CHAPTER - III

TOURISM POLICIES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH
Governments are interested in tourism due to the magnitude of its economic, social and environmental impacts, as tourism is generally considered to provide around 10% of the world's economy with consequent effects on the communities and natural environments with which it interact. Perhaps tourism policy would not be so important if these economic benefits were only available for particular countries of tourism was a closed system where the potential for collateral impact and damage from external shocks, crises and disasters was less. Instead most governments have an involvement in tourism, although the existence of formally stated and publicly accessible national tourism policies is by no means universal (Baum, 1994). Government tourism policy may also be indirect, whereby government actions influence tourism as a by-product of an interest in some related area; or direct whereby governments actively seek to influence tourism or some aspect of tourism in pursuit of a policy objective (Airey, 1983). In general, governments consider tourism as a source of economic development, increasing its priority especially for developing countries.

Hall (2008) emphasised on three reasons to study policy: to understand the shaping of policy decisions and their impacts, to provide information about solutions to practical problems and to feed this information into the policy process and to understand the interests and values involved in policy and planning processes. These are general reasons for the study of policy, but do not provide a justification for the study of policy related to tourism in particular. Tourism policy is an important area for study because of its practical and theoretical importance. Tourism is of practical significance as international travel requires government cooperation in decisions about provision of facilities.
and services, interactions with other sectors, use of publicly 'owned' resources such as national parks as attractions, the issuing of tourist visas and in the funding of marketing of particular destinations (Ahmed & Krohn, 1990).

The nature of the policy-making process in any nation-state varies over space and time, and varies among policy sectors or policy communities. Attempts to analyse policy are made complex not only by decision, actions and events but by the knowledge that there is no coherent or universally accepted theory of public policy processes and no single means of explaining events (Hall & Jenkins, 2004). There are number of reasons why the study of tourism policy is difficult. A first reason is that tourism policy, explicitly or implicitly involves beliefs and values, about what is good and bad. Policy concerns goal and allocation of resources in situations and to social problems, sometimes called wicked problems (Rittel & Weber, 1973), where there is no answer. Policy is a web of decisions and actions that allocate values (Easton, 1953). Richter (1983) found that in many developing nations such as the Philippines, tourism is a chosen policy and that policy includes government action, decisions, and non-decisions as these all imply a deliberate choice between alternatives.

The introduction of choice and the notion that public policy involved choices about both whether to develop a policy choices need to be made suggested that public policy is more than what government did. Tourism policy is seen by Hall (2000) as first and foremost a political activity, influenced by the economic, social and cultural characteristics of a particular society, and by the formal structures of government and other features of the local political system. Policy involves consideration of the political debate about what the agenda is, what the issues are, who is involved or affected, and the alternative courses of action to address the problems (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). As these
ideologies changes, a government's tourism policy will differ in forms and means in relation both to the form of political economy that prevails in the country and to the degree of development reached (Sessa, 1976).

Policy has also been seen as a social process that involves and is influenced by the institutional context, issue drivers such as macro-environment factors, actors, agencies and networks, policy dialogues and events as well as space and time (Lawrence & Dredge, 2007). An increasingly important view associated with the ideology of neo-liberalism is that policy communities or networks of interested stakeholders play an important part in the development of issues and policy formulation processes. Thus some authors stressed that policy making is a soft human process rather than a rational scientific process. Stevenson (2008) indicated tourism policy is essentially about communication. Policies are formulated and implemented in dynamic environments where there is a complex pattern of decisions, actions, interaction, reaction and feedback.

The policy implementation process may also require a number of other steps as administrative coordination and policy coordination (Hall, 1999) as well as support from effective legislation.

Tourism is, without doubt, a highly political phenomenon which extends beyond the sphere of formal government structures and processes if politics is conceived as being essentially about power relation and it is thus an underlying and indirect theme in much tourism research (Henderson, 2003). The policy cycle model is an analytical perspective which simplifies the tourism policymaking process by segregating it into formal stages (Pforr, 2001), typically agenda setting, formulation, decision making, implementation and evaluation.
Formal objectives are normally consistent with the aims laid down in the national constitution or in the party policy documents of manifesto. The dominant informal objectives may be to achieve certain stakeholder aims, to hold on to or to increase power and to stay in office. Jenkins & Henry (1982) described various types of government involvement in tourism, active involvement is seen as a deliberate action by government, introduced to favour the tourism sector. Conversely, passive involvement occurs where government undertakes an action which may have implications for tourism, but is not specifically intended to favour or influence tourism. Traditionally, government involvement in tourism has largely been a product of wider policy aims such as the national balance of payments, or regional economic development targets (Kruuczala, 1990; Smyth, 1986).

There are a broad range of characteristics which identify policy. Policy involves actions, decision, politics, values and ideological beliefs, social processes involving communication, outcome such as legislation and implementation.

Himachal Pradesh being one of the famous tourist destinations has attracted many scholars to undertake their researches but there is lack of enough literature available on tourism planning & policy in Himachal Pradesh as tourism being one of the newest disciplines in the academics. According to Kapoor (1976) tourism as an instrument of economic development with special reference to Himachal Pradesh. The main objective of this study was to analyse the role of tourism industry in the overall economic development of the State and formulation of the policy for the promotion of tourism. Author concluded that tourism in Himachal Pradesh as a distinct product presents a vast potential. This is perhaps one of the industries whose development ensures the simultaneous development with a number of other related industries. The authorities associated with this trade throughout the world are now adopting new
techniques for promotion of tourism. Tyagi Archana (1989) made an attempt to study the development and potential of tourism in Himachal Pradesh. The main objective of her study was to critically examine the performance and development of tourism and to identify tourism potential in the State. The findings of this study revealed that Himachal is endowed with all the ingredients, which make a State a tourist State. Besides all the tourists' attractions, this State could not achieve the name & fame.

Batta (2001) studied the environment policy for sustainable tourism development in Himachal Pradesh. In his study he has taken the example of Kufri-Chail area of Himachal Pradesh. He concluded that tourism generally uses environmental resources without making any contribution to its well-being. It is also true that tourism has enough potential for the resource generation.

