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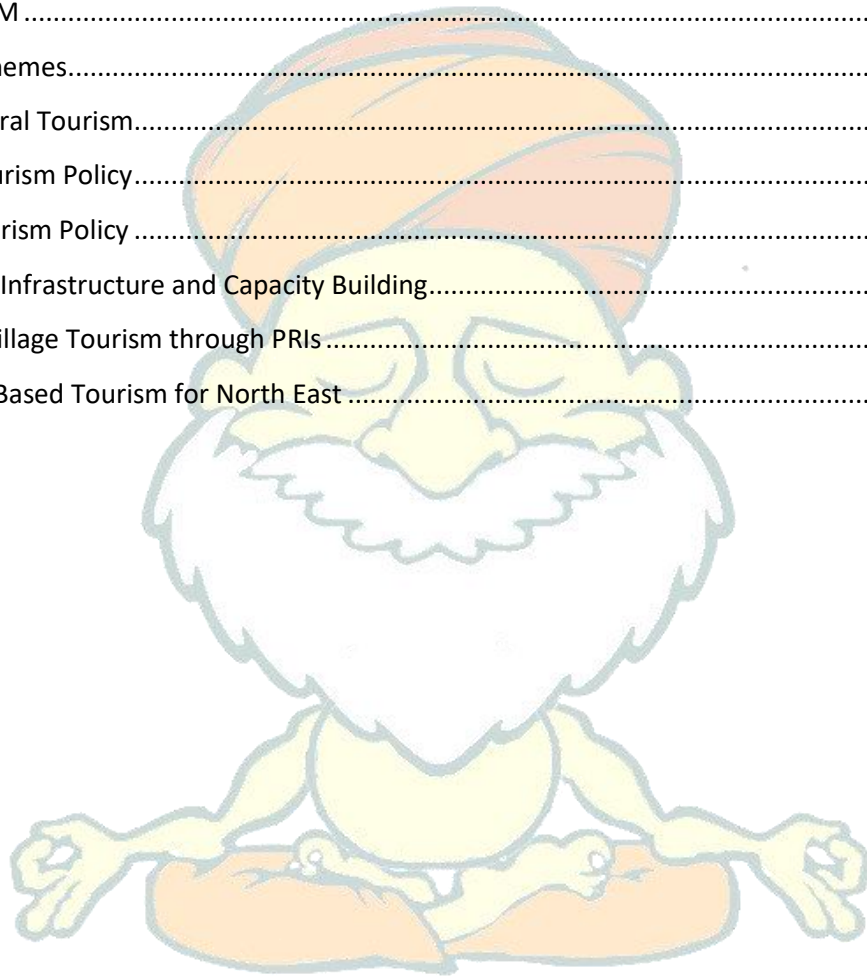
# YK GIST DEC '17

*Consumer Protection  
Tourism*

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## Preface

This is our 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of Yojana Gist and 24<sup>th</sup> edition of Kurukshetra Gist, released for the month of December, 2017. It is increasingly finding a place in the questions of both UPSC Prelims and Mains and therefore, we've come up with this initiative to equip you with knowledge that'll help you in your preparation for the CSE.

Every Issue deals with a single topic comprehensively sharing views from a wide spectrum ranging from academicians to policy makers to scholars. The magazine is essential to build an in-depth understanding of various socio-economic issues.

From the exam point of view, however, not all articles are important. Some go into scholarly depths and others discuss agendas that are not relevant for your preparation. Added to this is the difficulty of going through a large volume of information, facts and analysis to finally extract their essence that may be useful for the exam.

We are not discouraging from reading the magazine itself. So, do not take this as a document which you take read, remember and reproduce in the examination. Its only purpose is to equip you with the right understanding. But, if you do not have enough time to go through the magazines, you can rely on the content provided here for it sums up the most essential points from all the articles.

You need not put hours and hours in reading and making its notes in pages. We believe, a smart study, rather than hard study, can improve your preparation levels.

**Think, learn, practice and keep improving! You know that's your success mantra 😊**

## **Consumer Awareness in India**

As per Consumer Protection Act, 1986, "Consumer" means any person who buys or avails of any service for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised under any system of deferred payment etc. (for details refer to Section 2(1)(d) of CP Act, 1986).

India was a pioneer in consumer advocacy with the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), a path breaking legislation at the time, enacted in 1986 and the establishment of a separate government department dedicated to consumer affairs as early as in 1997. Translating this mandate into action entails:

- Enabling consumers to make informed choices;
- Ensuring fair, equitable and consistent outcomes for consumers; and
- Facilitating timely and effective consumer grievance redress

### **Consumer Movement & Consumer Protection**

Consumer movement is a socio-economic movement which seeks to protect the rights of consumers in relation to the goods purchased and services availed. Government has been according high priority to better protect consumer interests.

