
UNIT 29 GOVERNMENT

Structure

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29.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will:

- be acquainted with the relationship amongst tourism, culture and the state,
- know about the government policies to preserve, protect and promote various facets of Indian culture, and
- be able to analyse the cultural contents of Government's tourism policy along with the inherent contradictions.

29.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is becoming one of the most important social and economic activities of today's world. The number of domestic and international travellers is steadily increasing and many countries in the world are now seeking to develop tourism for its many benefits. There is also justifiable concern about the existing as well as possible negative effects of tourism and a growing desire to develop this sector in a planned and controlled manner that optimizes benefits while preventing any serious problems. In addition to newly developing tourism areas, those places that already have substantial tourism development are now re-examining their tourism sectors, policies, and in many places, desiring to make improvements where necessary to meet contemporary standards and environmental objectives. Recognition is gradually being given to the development of tourism in an integrated manner that sustains its resources for perpetual use, and helps conserve (and not deteriorate) an area's natural and cultural heritage.

In developing tourism of any particular country/region, its cultural heritage plays a very crucial role. Equally important is that how the culture is portrayed to the tourist or How its promotion is carried out in the tourist generating markets. Alongwith it, ideology, values and the vision of the tourist plays a critical role in influencing the nature of tourist development and policy formulation. The vice-versa is also true in this regard.

Since tourism is generally considered as an unproblematic activity that is beyond a political uniteque, the Government and inter -governmental agencies concerned with tourism have generally not been questioned on who makes Tourism Policy and what are its contents as far as social and cultural impacts are concerned. The notion that it is an industry which is generally considered as a remedy for foreign exchange problems with no side effects has proved to be erroneous in the case of developing countries.

In the present Unit we will discuss the relationship of the state, tourism and culture. Besides, a critical evaluation of the government's policies regarding promotion and preservation of Indian culture in relation to cultural tourism are also discussed.

29.2 TOURISM, CULTURE AND STATE

Tourism is developed for various reasons. Besides economic benefits, tourism can also justify applying measures for environmental and cultural heritage conservation for which resources otherwise might not be available. Socially, tourism in its best form provides recreational, cultural and commercial facilities and services that may not have been developed without tourism for use by both tourists as well as by residents. It provides the opportunity to educate people about their cultures and environments as well as their own national heritage. Often this helps in circumventing ideological and political differences and reducing prejudicial attitudes, that is, achieving a cross-cultural exchange.

However, tourism can also generate various problems such as the loss of potential economic benefits and local economic distraction, environmental degradation, the loss of cultural identity and integrity, and cross-cultural misunderstandings, reinforcing existing prejudices. These benefits and problems will be examined in more depth in the specific context of cultural aspects.

One of the difficulties in examining the relationship between tourism, culture and Government is that the concept of culture is, like state/power, a contested concept. Recreational tourism is typically perceived as a leisure activity which is undertaken voluntarily, without constraints, as a sense of obligation. On the other hand, politics denotes the struggle over scarce resources, the domination of one group over another and the potential exercise of state control. The two would, therefore, seem to be completely different social realms or spheres. Nevertheless, Wilson has explained it very clearly:

"The liberals and conservatives both locate leisure firmly within the private sphere, a region of elite in which the individual can engage in these integral and significant social relationships that are the building blocks of personal identity. The private sphere connotes freedom and autonomy while the public sphere means constraints and alienation. In the private sphere the individual is in control, in the public sphere the individual is under control".

The problematic positioning of tourism within either the public or the private sphere reflects the emptiness of understanding the social context within which tourism is both defined and occurs as an activity. The notion of the contextuality of tourism as a form of leisure implies the recognition that there is no such thing as absolute freedom.