Himachal is a very attractive tourism destination. Till date three tourism policies have come into effect in the State. It is imperative to review and understand the same before embarking on the study. The policies are described as follows:

3.1 TOURISM POLICY- 1991

Himachal Pradesh has taken the lead in the country in formulating a comprehensive tourism policy in 1991. In the Indian constitution, tourism is a State subject. The Directive Principles of State Policy Article where States have right to develop their own policies, programmes and plans. The Himachal Pradesh Government considers Tourism to be multidimensional industry that has significant implications on other sectors of the economy. It places a very high priority to tourism so that it can become an input to rapid overall economic development of tourism industry. This objective will primarily be achieved through the mechanism of private enterprise and initiative. At the same time government will have to play an important role by constant interaction with tourism trade, visitors and the people of the State.
The State govt. accepts tourism as a multifaceted industry that has implications on the economy. It seeks to promote tourism to increase the income and employment level but at the same time, preserve the cultural and ethical values of the State. Tourism has been accorded a high priority because the govt. believes it will accelerate the overall development of the State. A comprehensive tourism policy was formulated in 1991 and these guidelines from the base of the present tourism policy of the State.

The objective of developing tourism as defined in the policy is to generate additional income, larger employment opportunities, correct regional imbalances and equitable distribution of income. Other objectives include preserving the cultural, moral, religious and environmental heritage of the State. These objectives were to be achieved primarily through the mechanism of private enterprise and initiative. At the same time the govt. would play an active role in creating the requisite environment for the healthy growth of tourism. The govt. expects the private sector to act in a responsive and responsible way towards evolving internal self-discipline so that the need for regulation is minimised and the tourism industry itself acts own watchdog.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following guidelines were laid down in the tourism policy for the private sector:

The tourism policy identified two types of infrastructure-commercial and non-commercial. The non-commercial infrastructure like roads, water supply, electricity etc. were to be undertaken by the govt. while the commercial infrastructure like hotels, transport, catering etc. were assigned to the private sector.
Considering all other factors special concession may be granted to citizen of Himachal Pradesh at all levels. To achieve these aims the development of tourism will go on planned basis, pin pointing specific aspect of the sector. By creating infrastructure facilities, like accommodation, transportation, catering, wayside, amenities, tourism clusters, package utilities, publicity, promotion of art and crafts, adventure and culture, Heritage & Ecotourism etc. started in big way with the help of master plans.

3.2 TOURISM POLICY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH-2000

Tourism is increasingly recognized as one of the most important sectors of the global economy. In India, although we have not yet even begun to tap the potential, tourism already is the third largest foreign exchange earner. Each million rupees invested in tourism creates 47.5 new jobs. This compares favourably to even important traditional sectors like agriculture, where a similar investment yields only 44.7 new jobs. Worlds wide, countries at all stages of development are realizing that tourism is a major engine of growth for the new millennium. It is, moreover, one that can help us preserve our natural and cultural environments, providing sustainable development at many levels.

Himachal Pradesh is endowed with all the basic resources necessary for thriving tourism activity: geographic and cultural diversity, clean, peaceful and beautiful environment; forests; lakes; mountains; rivers and streams; sacred shrines; historic monuments; and that most important resource of all-friendly and hospitable people. During 1999, total tourist arrivals in the State were 4.77 million, of which 88,000 were foreigners. Tourism already nearly 2% of our State Domestic Product. With careful Planning and development : there is no reason that this cannot be increased many times over.
Need for a Tourism Policy

To create prosperity for the people of Himachal Pradesh through travel and tourism; tourism that is in harmony with the social and cultural values of the local communities and is environmentally sustainable; and to create direct, indirect and ancillary new employment opportunities for the people of this State.

To reach the goals of this mission, and to explore the full scope of tourism potential, it is necessary to develop a new Tourism Policy.

Business and activity-oriented tourism have entered the scene, alongside the more traditional leisure tourism. Adventure sports have become a major tourist attraction. We have realized - often, too late - that unbridled expansion can lead to ecological damage. At this point, it is crucial that we develop an appropriate regulatory framework to ensure that all tourism activity takes place in a safe, and orderly fashion, and to make sure that all future development takes place in a manner that will enhance and protect our natural and cultural environment. There is also tremendous opportunity for the State to act in the role of facilitator, providing an attractive and appropriate environment for new investment in the tourism industry. Without being overly dependent on subsidies and incentives.

Objectives

- To promote economically, culturally and ecologically sustainable tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
- To promote responsible tourism, that will be welcomed as both preferred employer and new community industry.
- To use tourism as a means of providing new employment opportunities in rural, tribal and remote areas.
- To increase private sector participation in tourism, both as a means of generating employment and providing new
infrastructure.

- To develop activity-based tourism to increase the duration of tourist visits.
- To develop adventure tourism by providing facilities and safety standards at internationally-required levels.
- To devote special attention to the promotion of religious tourism.
- To promote new concepts in tourism, such as time-share.
- To transform the role of the Government into that of facilitator.

**Strategy**

To achieve the above objectives, the tourism policy will employ the following strategy:

- Break the seasonality factor: Himachal has always been a popular tourist destination in the summer. Tourism products must be diversified to attract visitors in other seasons as well.
- Disperse tourism to lesser known areas of the State: This includes promoting tourism in rural and tribal, and developing National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
- Develop pilgrimage sites: These can become important tourism destinations by improving access, internal roads, sanitation and drainage, and pilgrim facilities. In addition, other tourism activities can be developed in nearby areas.

For all these strategies, it will be necessary to prepare an inventory of resources and a zoning management plan.

**Plan of Action**

Plans of action must be developed in five different areas:

- Basic infrastructure
Basic Infrastructure
This includes upgrading of air, rail and road access, and improvement of power, water, communication and other basic facilities. These are areas that are basically the responsibility of the State Government, although private sector initiative may be welcomed on a project- to - project basis.

Improving Access
The three existing airports of Jubberhati (Shimla), Bhuntar (kullu) and Gaggal (Kangra) shall be upgraded for landing of larger capacity aircraft. The work on these has already been taken up. The State helicopter is being made available for use of tourists. The Government shall also attempt to make the Government of India to agree for civilian flights to Pathankot airport. The Government shall also endeavour for introduction of special trains from various destinations in the country up to Kalka. The Government shall also introduce innovative packages in collaboration with railways for the benefits of tourist. The network of National and State Highways as well as District roads will also be strengthened for all tourist destinations.

