

THE HINDU

Stress on sustainable tourism

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State set to be declared 'World leader in Responsible Tourism'

STAFF REPORTER
ALAPPUZHA

With the State set to be declared as the 'World leader in Responsible Tourism (RT),' the State RT Mission will further enhance sustainable tourism activities across the State.

The State government has already announced an ambitious target of achieving 25,000 new RT units and one-lakh job opportunities for local community members.

"Harold Goodwin, chair of International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) and World Travel Market (WTM) adviser, during his recent visit to the State stated that Kerala will be declared as the World Leader of Responsible Tourism in November 2022. Responsible Tourism seeks to minimise negative economic, environment and social impacts, while generating greater economic benefits to local people and enhancing

Community connect

• 17,008 units registered with RT Mission

• More than 13,000 units run by women

• 98,654 local community members directly or indirectly linked with tourism

• Units registered with the mission have generated ₹24.38 crore till January 31, 2020 since its formation in June 27, 2017



the well-being of local communities. Considering this, the State Responsible Tourism Mission will initiate steps to expand community-level tourism activities along with facilitating tourism, trade and community-level linkages and encouraging adoption of Responsible Tourism principles and practices by stakeholders," said K. Rupesh Kumar, coordinator, Responsible Tourism Mission.

Mr. Kumar, who recently bagged an award instituted by the WTM for achievements in the field of RT, said

that priority would be given to RT classification of all tourism units, carbon neutral/green initiatives, plastic reduction and waste management, experiential tourism packages, experience ethnic cuisine initiative and so on.

As part of the carbon neutral initiatives, the mission has launched activities such as cycle tours, mangrove protection activities, protection of local of fruit trees and visit a grove package. "The sacred groves of the State will be mapped and the different festivals related to them will be made part of the

packages," he said.

Mr. Kumar said that as part of plastic reduction, 550 hotels and resorts had adopted RT programme. "More than 480 accommodation units have been declared plastic-free. In Palathuruthy, all houseboats have joined the waste management initiative. But we need to do bring all tourism units into the fold," he said.

Experiential

He said that a set of new 100 packages in various parts of Kerala were ready to be launched as part experiential tourism packages, taking the total number to 150. Besides, houseboats and Ayurveda centres, the RT classification for hotels, resorts, homestays, tour operators and tourist transport operators were under way, Mr. Kumar added.

Under Experience Ethnic Cuisine, 2,888 houses, including 3,88 in Alappuzha, have joined the network.