



Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0

For Prelims: Swadesh Darshan scheme, PRASAD, Atmanirbhar Bharat

For Mains: Tourism Sector and related Initiatives taken

Why in News?

Recently, as part of the **first phase of the 'Swadesh Darshan 2'** (beginning from January 2023), the government has identified 15 States across the country to be promoted as part of **India's new domestic tourism policy**.

- This policy moves away from **theme-based tourist circuits and focuses on reviving up destination tourism**.
- Some of the prominent places identified are Jhansi and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, Gwalior, Chitrakoot and Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh and Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra.

What is the Swadesh Darshan Scheme?

▪ About:

- It was **launched in 2014-15 for integrated development** of theme-based tourist circuits — Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Northeast Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Wildlife Circuit and Tribal Circuit.
- It is **100% centrally funded and efforts** are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to leverage the voluntary funding available for [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.

▪ Objectives:

- To **position tourism as a major engine of economic growth** and job creation.
- **Develop circuits having tourist potential** in a planned and prioritized manner.
- Promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods in the identified regions.
- **Enhancing the tourist attractiveness in a sustainable manner** by developing world class infrastructure in the circuit/destinations.
- **Follow community-based development** and pro-poor tourism approach.
- **Creating awareness among the local communities** about the importance of tourism for them in terms of increased sources of income, improved living standards and overall development of the area.
- **To make full use of the potential and advantages** in terms of available infrastructure, national culture and characteristic strong points of each and every region throughout the country by development of theme-based circuits.
- Development of tourist facilitation services to enhance visitor experience/satisfaction.

What is Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0?

▪ About:

- With the mantra of '**vocal for local**', the **revamped scheme namely Swadesh Darshan 2.0 seeks to attain "Aatmanirbhar Bharat"** by realizing India's full potential as a tourism destination.
- Swadesh Darshan 2.0 is **not an incremental change but a generational shift to evolve the Swadesh Darshan Scheme** as a holistic mission to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations.
 - It will help develop sustainable and responsible destinations with a tourist and destination centric approach.
- It will **encourage the development of benchmarks** and standards for generic and theme-specific development of tourism destinations and the States will follow the benchmarks and standards while planning and developing the projects.
- The following major themes have been identified for tourism under the Scheme:
 - Culture and Heritage
 - Adventure Tourism
 - Eco-Tourism
 - Wellness Tourism
 - **MICE Tourism**
 - **Rural Tourism**
 - Beach Tourism
 - Cruises - Ocean & Inland

▪ Significance:

- The revamped scheme **seeks to enhance the contribution of tourism to local economies.**
- It **aims to create jobs including self-employment** for local communities, to **enhance the skills of local youth** in tourism and hospitality, to increase private **sector investment** in tourism and hospitality and to **preserve and enhance local cultural and natural resources.**

What are the Other Initiatives taken to Promote Tourism?

▪ **PRASHAD Scheme:**

- This scheme **focuses on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites** across India for enriching the religious tourism experience.
- It aims to integrate pilgrimage destinations in a prioritised, planned and sustainable manner to provide a complete religious tourism experience.

▪ **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.

What is the Scenario of Tourism Sector in India?

- According to the **third Tourism Satellite Account** for 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20, the contribution of tourism to the employment of the country is **14.78%, 14.87 % and 15.34 % respectively.**
- The total jobs generated by tourism are 72.69 million (2017-18), 75.85 million (2018-19) and **79.86 million (2019-20).**
- **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).

Source: TH

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