



## 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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>