Integrated Area Development Project
The Government has launched efforts, with the assistance of Central Government, to improve the sanitation, roads and parking facilities in popular tourist Stations. Kufri in Shimla, Renuka in Sirmour, McLeodganj in Kangra, Parasher in Mandi and Maharana Pratap Sagar lake have been taken up in first Phase. Work on these projects will start soon. Projects at Solang, Jawalamukhi, Chirnpurni and other places will also be taken up in an integrated
Development of lakes

The State government will make special efforts to make natural and man-made lakes as important tourist destinations. Steps will be taken to maintain and enhance their beauty by undertaking development in an integrated manner and Government will seek expert advice of both domestic and foreign experts to develop the lakes as major attractions. Facilities for water sports in Maharana Pratap Sagar, Chamera and Gobind Sagar will be developed to international standards and national and international level events will be organized to popularize these destinations.

Tourism - Specific Infrastructure

These are the crucial areas necessary for development of a successful tourism industry; They are primarily the responsibility of the State, but some may be carried out in coordination with the Private Sector.

Tourist Information & Reception Centers

Availability of reliable and quick information is absolutely vital for promotion of tourism. To harness the modern technology to create data bank on tourism industry in the State and to provide information to the tourists/visitors through information kiosks with active participation of the industry itself, the Government shall endeavor to upgrade the existing centers into information cum reception centers, which not only provide information but also provide facilities for parking, reservation of accommodation, transport reservation, cloak room facility and even dormitory accommodation where possible. State government will also arrange to provide information through modern means like website, E-mail, Internet and other electronic means.

Human Resource Development

In a service industry like tourism, availability of skilled workforce
is essential for delivery of professional services of the highest order. The State government will assess the manpower requirements of tourism industry and organise training programs to create a pool of trained manpower. The Government would like to see investments in human resource development in hotels and tourism services provided in collaboration with the private section of tourism. Stipend, scholarships and other forms of financial aid may be given for basic courses as well as for skill up-gradation programs. New small/large scale hotels/resorts and projects will be persuaded to make provision for expenditure on higher level training of Himachal is as a part of their project capital cost.

The Government shall endeavour to re-orient the policy and work culture of all Departments and agencies to facilitate the promotion of tourism industry in the State.

**Awards**

To promote excellence in tourism, the government will institute monetary and non-monetary awards for institutions and individuals for recognition of outstanding contribution in various sectors of tourism like accommodation, catering, transport, travel agency and eco-friendly practices. This scheme will be administered by a State level committee consisting of experts, representatives of the tourist trade and Government officials.

**Entertainment / Special Interest Infrastructure**

This includes facilities such as amusement parks, ropeways, parks, herbal gardens, health resorts, botanical gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, sound-and-light shows, sports and adventure. It also includes sacred sites. The private sector can play a leading role in development of these types of facilities, with the State creating conditions conducive to investment.

**Village Tourism**

Village tourism shall be encouraged to ensure dispersal of tourists across the State and to open up new areas for tourism. Village
tourism also needs to be encouraged to broaden the base of tourism industry and provide employment opportunities in the rural areas. The procedure for registration of village tourism and farmhouses shall be simplified and adequate publicity given to the facilities available in the State in villages and farmhouse. Small village tourism units in villages with less than five guest-rooms or tourism cooperatives will be exempted from luxury tax.

**Pilgrimage Tourism**

Large number of tourists visit sacred shrines of Himachal Pradesh throughout the year. The State Govt. proposes to encourage development of cheap accommodation, parking, Sulabh Shauchalayyas telephone facilities, air, rail, and hotel bookings, drinking water, garbage disposal etc. at these religious places. During important festivals and special tented colonies will be set up and tourist police will be deployed in order to avoid inconvenience to the tourists. Special integrated development plans for places where large number of pilgrims visit, will be drawn up and implemented to facilitate the growth of pilgrimage tourism.

**Eco-tourism and Camping Tourism**

The State Government also proposes to harness the tourism potential of forests and wild life sanctuaries in the State. Camping sites with adequate infrastructure facilities for trekking trails, bird watching towers, rain-shelters, public convenience and parking shall be developed. A reasonable fee shall be determined by the government for use of camping sites for the maintenance and conservation of these forests.

**Promotion of Adventure Tourism**

The State is today synonymous with adventure tourism in the country. A number of youth are engaged in organizing adventure sports activities like para-gliding, skiing, camping, angling, water sports, rock climbing, trekking, mountaineering etc. Adventure
sports offers one of the most viable avenues for self-employment. The State Government shall make efforts to provide comprehensive training to the youth so that they are able to take up these activities on commercial basis & the facilities available are of acceptable international standards. Adventure sports also require enforcement of safety standards and government shall provide the necessary legislative and regulatory framework for enforcement of the safety standards.

Promotion of Art and Culture
Promotion of local art and culture is a major component of tourism policy. The State Government shall endeavor to encourage the development of souvenir industry, which would promote a distinctive image of the State outside its borders. The private sector will be encouraged to patronize and promote local folk culture and crafts. Village tourism is also expected to provide a closer glimpse of the local art, culture and crafts for the visiting tourists.

Development of Herbal Gardens
Himachal Pradesh has an enormous wealth of medicinal plants. Herbal gardens are being developed in the State will promote such gardens and Herbal Museums as tourist attractions for health and academic reasons. The tourism department in collaboration with department of Indian System of Medicine and Department of Forests has started organizing such tours, which will further develop awareness and interest about medicinal plants.

Promotion of Entertainment Industry
To make visit to Himachal a pleasant experience and to prolong the stay of visitors/tourists, there is a need to provide facilities for entertainment in the State. Efforts will be made to develop the entertainment industry in the State in a big way so that amusement parks, ropeways, film cities, tourism cities etc. are
developed in a planned manner in different parts of the State. Private sector will be encouraged to invest in entertainment industry. The State Government will provide govt. land on reasonable terms or acquire private land for such projects on the request of the investors, large projects for amusement parks, ropeways projects, golf courses, film cities may be exempted for entertainment duty for the first five years.

Foreign Investment

The Government will encourage the non-resident Indian and foreign investors to invest in the State. The Government shall accord priority for allocation of sites and other basic facilities which are required for setting up a unit. A special incentives will also be provided to the Non Resident of Indian's for implementing mega projects like development of satellite towns, Non-Resident of Indian colonies. Cyber city with investments exceeding Rs. 100 crores. The Government will also prepare schemes for development of tourism facilities for being funded by external sources on loan and aid basis in consultation and co-operation with the Government of India.

