



Written Submission to Ministry of Tourism on National Tourism Policy, 2015

EQUATIONS
23 March 2015

A. Tourism Policy, Planning and Regulation

1. Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is applicable to all forms of tourism, which are in harmony with their economic, social, physical and cultural environment in the long term. The 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment that took place in Stockholm and which, in its declaration, defined key principles of sustainable development concerning environment and development, which was to be followed by all countries who are signatories. With the failure of the effectiveness of the 1972 declaration, the World Commission on Environment and Development was created to formulate a global agenda for change. It is in their report 'Our Common Future' released in 1987 that a definition of Sustainable Development was promulgated and which has today gained universal acceptability. Below is a reproduction from the document:

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- *the concept **of needs**, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and*
- *the idea of **limitations** imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."*

- World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). Our common future. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987 p. 43.

The UNWTO defines Sustainable Tourism as 'leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. Article 3 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 1999, further articulates practices that the tourism industry should engage in to achieve goals of Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, the Agenda 21, an action plan formulated at the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992 identifies tourism with the potential to play an important role in the global movement towards Sustainable Development. Additionally, Chapter 28 of the Agenda 21, focuses on the role of local authorities in the fruition of the objectives of Sustainable Development.

Quoting from the Mid-term appraisal of the 11th five year plan for Tourism, 'Tourism is an industry with great reliance on attraction and amenities, along with dependence on the goodwill of the local community. Of late, the social and economic consequences of tourism have raised various issues related to environment and the impact on the local community. Therefore, in order to have sustainable tourism development, the involvement of local people would be of utmost importance'.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

1.1 Central to the National Tourism Policy, 2015 is the definition and principles of Sustainable Development. Accordingly, the forthcoming Policy will envision tourism that is people governed and where the accountability of the tourism industry is paramount to its implementation.. For this all aspects of tourism - environmental, economic,

social, cultural, and its institutions are taken into account. Tourism, will be developed and promoted respecting the land, its people, their culture and the prevailing laws

1.2 Voices of local people are heard and their perspectives and aspirations privileged as tourism destinations are their homeland and cultural spaces. Where processes of planning and implementation are transparent and participatory so that all stakeholders have the space to influence its forms and outcomes, and where tourism is designed with the principles of equity in benefits at its core.

1.3 As tourism is an important instrument of bringing people together, learning about, and respecting each others cultures, all forms of tourism in our vision are necessarily non- exploitative, respect human rights, are gender just, and do not dispossess nature and communities.

1.4 Sustainable Tourism Cell is to be instituted at the Central and State levels. The function of this Cell would include:

- To coordinate a process for visioning for tourism development in India based on the principles of sustainable tourism: The vision for tourism is of decision making, planning and implementation being democratised.
- Research on the various issues of sustainable tourism – on sound tourism impact assessments studies with focus on specific groups within the society, climate change, tourism carrying capacities of an area and developing monitoring tools that would inform guidelines and practices. Research at both micro and macro level to assess the economic benefits, multipliers and leakages are critical so that policies are based on data. Master planning processes to be more inclusive and consultative with stakeholders particularly local stakeholders. Planning for tourism is not a one off process but cyclical and iterative, based on a loop of experiences, impacts and learnings.
- Coordinate the STCI process – plan, implement, monitor and expand the Criteria to all sectors of tourism (organised and unorganised) within the country.
- Coordinate the Safe and Honourable Tourism Process – plan, implement, monitor and expand the Code to all sectors of tourism (organised and unorganised) within the country.
- As part of its monitoring role, the Cell conducts social audit of its tourism projects once every 5 years.
- The Results – Framework Document developed by MoT will include qualitative and quantitative indicators towards implementation and monitoring of its various initiatives on sustainable tourism.

1.5 A Scheme on Sustainable Tourism is proposed that will work on the following issues:

- Sustainable Tourism Cell – Visioning for Tourism Development, research, coordination, monitoring
- Scheme on Safe and Honourable Tourism – implementation, monitoring and expansion of the Code to all sectors of tourism within the country
- Scheme on Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India – implementation, monitoring and expansion of the Code to all sectors of tourism within the country

2. Tourism Planning

The Constitution of India in Article 40 in the Directive Principles of State Policy, states “The State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government”. The subsequent changes made to the Constitution through the 73rd applicable to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and 74th amendment applicable to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) further strengthen this provision. A key aspect of this is the devolution of powers (funds, functions and functionaries) to Local Self Governing Institutions (LSGIs) so that the Policy is aligned with the laws of the country vis-a-vis governance.

