

INDeco Hotels

Pioneer of Sustainable & Rural Tourism in India



Can you believe that a sustainable and responsible hotel project in a remote rural region can change the fate of neighbouring villages and nearby towns?

The per capita income goes up from 5 odd US dollars per family per month to well over 400 US dollars in a period of 10 years, happiness quotient goes up, NIL unemployment, finds a market for all village produce, all children go to school and the list goes on. Works with the local administration to make its town and railway station one of the cleanest, treats 100% of its solid waste and above all has about 50 odd air-conditioned bus stops with ATM's attached, all-girls schools have been provided with a toilet. Again, this list also goes on.

The question is why we have not reproduced this model across the Country.

The story of India's first sustainable and rural tourism dates back to as early as 1992 when a young man set out to revive Indian villages. After having worked globally at the UN, Government of India, Press, Films, Hotels and the Corporate, he bought a sick company in India, revived it and sold it to find the money to create these Rural Hotels. Being the hotelier wasn't his business plan. It was his passion to work for the villages. The rural and urban inequalities causing total damage to the rural economy was his primary concern. This was followed by a chance meeting with the late Hindu pontiff Shankaracharya, who inspired him to follow his passion.



He set out to establish big, responsible, sustainable and regenerative tourism businesses in remote rural and tribal pockets of Tamilnadu to mend their broken backbone. He acquired three abandoned dilapidated historic villages in SWAMIMALAI near Tanjore. He redefined Hospitality from being a mere shelter to development, protection and preservation. All with what the local people know have and do. And in the process preserve their art, heritage, culture, livelihood, antiquities, flora, fauna, lifestyle, ecology, technologies, tradition, skills, traditional cuisine & sustainable practices.

The destiny changed not only for him but also for the villages and the town around. Wherever he established businesses, Per capita income increased from less than USD5 to USD 400 per family per month and the happiness quotient went up and attained high employment, hygiene and sanitization levels. Today, the man STEVE BORGIA is India's pioneer in rural tourism.

Steve is one of the founders of the Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI) which is now the Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI). He's also the Vice President of the Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA). He is the founder chairman of Association of Agri & Rural Tourism Society of India (AARTI) and several smaller travel and tourism organisations.



His unique properties are as follows:

1. INDeco Hotels Swamimalai, in Kumbakonam, Tanjore District, S.India established in 1992. India's unique Heritage Hotel.
2. INDeco Hotels, Mahabalipuram was established in 2003 to create job opportunities for the fisherman communities around.
3. INDeco's Lake Forest Hotel was created in 2007 with 100 rooms amidst coffee plantation without damaging the ecology.

Kumbakonam today is the cleanest town in India. Its Railway station is one of the best kept Railway Station. No beggars in the town, 100% solid waste is treated, the cost of electricity is 10 % less than the rest of the country. All girl schools are provided with toilets; the only town in India which has air-conditioned bus Stops with ATMs attached.

Another very interesting feature of INDeco hotels is that each of these properties houses a Museum. *"The Indian heritage museum is the soul of INDeco Hotels. These museums contain very pristine objects right from the World's smallest gramophone to the first aircraft that landed at the Madras presidency. The Gate of Madras Central prison, the prison cell in which Subhash Chandra Bose was kept overnight before being moved to the cellular jail, very interesting objects which the British brought from*





England and left behind. The museums are very interactive as we encourage some objects being touched and operated by the visitors. We are lucky to be in historical space, therefore it serves the very purpose of the museum", says Steve.

Fortune magazine awarded INDeco Hotels as the 6th best idea to save planet earth minuscule all the other national and international awards bestowed.

Here is what a Former Indian Prime Minister had to say...

"Steve, the creator of this facility is the Viswakarma in building heavenly resorts. This is what we must expose to the Western World. I like the way INDeco cares for insects, birds & animals, protects heritage, promote culture, work with local people with what they know, have and do. This is a workable model for the nation to develop our villages, It is truly overwhelming to know that this hotel project has had such an impact in the neighbourhood. I feel I am in a village and not in a hotel."

Steve is now all set to take sustainable rural tourism to the next level. He is now in the process of creating a world wonder THE LAST RESORT for human wonderment and the ecoVILLE. a sustainable village for earth-loving people in the Kodai foothills near Palani in Tamilnadu.

Thanks to CORONA, the world will now be moving to sustainable, rural and responsible tourism products. And this shift will quickly be on the upward trend as

it is across the globe. Today people want to go to natural spaces where there is not much of human intervention.

On being asked, why have we not reproduced this model across the Country, Steve says, "These things like Museum, ecology are all the end products of very passionate people, govt can support in terms of tax benefits and subsidies. But passionate entrepreneurs need to take charge to reproduce this model. One has to be innocently brave, logically sane, shamefully courageous, dream big and achieve their dreams passionately. I am very hopeful of the younger generation to follow my footsteps as I see a lot of compassion, care for earth and sustainability among youngsters. I strongly believe that more and more young people will do responsible businesses and not polluting businesses. You will not find somebody put up a cement factory in a remote rural area, as my generation did."

I just have one piece of advice for the Tourists in general who desire to holiday in Rural Areas. "if you go to villages, you need to be highly responsible, if you cannot give back to the rural community, don't go there. You must offer benefit to the local community otherwise you are not being fair. Also, I request young people from rural areas, who go to urban cities for education to come back to your villages, revive them, regenerate them, and take care of your people. Believe me, you are going to be the winners and not the ones scaling heights in the share market."



The government on the other hand should create policies that support such activities by entrepreneurs, maybe some tax cuts, electricity subsidies, etc. To build a hotel in a remote area or a hill station is twice as expensive as building it in the city. The government should consider this seriously as this could really give a boost to sustainable and rural tourism and make the villages self-sufficient.

There is no other country in the world that is as rich as India when it comes to Tourism. We have everything, from North to South, East to West, we have so many countries and cultures packed in India. In fact, we are the only country that can sell emotion in the whole world. If India needs to smile longer, we need to act now, the hour is now.