Film Shooting

Himachal because of its scenic beauty attracts several film makers for shooting of films. Currently, they have to seek permission from a number of agencies like Tourism Department, Deputy Commissioner, Police Department, Forst Department, Municipalities, temple committees and other authorities. This is discouraging them from coming to Himachal. The State Government proposes to declare Director Tourism as the sole authority for granting all type of permissions for outdoor shooting and all other authorities will co-operate in providing necessary assistance for film shooting. The charges to be levied will be decided by the Department of Tourism and if at all, any charges are to be levied by any other department, they will be collected by
Tourism Department at the time of grant of permission and remitted to the concerned departments. However, no such charges shall be levied without consultation with tourism department and the approval of the Government. For indoor shooting in a building, the permission will be given by the tourism department in consultation with concerned department or local authority and the charges therof will be collected by the tourism department and remitted to the concerned authority.

**Accommodation, Transport, Catering**

These are areas basically reserved for private sectors, with the State intervening only in exceptional cases, such as in under-developed areas.

**Accommodation**

The task of providing, upgrading and augmenting tourist accommodation will primarily be reserved for private sector. However, the Government will regulate construction of accommodation to preserved the architecture and ecology of the State and to avoid over exploitation and over-loading of a particular station. The construction will be regulated in accordance with the master plans of the department of Town & Country Planning so that the pitfalls of unbridled growth are avoided. The Government will encourage creation of accommodation in orchards, tea-gardens, tourist villages, paying guest-houses in villages and such proposals will be given preferential treatment and special incentives.

**Transport**

The State Government shall seek to provide safe, economical and reliable transport within the State as well as across State borders. Professional Guides shall be encouraged to make available their services to the tourists in Coaches as well tourist destinations. The Government shall also evolve a simplify the collection of taxes and levies so as to facilitate the unhindered
movement of tourist in the State.

Catering

Catering is an important area of tourism industry where the enterprise is expected to take the initiative. The government shall endeavor to promote suitable institutions to train the man power in this sector so that services of affordable standards and acceptable taste are provided to various categories of tourists. The State Government will take steps to ensure proper hygienic conditions and to prevent the exploitation of tourists on national and State highways and in tourist places. The Government will encourage ethnic Himachal cuisine.

Wayside Amenities

The Government shall accord high priority for wayside amenities like cafeterias, parks, information services, public conveniences through the private sector as well as through public and private sector participation.

Heritage Tourism & preservation of Monuments

The State has a number of old palaces, forts, have lies and other beautiful buildings which if properly developed could become important tourist destinations themselves. The Government shall encourage the development of such buildings for use as tourist accommodation and such heritage hotels shall be exempted from the luxury tax for a period of five years.

Apart from heritage buildings being converted into hotels, there are a number of historical temples, monasteries, churches, forts and other buildings which constitute the cultural heritage of the State and Government would endeavour to associate the Archeological Survey of India and private sector in their development as major tourist attractions.

In addition to the above, Heritage zone/heritage villages would be identified for preservation, maintenance, beautification and for providing basic amenities only regulated construction would be permitted within the identified heritage zone/village.
Development of Business Convention Facilities

Business conventions today offer the best opportunity for optimal utilization of tourism infrastructure in the off season. The Government will endeavour to promote both the creation of convention facilities in the State at par with the best in the country and aggressive marketing of this infrastructure in the rest of the country. State Financial institutions will be encouraged to approve loans on priority for this purpose.

Policy/Planning/Legislation

The State's most crucial role is in planning and regulating tourist growth so that it occurs in a manner most beneficial to the State's citizen and environment.

Tourism Clusters

The department of tourism will identify sites at new destinations. In order to set up tourism clusters. These clusters will be designed and developed as tourism cities/tourist villages. The Government will organize the civic infrastructure at these clusters such as water, road, electricity, communication etc. and will also meet the full coast of preparing such projects and shall accord priority for allocation of funds for such ventures from the financial institutions. Activities like amusement parks, resorts, cafes, handicrafts etc. will also be integrated into the projects. The plots in these clusters will be offered on the pattern of Industrial Plots.

Land Policy

The laws for the purchase of land are being simplified. A single officer will be made responsible so as to co-ordinate clearances from all the departments, thereby saving time and efforts of the entrepreneurs. The government land, which is available in the State at important places, will be transferred to tourism Department. The Department will further lease-out these sites to private sector for the department of tourism related activities in the State. The sites will be advertised in press to attract
prospective entrepreneurs. The Government will also create land bank of private land by inviting consent of owners to sell land for tourism projects. After initial scrutiny of possible use, the land will be shown in pool and put on website. Parties themselves will enter the transaction but the department will charge nominal charges as service charges from buyer and seller. The permission under section 118 of Tenancy and Land Reform Act will be readily given for such sales provided the concept of project is got approved beforehand.

Tourism Development Board

A Tourism Development Board under the chairmanship of Hon’ble Chief Minister and with representation from amongst the officials/non-officials, shall also be set-up to formulate policy guidelines for development and promotion of tourism industry in the State and to advise the State Government on matters regarding regulation and licensing in the tourism industry.

Role of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation

Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation has been a catalyst, trendsetter and a prime mover for the promotion of domestic and foreign tourism in the State. It has established, developed, promoted and executed various projects and schemes to facilitate and accelerate the development of tourism in the State. Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation shall continue to play a pioneering role in the State to sector. The State Government shall however explore possibilities of privatization and disinvestment of existing properties of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, to raise resources for development of new projects in hither-to to virgin areas. Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation will also prepare, organize and operate new packages and promote adventure activities. It will also produce literature for disseminating information to the tourist about Himachal Pradesh as a tourist
destination.

3.3 TOURISM POLICY-2005

Introduction

- Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The number of tourists worldwide has been registering phenomenal growth and it is expected that this number would shortly touch 1.5 billion. Tourism contributes about 11% of the world workforce and 10.2% of the global gross domestic product. The Dynamic growth if this industry is evident from the fact a new job is added to the sector every 2.5 second.

- This pattern and dynamic character of the Sector necessitates he policy to adapt to the changing environment. Policies are products of time and circumstances, available resources and technologies and most importantly, the needs of the stakeholders.

- This Policy document aims to provide clear direction for the development of tourism In the State. Himachal Pradesh is already a well-established and recognized tourist destination. It seeks to harness the fullest pontential of the State for Development of tourism, which in turn can be a prime engine for economic growth and prosperity of the Sate, besides effectively addressing the problems of unemployment and poverty. This document is a result of wide range of consultations within and outside the Government, including the industry, tourism unit operators and other stakeholders. Besides outlining the policy, the document also lists out the strategy for implementation, as also specific action plans to implement the policy.