The focus of tourism planning has been focussed much more on the ways to increase revenues from tourism and on improving tourist experience. While tourism is inherently a commercial activity, it cannot be ignored that it results in impacts which both contribute to communities, but which are also detrimental to their interests. Impacts of tourism across the country are evident. However, these have not been compiled and analysed to arrive at concrete learnings on how to improve the experience of tourism from the point of view of local communities. Importantly, certain benefits attributed to tourism have not been adequately explored. For e.g. while it is a popular claim that tourism increases employment opportunities at a destination, there is no account of how it has impeded already existing occupations such as agriculture, fishing, handicrafts and other such traditional occupations, which are far more economically and environmentally sustainable. Therefore opportunity costs of tourism have not been adequately calculated and taken into consideration while planning for tourism.

All development has a threshold, beyond which it harms society rather than contributing to it. Unfortunately, lack of tourism planning has already breached these in several parts of the country resulting in over crowding and running down of resources, which run counter to the objectives of Sustainable Development.

Past experience of the Ministry of Tourism as well as the Departments of Tourism have been the lack of transparency in the planning process. Vision plans are made without true public engagement, where announcements are made in tokenistic forms. Information is the first step to access power. Armed with information and data local communities would be able to contribute meaningfully to the planning process.

While the Ministry engages with the industry to hear from them, their perspectives, there has not been a similar tradition for engagements with people living in tourism destinations. Even within the industry, when plans are made and implemented, the unorganised sector is ignored and at best a few welfare measures are proposed.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

2.1 The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) will ensure that planning processes are accountable, transparent and participatory. Devolution of tourism decision making as per the 73rd amendment of the constitution would aid this process, since it becomes the mandate of the Gram Sabha to include tourism planning in its annual plans. Additionally, the forthcoming policy, directs state Departments of Tourism to evolve a process for engagement with PRIs present in destinations so as to ensure that tourism is being conducted in accordance with the policy and law.

2.2 Site specific tourism planning will be undertaken up considering local dynamics in terms of social and infrastructure capital of the local context as well as political realities into account. The planning for tourism will be within the overall development plans of a region and not introduced as a standalone intervention. Planning processes will include engagement with LSGIs in areas where the plan is to be implemented.

2.3 Planning and consultation takes into account impact assessments (environmental, social, cultural and economic) and consensus built on informed consent, calculations of tourism carrying capacity, and sustainable use of natural and other resources. It recognises that planning for tourism is not a one off process but cyclical and iterative, based on a loop of experiences, impacts and learnings.

2.4 MoT takes the responsibility to ensure that information on tourism development and plans are available in the public domain. The planning process will create spaces for the active engagement of women, adivasis, dalits and other marginalised communities in all aspects of tourism development (planning, implementation, participation, ownership and monitoring). The Ministry will adopt gender responsive budget for each and every plan/ programme/ scheme related to tourism.

2.5 The state Departments of Tourism are directed to acknowledge and engage with unions of the unorganised sector within tourism in its planning process, at the destination and state level. Interests of the unorganised sector be reflected in the forthcoming policy and all tourism trade acts in the states be aligned accordingly.

3. Tools for planning: market research, statistics, evaluations, tourism carrying capacity

While the MoTs and DoTs conduct market surveys, the findings of these do not seem to influence the planning process. Further, the statistics like visitation data based on which planning does take place are suspect in so far as they represent the situation on the ground. Methods of collecting statistics are ad-hoc and mired with statistical errors.

There is a huge lacuna in the field of Research and Development in tourism. The tourism teaching institutions have been unable to product robust and multi-sectoral research reports as these institutions have a management perspective rather than a development perspective. If tourism is to achieve its developmental goals, it would be imperative that a space to evolve this perspective be created.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

3.1 Scientific techniques to collect tourism statistics will be evolved in collaboration with relevant institutions like the Indian Statistical Institute. Attempts to standardise this would be made as far as possible and keeping in mind the diversity of the nature of tourism and destinations.

3.2 The Ministry proposes to have a dedicated centre for tourism research, policy, planning. It is envisaged that this Centre would generate studies to clarify the role of tourism in the development goals of the country at the macro level and those of the people living in and around the destinations at the local level. Research would result in sound impact assessment studies, tourism carrying capacities, evaluations of schemes and monitoring tools on issues and impacts of tourism which will inform guidelines, practices, projects, schemes, master/ management plans, perspective plans and policies.

