



**Department of Tourism**

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**Press Release**

**Kerala's woman-friendly tourism initiative is a global model: Sri Lankan tourism expert**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 01:** Kerala's woman-friendly tourism initiative has received a big endorsement in neighbouring Sri Lanka, with a former Managing Director of Sri Lanka Tourism Bureau hailing it as "a benchmark model for gender-inclusive and sustainable tourism."

"Kerala is setting an inclusive model by placing women at the heart of its tourism development strategy," said Charmarie Maelge in her guest column in Sri Lanka's leading business newspaper Daily FT.

Maelge, who has played a key role in promoting inclusive and sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka, noted that Kerala's gender-inclusive tourism policy has also set a national model for India and could be leveraged elsewhere.

"It is heartening to know that the trend-setting woman-friendly tourism policy of Kerala is being seen as a sterling model of gender-inclusive and responsible tourism development not only by other Indian states but also leading tourism brands abroad", Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas said.

Significantly, accolades from overseas experts keep pouring amid women travellers from India and abroad themselves vouching that Kerala is one of the safest places in the world where women can travel to experience its diverse charms, Shri Riyas noted.

The initiative, which began under the "Women-Friendly Tourism Project" in 2022, has now expanded across the State, drawing the participation of more than 17,000 women as entrepreneurs, guides, homestay owners, and tour operators.

The write-up in the Sri Lankan daily noted that Kerala's successful RT initiatives like the Maravanthuruthu STREET Project have helped develop small, sustainable tourism hubs in rural areas, built around local culture, heritage, cuisine, and everyday life that tourists might call the "real Kerala" experience.

Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society's gender inclusive approach ensures women are not only beneficiaries but active partners in tourism, it said.

It also noted that the state hosted Global Women's Conference on Gender-Inclusive and Responsible Tourism in 2024 supported by UN Women, leading to the Kerala Declaration on Women Friendly Tourism. The declaration underlined Kerala's commitment to integrating gender equality in all aspects of tourism, from policy to practice.



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The State has also completed gender and safety audits in a number of tourist locations, identifying infrastructure and behavioural improvements needed to make travel safer for host women and women travellers, Maelge said, quoting Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society CEO Shri Rupeshkumar K.

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