- Nature has bestowed Himachal Pradesh with unique beauty and splendour with its lush green valleys, snow covered Himalayan ranges, a serene, peaceful, hospitable and
comfortable environment, smiling people and a rich cultural heritage – which tourists would be hard put to find elsewhere.

- Being in the lap of Himalayas this fact becomes its natural and unique USP with global appeal. The outer fringe of Himachal is formed by the Shiwalik hills, which are characterized by shallow valleys and dense scrub forests. The mid ranges have the majestic Himalayan cedar and the spruces – followed by alpine meadows that intersperse themselves with the snow clad peaks of the Greater Himalaya.

- Tourism, as we understand it today, in Himachal Pradesh, received recognition only in the 19th century, when the British established their chain of hills stations. Earlier, Himachal had been a destination for pilgrims only. A fillip to tourism was administered when British declared Shimla as summer capital of India in 1864. Post-independence and upgradation as fledged State in the year 1971 led to more investment in the infrastructure sector leading to opening up of the State. However the biggest explosion in tourism occurred in the mid 80s and 90s with the Kashmir problem when the number of hotels & hotel rooms increased within this period from 350 to present 1710 and 6300 to 36000 respectively with its concomitant chaos and haphazard growth which the State would have done well without. With the wisdoms of yesteryears and this document attempts to address those very problems.

- During the year 2004, the tourist arrivals in the State were 6.5 million which is roughly equivalent to the population of the State. (2.04 lacs were foreigners). In terms of numbers therefore the State has done more than expected. The challenge now is to attract quality tourists and increase the stay of the tourists in the State. We also need to think
globally as even the domestic tourists today have a choice unlike in the past. By focusing on quality tourist the State Government also aims at promoting sustainable tourism and encouraging the private sector to develop tourism related infrastructure in the State – without disturbing the existing ecology and environment.

- In order to increase the duration of the year of the stay of the visitors/tourists, a special emphasis is being placed on the development of activity-based tourism and opening up new sub destinations. To promote tourism in the countryside and to lesser-known areas, appropriate infrastructure will he developed within available resources. Himachal was earlier known only for the summer season. Efforts are being made to break the seasonality factor and tourism products have been diversified to attract the tourists in other seasons too. Now Himachal is known as “A Destination for All Reasons”.

- Tourism contributes nearly 8% of the State Domestic Product which is roughly the same as horticulture sector. With careful planning and infrastructural development, the Policy proposes to increase it to 15% by the year 2020. The position with respect to some of the other economies is as follow:

**Objectives**

- To establish Himachal Pradesh as a leading tourist destination in the country and abroad;

- To make tourism a prime engine for economic development and prosperity of the State and as a major means for providing employment;

- To encourage a strong and sustainable private sector participation in creation of tourism infrastructure especially through public private partnerships;
• To promote sustainable tourism, which is not only environmentally compatible but also leads to economic betterment of the rural people;

• To attract quality tourist and to increase their stay in the State;

• To safeguard the State’s natural and manmade heritage;

• To encourage civil societies & non-governmental organizations for promotion & the conducting of tourism related activities;

• To position Himachal Pradesh as a stop destination for adventure tourism;

Himachal Tourism- An analysis of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths

• One of the rare places in the world offering five distinct season, thus having potential to attract tourist inflow round the year;

• Political and Social stability;

• Recognized as a peaceful and hospitable State;

• Salubrious climate;

• Pollution free environment;

• offers a rare conglomerate of eco-tourism, pilgrimage, adventure, culture, heritage, leisure, wilderness etc.;

• Fairly good infrastructure;

• High literacy;

• Rich history and heritage that has something to offer to all. Its Buddhist monasteries, which are of thousand years of old, ancient temples, churches and cemeteries;
• Special package of incentives for setting up of tourism units;
• Strong political will to promote tourism;

Weaknesses

• Negligible air and rail in the State;
• Inadequate flow of foreign tourists;
• Non-disbursal of tourists round the year, putting severe strains on civic infrastructure during the peak season;
• Lake of trained tourist guides at important tourist places and historical tourist site;
• Saturation at the established tourists destinations;
• No new major tourists destination has come up recently;
• Lack of adequate parking places at important tourist places;
• Poor marketing of the State abroad and inadequate marketing within the country;
• Very little budget;
• problem of land acquisition;
• Problem of conversion of forest land;

Opportunities

• Strong potential for activity based tourism such as white water rafting, Para-gliding, trekking, mountaineering, water sports, mountain biking, Car Rallies etc.;
• A strong base for heritage tourism to attract persons from all walks of society and religious beliefs;
• To develop an ideal destination for nature lovers by promoting eco-tourism;
• Create synergy between heritage and pilgrimage tourism;
Development of wetlands of the State to attract nature lovers especially bird watchers;

Promote the State as an open university and learning centre in mythology, anthropology and ornithology etc.;

Position it as an ideal destination for the film industry;

Himachal has something to offer to persons of all ages, groups, beliefs and interests. There is unlimited scope for development of varied tourist packages;

Himachal can become one of the leading adventure destinations in the world;

Promote wilderness tourism for lovers and seekers of nature, peace and quiet.

Create new destinations in yet unexplored but beautiful areas. This would also ease the burden on established tourist destinations

Threats

Tremendous strain leading to collapse, at times, of civic amenities at leading tourist destinations during the season;

Haphazard growth & construction threatening the environment, especially at the leading tourist destinations;

An alarming growth of concrete structures creating a disharmony with the local environment;

Unscrupulous commercialization of tourism could erode the social and cultural values;

Aggressive competition amongst the leading tourists States and a strong promotion of tourism by other States;

Lack of coordinated strategy by the different Government Departments;

A large increase in volume and limited increase in value;
• Poor garbage/waste disposal posing threat to the environment

Strategy

Tourism Sub Plan

There is no denying the fact that the total budget with the department of Tourism is less in comparison to the other tourism-oriented States in the country. Tourism is one industry, which is linked with all development departments. Under their normal programmes, they are required to meet the infrastructure demands for promotion of tourism. What is needed to mechanise and accelerate the activities of the tourism department is to integrate and coordinate with the departments like Public Works Department, Urban Development, Irrigation and Public Health, Health, Horticulture, Forest, Power etc. If properly coordinated, this is likely to yield good results and the deficiency of budget can be surmounted. The government would take steps to manage the funds in such a way that the tourism related departments will be asked to pool their resources with regard to such schemes which will be monitored at the level of Chief Minister through the Tourism Department Board.

