



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?

Parliamentary committees have concluded that drafting a National Tourism Policy will not lead to the development of the tourism industry in the country.

- The committee has **suggested fast-tracking the creation of a National Tourism Council on the lines of the [GST council](#)** to directly make recommendations to the Central and State governments on various issues of the tourism sector and its stakeholders.

What are the Concerns raised by the Committee?

- **Inclusion in the Concurrent List:**
 - The committee also sought to know the steps taken by the Tourism Ministry regarding its earlier recommendation of including tourism in the **[concurrent list](#)**.
 - The committee is of the view that **inclusion of tourism in the concurrent list will help in simplifying the issues of the pandemic-hit Indian tourism sector** since tourism is a multi-sectoral activity.
- **Industry Status to Hospitality Projects:**
 - It also **sought to know why some 20 States were yet to accord industry status to hospitality projects** and asked the Ministry whether anything in this regard has been conveyed by these States to the Centre.
 - As of now eight States (**Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand**) have accorded industry status to hospitality projects.
- **Regarding Sanctioned Projects:**
 - It expressed concern that in **projects sanctioned five years ago or before 2017-18, the progress rates achieved have been less than expected.**
 - **Projects Sanctioned:** 'Development at Hazratbal' in Jammu and Kashmir and 'Infrastructure Development at Puri, **[Shree Jagannath Dham - Ramachandi-Prachi River front at Deuli under Mega Circuit](#)**' in Odisha.
 - The committee is of the view that **projects taking longer than five years may incur high cost and schedule or time overruns**, which will put extra financial burden and resource crunch on the Ministry and implementing agencies involved.

What are the Highlights of the Draft National Tourism Policy?

- **Industry Status to Sector:**
 - It mentions **granting industry status to the tourism sector**, as well as granting infrastructure status to hotels, in an effort to attract investment.

- **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 \(MSMEs\)](#).
- **Advocacy for Appropriate Taxation and Subsidy Policies:**
 - The Mission will advocate appropriate taxation and subsidy policies to encourage investment in sustainable tourism activities and discourage unsustainable tourism.
- **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 are being laid out to improve the experience of tourists, foreign as well as local.

What is the Status of the Tourism Sector in India?

- **About:**
 - India ranks **6th** according to [World Travel and Tourism Council](#) in terms of Travel & Tourism total contribution to **GDP** in 2021.
 - India is currently **ranked 54th in World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index (2021)**.
 - India has 40 sites listed on the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#) (32 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed) as of 2021.
 - [Dholavira](#) and [Ramappa Temple](#) are the latest ones.
 - A total of 39 million jobs were created in the tourism sector in FY20, which represented 8% of the country's employment. By 2029, it will account for 53 million jobs.
- **Recent Initiatives:**
 - [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)
 - [Dekho Apna Desh Initiative](#)
 - National Green Tourism Mission
 - [PRASAD scheme](#)
 - [Buddhist Conclave](#)

What are the Challenges Related to the Tourism Sector in India?

- **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.

Way Forward

- Considering India's rich heritage and culture, an unmatched variety of cuisine tourism can be a vehicle for enhancing [India's soft power](#) and attracting foreign revenue.
 - India's philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' sees the world as one family. It gives India an unwavering belief in multilateralism.
- There is a **need to focus on inclusive growth of tourism** by creating opportunities for

marginalised sections of society including people living in remote areas.

- An **extensive market research and evaluation exercise can be undertaken** in order to identify desired tourist destinations across the country and major markets and segments.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q.1 How can the mountain ecosystem be restored from the negative impact of development initiatives and tourism? **(2019)**

Q.2 The states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are reaching the limits of their ecological carrying capacity due to tourism. Critically evaluate. **(2015)**

[Source: TH](#)

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