The Department of Consumer Affairs, has initiated a number of steps to promote a responsible and responsive consumer movement in the country. Main objectives of Consumer Protection program are –

- a) To create suitable administrative and legal mechanisms which would be within the easy reach of consumers and to interact with both Government and non-Governmental Organizations to promote and protect the welfare of the consumers.
- b) To involve and motivate various sections of society including consumer organizations, women and youth to participate in the programme

- c) To generate awareness among consumers about their rights and responsibilities, motivate them to assert their rights so as not to compromise on the quality and standards of goods and services and to seek redressal of their disputes in consumer fora, if required.
- d) To educate the consumers as to be aware of their rights & social responsibilities

**MRP means Maximum Retail Price**  
**inclusive of all taxes**

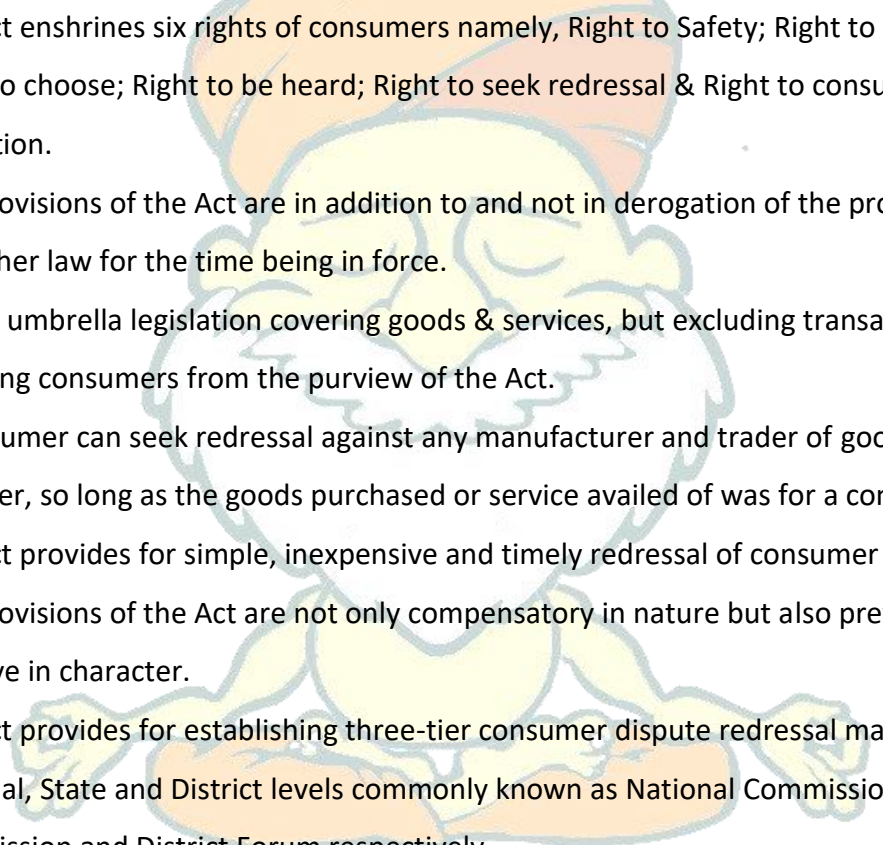
**Sellers:**  
Charging more than the MRP  
**is a punishable offence.**



- |                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Right to<br><b>SAFETY</b>      | Right to Consumer<br><b>EDUCATION</b> |
| Right to<br><b>REDRESSAL</b>   | Right to<br><b>CHOOSE</b>             |
| Right to be<br><b>INFORMED</b> | Right to be<br><b>HEARD</b>           |

## Consumer Protection Act, 1986

One of the most important milestones in the area of consumer protection /consumer movement in the country has been the enactment of Consumer Protection Act, 1986. This Act was enacted to better protect the interests of consumers by creating a mechanism for dispute resolution exclusively for consumers. It is one of the most progressive and comprehensive piece of legislations creating an exclusive three-tier quasi-judicial consumer disputes redressal machinery at the National, State and District levels.

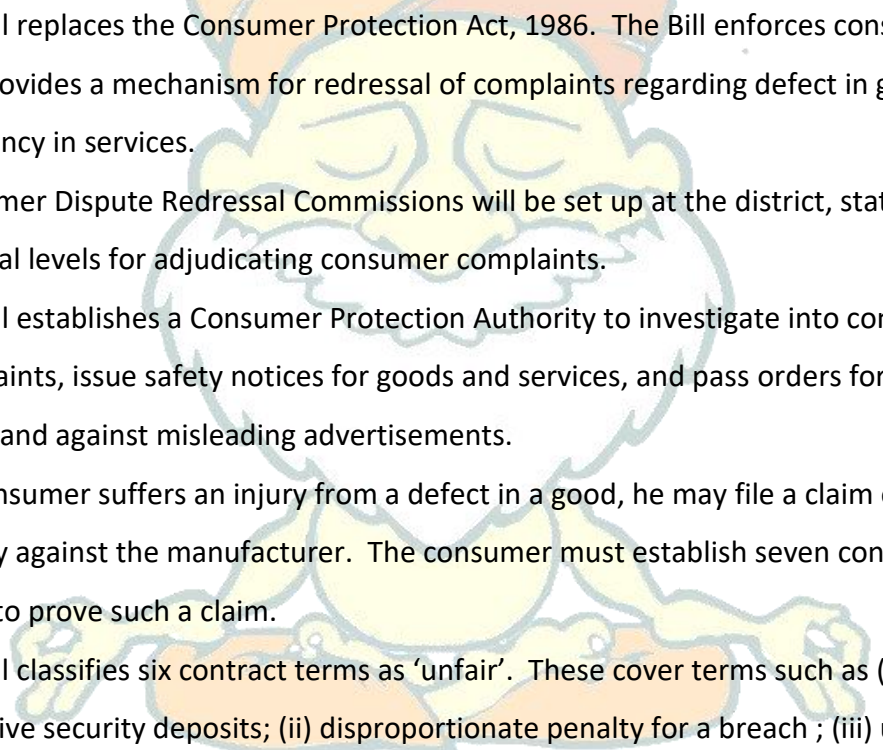
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- a) The Act enshrines six rights of consumers namely, Right to Safety; Right to be informed; Right to choose; Right to be heard; Right to seek redressal & Right to consumer education.
  - b) The provisions of the Act are in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force.
  - c) It is an umbrella legislation covering goods & services, but excluding transactions not involving consumers from the purview of the Act.
  - d) A consumer can seek redressal against any manufacturer and trader of goods/service provider, so long as the goods purchased or service availed of was for a consideration.
  - e) The Act provides for simple, inexpensive and timely redressal of consumer complaints.
  - f) The provisions of the Act are not only compensatory in nature but also preventive and punitive in character.
  - g) The Act provides for establishing three-tier consumer dispute redressal machinery at the National, State and District levels commonly known as National Commission, State Commission and District Forum respectively.
  - h) The Act also provides for setting up of Consumer Protection Councils at the Central, States & District level, which are advisory bodies to promote and protect the rights of the consumers.