Infrastructure Development

Demand driven tourism Infrastructure in Himachal Pradesh has come up in some of the major tourist destinations like Shimla, Manali, Dalhousie, Mcleodganj, Kasauli and Chail. With rapid increasing tourist influx and expending hotel accommodation in these areas, the civic infrastructures are under serious strain. The State Government therefore proposes to upgrade the civic infrastructure in the above towns on priority. The funds raised by the Tourism Department through Government of India under their various schemes will also be used to strengthen this area. Private investment in infrastructure will be welcomed with open arms. Priority areas will include setting up of hill stations, spas and
resorts, ski slopes, airports, tourist centres, multiplexes, parking areas, entertainment centres, amusement parks, ropeway, golf course, 4/5 Star Hotels, standardized budget accommodation etc.

In service like tourism, availability of skilled work force is essential for delivery of professional services of the highest order. The Government will invest in human resource development so that the managerial and technical skill is made available with the State. Presently the State has one Food Craft Institute at Kufri. The Department will endeavor to open Food and Craft Institute one in Kangra District and another in Kullu.

**New Marketing Strategy**

In order to bring the State on to the international tourist map and to increase the inflow of the tourist the following actions will be taken up for strengthening the marketing strategy of the State:

- Creation of 'Destination Himachal Funds' which will be a joint effort of Tourism Development Board, the major Temple Trusts and the private sector.

- Printing of new brochures, posters and other tourist literature.

- Developing 10 minutes, 20 minutes tourism films in order to telecast in the electronic channels and also display during the tourism fairs/marts.

- Up-gradation of information centres. These centres will not only provide information but also provide booking facilities for HPTDC & Private Hotels for reservation of accommodation/transportation, cloakroom etc.

- Installation of touch screen kiosks with full information about the State at important international airports/national airports and railway stations of the country.
Participation in leading national and international tourism fairs. In this, the private sector will also be involved so put up a unified ‘destination Himachal’ campaign.

Organization of tourism events in the State particularly during the off season in order to attract the large number of tourists.

Providing information about the State through modern means like website, e-mail, around the clock toll free tourist assistance, and helpline etc.

Release of advertisements in the electronic and print media.

Organize familiarization tours of the leading tour operators of the country and overseas in the State.

Conduct of buyer-seller meets.

Professional guides to be trained and encouraged.

Signage's of the international class will be installed on the national, State and at the important tourist highways and stations

Himachal, because of its natural scenic beauty attracts several film makers for shooting of films, Television serials etc. Presently they have to seek permission for shooting from various departments. The government proposes to declare Commissioner-cum-Director Tourism as the sole authority for granting all type of permissions related to film shootings and the fee thus be collected by the Tourism Department could be further remitted to the concerned department. In addition to this, the department will invite investment from private parties for setting up of the film cities, studios and hiring of filming equipment etc. for which govt. land could be provided on ppp basis. Proactive action would also be taken to attract film shooting parties to Himachal.
Improving connectivity

Connectivity whether by road, rail or air is of essence if tourism has to grow. Presently the State has three existing airports at Jubbar Hatti, Bhuntar and at Gaggal. These airports are being upgraded for landing of a larger capacity aircrafts. The airport at Pathankot is also being opened for the use of civilians where Boeing will land. This will give a big boost to tourism to the State especially to Kangra and Chamba regions. The Government has also taken up the matter regarding setting up of an International airport near Sundernagar.

Operating more affordable flights into Himachal would not only promote travel tourism but also make viability for the aviation companies to start heli-taxies services in the State. Helicopter taxi services would extend the reach of geographically rich hinterland of Himachal. The State has 55 helipads available for the services. The State Government is also making efforts for the introduction of more special trains from various destinations in the country upto Kalka and Pathankot. The network of national and State highways is also being strengthened for all tourist destinations. The State government shall also seek to provide safe, economical and reliable transport within the State as well as across State boarders. The government shall also evolve a mechanism to simplify the collection of taxes and levies so as to facilitate the unhindered movement of tourist in the State.

Strengthening of Tourism Development Board

The State Government has set up a Tourism Development Board under the chairmanship of Hon’ble chief Minister to formulate policy guidelines for development and promotion of Tourism Industry in the State and to advise the State Government on matters regarding regulation and licensing in the Tourism Industry. Efforts will be made to increase the resources of the Board so that the Board can carry out various developmental and
other tourism promotional activities. The income of the Board will be built up through the user changes levied being level by Tourism Department, income from PPP projects, lease money, income from Tourism councils etc. The Board will generally undertake improvements in the tourist areas, provide assistance to the Department of Tourism and to the Tourism Development Councils.

The Manali model of collection of green fee from tourist will be replicated in other major tourism destinations. The funds so collected will be scrutinize for 10/15 years and sizeable Tourism Master Plans created and implemented in time bound manner.

Private Sector investment

In order to attract investors, it is necessary to simplify the procedures to facilitate genuine investors. The projects where forest/revenue clearances are needed will be dealt on priority within a specified time not exceeding 90 days.

In order to promote rural tourism and to give incentive to the entrepreneurs, luxury tax will be exempted for units up to five rooms. In addition to this, the electricity and water charges will also be reduced to give fillip to investment in tourism projects in rural areas. This incentive will be provided to the promoters for a period of 10 years from the date of their commercial operation. The Government will consider assigning the task of Luxury tax collection on the pattern of collection to the Tourism Department of State Road Tax in Transport Department. The funds so collected by the department shall from part of the resources of the Board.

Single window clearances for tourism projects on the pattern of the single system. Industries Department has been made applicable. The suitable Government land either through land bank or otherwise available in the State will be transferred to the Tourism Department, which will be further leased out to the
private entrepreneurs strictly on the own competitive bidding basis.

Effective Regulation

The State government has passed the H.P. Registration Tourist Trade Act, 2002. It calls for inspection and checking of the hotels, travel agencies against overcharging sub-standard service etc. The Government proposes to carry out the inspection work by delegating necessary powers and also by involving the Hotel Associations.

- The Tourist Police in the State will be strengthened concept of by placing a cadre of 500 police and home guards personnel who will be trained for regulating tourism related activities. They will be provided with special uniforms/distinguishing mark and will assist the tourist.