Good quality and credible research will be undertaken to understand the potential of tourism products. Policies and plans will be based on research at both micro and macro level to assess the economic benefits, forwards and backward linkages and leakages. A key component of planning any tourism development will ensure consultation with stakeholders particularly local communities living in and around tourism destinations and the unorganised sector in tourism.

Studies on tourism carrying capacities will be conducted while planning projects, master/ management plans. These studies are not based only on the numeric calculation of a site but take into consideration the qualitative impacts of the proposed development. This will ensure that over-crowding at tourism sites and in circuits is avoided, therefore creating positive experiences both for the tourists and the local communities.

4. Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism policy and planning until now has been geared towards increasing international tourist arrivals. The consequences of uncoordinated development of tourism without putting into place important measures have led to adverse economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. Often, Departments of Tourism draw inspiration from developed countries especially regarding issues like transportation and last mile connectivity, without consideration for the social, cultural and environmental differences between those countries and a diverse country like ours.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

4.1 The Ministry of Tourism will define the value framework on the principle of sustainable tourism development when proposing to develop any tourism infrastructure taking into consideration the need to plan the economic, social and ecological carrying capacity of tourism.

4.2 A scheme will be developed for the rejuvenation and preservation of old buildings that can be used for tourism purposes. It will encourage renovating and maintaining old buildings for the purposes of accommodation, information centres, museums, rather than constructing new units.

4.3 Basic facilities - toilets, sanitation in a range of tourist facilities including actual sites of visitation, public amenities in destinations, bus stops, railways stations will be developed. Basic amenities to support women engaged in tourism will be developed (creches, separate toilets, water).

5. Monitoring and Regulation

It is in the role of monitoring and regulation that the MoTs and DoTs fall short the most. The issues with monitoring and regulation are that they are inadequate, do not cover a range of tourism activities, are weak in enforcement and there is an inadequate system in place for follow up. The existing mechanisms are either not binding on the tourism industry (e.g. STCI) or are limited in its applicability (e.g. S&H Code) or cater only to the welfare of the tourists and do not concern themselves with the interests and vulnerabilities of the local communities (e.g. Tourist Police). The role of the MoT and DoTs are paramount in the context of tourism since the industry is inherently driven by the private sector and profit motives. In such a scenario it is left to the MoT and DoTs that laws of the land are not violated and that people in and around the destinations are protected from the vagaries of the industry.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

5.1 The Ministry recognises that the monitoring and regulation of tourism is of utmost importance so that it abides by the Constitution, respects and complies with laws, is not exploitative in any way, and functions with sustainability and equity as principles.

5.2 The Ministry takes the responsibility to evaluate and revise its current regulatory mechanisms or develop new ones to encourage and abide with international covenants on trafficking, child labour, biodiversity protection, climate change, governance and a broader sense of human rights – economic, social and cultural rights (beyond civil and political rights).

5.3 Guidelines and mechanisms will be developed in consultation with the relevant stakeholders that would support LSGIs to monitor and regulate tourism at the local level, as the 73rd and 74th amendment of the Constitution of India entrusts powers to LSGIs to identify, formulate, implement and monitor the local level developmental and welfare programmes. The mechanisms will ensure that the tourism industry is accountable in more direct ways for responsible and ethical forms of tourism development with people's rights as a prime concern.

5.4 While regulations in the forms of laws and notifications are essential, the Ministry encourages codes of conduct or charters that are developed more locally and have a bottom up process. These are ways by which local communities can stake their claim to shape tourism based on local aspirations and contexts. Through such processes the community decides what kind of tourism they want, what they allow, what they disallow, and what they want to offer. This has the possibility of being a powerful process of helping them to search for and articulate their identity in the context of tourism. Where communities have come up with their own charter it has increased their feeling of involvement and ownership of the tourism development process.

5.5 On the two current regulatory mechanisms linked to sustainable tourism, the Ministry will undertake a review of its implementation and revise the guidelines to strengthened both in content and implementation.

5.5.i Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India (STCI): MoT would undertake a mapping of the tourism sectors for developing sector-specific criteria (mega tourism projects / circuits, amusement parks, water parks, cruises, the unorganised and informal sector) as well as one for the destination level based on feedback from stakeholders in tourism. The challenge has been to ensure the implementation of the STCI in its true spirit. It will develop guidelines for implementation and in time move from it being voluntary to making it mandatory for all sectors of the tourism industry.