## Consumer Protection Bill, 2015

With a view to modernize the legislation on consumer protection to keep pace with the changes in markets, to ensure fair, equitable and consistent outcomes for consumers and to enable swift executive intervention in the nature of class action both to prevent consumer detriment and to provide redress to a class of consumers, it was proposed to carry out comprehensive amendments to the existing Consumer Protection Act, 1986 by way of a fresh Bill and repealing of the existing Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

### Effort A

#### *Highlights of the Bill*

- 
- A. The Bill replaces the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The Bill enforces consumer rights, and provides a mechanism for redressal of complaints regarding defect in goods and deficiency in services.
  - B. Consumer Dispute Redressal Commissions will be set up at the district, state and national levels for adjudicating consumer complaints.
  - C. The Bill establishes a Consumer Protection Authority to investigate into consumer complaints, issue safety notices for goods and services, and pass orders for recall of goods and against misleading advertisements.
  - D. If a consumer suffers an injury from a defect in a good, he may file a claim of product liability against the manufacturer. The consumer must establish seven conditions in order to prove such a claim.
  - E. The Bill classifies six contract terms as 'unfair'. These cover terms such as (i) payment of excessive security deposits; (ii) disproportionate penalty for a breach ; (iii) unilateral termination without cause; (iv) one which puts the consumer at a disadvantage.

### ***Key Issues and Analysis***

- A. The Bill empowers the central government to supervise the functioning of, and issue binding directions to the district, state and national consumer redressal commissions. This could affect the independence of these quasi-judicial bodies.
- B. The District Commission, a quasi-judicial body, may be headed by a District Magistrate, who is part of the executive. This could violate the principle of separation of powers between the judiciary and executive.
- C. The National Commission, headed by a judicial member and comprising at least 15 technical or judicial members, will examine complaints on questions of law. This could contradict a Supreme Court judgment that questioned the competence of such technical members.
- D. In order to claim product liability, a claimant must establish four kinds of defects in the product, the injury caused from it, and that it belonged to the manufacturer. The claimant must also establish that the manufacturer had knowledge of such a defect. It may be argued that the conditions to establish a product liability claim are unreasonable.
- E. The Bill defines product liability to include defects in goods and deficiency in services. However, the conditions to be proven to claim product liability do not include conditions for services. It is unclear how a consumer can claim product liability for deficiency in services under the Bill.

### **Effort B**

***In a significant development, the Union Cabinet in the last week of December cleared the Consumer Protection Bill 2017, which will now be tabled in Lok Sabha during the current Winter Session.***



**As per news reports, here are some of the features of the new Consumer Protection Bill:**

1) For the first time, India will have a Central Consumer Protection Authority, which will act as a national regulator for the protection of consumer rights. Designed along the lines of the United States Federal Trade Commission, this agency will have the power to take suo moto action against companies indulging in unfair trade practices to the detriment of consumers.

2) Reports indicate that the bill will introduce class action lawsuits to India, which means that a group of people with the same or similar injuries caused by the same product or action, can sue the company as a group. If the verdict goes in their favour, all consumers in the group stand to benefit.

3) In the event of a consumer suffering from injury, death or damage resulting from any defect in the product as a result of faulty manufacturing, construction, design, testing, packaging and labelling, among other facets of the production process, the manufacturing company will be held liable.

4) One of the key new features of the bill are provisions dealing with disputes that pertain to online purchase. At present, the law isn't clear on refunds or dispute settlement for online shoppers. Moreover, under the present law, a consumer can only proceed with legal action against a seller only at the place where the transaction in question is said to have occurred. If the new bill passes, the consumer can file a complaint electronically or at the consumer court closest to his/her residence.

5) The new bill also has provisions that subscribe hefty penalties and jail terms for adulteration and misleading advertisements by companies. Moreover, celebrities found to endorse such advertisements are liable to pay a hefty fine, endure a ban on any endorsement and even suffer a jail term.

*"On misleading ads, the bill provides for fine and ban on celebrities. In case of the first offence, the fine will be up to Rs 10 lakh and a one-year ban on any endorsement. For the second offence, the fine will be up to Rs 50 lakh and up to three years' ban," says this report by the Press Trust of India.*

For manufacturers, the penalty is a Rs 10 lakh fine and a two-year jail term for the first offence. Repeat offenders will suffer fines up to Rs 50 lakh and a five-year prison term, the PTI report adds. Adulteration, meanwhile, could incur a life-term jail sentence.

6) In a bid to deter consumers from filing false or frivolous complaints, the bill seeks to raise the penalty from Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000.

## **Schemes for Strengthening Consumer Protection**

### **CONFONET**

The scheme of 'Computerization and Computer Networking of Consumer Fora in the country, (CONFONET)' aims to digitalise the functioning of the Consumer Fora at all the three tiers throughout the country to enable access of information and quicker disposal of cases.