Each state sets the framework and rules by which tourism activities can be pursued. Even within the "free" countries of the west, certain tourist behaviours may be prohibited. Freedom is hedged by the prevailing distribution of resources and by rules which define those activities as admissible or inadmissible pleasures, and which defines those activities which may be legitimately pursued in their own right rather than for instrumental purposes, and which specifies by whom they may be pursued. For example, in totalitarian states the private sphere does not exist. In the case of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the nature of tourism activity was a substantial political concern of the state and was geared to serve the political and ideological goals of the state with benefits to the individual being a secondary consideration. However, tourism can play a major role in socialising certain values in individuals and reinforcing dominant ideologies/images. Moreover, the potential for wholesale contact between people of different cultures and values that tourism represents clearly has the potential for greater value change than industries which primarily deal with physical products, such as agriculture, manufacturing or mining.

The role that tourism can play in influencing cultural heritage is inherent in ideas of commoditisation, which implies that what were **once personal 'cultural displays' of living traditions or a 'cultural text' of lived authenticity become a 'cultural product' to meet the needs of commercial tourism.** We already have a changed language in which we talk about the arts no longer as expressions of imagination or creativity, but as a "product". We are no longer moved by the experiences the arts have to offer, rather we "consume" them. Here, Culture becomes a commodity. According to Dowson:

'... ethnic and multicultural festivals may be seen as cultural products to be exploited for tourism ends. Individual ethnic cultures and multiculturalism itself are to be 'sold' using 'professional business practices', through the medium of festivals and other special events. Marketing initiatives and advertising campaigns are the means by which ethnic and multicultural festivals can promote themselves as 'cultural packages' to tourists.

.... when... an archaic revival of neurotic cultural practices takes place in order to satisfy the tastes of tourists, this deliberate, specialized revival vendors ethnicity as a commodity. It is valued for the profit it accrues through its exchange in the commercial tourism market and little more'.

The above discussion makes it very clear that tourism cannot be termed as an economic activity only for the state. It is very closely related to the culture and society of the destination. Hence, it is necessary for the state/government to formulate the tourism policy keeping in view not only the economic aspect but also the issue of commoditisation of culture.

29.3 GOVERNMENT : POLICY AND PLANNING

In this Section we will discuss various steps taken by government to protect and promote Indian culture and arts, whereas we will discuss Indian governments' tourism policy to promote Indian culture separately in the next Section.

India possess a complex, and multilayered, multidimensional cultural fabric with strong regional identities. To accommodate such intricate culture Indian government developed vast structure to plan and implement various schemes and programmes. During the pre-independence period British government promoted few cultural institutions like, **National Library, Archaeological Survey of India, Botanical gardens, Anthropological Survey of India.** Mass-media units (All India Radio), etc. But there was no state finance or organizational support available to the crafts. Whatever all India institutions of culture were developed were the sheer voluntary efforts. After independence need was felt that Indian government should frame policies to protect and promote Indian arts and crafts; cultural heritage, etc.

The basic responsibility of administering culture rests on **Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.** Its **Department of Culture** is the main incharge of policy planning and execution. It maintains and directly administer certain cultural institutions like - **Archaeological Survey of India, National Museum, National Library, National Archives, National Gallery of Modern Art,** etc. Besides, it provides financial support to number of autonomous bodies, and also to voluntary efforts in literary, performing and plastic arts.

The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting looks after and controls mass-media, both, Radio and television. It also administers **Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity** with the aim to disseminate cultural heritage to the masses. It has two publicity units **Press Information Bureau** and **Directorate of Field Publicity.** Besides, its **Song and Drama Division** looks after the entertainment of a large audience. The **Films Division** is the central film producing organisation responsible for the production of documentary films to educate people and spread and preserve Indian cultural heritage. The mass-media organisations were set up with the aim:

- i) for popular entertainment, and
- ii) to disseminate information about regional, national and international developments.