5.5.ii Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism (S&H Code): In July 2010, MoT launched its Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism. This code aims to strengthen safe tourism practices in India for both tourists and the local population, especially children and women.

The Ministry of Tourism takes a firm position denouncing exploitation of children and women in tourism and its intent to take serious action against this. The Ministry takes cognisance of the growing links between tourism and the abuse of children – in the forms of child labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking as well as the increasing rate of violence against women, the exploitation through sex tourism & forced sex work, objectification of women and the non recognition of women working in unorganised sector and ignorance of issues of women living in and around tourism destinations.

Towards this it will undertake the following actions

- Review the implementation of the S&H code. The study will analyse existing child and women protection mechanisms in tourism in India and recommend revisions to strengthen existing & develop new mechanisms for better implementation of child & women protection in tourism.
- Coordinate between different ministries and departments to provide protection to children and women from abuse in tourism. Concerted efforts by all the related ministries and departments, law enforcing agencies, local self governing institutions, judiciary, media, Child Line and NGOs is required. A Terms of Reference with all the concerned Ministries/ departments will be developed towards the same.
- Appointment of Nodal person for coordination:
 - Every concerned ministry/ department to appoint a person assigned to act as the nodal person to coordinate with all other ministries/ departments and CSOs.
 - The name of the nodal officer, contact details and their roles in print media and place it in prominent places will be published.
- Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with MWCD will develop a National Plan of Action for Protection of Women and Children in Tourism.
- Ministry of Tourism with the State Tourism Departments will conduct an extensive research to map out high – risk (priority) areas.
- To conduct a study on the issues and impacts faced by women in tourism in India as well as examine current initiatives and schemes and bring in a gender perspective.
- Sensitisation workshops for all persons employed with the Ministry of Tourism on the issues and concerns related to exploitation of children and women in tourism will be undertaken.

- To expand the scope of S&H code to also include persons / tourism establishments not registered with the MoT but part of the formal and informal sector of tourism.
- Ministry of Tourism will put in place stringent mechanisms involving the police, child-lines, judiciary, local communities, panchayats and to work with various levels & sectors of the tourism industry.
- Through inter-department coordination, to ensure the implementation of the Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act in tourism industry.
- Strict follow-up of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act in tourism industry.
- To strengthen the Campaign 'I respect Women' – to create awareness on the impacts of tourism on women and publicise 1091, the women helpline number.
- Design/ develop communication material on protection of women and children in tourism and the S&H Code to be given to tourists, communities, which will also be translated in multiple Indian and foreign languages.
- Develop a film and a web page on combating exploitation of women and children in tourism (in different languages) and lobby with Ministry of Civil Aviation to make it mandatory to be screened on all flights.
- The Annual Report of Ministry of Tourism will clearly indicate the number of cases received/ handled and action taken, incidents uncovered of child and women in sex tourism, efforts they have taken to combat this and their commitment to make India free from exploitation of women and children in tourism. This, along with the status of implementation of the Plan of Action, will be reported in the Ministry of Tourism annual report.

B. Tourism Industry

6. Unorganised sector

In India, the unorganised sector contributes significantly to the expanding tourism economy. At a conservative estimate about 70% of the tourism economy is unorganised. Guides, photographers, taxi drivers and owners, small scale accommodation units (lodges, homestays), ticketing agents, hawkers and street vendors, way side dhabas, eateries and shops, vendors selling handicrafts, trinkets and other items for tourists, all represent a part of the huge unorganised labour force in the tourism sector. The other aspect is of unorganised labour within the organised tourism sector, as a large number of the workforce are engaged are employed on a daily / seasonal / contractual basis.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

6.1 The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of the unorganised sector within tourism. It plans to work with the relevant departments and tourism corporations to ensure that mechanisms to promote and protect the interests of this sector are in place - capacity building, access to credit, incentives, subsidies, social security, safe & decent working conditions, uniformity in wages, working hours, licensing, protection from abuse & exploitation by co-workers or tourists.

6.2 A key component of planning any tourism development will ensure consultation with stakeholders the unorganised sector in tourism. Directions are made to the state DoTs to engage with the unions of the unorganised sector and that status reports be prepared, based on which further planning may be done.

7. Taxation and subsidies

Taxes today are skewed in favour of the big tourism industry operators. For e.g. in several home stay policies, taxes such as luxury tax are imposed, which go against the concept and spirit of the concept. Industry associations of the formal sector of the tourism industry often access the MoT and DoT for tax holidays or subsidies in the name of promoting tourism, while the smaller operators receive no such support from the government.