- Has provided an ICT solution for efficiency, transparency, systemizing of working and e-governance at the consumer fora for speedy delivery of information to the consumers
- The registration of complaints, recording of proceedings, issue of notices, generation of cause lists, recording of judgments, record-keeping and generation of statistical reports etc. are carried out through the Case Monitoring application software which has been developed and implemented by NIC to facilitate entry of consumer cases online in the consumer fora.

**INGRAM:** An Integrated Grievance Redress Mechanism (INGRAM) portal was launched for bringing all stakeholders such as consumers, Central and State Government Agencies, private companies, regulators, Ombudsmen and call centers etc. on to a single platform. The portal will help in creating awareness among consumers to protect their rights and inform them of their responsibilities. Consumers can register online their grievances through this portal. The National Consumer Helpline is accessible now through this portal.

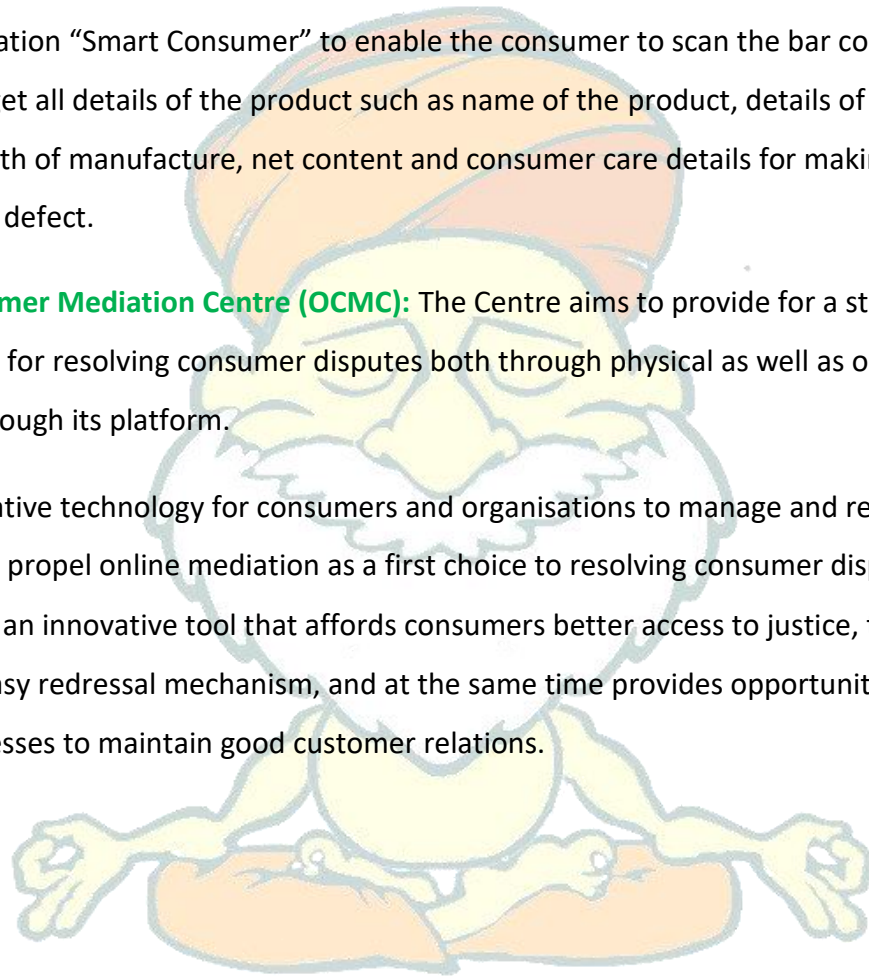
**GAMA:** Govt. has launched a portal named Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (Consumer Advocacy)

**Mobile Application and Short code:** As value added services, a mobile application and easy to remember five-digit short code 14404 have been launched for consumers from across the country to access National Consumer Helpline.

**Smart Consumer Application:** The Department in association with GSI India has launched a mobile application “Smart Consumer” to enable the consumer to scan the bar code of the product and get all details of the product such as name of the product, details of manufacturer, year and month of manufacture, net content and consumer care details for making complaint in case of any defect.

**Online Consumer Mediation Centre (OCMC):** The Centre aims to provide for a state-of-the-art infrastructure for resolving consumer disputes both through physical as well as online mediation through its platform.

- Innovative technology for consumers and organisations to manage and resolve conflicts and to propel online mediation as a first choice to resolving consumer disputes.
- This is an innovative tool that affords consumers better access to justice, through quick and easy redressal mechanism, and at the same time provides opportunity for businesses to maintain good customer relations.



## Consumer Grievance Redress

Under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, a three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism has been set up in the country to adjudicate complaints filed before them and to provide speedy redress to consumers.



The Act is intended to provide simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to the consumers grievances.

On March 15, 1962, President John F. Kennedy presented a speech to the United States Congress in which he extolled four basic consumer rights, later called the Consumer Bill of Rights.