It was expected that all programmes to include 'light cultural content to create awareness about diverse Indian culture among the masses.' Primarily, **All India Radio** and Television programmes consist of children's programmes; programmes on music, dance, drama, educational programmes, news bulletins, etc. Besides Hindi and English other regional language programmes are also shown/broadcast on **All India Radio** and **Doordarshan.** Also, there are separate stations of **All India Radio** all over India, which broadcast programmes in regional languages. Similarly, regional level **Doordarshan Kendras** show programmes, news, etc. in regional languages for a wider appeal. Another important component of media is films. Its entertainment value and impact on public mind is well established. The government's role in making feature films is confined largely to give subsidies and to institute awards for best films. Otherwise, Indian film industry is highly commercial and privately financed. However, in making documentaries government plays significant role and they are prepared largely either as propaganda or for information on Indian culture. In 1960, **Poona Film Institute** was established under the aegies of **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** for providing diploma courses in photography, sound recording and engineering, film acting and film editing, etc. Later, **National Film Archives of India** (1964) and **Indian Institute of Mass Communication** (IIMC, 1965) were established. In the archives copies of all the national and

international films, documentaries, etc. are preserved ; while IIMC provides training and research in mass communication. Here, we are not going into details about the history and impact of mass-media on society for we have already dealt it in our Block 4 and in Unit 30 of the present Block. Here, we are confining to government's promotional policies with regard to mass-media.

Prior to independence music, dance and drama were not supported directly or indirectly by the British government. Indian art primarily survived during this period in the urban areas either under the patronage of Indian princes, or in the hands of handful free-lancers; while among the rural masses it was the integral part of the folk culture and tradition and also the chief source of recreation. After independence, Indian government's chief objective behind the promotion of performing, visual and verbal arts was to preserve, foster and promote national integration through an awareness of culture. With this purpose, immediately after independence, three academies were set up:

- i) National Academy of Letters (**Sahitya Academy**, 1952),
- ii) National Academy of Plastic Arts (**Lalit Kala Academy**, 1953), and
- iii) National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama (**Sangeet Natak Academy**, 1953).

The aim of establishing these academies was not only to revitalise, nourish and nurture traditional arts but also to create better opportunities for the artists. The **Sahitya Academy** was set up with an objective to maintain high literary standards and to sustain and nourish literary activities in all Indian languages, and to promote through them, the cultural unity of the country. The Academy has succeeded in blossoming the variegated richness through its publications, translations, etc. High quality literary works in regional languages have appeared and awards of prizes (financed by Government of India) to outstanding works of writers are given. At present, practically in all the states, on the pattern of **Sahitya Academy** various academies, literary societies and institutions are working at regional levels. Its critics continue to comment that more work should have been done in terms of achievements. To achieve Academy's goals -to stimulate growth, foster quality and bring out coordination among regional languages - is not an easy task. Certainly much more is left to be done. But it no way undermines the efforts which have been undertaken for the promotion of Indian literature and languages.

The aim of setting up the **Lalit Kala Academy** was to encourage and promote research and training in plastic and applied arts; and to encourage setting up of art institutions and art associations. The academy has since then published a number of monographs on Indian paintings and sculpture. Besides publishing a research journal it also does the work of preservation, dissemination and fostering of Indian art. Currently it is the most vocal platform for artists. Here one can see the fine blending of tradition with modernity. But, still more is to be done to establish coordination among various voluntary organisations.

The third important academy **Sangeet Natak Academy**, working in the field of dance, drama and music, is expected to promote research in the fields of performing arts and coordinate activities in these fields. Since its inception it is involved in organising competition, seminars, festivals, etc. It provides subsidies for publication and research works in the field of performing arts. There is a special unit for surveys and documentation of folk music, dance and drama. Annual awards are given by the academy in the field of classical music. It has established three national institutions - **National School of Drama, Manipuri College, Dance and Kathak Kendras** - to provide training in various fields of performing arts.

To preserve Indian cultural heritage, as early as pre-independence period, efforts were undertaken. In 1788, under the aegis of Sir William Jones, **Asiatic Society of India** was established primarily to locate literary material relating to India's past. Archaeology, however, formed a very small part of its activities. In 1900, Lord Curzon established a separate unit - **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**. The major activities performed by ASI are : i) excavations ii) preservation and conservation iii) research in the field of epigraphy and numismatics, and iv) publications. We have already discussed in detail the working of the **Archaeological Survey of India** in our Block 1 Unit 3 of this Course. **The first great task performed during the pre-independence period was unearthing India's most ancient civilization, the Harappa in 1924 under the leadership of Sir John Marshal. The Archaeological Survey of India further did commendable work at Kalibangan and Burzahom in unearthing the pre-historic past. Government of India passed Ancient Monuments' Preservation Act under the aegis of Lord Curzon which now exist in the revised form i.e. the Act of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. Similarly,**