The Ministry will develop the regulation and guidelines which will cover various types of taxes. Currently the many of these comes under different sector such as air transport charge, security charge, departure tax, accommodation tax, entrance fee or eco-tourism tax.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

7.1 The MoT will explore subsidies & incentives to innovative and creative options in order that entrepreneurship at the local level is stimulated on the principals of sustainable and responsible tourism. This increases the sense of control of communities as they are sure that the profits will be ploughed back into development funds for their community. This will be institutionalized and rationalized as the tax equivalent.

8. Corporate Accountability (CA)

The tourism industry in India is growing immensely and the MoT is supporting this growth in many ways. This does not pose a problem in itself. However, that many local communities face serious problems because of this growth, adds a new dimension to this issue. Many of the corporations in India's tourism industry have not shown concerns about their impacts on the social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of the individual and community rights. Corporations often take no responsibility for these negative impacts and have no mechanisms to prevent or mitigate them.

There is a difference between Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Accountability as is clear from the below mentioned definitions:

"Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life".

-World Business Council on Sustainable Development.

"Corporate accountability can be defined as the ability of those affected by a corporation to control that corporation's operations".

-Friends of the Earth

CSR in India is mostly understood and implemented in project mode. Corporations spend money on CSR projects (often no doubt altruistic) but most times have no connection with the core work that the Corporation is involved in and which is causing negative impacts on local communities. Also most CSR activities are voluntary. CA is based on a stricter framework of impacts and regulation, which makes corporations more accountable to the communities whose life it impacts. The most important aspect of ca is the shift in power.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

8.1 The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of corporations to society under the banner of Corporate Social Responsibility. However recognising that Corporations need to be accountable towards communities and people they impact and thereby proposes to develop and implement a monitoring framework of Corporate Accountability in Tourism local self governance institutions. Stringent sanctions against companies introduced when actions of the company are negative.

8.2 The following will be mandated for the Corporations:

- Corporations need to make their actions visible through transparent and accurate reporting on social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts. These reports need to be accessible to local communities. A regular impact assessment conducted on the social, cultural, economic and environmental levels. Corporate decision making to be influenced by these assessments.
- Company plans that impact local communities need to be in consultation with them to keep them informed and give them the opportunity to object.
- Resources or property should not be taken from local communities and if this might happen they should be compensated appropriately and adequately for their loss.
- Standards on social, environmental, labour and social justice issues should be high and based on the existing legal frameworks of the country and international conventions.
- Companies should mention their CA philosophy and practices on their websites so that their customers can make informed choices.

C. Types of Tourism

The Ministry will play a special role in ensuring that the various types of tourism development (urban, rural, nature, wildlife, coast, hills and mountains, islands, golf, cultural, heritage, pilgrim, adventure, niche, MICE, cruises, luxury trains, sporting events, recreation, theme and amusement parks, medical, health and wellness, caravan, film, community governed and ecotourism) are conceptualised based on sound research. The tendency of tourism to go through a life cycle of exploration, consolidation and decline is well known. Equally well known is the inadvisability of over dependence on tourism.

The typology that exists in tourism will be studied closely in terms of effectiveness as it would be valuable to understand the links between emerging entrepreneurship models, impacts in terms of community benefits and

“successful” tourism in the long run. It will also reflect on what fails and why. The studies need to highlight the quality of the tourism experience in terms of authenticity, people-centeredness and genuine human encounter.

The tourism typology based on motivations of the traveller must take into account the assumptions about what constitutes responsible, ethical and sustainable tourism. Budgets will be invested in research and development, innovation, use technical advancements to ensure that forms of tourism are more sustainable, reduce heavy use of natural resources, greater use of renewable energy, lower climate footprint (moving away from quick-fixes like offsets).

Lastly, acknowledging that each stage of tourism development is given adequate time in the learning cycle of experience, conceptualising, experimenting and reviewing and to take these into consideration when policies and schemes are reviewed and revised.

9. Rural Tourism

The Rural Tourism Project (RTP) is an innovative response to the agenda in the National Tourism Policy 2002 towards developing rural tourism. The scale of the RTP is very large with currently over 180 sites sanctioned. However the Scheme has not been as successful as anticipated.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

9.1 The Ministry recognises the need to relook at the concept and scheme for rural tourism projects as in spite of multiple evaluations, the fundamental objectives (augment sustainable livelihoods, gender equality, empowerment of women, youth and other disadvantaged sections of the community, working towards cultural sensitivity and environmental sustainability) remain unaddressed thereby resulting in the initiative being unsuccessful.

