



Draft National Tourism Policy

For Prelims: Tourism in India, Schemes Related to tourism, Draft National Tourism Policy.

For Mains: Government Policies & Interventions, Significance and Challenges related to Tourism in India.

Why in News

Recently, the Government has prepared the **Draft National Tourism Policy** focusing on **Green, and digital tourism** and has been sent to the industry partners, state governments, other allied ministries for feedback, before it is sent for approval.

- Earlier, the Ministry of Tourism has formulated **three draft strategies** with roadmaps for promoting Medical and Wellness Tourism, for development of Rural Tourism and for promotion of MICE Industry in India.

What are the Key Points of the Draft Policy?

- **Industry Status to Sector:**
 - To promote investment in the tourism sector, the document mentions granting of industry status to the sector, along with formally **granting infrastructure status to hotels**.
- **Five Key Areas:**
 - Five key areas would be given significant focus in the next 10 years — **green tourism, digital tourism, destination management, skilling the hospitality sector and supporting tourism-related to [Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises \(MSMEs\)](#)**.
- **Relief Measures and Taxation Breaks:**
 - The industry, which has been the worst sufferer over the last two years of the **pandemic**, had sent multiple representations to the government representatives for relief measures as well as taxation breaks.
- **Offers Framework Conditions:**
 - The draft policy **doesn't deal with specific operational issues, but offers framework conditions to help the sector**, especially in the wake of the pandemic.
 - The **overall mission and vision is being laid out to improve the experience of tourists**, foreign as well as local.

What is the Scenario of Tourism in India?

- **About:**
 - **India attracted a lot of travellers in the past** due to its fabled wealth. Visit of **Hieun-tsang**, a devout Chinese Buddhist is an example of this.
 - **Pilgrim Travel got a boost** when Emperors like Ashoka and Harsha started building rest houses for pilgrims.
 - Arthashastra' pointing out **the importance of the travel infrastructure for the state, which played an important role** in the past.
 - Post-Independence, Tourism continuously **remained part of the [Five Year Plans \(FYP\)](#)**.

- Different forms of Tourism like **Business Tourism, Health Tourism, and Wildlife Tourism etc. were introduced** in India after seventh FYP.

▪ **Status:**

- India's Tourism is ranked at 10th position in terms of its contribution to World **GDP (Gross Domestic Product)** in the World Travel and Tourism Council's report in 2019.
 - During 2019, contribution of travel & tourism to GDP was 6.8% of the total economy, ~ Rs. 13,68,100 crore (USD 194.30 billion).
- India as of now in 2021 has 40 sites listed under '**World Heritage List**', 6th most highest (32 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed site) in the world.
 - **Dholavira** and **Ramappa Temple (Telangana)** are the latest ones.
- In FY20, the tourism sector in India accounted for **39 million jobs, which was 8.0% of the total employment in the country**. By 2029, it is expected to account for about 53 million jobs.

▪ **Significance:**

- **Service Sector:**
 - It gives **a push to the service sector**. A large number of businesses engaged in the service sector such as airlines, hotel, surface transportation, etc. grows with the growth of the tourism industry.
- **Foreign Exchange:**
 - Foreign Travellers help India in getting **Foreign Exchange**.
 - The foreign exchange earnings from 2016 to 2019 grew at a CAGR of 7% but dipped in 2020 due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- **Preservation of National Heritage:**
 - Tourism helps in **preservation of National Heritage and Environment** by bringing in focus the importance of sites and the need to preserve them.
- **Renewal of Cultural Pride:**
 - Tourist spots being appreciated globally **instils a sense of pride among Indian residents**.
- **Infrastructural Development:**
 - Now-a-days, it is ensured that **Travelers do not face any problem; multiple use infrastructures are getting developed** at several tourist places.
- **Recognition:**
 - It helps in **bringing India on the global map of tourism**, earning appreciation, recognition and initiates cultural exchange.
- **Promotes Cultural Diplomacy:**
 - Tourism as **a form of soft power, helps in promoting cultural diplomacy**, people to people connect and thereby promotes friendship and cooperation between India and other countries.

▪ **Challenges:**

- **Lacking in Infrastructure:**
 - Tourists in India **still face many infrastructure related problems** like inadequate roads, water, sewer, hotels and telecommunications etc.
- **Safety and security:**
 - Safety and security of tourists, especially of the foreign tourists, is a **major hurdle to tourism development**. Attacks on foreign nationals raise questions about India's ability to welcome tourists from far away countries.
- **Lack of skilled manpower:**
 - Lack of skilled manpower is another challenge to the Tourism Industry in India.
- **Absence of basic amenities:**
 - Absence of basic amenities like drinking water, well maintained toilets, first aid, cafeteria etc. at tourist places.
- **Seasonality:**
 - Seasonality in Tourism, with the busy season being limited to six months from October to March and heavy rush in November and December.

▪ **Related Initiatives:**

- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** Under it, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for infrastructure development of 13 identified theme based circuits.
- **National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage**

Augmentation Drive:

- PRASAD Scheme was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the objective of holistic development of identified pilgrimage destinations.
- **Iconic Tourist Sites:**
 - Buddhist Sites at [Bodhgaya](#), [Ajanta & Ellora](#) have been identified to be developed as **Iconic Tourist Sites** (aimed at enhancing India's soft power).
- **Buddhist Conclave:**
 - Buddhist Conclave is organised every alternate year with the objective of promoting India as a Buddhist Destination and major markets around the globe.
- **Dekho Apna Desh' Initiative:**
 - It was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2020 to encourage the citizens to travel widely within the country thus enabling the development of Domestic Tourism tourist facilities and infrastructure.

Way Forward

- Faster development of all sorts of **infrastructure (physical, social and digital) is a need of the hour.**
- Safety of **tourists is a priority.** An official guide system can be launched for tourists.
- Indian Residents **should be motivated to treat tourists** well, so that tourists don't face any type of fraud.
- Promotion of other forms of **Tourism like Medical Tourism, Adventure Tourism etc. to solve the problem of seasonality.** Off-season concession is another solution.
- India's size and massive natural, geographic, **cultural and artistic diversity offers enormous opportunities.** The Indian Tourism industry should play on that.

Source: IE

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/draft-national-tourism-policy>