Indian Treasure Trove Act of 1878 exists in the form of the **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**. With the aim of protecting Indian Monuments **Archaeological Survey of India** since independence has declared thousands of monuments and art pieces as National heritage. Attempts are also taken to preserve them. In this direction number of structural preservation projects are undertaken by the **Archaeological Survey of India**. A separate **Epigraphical Branch** is established to undertake deciphering, identifying, and publishing inscriptions of Sanskrit, Dravidian, Persian, etc. **Archaeological Survey of India** runs separate diploma in archaeology to provide training in various branches of archaeology. It also publishes **Reports of Archaeological Survey and Epigraphica Indica**. Besides, they publish a regular journal **Indian Archaeological Survey** which is an excellent forum for discussion on approaches, content, and techniques of archaeology. Licences to tourist guides who work in the monuments are issued by the **ASI**.

Museums are also established to conserve and preserve artefacts and to serve as a centre of public education and recreation. They also organise small exhibitions, particularly to educate and create awareness about the cultural heritage of India among school and college students. They are also used for research purposes. They regularly publish guide books and information bulletins. However, there is still great need for better training facilities for museum personnel. We have already discussed about the Museums as vehicle of preserving Indian art and culture in Block 6 Unit 20. There are 16 exclusive site archaeological museums where artefacts of various archaeological sites are preserved. In this regard one can name **Indian Museum, Calcutta, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, National Museum, New Delhi, and Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad**. To preserve the extinct tribal culture government has set up various museums where living tribal culture is preserved. **Manav Sansthan** of Bhopal is a unique attempt in this direction. Similarly, in New Delhi a separate **Adim Jati Sangrahalaya** was set up where not only various tribal traditions are preserved and depicted through visuals but it also coordinates with various tribal groups for the development of various tribal communities. The Government of India as well as various state governments offer grants to museums and formulate policies relating to their management and functions.

Country's community development programmes come under **Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation**. The chief objective of setting up village community programmes is to protect and nourish culture at the village and the non-urban level.

To preserve India's richest craft tradition i.e. handloom and handicrafts, various organisations, like the **All India Village Khadi Development Board, All India Handicrafts Board, etc.**, were set up. Indian government's policies are primarily framed with the aim of preserving, sustaining and promoting indigenous village industry. Artisan and craft tradition is imbedded with the day-to-day activities of rural masses. One finds women painting their mud walls for decoration or embroidering their skirts, **ordhnis, cholis**, etc. Similarly, craft tradition among the tribals is linked to the ritualistic cults and deities. They also prepare items of day-to-day use (pots, beads, cane and bamboo artefacts, etc.). (For further details see Blocks 7 and 8 of this Course). Immediately after independence Indian government launched plans for the development of handicrafts and handlooms. The prime task before the government was to sustain this craft tradition as part of village culture, instead of reducing it to museum pieces. To fulfill this objective in the fore government had to provide economic support to make the artisans economically independent. The Government also took steps to create a greater demand and launch programmes to accelerate handloom production for exports. With this purpose various Handicraft and Handloom boards, Units, etc. have been set up. From time to time policies were framed for this purpose. For example, **Handlooms Act** was passed by Parliament in 1985. Besides, special provisions are made in each five year plans for handloom sector. To provide financial support on easy terms in 1983 **NABARD** is set up (for details see Section 24.5). Likewise, separate budget provisions are made for the development of tribal handicrafts. Various projects (**ITDP; MADA; TRIFED; etc.**) are in operation for such purposes. Besides, various crafts **melas** (**Dilly Haat** and **Crafts Museum** in New Delhi) are set up with the purpose of eliminating middlemen so that profit can directly reach to the artisans. Similarly, **Gramshree** and other exhibition like **TEX India, International Trade Fair, etc.** (at New Delhi) are organised for the promotion of handicrafts (for further details see Sub-sec. 28.3.3). But, in spite of government's efforts still lot more is to be done as the real profit is still not reaching the artisans. They could hardly achieve more than the subsistence level. There are problems in getting short term and long term loans. Many are even not aware about various schemes of the government in operation for their development. Therefore, in spite of the existing schemes, they are not actually benefited

by them. Therefore, there is need to create more awareness regarding the various assistance programmes of the government among the rural masses and the tribals. There is also need to take care that real profit should reach the artisans. Influence of brokers, middlemen, etc. must be minimised.