Therefore the next 2 years will be considered as a time to review, learn and reflect on this intervention and to work with a smaller number of sites but with much more focus and individual attention.

9.2 A review of the scheme will be undertaken not just from the point of implementation of action plan of infrastructure development and capacity building but one that would review keeping the original stated objectives as the base (as conceptualised between MoT and UNDP), assess the impact it has had on the rural people as well as the future sustainability of the rural tourism initiatives being implemented. Based on this the scheme will be revised.

9.3 In parallel to ensure that current sanctioned projects receive adequate support, processes and systems will be built. The mechanisms to monitor progress of the project will be by panchayat and village level administration.

10. Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Cultural tourism has historically been an important form of tourism, even before it was formalised in the manner that it exists today. In India most heritage tourism sites are living cultural sites for communities. There cultural and heritage tourism are not only interactions with monuments and other physical entities but more importantly are interactions with communities.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

10.1 The Ministry of Tourism & Culture will formulate a Cultural Tourism Policy by involving representatives from LSGIs, and civil society organisations. Clear guidelines and regulatory mechanisms will be developed with local communities playing a key role in defining and developing cultural and heritage tourism in their region and in the mitigation of negative impacts of tourism.

10.2 Application to UNESCO of cultural and heritage tourism destinations as world heritage sites will be done only after completely understanding its implications on local communities. The final decision will be taken only after getting approval from the communities and all the Gram Panchayats in writing within the heritage sites.

11. Ecotourism

United Nations Environment Programme defines ecotourism as “Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promote conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local population.”

Subsumed in ecotourism is the issue of sustainability. Based on the principles of the UNEP, for ecotourism to be sustainable, the following process will be adopted:

- a. Ensure prior informed participation of all stakeholders
- b. Ensure equal, effective and active participation of all stakeholders at all stages in the ecotourism projects
- c. Acknowledge adivasis'/ other forest dwellers'/ local communities right to say 'no' to tourism
- d. Development - to be fully informed, effective and active participants in the development of tourism activities within their communities, lands and territories
- e. Promote processes for adivasis/ other forest dwellers'/ local communities to control and maintain their resources, culture and rights.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

11.1 The Ministry of Tourism in coordination with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will formulate a new National ecotourism policy as numerous developments have taken place on the issue of ecotourism. The currently policy that is in force was developed in 1998. To ensure that the voices of people involved in and affected by ecotourism are taken into consideration an open and consultative process will be put in place that seeks inputs from the people.

11.2 The Ministry along with State Departments of Tourism will conduct extensive impact studies on the issue of tourism and conservation, impacts of ecotourism at existing ecotourism destinations in the forests, coasts and mountains. The Ministry of Tourism will study the method of Tourism Carrying Capacities and arrive at a mechanism for determining this for India.

11.3 Pilot ecotourism projects will undertaken across various ecosystems keeping stated objectives of ecotourism - conservation, conservation education and community development as its basis. A mechanism for the regulation of ecotourism will be planned and put in place.

12. Pilgrim Tourism

MoT will establish regulatory mechanism to make pilgrim tourism in country more sustainable and long run. Any planned development / tourism infrastructure will be undertaken only after consultation and through a process of decision making with local people. As pilgrimage tourism is also mass tourism in most places, which is detrimental to the place, alternatives need to be considers so as to maintain the carrying capacity of the destination.

D. Tourism Impacts

13. In a move to globalise tourism, the needs of the private sector are often privileged, leaving many communities living in and around tourism destinations adversely affected by tourism.

Economic Impacts: Big business gain subsidised land, tax concessions, import advantages, leakages in tourist trade leaving very little gain or benefit for local communities or for people engaged in the unorganised tourism sector. Tourism has not proven its claim of generating quality and secure employment for local communities. Tourism also increases the cost of living for local communities.

Social Impacts: Social costs of the abuse of women, children particularly those forced into sex work, trafficking and labour. Current forms of tourism systemically and systematically exclude Dalits from substantive and significant participation and benefits in tourism. Tourism projects have failed to break or even dent rigid social caste hierarchies. Similarly religious minorities and sexuality minorities face very similar discrimination and disempowerment. The growing social and economic aspect of HIV/AIDS linked to tourism. The impact of drugs and narcotics and its effects on vulnerable populations in the developing countries especially linked to tourism. The increased crime linked to tourism impacting local people and tourists.