1. The right to safety
2. The right to be informed
3. The Right to Choose
4. The right to be heard

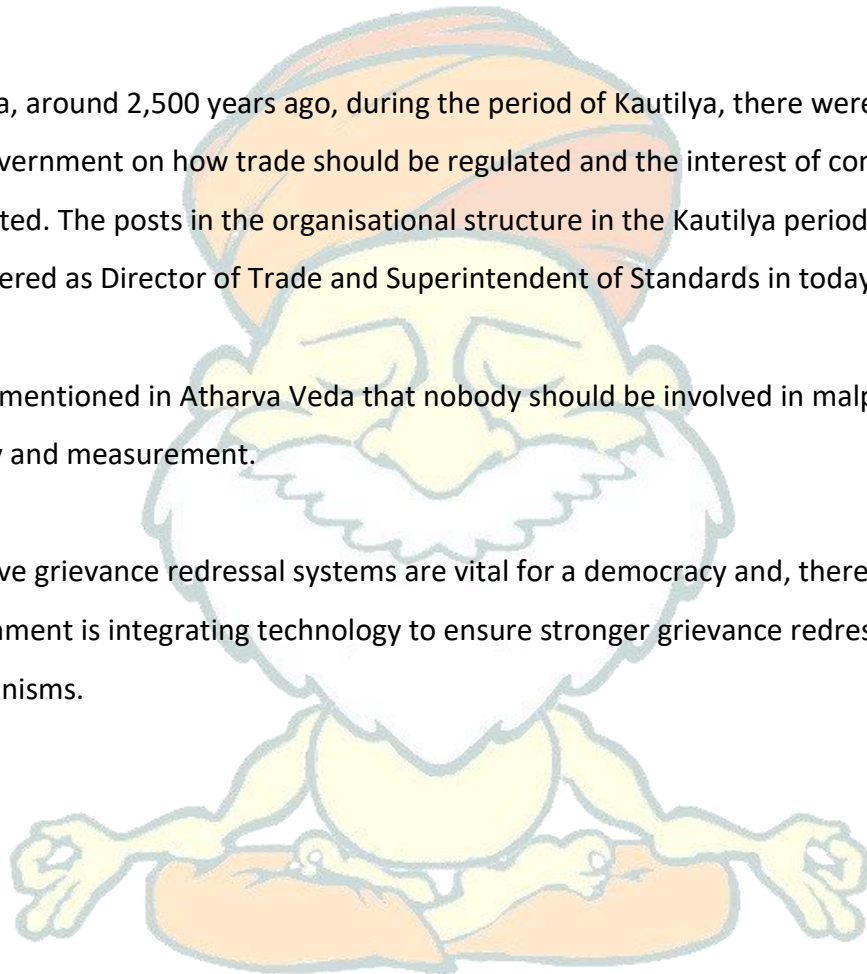
*Expansion to eight rights*

1. The right to satisfaction of basic needs
2. The right to redress
3. The right to consumer education
4. The right to a healthy environment

March 15: Celebrated each year as World Consumer Rights Day.

## *Narendra Modi speaks...*

- A. "Consumer protection" is in line with the government's resolve of building a 'New India'
- B. Government would formulate a new stricter consumer protection law to crack down on misleading advertisements and see that grievances are redressed in a time-bound and cost-effective manner.
- C. In India, around 2,500 years ago, during the period of Kautilya, there were guidelines for the government on how trade should be regulated and the interest of consumers protected. The posts in the organisational structure in the Kautilya period may be considered as Director of Trade and Superintendent of Standards in today's context.
- D. It was mentioned in Atharva Veda that nobody should be involved in malpractices of quality and measurement.
- E. Effective grievance redressal systems are vital for a democracy and, therefore, the government is integrating technology to ensure stronger grievance redressal mechanisms.



### **Consumer awareness can play important role in health**

The consumer has a direct role to play in increasing awareness about the consumer protection, rights and duties. They can also inform and influence a few other aspects of health services (collateral benefits). Indicative list includes as follows:

Shaping the policy dialogue (– media, civil society) and place Health higher on the policy table/dialogue.

Demand for (from Union and State Governments).

Re-designing health services for making people oriented and focused.

Population or public health services; shift attention from curative or personal health services.

More investment on Primary Health Care Services.

More provision of promotive and preventive health services.

Invest more money by government on health (Government investment on health in India is one of the lowest in the world).

To establish mechanisms so that people don't fall into poverty while accessing health services, i.e. social health insurance.

Bringing accountability and transparency to ensure that commitments made are fulfilled.

Strengthening dialogue between people and their people's representative for strengthening healthcare services.



## RURAL TOURISM

India is a vast country with varied culture, traditions, languages, festivals and rituals. The country sets up a perfect example in the world when it comes to unity and in diversity. History in its ancient, medieval or modern form has provided evidence to the fact that India has been a country which has attracted global attention right from the days of Alexander to British raj. Some of the dynasties that have ruled the country have left indelible impression in art, culture, architecture and most importantly has left with legacy that is part of India's daily life today. All this have made India a hugely attractive tourist destination.

As per the report of World Travel and Tourism Council, India is the **world's seventh largest tourism economy in terms of its total contribution to the country's GDP**. According to the latest data available, travel and tourism generated **Rs. 14.1 trillion in 2016**, which is the world's **7<sup>th</sup> largest in terms of absolute size**, the sum is equivalent to 9.6% of country's GDP. This sector has **supported 40.3 million jobs in 2016**, thus making India global second in terms of total employment supported by travel and tourism. It **accounts for 9.3% of total jobs in country**. In 2017, it is **estimated to have 6.7% growth**.

However, this remarkable growth of **India's travel and tourism sector is being driven by domestic tourism which accounted for 88% of the sector's contribution to GDP in 2016**. Thus, there lies significant potential in India's tourism sector.

### **A new tourist place!**

Time and affordability play an important role in selecting the destination. Traditional tourist spots are often quite congested during the peak tourist seasons. Countryside has always been a stress reliever for the urban people. This is more evident from the fact that more than 50% of world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 66% by 2050. According to World Urbanization Prospectus by UN DESA's population division (2014), the largest urban growth will take place in India, china and Nigeria. By 2050, India is projected to add 404 million urban dwellers, china 292 million and Nigeria 212 million. Since majority of people are resorting to migration to urban people. Since majority of the society has now been urbanized, rural tourism is increasingly becoming popular among the urban population.