Indian Council of Cultural Relations is another autonomous organisation created under the **Ministry of External Affairs**, which works for the promotion of Indian Culture overseas. Arranging or sponsoring the visits of Indian artists abroad, holding promotional fairs depicting India's cultural heritage (see Unit TS-2), etc. are the tasks undertaken by this organisation.

Check Your Progress-1

1) Explain the relationship between Tourism and Culture.

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2) Why is it important to plan a tourism policy?

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3) Examine government's policy regarding performing arts.

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29.4 TOURISM POLICY : PROTECTION AND PROMOTION

The **World Tourism Organization** sees the role of policy as the means by which Government motivations can be balanced with private sector improvement. This is primarily because it views Tourism as one of the few development options for third world countries, and a means of participation in the International trade. The **World Tourism Organisation**, therefore, recommends that all countries, to realize the value of the process of liberalisation would have a Tourism policy, which defines the means by which the objectives of Tourism development

are to be realised. To be 'meaningful' these objectives, should be fixed in a tourism development plan which has the sanction of the Government.

The first ever Tourism Policy was announced by the Government of India in November, 1982. It was more an aggressive statement in marketing than a perspective plan for development. Its main thrust was aimed at presenting India to the foreigners as the ultimate holiday resort. With a view to reach this destination, the following measures were:

- 1) To take full advantage of the national heritage in arriving at a popular campaign for attracting tourists,
- 2) To promote tourist resorts and make India a destination of holiday resorts,
- 3) To grant the status of an export industry to tourism,
- 4) To adopt a selective approach to develop few tourist circuits, and
- 5) To invite private sector participation into the sector.

The Planning Commission recognised tourism as an industry by June, 1992.

As is very clear from above policy tourism was considered by Government as an industry which should use India's cultural heritage as commodity to attract foreign travellers.

The major development in Tourism policy of India came with the **National Action Plan for Tourism** in May, 1992. Its central concerns were:

- socio-economic development of areas,
- increasing employment opportunities,
- developing domestic tourism for the budget category,
- preserving national heritage and environment,
- development of International tourism,
- diversification of the tourism products, and
- increase in India's share in world tourism.

The Eighth plan document makes a special mention that the future expansion of tourism should be achieved mainly by private sector participation. The thrust areas as enumerated in the Plan include development of selected tourist places, diversification from cultural related tourism to holiday and leisure tourism, development of trekking, winter sports, wildlife and beach/sea resort tourism, exploring new source markets, restoration of national heritage projects, launching of national image building, etc.

It is evident from the contents of this document that now there is greater stress over preservation of cultural heritage. Contrary to the policy of 1982, where it was suggested to commoditise the culture, the 8th plan proposed diversification of tourist attractions from more cultural heritage perspective. This change in orientation is very crucial as India is moving on the road of development and it needs a positive image rather than a country of snake-charmers and the rope trick.

As part of Government Tourism Policy certain cultural attractions are being promoted. The Department of Tourism intends to set up craft villages in different parts of the country to provide a boost for the traditional handicrafts of various regions. In New Delhi, **Dilli Haat and Crafts Museum** - a kind of **shilpgram**-which exhibits the crafts of different regions throughout the year have been started. The **Surajkund Crafts' Mela** and **Shilpgram, Udaipur**, have been a tremendous draw with the tourists. Organisation of **Republic day** celebrations in India is a big cultural event. it attracts in large number not only foreign tourists but also number of domestic tourists visit Delhi to see the event. Dances and cultural representations, in the form of **jhankis** (tableau), from different states are major cultural attraction. For almost a week after the **Republic day** parade the dancers and artists give performances in different auditoriums in the city.