Cultural Impacts: The commodification of culture and traditional practices to cater to tourists needs and increased consumerism in local populations influenced by the demonstration effect. The distortion and commodification of culture, including mass produced handicrafts and demeaning cultural performances designed to entertain and amuse rather than promote interchange and understanding among different peoples.

Environmental Impacts: The relentless expansion of tourism is a cause for concern as it continues to pervade forests, coasts, lakes, rivers, deserts, islands, hills and mountains, mangroves, leading to undesirable impacts on ecosystems. Ecological damage & losses incurred through environmental destruction because of tourism. This also leads to make way for tourism enterprises, golf courses, amusement parks, theme parks, ecotourism projects, beach resorts, water sports in these ecosystems. The links between tourism growth and water scarcity, waste and pollution is of serious proportion. The two-way relationship between tourism and climate change – each one affecting and being impacted by it.

Governance and human rights: The impact of diversion of people's essential needs like agricultural land and access to natural & common property resources, as well as the diversion or privileging water and electricity supply to tourist enterprises like hotels, amusement parks is least acknowledged in the narratives on tourism's successes. The social & economic impact of displacement caused by tourism enterprises on livelihood and life. The dilution of the rights of communities and local governments to regulate tourism and to say no to tourism. The dilution of provisions of local ownership, regulation and control and the increasing trend of setting up of centralised supra authorities to determined the pace and direction of tourism development. The rights of workers in tourism. The rights of indigenous people in tourism. The complex and covert links between tourism and conflict and militarized zones are increasingly visible. Also the impact of local politics and context on the tourism strategies of countries – particularly those whose own cultural, economic and political contexts and human rights record are at variance with the models of tourism they are trying to promote. All these have implications on the rights of local people that an unbridled growth of tourism rides roughshod on. Tourism projects often fail to consult, engage, or adequately compensate local communities for loss of livelihoods, agricultural lands, and access to natural and common property resources such as forests, beaches, oceans, and lakes.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

13.1 The Ministry takes on the responsibility to spread awareness on the impacts of tourism and ensure that tourism is conducted ethically and does not result in the exploitation of people.

13.2 Tourism Impact Assessment (TIA)

Similar to Environmental Impact Assessment and now Social Impact Assessment being mandatory before a development/ management project is implemented, all new & proposed tourism master/ management plans and projects initiated by the centre and the states undertake a mandatory Tourism Impact Assessment process. A Tourism Impact Assessment is a comprehensive assessment of the tourism site/ circuit which assesses the potential/real impact of tourism across the following 5 dimensions: social, cultural, economic, environmental and governance. The impacts are assessed vis-a-vis a baseline study which is conducted prior to the tourism project/ plan being implemented. It is therefore important that a TIA is weaved into the planning of projects and master/ management plans. All evaluations of existing tourism projects/ master plans include Tourism Impact Assessments within the evaluation framework.

E. Tourism Awareness and Education

14. Despite the rapid growth in the provision of tourism higher education in the past 40 years, uncertainties remain about the content and nature of tourism degrees and how these are aligned with the needs of the many other issues which is linked to the tourism. The current flow of education structure is based on the policy and the industry needs without taking consideration of the critical aspect in tourism. The structure of curriculum followed by the tourism institution is completely as per the parameter of industry expectation and needs, binding the student within limited knowledge and exposure focussing on the how to commoditising and marketing the natural and cultural resource, local ethics and arts, people from in and around tourism destination. The ongoing debates within tourism education is only linked to the marketing, management, promotion and economic development without considering people from in and around tourism destination. Currently in India more than 170 tourism institution is teaching tourism subject but there is negligible presence of multi and interdisciplinary scope of study for our student.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

Universities, Skill oriented, Vocational training and Autonomous Institutions teaching tourism will be encouraged to include critical perspectives and current trends and developments in tourism, which until now has not been taken up by many mainstream tourism studies courses. Such critical perspectives will help tourism professionals to uphold values of people centeredness, sustainability, and equity. The institutions will explore offering tourism with other disciplines and bring in rigour on tourism research. This will raise the bar of tourism education in the country.

The Ministry will play a key role in creating wider awareness on the issues and impacts of tourism and good practices among local communities and LSGIs as that will give them information and knowledge of making an informed choice on whether, how and when they would like to engage with tourism. Should a region choose to then engage in tourism, tailor made capacity building and skill development programmes will be developed in collaboration with tourism / hospitality teaching institutes and experts in the specified field. These programmes will encourage the establishment of social enterprises, which will benefit local people at large.