- The Information Centres will be manned apart from the Department staff by the students of Hotel Management Institute and Master of Tourism Administration (University).

- The State government will take steps to ensure proper hygienic conditions and to prevent the exploitation of tourists on national and State highways and at tourist places. The Government proposes to classify the Dhabbas situated on the National and State highways. The classification will be done on the basis of facilities provided, hygienic condition, quality of the food, availability of toilets, parkings etc. The government will encourage ethnic Himachal cuisine in these Dhabbas.

- Similarly all the Tourism Units in the State will be classified as per facilities provided so that the tourists get their value for money. The Hotel Associations will be actively involved.

To promote excellence in tourism, the government will institute monetary and non-monetary awards for institutions and
individuals for their outstanding contribution in various sectors of tourism like; accommodation, catering, transport, travel agency, eco-friendliness, cleanliness etc. This scheme will be administered by a State level committee consisting of experts, representatives of the tourist trade and government officers.

**Thrust Areas**

In order to achieve the policy objectives indicated above the Department / Board has identified thrust areas for action and follow up some of which are as follows:

**Rural Tourism**

- The fruits of tourism must percolate down to the rural areas in order that it is truly sustainable and responsible. For this the Department / Board proposes that

- Rural Tourism villages are identified and notified by the Department The precondition for declaring these as rural tourism villages would be that they must predominantly have traditional architecture and an MOU would be signed with the Panchayat that this would be maintained. The villagers may modify their houses internally but they must maintain their traditional outer façade.

- For the sake of easier marketing these villages must be near to the existing tourist centre which will also ensure dispersal of tourist to the rural areas and promote decongestion.

- These would be dovetailed with the Government of India Ministry of Tourism Scheme under which funding is available up to Rs. 5 lacs. This would be used to create infrastructure like roads, streets, drainage, lighting, parking, bus stand, water supply, sanitation, tourist reception centre, rural museum, open air theatre, parks, nature trails, crafts
bazaar etc. This could also be funded from the Department / Board funds.

- In such notified villages there would be no luxury tax or commercial rates for electricity up 5 bed room home steads.
- The existing schemes of the Department Would be reviewed and efforts would be made to provide funds for renovating the homesteads and providing grant / loans to the weaker section of the society. The Department would actively work with the Department of Rural Development and nationalized banks for tying up in this regard.
- The government proposes that in these homesteads Himachali / local food will be served.
- Linkage would be sought to promote local handicrafts and cultural toupes.
- The procedure for registration of village tourism guest houses shall be simplified and adequate publicity given to the facilities available.
- The above scheme would be made applicable mutus mutandi to Heritage and Orchard tourism.
- The State has a number of old palaces, forts, havelies and other beautiful buildings in rural areas which if properly developed could become important tourist destinations themselves. The Government shall encourage the development of such sites for use as tourist accommodation and such new heritage hotels located in rural areas shall be exempted from the luxury tax for a period of five years. The Government would endeavour to associate the Archaeological Survey of India and private sector in the development of such sites.

Shimla evokes memories linked to the Raj, the freedom movement and in more recent time's events such as the 'Shimla
Agreement'. A monumental testimony to the times of the Raj are buildings like the Viceregal Lodge, which now houses the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, The Gaiety Theatre and more than a hundred other heritage buildings including churches and graves and promote nostalgia tourism linked to the colonial and freedom struggle era.

- Apple and orchard tourism is also an area of focus as in the Distt. Of Shimal, Kinnaur, Kullu and parts of Mandi Distt. Traditional farm houses could be converted into homesteads wherein the tourists could enjoy the beauty right from apple blossom to harvesting.

- Apple Festival celebrated annually would be continued with active involvement of the Horticulture Department And the Hotel Association.

- The Department/Board will co-ordinate with the watershed/livelihood related projects like Mid-Himalaya Watershed Development Project funded by World Bank so that rural/ecotourism can be furthered in these project areas.

**Eco tourism**

- Himachal offers a new era of nature enjoyment and learning. It also provides visitors an excellent exposure to the temperate forests. This makes it an ideal area for developing eco-tourism activities like jungle safaris, trekking, rock climbing, forest trails, nature walks, angling (esp. golden mahaseer and brown trout), camping etc. All these activities are to be conducted in a manner that promotes awareness of the environment and helps maintain the ecological balance.

- The eco-tourism projects being predominantly situated in forest lands are technically under the Forest Department Which has already formulated an Eco Tourism policy in
consultation with the tourism Department under this Eco-
tourism Societies have been established on Community
Based EcoTourism basis to cover the Great Himalayan
National Park (Kullu), Himalayan Nature Park (Shimla),
Renuka Wildlife Sanctuary (Sirmour) and Potter's Hill Van
Vihar (Shimla).

• The Government will harness the tourism potential of
forests in the State by developing camping sites with basic
infrastructure facilities and other public convenience
services. A nominal fee shall also be determined by the
Government for the use of camping site for the maintenance
and for the conservation of these forests. The private
parties shall be encouraged for setting up of such camping
sites on environment friendly basis. The government will
endeavour to open forest rest houses for the tourists
through the society. These would be run on community
based ecotourism tenets or through public private
partnership with companies with good track record of
working in Eco-tourism.

Wildlife Tourism

Wildlife Tourism is an integral part of Eco Tourism. Himachal
Pradesh has a varied topography, climate and forest cover and is
endowed with a vast variety of flora and fauna. At present there
are 32 Sanctuaries, 2 National Parks and 3 Game Reserves. The
sanctuaries include Simbalwara (Sirmour), Churdhar, Chail
(Solan), Maharana Pratap Sagar (Kangra), Manali (Kullu), Kanwar
(Kullu), Kalatop, Khajjiar (Chamba), and Daranghati (Shimla). The
National Park, Kullu; The Nature Parks are at Kufri (Shimla),
Manali (Kullu), and Gopalpur (Kangra). The Tourism Department
to further develop and improve wild life parks/zoos, bird watching
towers and other public utility services for the facility of the
tourists. A reasonable fee shall be determined by the Government
for use of such parks/zoos for its maintenance.
Development of Lakes and Wetlands

The State Government will special efforts to make natural and man-made lakes as important tourist destinations. Steps will be taken to maintain and enhance their beauty by undertaking development in an integrated manner. Facilities for water sports in Maharana Pratap Sagar, Chamera and Gobind Sagar will be developed to International standard and national and international level events will also be organized to popularize these destinations. Maharana Pratap Sagar will be developed as a world class water sport destination with the financial assistance of the Central Government in order to develop activities like water sports, angling, bird watching, setting up of house boats, development of artificial beaches etc. The government will also encourage the private sector to set up houseboats and operate shikaras in the Maharana Pratap Sagar. Improvement of the forest rest houses will also be carried out in the area and will also be made available to the tourists in order to accommodate them.