Certain fairs and festivals have been identified by the Ministry of Tourism and assistance is given to develop and publicise them to attract inland and foreign tourists. Fairs like **Pushkar Fair, Sonepur Cattle Fair, Kite Festival, Alleppey Boat Race, Duhsehra Festival in Mysore and Kulu**, etc. are already attracting tourists. Ministry gives liberal financial assistance to develop these traditional fairs and festivals all over the country and promote them aggressively in the international market. **Festival of India and India-Fest** are attempts in this direction (See Course TS-2, Block-6, Units 21 and 22).

At important tourist centres where, earlier, there were no structured arrangements for organising cultural evenings which could provide an experience or a glimpse of Indian culture to the visiting foreign tourists now it will be the endeavour of the government to have a tie-up with the zonal cultural centres for making arrangement at important tourists destinations to organise cultural evenings son-etlumières, craft bazars, food plazas and fairs and festivals all round the year. Such activities will be organised in coordination with the **Department of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India. Konark and Khajuraho festivals, light and sound programmes at the Red Fort and Purana Qila in New Delhi, and at Gwalior Fort**, etc. are some attempts in this direction.

At the same time the efforts in this direction should not be undertaken keeping in view the foreign tourists. It is high time that the interests of domestic tourists be taken care of.

29.5 TOURISM POLICY: NEED FOR REORIENTATION

It is suggested that the existing thrust of our Tourism policy, should be reconsidered and to locate alterations within the reality of our cultural heritage and existing socio - economic conditions.

South Asian destinations have a marginal share of the International Tourism market and the 60's vision of the economic and developmental benefits and foreign exchange earnings from tourism continues to dominate the developmental debate. Tourism is penetrating deeper into our political and economic thinking and our culture.

Experience, however, shows that as the tourism industry draw an accounting's infrastructure, the more developed and complex the rest of the economy, the greater are the economic gains and the power of economy to retain the value added in the country.

Tourism policy in India, which is conceived and pushed from the top, is always justified and legitimised by the yardstick of customer satisfaction. To ensure a competitive tourism growth, tourism professionals and officials are to be encouraged to take an active part in the decision making process.

In the 'free market' economies few needs are satisfied locally. Products originate in communities that cannot consume them and the determining factor is access to money and the empowerment it gives to the consumer. Tourism is an advanced form of consumerism that depends on the distant, unknown "other" to supply it. It compiles peoples who have unknown names and identities to sacrifice the means to meet their daily needs so that the affluent tourists can effortlessly reach out for whatever they desire - at their price.

An alternate tourism policy must reject this value system. It must stop just being consumer oriented. Its focus should be on that form of tourism that encourages an exchange of cultures and wealth, a sharing of skills and problems. This would include both domestic and international tourists who wish to come at the terms of the destination. If India has developed resistance to tourism it is because the people at the destination have no role in decision making or in the benefits from tourism.

We want a policy that does not reduce us to a 'field' for which our Government has become the 'native informant', making value and cultural statements that are neither authentic nor representative for culture. We should have a policy that assents our subjectivity in the context of unequal trade so that we do not subsidise the mass tourist and become victims of the travel trade.

Therefore, the Tourism Policy must be re-defined by people's needs, people's movements and people's organizations, in cooperation with similar bodies and counterparts elsewhere keeping in view the conservation and preservation of culture.

Check Your Progress-2

1) Examine the salient features of Tourism Policy of India.

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2) Examine the problems of current Tourism Policy and give some suggestions?

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29.6 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, in this Unit we have analysed the:

- role of government in Tourism Policy making process and its execution,
- role of cultural heritage in Tourism development,
- critical examination of government’s policies to protect and promote Indian culture and cultural tourism, and
- impact of Tourism over our cultural heritage.

29.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sec. 29.2
- 2) See Sec. 29.2
- 3) See Sec. 29.3

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sec. 29.4
- 2) See Sec. 29.5