The Ministry also will plan an awareness campaign on the impacts of tourism targeted towards tourists and the wider public so that they can make conscious and responsible choices as tourists. Through this opportunity we aim for a transformation of the nature of tourism – from its mass consumptive form to something which has elements of interaction, learning and human contact.

The Ministry and the State Tourism Departments will encourage the setting up of tourism information / interpretation centre. These centres will be spaces for local communities to present their own histories in creative and local ways. These centres will be spaces to handle data generation and impact, gather information about tourist profiles and have rudimentary tourism impact assessment cells. Basic information technology based resources such computers / internet facilities will be provided which will be manned by village youth.

F. Inter-departmental Coordination

15. Tourism is inter-disciplinary in nature and requires the coordination of multiple departments to ensure smooth functioning, to avoid duplicity of work, peg accountability, put in place requisite regulatory mechanisms and to ensure proper grievance redressal when they arise. Currently, there is a large gap in this context. For e.g. who is responsible when a woman is abused in a tourism destination? Is it the Ministry of Women and Child Development or the Ministry of Tourism or both? What roles should each play vis-a-vis such abuse? Who should regulate – the MWCD because it pertains to women or MoT since the abuse took place in the context of tourism? There are similar confusions even in the context of granting of permissions. For e.g. how does a state PCB grant Certificates for Establishment and Operation to accommodation units when they propose to come up in zones which violate the CRZ, 2011 guidelines? This is possible only when there is lack of coordination between the DoT, Departments of Environment and state PCBs.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

15.1 The Ministry of Tourism recognises the need to pay significant attention to the coordination of tourism, particularly in the light of the fact that the tourism sector is by nature highly interdisciplinary.

15.2 While the Ministry currently works with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Finance, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Information and Broadcasting, Culture, Shipping, Road & Surface Transport, Civil Aviation, Railways, Home Affairs & External Affairs. To expand and ensure coordination, along with the ones mentioned above, it will also work with the Women and Child Development, Rural Development, Urban Development, Tribal Affairs, Development of North eastern Region Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Human Resource Development, Labour and Employment, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Youth Affairs and Sports which until now at an operational level has been limited. Such coordination among Ministries and bodies will also be encouraged to be replicated at the level of the state.

G. Role of Ministry of Tourism and Tourism Development Corporations

16. Currently, one of the major roles that the MoT plays is that of branding and marketing of tourism destinations in India. This role conflicts with the other roles of the MoT, importantly planning and monitoring. For e.g. promotional material generated by DoTs, apart from popularising a place, also sets in motion the nature of tourism being promoted and the kind of tourists who will visit. For e.g. on the Department of Tourism, Goa, website, under events there is the listing of the Sunburn Festival which takes place in the month of December. This festival is known to be a place where drugs, alcohol and sexual abuse festers. However, it is also a crowd puller not only from across the country but from across the world. So, should the DoT, Goa promote it since it brings in the footfalls or should it not promote it since is a site for the sale of contraband and therefore against the law?

Branding and marketing are important activities, which should be separated from the MoT whose primary role needs to be planning, monitoring and regulation. Tourism Development Corporations or other relevant bodies maybe instituted for this.

Expectation from the Policy, 2015

16.1 The Ministry of Tourism envisages its role to be a facilitator, a regulator, a champion for sustainable tourism. The Ministry's core purpose is to ensure that tourism policy and the planning, coordinating and monitoring of tourism development is based on research and ground realities, privileges local community benefits and local economic growth. While the Ministry has traditionally played the policy making, facilitator and promoter role, it is the other roles that will be the focus in the coming years.

- Policy making
- Planning
- Monitoring and Regulation
- Coordination
- Research and evolving appropriate models for tourism
- Protection – ensuring ethical and non-exploitative tourism
- Education and awareness
- Strengthening local institutions and local capacities

16.2 An area that has until now been under the domain of the MoT is of tourism marketing and brand building of India as a destination. This role in a phased manner will be shifted to the India Tourism Development Corporation. This move is being suggested as marketing involves product/ service development, place (location and distribution), and pricing and promotion. It defines the market and the customer and makes the match between beneficiary, the "product" they design and offer and its match to customer needs and expectations. All of these which are intrinsically linked to the business of tourism and within the scope of responsibilities of ITDC.

16.3 In certain states, one institution functions as both – state tourism department and the state tourism development corporation, thereby creating confusion and more importantly not giving enough time and focus to the key roles that each must perform. The state tourism departments and the state tourism