

# Ministry of Tourism organises 40th webinar titled “Women of India -Shifting Gears” under Dekho Apna Desh campaign

## Women motorbike enthusiasts highlight the thrill and extraordinary experience of travelling on bike across the country

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The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, under the Dekho Apna Desh webinar series, organised its 40<sup>th</sup> webinar titled “Women of India - Shifting Gears” outlining the thrills of women biking infused with tourism. The webinar session was held by two women bike enthusiasts of India Jai Bharathi who is an avid motorcyclist, travel enthusiast and Co-founder of MoWo (Moving Women), a social initiative encouraging women to travel in motorcycles; and Candida Louis, a biker, blogger, story teller and Motorcycle tour guide.

Moderated by Ms. Rupinder Brar, ADG, Ministry of Tourism, the hour-long session touched upon various aspects surrounding safety of women bikers of India, the exploration of the myriad landscape of India on motorcycle, responsible travelling and encouraging more women to bike across the country without inhibitions. Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India’s rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and it is continuously spreading spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat through virtual platform

Both the speakers of the session are well known personalities in the women’s biking community of India and have paved the way for many budding motor enthusiasts who have been inspired by their biking journeys. While Jai Bharathi hails from the state of Telangana, is an architect by profession and now runs a non profit organisation called MoWo (Moving Women) which helps women learn how to ride two wheeler and also heads an all-women biker club called Bikerni of the Hyderabad chapter, Candida Louis is a young motorcycle travel influencer with over millions of followers on YouTube and Instagram. Coming from the town of Hubli in Karnataka, she claims herself to be a story teller and a passionate motorcycle tour guide who helps tourists encounter much thrilling and extraordinary travel experiences around the country and abroad.

For someone who has been conferred by the Govt of Telangana with “Vishishta Mahila Puraskaram” and the only woman bike traveller in the state, Jai Bharathi proudly shares her experience of travelling across the borders of the country and 7 foreign countries like the USA, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, etc covering thousands of miles and representing the country in past few years of her biking journey. Her fascination for visiting UNESCO sites has helped her finish the challenge of visiting all of the 38 UNESCO sites across India. This fascination has got her traveling in unexplored destinations and learns the uniqueness of Indian culture.

Candida on the other hand had toured the entire country at a stretch in 2015 covering 32000 kilometres and 22 states in a span of 7 months. Her most recent trip was from India to Australia where she rode for about 8 months crossing 10 countries on the road. Her passion for motorcycle tour leading has made her lead tours in and out of the country with more than 15 countries and 40 trips ticked off her check list. During her introduction, Candida shares her love for local culture and cuisines as well as being active in volunteering and community service.

Jai Bharathi expressed, how the historical and cultural heritage, the long coastal lines, the vast mountain ranges and hills, the country side, agriculture fields and India's road network which is considered the second largest in the world can be experienced through these motor machines that not only add to the thrill and adventure but also empower women to get out of their homes and experience true freedom.

Candida moves on with the presentation by elucidating India's natural beauty region wise. The north, she said, has its own charm making it every bikers dream to set out on a biking trip to the rocky roads of the mountains and hills of the Himalayas. A ride to Leh, Ladakh and Spiti region, the highest motorable road Umling La and the Kargil war memorial site are some of the dream destinations of every motorbike enthusiast. North India is also blessed with some of the best monuments and historical sites that makes it an apt region for biking adventures for foreign and as well as national tourists.

The eastern India, according to Candida, has one of the best views for a biker during his or her expedition due to the greenery of the region. The one that stands out the best is the northeast region which immensely depicts the actual picture of natural beauty with the seven sisters of the northeast consisting some of the most stunning landscapes including waterfalls and deep forests, cleanest villages, high mountain passes etc and the best way to experience these remote places, she said, is by motorcycling.

Moving on to southern India, Candida revealed to the viewers that she shares a special bonding with the region as she comes from the south and developed her passion growing up there. South India being blessed with long coastal roads and pristine beaches makes for a perfect destination for bike riders and motorbike journeys. She mentioned that the friendliness of the people of the region pushed her to travel frequently opening up her horizons with more confidence.

Coming to the western region, Candida mentioned that her solo trip to west India was a special ride where she landed up in Pushkar, Udaipur, Jaisalmer and many other unexplored places that opened up a whole new colourful world to her and places like the rat temple, bullet baba temple or biker temple and the likes were something she'd never heard of but discovered them during the journey. West India, according to her has the most picturesque views and provides the best backdrop for bikers on their biking journey.

The last region she talked about was central India which she described it as a soft and mystical land with ancient temples, majestic forts, forests, jungles, wildlife and some of the most vibrant cities of India. Contrary to popular belief, Candida mentioned that during her ride to the region she did not face any kind of danger of the road and her travel was accomplished satisfactorily without any hesitation in terms of safety. Thus, she advises the viewers to set out on their journeys to any place in the country with maximum trust and minimum fear but with full precautions.

She concludes by mentioning that, to her India is almost like a continent with the most variant of attractions spread across this huge land of dazzling culture and traditions and calls for exploration by every citizen especially the women folk.

Jai Bharathi explains how people who visit India are mostly intrigued by the distinct culture of the country and that every tradition has its own meaning to fulfil. This brought her into narrating one of her motor ride journey celebrating and promoting one of the major festivals celebrated in Telangana during Navratri called, Bathukamma. It's a 9-day festival for and by women where the women folks gather flowers of different kinds available naturally in the surroundings and decorate it around a pit dug outside their homes. In 2018, in order to promote the Bathukamma festival Jai and a group of 9 women travelled across 9 districts in Telangana covering 1200kms on their bullets dressed up in ethnic attires and exploring their traditional handloom and culture. Bharathi said that it is essential for us to promote these cultures as much as we can through various platforms and means available to us.

Jai also emphasised on detailed planning of trips before setting out on one's respective bike journeys. It is essential that a pre-planning is conducted measuring all requirements for the trip and the vehicle. Road safety is another aspect that one must take deeply into consideration. Being protected with riding gears, maintaining traffic rules, taking breaks every now and then and regularly checking the bikes to avoid breakdowns is crucial for every rider embarking on adventure like these.

She concluded her talk by mentioning about how a dialogue needs to be started and amplified by positively encouraging more women to travel and have zero fears of exploring, venturing out and leaving their worries at home to celebrate and capture the beauty of their own country and to empower themselves.

The sessions of webinars are now available on the given links

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbzIbBmMvtvH7d6Zo\\_ZEHDA/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbzIbBmMvtvH7d6Zo_ZEHDA/featured)

<http://tourism.gov.in/dekho-apna-desh-webinar-ministry-tourism>

<https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/events/dekho-apna-desh.html>

The sessions of webinars are also available on all social media handles of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

The next webinar is scheduled for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020 which will focus on Uttarakhand as a yoga destination.

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