



Promoting Responsible Tourism through Digital Media

To promote the Ecotourism initiative, Development Alternatives in support with National Mission on Himalayan Studies organised a live session on its social media handles with Anshul Akhoury, acclaimed travel influencer recognised by Outlook Responsible Tourism Awards. The sessions were organised to highlight Responsible Tourism practices. In order to understand a holistic view of the above, the discussion included a local and a travel influencer perspective. Local community participation (Gajendra Singh Rana and Partap Singh Thakur from Uttarkashi and Mandi respectively) was crucial to the discussion as they spoke about the significance of preserving mountain ecosystems of their villages and also gave an insight of mesmerising views of the villages to viewers. Other key points discussed were - how to plan travel post-COVID, supporting the local economy by staying at homestays, eating local food, purchasing organic, and sustainable traditional handicraft products as a souvenir.

The pandemic has disrupted the tourism industry bringing it to an indefinite halt, the crisis has given importunate time to rethink the tourism sector all over again having a potential for job creation, while also promoting sustainable consumption of natural resources. In the current scenario, it becomes imperative to offer Responsible Travel experiences to consumers that benefit the local community, environment, and travellers.

Digitisation is a crucial aspect for tourism industry post-COVID, thus our social media platforms play a key role in bringing behavioral changes among consumers by taking them on a virtual tour which offers insightful glimpses of Uttarakhand (*Kamad-Thandi*) and Himachal Pradesh (*Thatta, Lagshal, Bhanuthi and Kalang*) villages, filmed and guided by the local community.

Our Virtual Tour videos are up on our Instagram and Facebook handles; taking one through indigenous **Agricultural Produce** of the region, **Heritage Walk** covering traditional elements of the village and local **Traditional Cuisine** of the region. The videos are available on [@parashar_ecotourism](https://www.instagram.com/parashar_ecotourism) and [@thandi_kamad_ecotourism](https://www.instagram.com/thandi_kamad_ecotourism).