### **Concept**

*Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefitting the local community, economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching experience can be termed as rural tourism.*

**Rural tourism is essentially an activity that takes place in the countryside.** It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like it is **experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is pre-dominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonally and local events** and is **based on preservation of culture, heritage and tradition.**

Ministry of tourism in India has laid a great deal of emphasis on the development of such rural tourism sites which boast of rich art, culture, handloom, heritage and crafts. These villages are affluent in both natural beauty and cultural splendor.

Rural tourism is supposed to generate increasing benefits to rural areas in terms of rural productivity, conservation of rural environment and culture, local people's involvement and a suitable way of adapting traditional beliefs and values to modern times.

## Major types of rural tourism

**Agricultural-**  
to know about agricultural industry

**Cultural-** to allow tourists to get immersed in local culture related activity like rituals and festivals.

**Nature-** responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves environment and improves people's lives.

**Adventure-** any constructive activity which tests endurance of person as well as his limits.

**Food routes-** it is all about food and knowing about staples of different places.

**Ethno-tourism-** Expand horizons to view different cultures and know about various ethnic and cultural lifestyles and benefits.



## Different Schemes

### Swadesh Darshan

- Scheme guidelines for integrated development of theme based circuits
- India's natural heritage has a huge potential for development of tourism and job creation.

### PRASAD

- Pilgrimage rejuvenation for spiritual augmentation drive
- Pilgrimage tourism is a form of tourism motivated by religious sentiments as India is land of many religions like Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Christianity etc.
- Religion and spirituality are common motivations for travel, with major tourist destinations having developed largely as a result of their connections to sacred places, persons and events.

### Special Tourism Zones

- Union budget 201-18 has announced that five special tourism zones, anchored on SPVs, will be set up in partnership with states.
- This would help in introducing incredible India's second global campaign to strengthen India's position as an attractive tourist destination.

### e-tourist visa facility

- To facilitate arrival of international tourists, tourism ministry has been working very closely with ministry of home affairs and ministry of external affairs for easing of the visa regime in the country over a period of time.
- In order to make rural tourism attractive, ministry of tourism is promoting farm tourism as niche products. Ministry is also encouraging home stay facilities in rural areas.

## Impact of Rural Tourism

### Positive

- **Impact on economy**- with increased number of tourists visiting countryside, there will be a boost in the income level of the people due to increased level of trade among the people. This will generate jobs among the youths.

- **Traditional handloom and handicrafts**- it is a matter of pride for local people to show their local specialty. Through tourism, the visitor can have the benefit of directly buying the finished products from the local people.
- **Exchange of ideas**- the tourists will create a new idea among the villagers while interacting with locals. This entails increasing interest in education, preventive health care, modern gadgets etc. this will help universal literacy.
- **Connectivity**- with more tourists visiting the villages, there will be improvement in the connectivity by means of roads, increase in public transport etc.
- **Preserving nature**- villages close to sanctuaries and reserve parks can teach the idea of preserving the nature to their urban counterparts as they live by the side of nature for centuries. Tourists may develop an interest in the local region and traditional rituals that act as a catalyst for social harmony.

### Negative

- **Urban transformation**- To facilitate tourism, there would be an increase in the infrastructure development of the countryside. This may lead to concretization of rural area and may distort the natural beauty.
- Besides, influx of tourists may lead to **exploitation of natural resources**.
- Tourism may have an **adverse effect on the traditional livelihood of people**. The village people may shift from agricultural and other traditional livelihoods to lucrative livelihoods related to tourism. This may in turn have a negative impact on rural tourism.

### Scope for improvement

- In order to make tourists feel comfortable while visiting any place, they may be provided detailed information regarding their place of visit in advance.
- They may also be informed about any particular custom prevalent in that region so that tourists may prepare themselves accordingly.
- There is a necessity for having good infrastructure and logistics support in villages. Roads connecting to the nearest railway station or highways would improve accessibility to the villages.
- However, instead of having more hotels or guest houses, it is better to encourage homestay. The tourists can have taste of traditional practices along with local recipes prevalent in rural India. This would help the tourists to connect to the villagers in less time.
- The exotic flora and fauna of rural India can be a huge source of learning for students. Students' excursion can also be allowed to make them learn value of nature in this way.
- Language can be an important issue when it comes to tourism. Hence, tourists may be given the option of interpreters in case they face any difficulty. Hence there is need to have trained and qualified interpreters for this purpose.

- The traditional products recognized by GI tags are always showcased on the national as well as international platforms and have a huge market demand. The government may take steps to ensure that tourists get a first-hand experience in seeing how these products are being made, packed and showcased.
- Many states of India are blessed with medicinal herbs and other ayurvedic products which have strong medicinal values. The government can develop suitable infrastructure to capture such tourists who can avail medicinal facilities in such villages of India.
- The role of state government is very important in promoting rural tourism. Each state has different potential to attract tourists hence it is necessary that state governments identify this potential and work in close coordination with the union government to promote rural tourism.
- Tourists may be advised well in advance not get involved into any local issues which may lead to law and order problems.
- The government may conduct a survey among tourists and get to know about their feelings regarding the place of their visit. Based on their feedbacks, measures may be adopted to improve tourism.
- Concerted efforts from both union and state governments to identify areas and explore tourism potential in this sector. That is of utmost importance to promote rural tourism in the country.

