borders.

Cross-Borders within country

- We must first confirm our inter-district and inter-state cooperation in regard to tourism and have common tourism circuits.
- Permits at gates or on the internet for the various districts or states (wherever may be necessary) within a country to confirm National citizenship.
- ***West Bengal and Orissa with eight Northeastern states of India should be brought under a single brand of Northeast for tourism purposes.***
- Interstate transport Permit to be simplified for the implementation of integration as one region.

Cross-Border with neighboring countries in the Indian subcontinent.

- We must reciprocate among the different neighboring countries each others respect in regard to entry permits and visas.
- Armed forces, customs and other Government personnel at at borders must display good behavior as they are the face of the country.
- Online Visa and Visa on arrival at the borders is a priority for the countries of the Indian sub-continent joining south and southeast Asia to promote more land and water based travels. Carbon potential and spreading tourism benefits to a larger section.
- Medical Tourism potential for people across border should be brought under a more organized sector through a policy.
- Education Tourism should also be a priority to attract students and scholars from across the borders.

Direct Stakeholders

- **The local people must be direct stakeholders of all cross-border initiatives.**
- **The local people should be empowered ownership on the local natural & cultural resources, which are to be protected.**
- **The local natural and cultural heritage should be part of the school curriculum at site.**
- **There should be cross-border relation development through tourism festivals and several tourism events.**
- **Establish 'Cross-Border Tourism Peace Parks' in Inter-District and Inter-State within a country and also across neighboring countries.**
- **Appreciate & support the local community initiatives in tourism and help to set up local bodies to advise the district officials on tourism matters.**
- **Local traditional beliefs, legends, rituals and myths to be a part of tourism.**
- **Low Cost and Simple local information brochures at every village with maps.**
- **Rural trails through river walks, boat rides.**
- **Also the same for the wetland conservation tourism initiatives.**

Proposed Areas to open specially for tourism exchange (including foreigners)

- **Ultapani, in Bodoland, Assam with Sarpang in Bhutan to access the other areas of Bhutan.**
- **Upper Assam & Eastern Arunachal Pradesh through Pangsau Pass on the Stilwell Road with Myanmar.**
- **West Bengal-Assam-Nagaland-Manipur through Tamo-Morreh Border with Myanmar, the existing arrangement to be made more active.**
- **Connect World Heritage Sites, Paharpur near Joypurhat in Bangladesh with Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in Darjeeling District India through the Hilly Border.**
- **West Bengal-Assam-Meghalaya to Bangladesh through Dawki and Dalu.**
- **Orissa and West Bengal-Nepal through Panitanki and Pashupati Fatak in Darjeeling District.**
- **West Bengal-Sikkim to Tibet through Nathula Pass.**
- **Open up the route from Agartala through Bangladesh to Kolkata for transit of tourist, saving both economic resources and carbon emission.**
- **South Tripura, Sabrrom-Agartala to Chattagong which existed should be re-established for Buddhist circuit with Pilak Heritage site as the main attraction.**
- **Re-establish the Bali/Java/Sumatra-Orissa sea relation initiated during 1992.**
- **Include similar old Buddhist ties of Orissa with Cambodia and Srilanka.**

Cross-Border Tourism Circuit proposals

- Land-route Religious (Buddhist & Hindu) circuits through contiguous Northeastern states to Myanmar and on to Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and China.
- Connect the Common Heritage sites of the countries across borders.
- Following the historic trails of Lord Buddha, Guru Padsambhava and early travelers to India.
- Nepal-India-Bhutan Heli-Tourism on the Guru Padmasambhava trails to start discussions immediately.
- Connect West Bengal-Orissa through water route with India's Northeast, considering the Brahmaputra to Sea route.
- India-Bangladesh Sunderbans through water route.
- Andaman Islands with the Malayan Peninsula and Myanmar by water route.

Infrastructure

- Consider immediate upgradation of Kolkata Airport for International Tourist in all respects including making it tourist friendly.
- Consider the same for Bagdogra and Guwahati.
- Improvement of the existing airports and air traffic for the Northeastern states with existing air terminals.
- Multiple Permits from a single window at the airports and railway stations like NJP, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Tezpur.
- The future is in Heli-Tourism and immediate introduction of Inter-state services among the tourism Northeastern states.
- Protected Area Permit system for Manipur is the major hurdle for any kind of tourism and is stopping the Cross-Border International tourism through Myanmar.
- For other India's Northeastern states ILP, RAP and PAP should be abolished or made easier through internet or permits at gate.
- Bhutan is already planned two domestic air terminals which will be a new opening for Northeast India.

Waterways have great tourism potential in Orissa, West Bengal and Northeastern states

- Silting of the rivers makes it impossible during low tide, same for Namkhana, Bhagwatpur and other places in Sunderbans. IWAI to look into desilting.
- Too many restrictions on waterways route by security forces and Forest Department, the matter to be considered to make a policy.
- The common circuit for the legendary Brahmaputra-Ganga cruises connecting through Bangladesh can make the subcontinent the most popular River Cruise destination to be made possible.

ACTION

- Circulate the 'Shantiniketan Declaration' widely across countries and all International developmental organizations.
- Constant endeavor through a committed volunteer team to follow up after this workshop.
- The first action will be going into Myanmar through Manipur to be organized by Mr.R.K.Shivachandra with workshop at Imphal and Myanmar.
- The other action will be arriving Paharpur through Hilly with a workshop organized by Rajsahi University and Joypurhat Municipality as said by Mr.Apurba Sarkar.
- Dr.R.Panth offered the next International Festival of the said countries in cooperation at Nalanda Deemed University in November 2010 to make a basis for confidence building.
- The action with the title of 'Peace through Tourism' to be continued as a part of the 150 years of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore with the support of Visva-Bharati Study Circle was proposed by Mr.Sandip Basu Sarbhadhikary.
- The UN bodies including ADB working in the Indian subcontinent will be requested to nurture the agenda of 'Cross-Border Tourism for Peace'.
- Mr.Ajoy Roy suggested the Natural, Cultural and Economical status Audio Visual documentation of all the border areas.

Delegates, a day before the Workshop



Pre-Workshop village visit at Ballavpurdanga in Shantiniketan,
India Tourism & UNDP initiated Rural Tourism site



Inauguration of theme DVD



Other photos during workshop



Action Volunteers of the Workshop

