



Strategy to Promote Medical, Rural and MICE Tourism

Why in News

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.

- India has been **ranked 34th** out of 140 countries on the [World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index](#) 2019, released by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.

Key Points

▪ Medical and Wellness Tourism (MWT):

- About:
 - Describes the rapidly growing practice of **travelling** across international borders **to obtain healthcare services**.
 - It may be broadly classified into three categories - Medical Treatment, Wellness & Rejuvenation and Alternative Cures. Now it is often referred to as **Medical Value Travel (MVT)**.
- **Scope in India:**
 - **State of the Art Medical Facilities:** Top of the line medical and diagnostic equipment from global international conglomerates are available.
 - **Reputed Healthcare Professionals:** Reputation for high-quality medical training and also fluent in English to converse with foreigners.
 - **Financial Savings:** The cost of quality of medical procedures and services are low in India.
 - **Alternative Cures:** India has a unique advantage of offering [Yoga, Ayurveda & Naturopathy](#) for treatment.
- **Major Strategy:**
 - **“Heal in India” Brand** for promoting India as a MVT destination.
 - **Capacity building of MVT facilitator**, enterprises and staff.
 - **Setting up of an online MVT Portal** to provide one stop solution to facilitate international patients.
 - **Convergence** of Wellness, Hospitality and Travel businesses.

▪ Rural Tourism:

- **About:**
 - Any form of tourism that showcases the **rural life, art, culture, and heritage at rural locations**, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially.
 - It offers an opportunity to promote **sustainable and responsible tourism** and fulfill the vision of [Atmanirbhar Bharat](#).
- **Scope in India:**

- Indian villages have unparalleled **culture, craft, music, dance and heritage** to offer to the visitors.
- **Well-developed agriculture and farms** to provide stay facilities and experiences.
- Beautiful **climate conditions and Biodiversity**.
- India has **coastal, Himalayan, desert, forest and tribal areas** amongst others for tourists.
- **Major Strategy:**
 - **State Assessment and Ranking** as a tool for Capacity Building (including that of [Panchayati Raj Institutions](#)).
 - **Enabling Digital Technologies for Rural Tourism** like enabling broadband internet infrastructure to rural areas having tourism potential.
 - Developing **clusters** for rural tourism.
- **MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions):**
 - **About:**
 - The main purpose is to create a networking **platform for business, industry, government and Academic Community** and engage in meaningful conversations.
 - MICE is also known as 'Meetings industry' or 'Events industry'.
 - **Scope in India:**
 - Core MICE infrastructure amenities are **at par with most developed countries**.
 - India has **consistently improved its rank in [World Bank Ease of Doing Business](#) and [WEF Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Rank](#)**.
 - Growing Economic Strength of India.
 - India has progressed rapidly in the areas like Information Technology, and Scientific Research.
 - **Major Strategy:**
 - **"Meet in India" Brand** for promoting MICE Industry.
 - Providing [infrastructure status](#) for **financing of MICE infrastructure**.
 - **Skill development** for the MICE industry.

Significance

- **Multiplier Effect:** Not only does the tourism sector **provide high-quality jobs**, it also enhances **investment in India, accelerates development**.
- **Push to the Service Sector:** A large number of businesses engaged in the service sector such as airlines, hotels, surface transportation, etc. grows with the growth of the tourism industry.
- **Preservation of National Heritage and Environment and Renewal of Cultural Pride.**
- **Soft Power:** Tourism helps in **promoting cultural diplomacy**, people to people connect and thereby promotes friendship and cooperation between India and other countries.
- **Boost to Other Forms of Tourism:** India has huge potential for related areas such as **Eco-tourism, Nature Reserves, Wildlife tourism, Himalayan tourism**. India has 38 **world heritage sites** that include 30 Cultural properties, 7 Natural properties and 1 mixed site.

Constraints

- **Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Deficiencies in infrastructure and inadequate connectivity hamper tourist visits to some sites.
- **Promotion and Marketing:** Although it has been increasing, online marketing/branding remains limited and campaigns are not coordinated.
- **Tourist information centers** are poorly managed, making it difficult for domestic and foreign tourists to access information with ease.
- **Lack of Skills:** A limited number of multilingual trained guides, and the limited local awareness

and understanding of the benefits and responsibilities associated with tourist growth.

▪ **Others:**

- There is a perception about India **not being a very hygienic country**. This impacts the choice of India as a medical destination.
- **Lack of prioritization for rural tourism** at the State and National level.
- **Lack of focussed approach on MICE** as an industry.

Major Schemes of the Ministry of Tourism

- [Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative](#)
- [DekhoApnaDesh Campaign](#)
- [PRASHAD Scheme](#)
- [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)

Way Forward

- **‘One India One Tourism’ Approach:** Tourism encompasses multiple ministries and takes place in and within many states and thus requires collective efforts and cooperation with centre and other states.
- **Promoting Ease of Tourism:** To truly ensure a seamless tourist transportation experience we need to standardize all interstate road taxes and make them payable at a single point which will facilitate the ease of doing business.

[Source:PIB](#)

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