### Need for Tourism Policy

**Table I: Foreign Tourists Arrival in India:**

Year	Number of Foreign Tourists Arrival (in Millions)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
2014	7.68	10.2
2015	8.03	4.5
2016	8.80	9.7
2017(P) Jan-Jun 2017	4.89	17.2*(growth rate over same period in 2016)

*(Source: India Tourism Statistics At a Glance, 2017)*

**Table III: Number of Domestic Tourist Visits**

Year	Domestic Tourist Visits (in Million)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
2014	1282.80	12.3
2015	1431.97	11.6
2016	1613.55	12.7

*(Source: India Tourism Statistics At a Glance, 2017)*

Indian tourism industry is doing remarkably well but major challenge lies in providing adequate infrastructural and logistic support to sustain this growth momentum. Tourism has evolved with time and presently it can be broadly classified into

- **Medical tourism-** a large chunk of population from South Asian countries comes to India to avail medical facilities here.
- **Education tourism-** prospective students and their families coming for pursuing higher studies in institutes of repute such as IITs and IIMs.
- **Golf tourism-** India boasts of world class golf courses to promote golf tourism. Places like Jammu and Kashmir, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, and New Delhi have excellent facilities and infrastructure to attract golf connoisseurs worldwide.
- **Eco tourism-** it means' responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the wellbeing of local people and involves in interpretation and education. The concept of ecological sustainability subsumes the environmental carrying capacity of a given area. For ex, India has Western Ghats, indo-Burma border as bio-diversity hot spots eco region. Apart from it, there are other forms of tourism gaining popularity which are wedding, sports, tea tourism and rural tourism.

Thus, it is essential to provide adequate infrastructure and other supports to sustain and expand the tourism industry in the country. But there are some challenge faced by India in tourism sector like pollution, exploitation of nature parks and reserves. Lack of institutional maintenance, tourist guides and more.

Thus, to address this need, there is national tourism policy needed which will highlight each issue and lay down structure guidelines to address the issues individually for overall development of tourism sector.

## National Tourism Policy

It was formulated in 1982 in a closed economy with stringent licensing procedures. The **policy however did not recognize the role of private sector** and due to its formulation in the closed economy, foreign investment in the tourism sector was not encouraged. Further, the **policy did not adequately address the domestic tourism**. The main objectives of the policy were

- To position tourism as a major engine of economic growth
- To harness direct and multiplier effects for employment and poverty eradication
- To focus domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth
- To make India a global brand to reap off benefits from global tourism trade and to promote the untapped potential of India as destination
- To create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on cultural and social-economic aspects along with states, private sector and other agencies
- Recognize importance of private sector and private investment in tourism industry, with government acting as a catalyst to boost up tourism earnings.

Considering the recent developments and advancements in the tourism sector across the world, a new draft tourism policy has been formulated by government of India (yet to be approved). Some of the salient features are:

- Stress on sustainable and responsible tourism.
- Vision the policy enshrines the vision of developing and positioning India as a 'must experience' and 'must re-visit' destination for global travellers., while encouraging Indians to explore their own country.
- Development and promotion of varied tourism products as well as niche products such as medical and wellness, meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE, adventure and wildlife. Etc.
- Development of core infrastructure- airways, railways, roads, waterways etc.
- Developing quality human resources
- Creating enabling environment for investment
- Emphasis on technology enabled development
- Focus on domestic tourism.

## Rural Tourism- Infrastructure and Capacity Building

Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting local community economically and socially as well as enabling interactions between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience.

India's national tourism policy 2002 identified rural tourism as one of its main focus areas. The Endogenous Tourism Project- Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP-RTS) is a collaborative effort between Ministry of Rural tourism, GoI and UNDP initiated in 2003.

UNDP contributes towards 'software' creation i.e. awareness creation between locals and outside agencies. MoT contributes towards 'hardware', i.e. development of infrastructure, which includes improvement of roads, hygiene, surroundings of village etc.

Against the conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like- it is experience oriented, locations are thinly populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, engages local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions. The implementation is done through a Paryatan Samiti headed by the district collector of the concerned rural tourism site.

### Capacity building of community

It is unique in the sense that it banks upon ownership and involvement of the community. Before construction at rural tourism site, community is prepared for the change and consensus is built upon what has to be done with help of government and NGOs.

Two steps approach for these projects includes **community mobilization and building capacities in the communities**. The challenge is to create tourism products because they cannot be imposed from outside, they have to be generated from within the village.

In projects such as Paryatan Samiti, the aim is to provide livelihood to those who are not doing well- by making them participate in tourism, whether in hospitality or in craft or in any other allied services that a tourist requires.

The underlying idea of the project was that a part of the revenue generated from tourism should be utilized for the general welfare of the community as a whole, even to those who are not participating in the tourism businesses in the village, because in community based tourism, the mere presence of villagers in the village contributes to the tourism.

### **Infrastructure**

Architects are empanelled at retaining the vernacular architecture and traditional customs during infrastructure creation. Style of architecture depends on the situation and availability of material. More community involvement in construction and maintenance is focused upon.

Supply chain for tourists and major organizations (service provider's tourism) is linked to larger private sector network. Requirement of travel trade include sanitation and hygiene, safety to tourists at the rural tourism sites, enterprises and NGOs acting as service providers have been working towards fostering rural tourism, in the country and they are the most essential component in the supply chain for tourists. Such initiatives include Grassroutes, Rural tourism network enterprise, DHAN foundation, travel another India etc.

### **Accessibility and improvement**

Many rural tourism projects have been carried out across the country but only handful have resulted in increased tourist flow as well as enhanced livelihood for the locals. The reason is location and proximity to tourist destination.

