

First Workshop on Environment Laws and Tourism

27th and 28th September 2008

The Workshop went well. Unfortunately our society was not very well represented. Sudhir Sahi attended the initial session when Mr Bezbaruah gave an introductory talk. Mandip was down with a viral and Rakesh Mathur was away on the 27th but popped in on the second day. I was embarrassed to sit through all the sessions alone. Interestingly, no representatives of any of our associated companies attended other than Dhruv Singh from Anantvan (Bandhavgarh) and Suhail Gupta from India Safaris.

So by default I ended up chairing most of the sessions. I was then double surprised when on the last day someone woke up and asked what role ESOI had in the Workshop!

As a background session for the Travel Trade I think the workshop succeeded. And Moulika deserves credit for this.

Ananya Dasgupta from Equations did not understand the purpose of the Workshop and failed to read the mood. Her comments were often based on misinformation (such as tigers are being collared to help tourists see the animals) and blatantly wrong. I gather she said similar things at the Cochin Meeting a few months before. On the other hand Liyakat was reasoned and informative in the way he sounded alarm bells.

The session with the lawyer and Judge were useful and Samir Sinha's twin presentation a good way to end the first day.

The highlight of Day Two was definitely Hariharan's four presentations rolled into one about "What we can do". We need more of these positive and inspirational talks.

Ravi Kalra (Travel Inn) was an active participant and saved me the job of refuting Ananya Dasgupta's presentation from the chair.

A few suggestions on content came from people who came on only one day and missed some material from the other day.

Some asked that the programmes be taken to the field.

Other suggestions and comments included:

How do we address and implement 'best practices'

You can only get a bottle of water on tour or in a hotel free on receipt of the empty.

Water recycling upto 70% is possible and should be mandatory in all offices and projects.

There should be a Best Practices Bulletin Board on the ESOI website.

We should also post a list of good tourism practices, with examples. We should have links to suppliers.

Ravi Kalra wanted to involve more people I ESOI and to take the membership horizontal.

He wanted ESOI to create a Data Bank and become a place to discuss issues.

And he suggested ESOI should be a bridge between the resource and the user.

Lokesh Bagga from Kuoni wanted more on Community Issues but of course failed to realise that the workshop was for the Travel Trade. He also asked for Govt participation.

Amaresh Tiwari from A T Seasons & Vacations wondered why “no one from the Ecotorism Society of India was present” As I spoke and sat in on every session I wonder if he listened!!

Ananya Dasgupta from Equations gave a totally misplaced and many of her comments were wrong. This was a pity and these sort of emotive presentations are wrong

About ten people came and paid on the day so Moulika is holding approx Rs15,000/- as fees. As a Society we were not very prepared and did not have a receipt book at the registration desk.

The students from DU School of Environmental Studies (SoES) felt there should have been more participation by the students and greater emphasis on what would help them. I personally feel the course should be targeted at the Travel Trade in the broadest sense and students are an ‘add on’. However, I think it would be good to work with the SoES and perhaps help them structure part of their course (this is a two-year MA course).

Sunil Kundo from Le Passage.... Even suggested we institute awards for best practices.

A lot of people asked for rules and guidelines. And others asked for lists of good practices.

Toby Sinclair

October 2008