

Strengthening cultural tourism in western Rajasthan

Rajasthan popularly called the Land of Royals, has a rich cultural heritage of bewitching palaces, forts, memorials, museums, Baolis, together with a plethora of exquisite Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) that greatly adds to the colourful character and tourism offerings of the state. Across Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Bikaner, there are the Langas, Manganiyars and Mirs, who are folk singers of the Thar Desert, the Kalbelia folk dance, listed in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the puppeteers, makers of exotic handicrafts like pottery, Durrie, embroidery and appliqué work, leather craft, miniature painting, handloom weaving, Usta art, and others. Experiencing these living heritages in their traditional, natural habitats and meeting the actual artists can be enticing for tourists, heritage enthusiasts, and explorers. To unleash the potential of cultural tourism in western Rajasthan we worked with UNESCO and Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan to develop ten cultural tourism destinations. The project involved mapping of the destinations, developing trails, enhancing skills of the artists in their art form and also on cultural tourism skills. The artists were provided with skills to develop tourism souvenirs and linkages were created through participation in multiple festivals and programmes. Exchange and collaboration at the artists' villages were held with Danish musicians. The artists came together to document their songs. Films were developed on the art form and the cultural tourism destinations. Sensitisation workshops were held with tourism stakeholders and they were provided with familiarisation tours. The tourism stakeholders included some of the villages in their itinerary. Festivals were held at the villages and districts to promote the villages as destinations. Media, bloggers, tourism stakeholders, schools, colleges, general visitors took part in the festivals and appreciated the initiative. The artists took part in tourism fairs and highlighted their village. Branding in the villages was also done as part of the initiative. The efforts have helped in popularising the villages and tourists are visiting these villages.

URL : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvNNUwAS7OI>