### **Marketing**

Travel industry relies on marketing experiences because experiences are at the core of entire industry. Those experiences could be of visual appreciation, cultural immersion and spiritual elevation. The plan of promoting rural tourism as a primary tourism product by ministry of tourism was supplemented by UNDP in spirit of MDGs of sustainable human development and elimination of poverty and inequalities.

Given the cultural and geographical diversity of India, the country has plethora of opportunities to harness rural tourism. If implemented and promoted properly, projects can become a driver of economic growth and will address issues such as poverty, empowerment of women and strengthening the economic status of rural people.

### **Promoting Village Tourism through PRIs**

PRIs are people's institutions at grassroots levels. These are expected to prepare plans for economic development and social justice including those listed in Schedule XI of the Indian constitution.

Since panchayat would prepare plans for economic development and social justice, they can include other activities which are relevant for tourism under their jurisdiction in plan. The tenth plan document mentions that 'the experienced traveller wants authentic off beaten track vacations in remote and less well-known places as against luxurious hotels., leading to an interest in rural and ethnic tourism'.

Village tourism covers all those aspects of travel whereby people come to know about each other in terms of their customs and traditions and thoughts.

There is a need to promote panchayat tourism because of its uniqueness in terms of people's [participation through institutions of panchayats, gram sabhas and various subject committees. Tourists, particularly foreign tourists like to see participation of women elected representatives (more than 11 lakh in panchayats) in rural governance, planning and development.

### **Community Based Tourism for North East**

North east is a land of diverse culture loaded with hide potentials for tourism that would bring inclusive development in rural communities. Each rural village in northeast would be offering a unique experience to the visitor with rejuvenating freshness of nature, richness of culture and traditions, cuisine and various aspects of rural life, which are way distinct from modern urban life.

Cleanliness accountability is generally lacking in Indian tourism as most sought after tourist destinations are littered with plastics and package food containers and often clogged drinking water streams. In north eastern tribes where land is revered, such littering might not be taken lightly as it becomes insult t the society to which the land belongs. Thus, the tourism development in north east shall maintain a litter free environment and focus o socially and environmentally conscious tourists.

The tourists are apprehensive e of 2 aspects of north east

- Availing ginner line permit
- Security

The ILP application systems are mostly online in most of northeastern states. This is simplified with availability of ILP on arrival. The concerns of personal security are mostly notional. Concrete efforts are needed to generate awareness regarding this notional insecurity and to bring out the safe and pleasant travel experience

The development of an inclusive tourism model for north east is unthinkable without involving the local communities. The unique potentials of local community shall be identified and brought before potential tourists at appropriate platforms.



**Table 1: Government's Proposed Plans, Schemes and Tourism**

Government's Initiatives, Schemes and Policies	Benefitted Sectors and Forms of Tourism and related Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skill Development Programme</li> <li>- Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojana</li> <li>- IT based Student Financial Aid Authority</li> <li>- Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karya Kram</li> <li>- MUDRA Bank, SETU, Nai Manzil</li> </ul>	<p>Employment (Disposable income), Human Resource Development, Entrepreneurship, Change of Mind Set, Education Tourism and Creative Tourism, All forms of tourism will be benefitted</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)</li> </ul>	<p>Innovation in Amenities, Super-infrastructure, Speed, effective Telecommunication, Management of destination, services etc. All forms of tourism can get benefit</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)</li> <li>- Tax Free Infrastructure bonds</li> <li>- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana</li> <li>- Pradhan Manti Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana</li> <li>- Senior Citizen Welfare Fund</li> </ul>	<p>Tourism infrastructure i.e. Rail, Road. Multiplier effect on development. Security, Safety. Domestic Tourism will be benefitted, Religious Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Yoga Tourism, Ayurvedic Tourism, Social Tourism etc. Indirect push to travel and tourism industry at micro level.</p>
<p>Swachh Bharat Abhiyan</p>	<p>Image building, Marketing. Promotion, Desire of travel, cleanliness, Safety, Awareness, Hygiene, Change of mindset, Boost to International Tourism, Mouth to mouth publicity. All forms of tourism will be benefitted</p>
<p>Clean Ganga Mission</p>	<p>Image building, Cleanliness, Hygiene, Safety, Change of mind set, Water Transportation, Promotion, Cruise Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Religious Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Wildlife Tourism, Environmental Tourism, Recreational Tourism, Yoga Tourism, Ayurvedic Tourism, Eco Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Health Tourism</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)</li> <li>- National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)</li> </ul>	<p>Infrastructure Development, Image Building, Heritage and Cultural Circuit Development, Conservation, Preservation and Maintenance of Resources, Promotion and Marketing, Cultural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Religious Tourism, Ethnic Tourism, Historical Tourism, Spiritual Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Educational Tourism, Social Tourism and Other forms of Tourism will be indirectly benefitted.</p>
<p>Make in India Programme</p>	<p>Manufacturing Hub, Employment (Disposable Income), Transportation (air, road, water, rail), Accommodation, Culinary Tourism, Business Tourism, Recreation Tourism, Infrastructure Development, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Expositions, Seminars, Workshops, Resorts development, Shopping. Other form of tourism will also get benefit.</p>
<p>Digital India</p>	<p>Information, Awareness, Desire, Image Building, Promotion, Management of destination and resources, Infrastructure, Security, Information Technology, Innovation, Telecommunication, Resource identification and documentation. All forms of tourism can get benefit.</p>
<p>Smart City</p>	<p>Image Building, Infrastructure development, Accommodation. Business Tourism, Medical Tourism. All forms of tourism can be benefitted.</p>

**Best Wishes!**

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