Pilgrimage Tourism

Himachal has emerged as an important pilgrim destination. A large number of religious tourists visit sacred shrines of Himachal Pradesh throughout the year. A large number of religions are situated in the State. The State Government propose to develop wayside/civic amenities, parkings, landscaping and beautification around the temple, Sulabh Shauchalyas, drinking water, garbage disposal etc. at these religious places in coordination with the temple trusts on the lines of Vaishnoo Devi Trust. During important festivals special measures will be taken up for the safety and security of the tourists like setting up of information centres, tented colonies to accommodate tourists and to deploy special Tourist Police Force on the lines of Vaishnoo Devi.

As a deliberate policy the Department/ Board will make efforts to integrate the important temples of Himachal with
Vaishnoo Devi in Jamīū and Kashmir or the Chaar Dhaam in Uttaranchal.

The Department / Boards will work in coordination with the Department of Language Art and Culture and also the Temple Trusts so that Tourist information centres are established in all the major temples and run by the temple trusts.

**Adventure Tourism**

The Tourism Department/ Board will make comprehensive adventure tourism promotion plan for the State and shall lay down the regulatory framework for enforcement of safety standards. For the promotion of adventure sports, the department/ Board will impart training in different sports to the youths. International competitions in such sports will be organized for attracting participants not only from the country but also from the abroad in coordination with the Department of Sports.

The Tourism Department / Board will support all efforts to promote and set up adventure sports schools at various locations in order to train more youths in Paragliding, Rafting, Water Sports, Angling, Sking, Mountaineering, Motor Sports etc. in coordination with the WHMI Manali and the State Level Associations. The Department / Board will help the WHMI in setting up more Sub Centres in the State to take adventure tourism the hitherto unexplored places. It will assist in training the local youth in adventure tourism so that they also benefit through employment & other means. Similarly it will work at tandem with Forest Department and the Eco Tourism Societies to meet the above ends.

The State was the first and continues to be the only State, which has heli-skiing in the country. This attracts foreigners and quality tourists with paying capacity to some of the best powder-snows that the world can offer. The experience in this venture has been very positive despite the initial apprehensions about
possible disturbances to the environment and fauna. It is proposed to expand the concept of heli-skiing by introducing activities like heli-trekking and cross-country skiing.

Conventional skiing and setting up of more ski lifts and ski resorts in the public private partnership will be a major thrust area. The Chanchal range beyond Rohru which has great potential will specially be explored.

The State started promoting paragliding from 1984 onwards. Himachal is now the leading States in the country in this field. Bir Billing in Kangra, Solang and Marhi in Kullu, Bilaspur, Kasauli etc. will continue as important centres for the sport. More areas will be explored and opened up with the objective of providing a source of livelihood to the local youth. The Bir Billing Pre-World Cup event will continue to be an annual event. A paragliding School will be opened at Dhelu. Bir Billing will be developed over the years into a top class paragliding destination internationally on self-financing basis with the local community benefiting the most.

The tourism Department in tandem with the WHMI and other adventure sports operators will encourage mountaineering expeditions internationally. Similarly Trekking and adventure sports activities will be undertaken on large scale through WHMI on sustainable basis especially during the holidays season for school and college students.

The Department / Board will continue to hold annual events of as many adventure sports activities as possible through their respective associations- Paragliding, river rafting, sailing, mountain biking, endurance events, marathons, motoring events, vintage car rallies (biannually) etc. The objective is that eventually all these events must become self sustainable.

One of the major aims in this area will be to get the latest technology in the field of adventure sports in terms of equipments
and know-how. Be it skiing / ropeway projects, water sports or paragliding. All PPP projects in this field of adventure tourism will have this as a necessary precondition.

Promoting Unexplored Himachal

The main tourism circuits in Himachal are fairly well known and even remote districts like Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur are now becoming popular destinations to relax and unwind. Himachal also has many undiscovered spots with unspoiled charm that are worth a visit for a quiet rewarding holiday spent amidst the splendour of nature away from the crowds. The State Government will made special efforts to develop unexplored destinations with the assistance of Central Government, to improve the sanitation, roads, parkings, toilets, accommodation, beautification and land scraping of tourist interest places, wayside amenities etc. Efforts will be made to keep these new areas neat and clean and only limited construction will be allowed, so that these areas may not become over saturated and the construction so allowed will preserve the architecture and ecology of the State.

Some of these areas include:

- Lahoul
- Spiti
- Kinnaur
- Janjheli
- Jot Chamba
- Rajgarh and Choor
- Nahan
- Chindi
- Barot / Jhatingari
- Rohru Chansal
• Sarahan and Bashal Dhar

Ever since opening up of tribal/border area of Himachal Pradesh to foreigners, the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting these tribal areas has increased manifold. Lahaul-Spiti & Kinnaur Districts have emerged as important destination yet compared to the potential it just a trickle. These areas being enormously rich in culture the effort would be to invite culturally conscious tourists who enjoy the quality and difference of experience. Preservation of the cultural uniqueness of these areas therefore will remain the prime concern of the Government. The Government will only allow such construction, which preserve the architecture and ecology of the area. The private sector will continue to be encouraged to set up guest houses for which subsidy will be provided from the State budget. Tented accommodation will be encouraged with local participation so that maximum benefits accrue to the local economy. The centuries old monasteries are also being upgraded where foreign tourists show lot of interest.

• Tourism Councils will be set up under the Tourism Act 2000 in these areas so that some fee is charged from the trekkers / tourists the proceeds of which will go to the local Panchayats for the maintenance and upkeep of the tourism related infrastructure and for regulating tourism on sustainable basis.

• The Department will take up the opening up of Tribal / Border areas further so that the present restrictions on travel in the inner line areas is removed.

• The Manali Leh route which has already become a favourite for both domestic as well as international tourists will be further improved in coordination with the Government of J & K and efforts would be made to link it to the Buddhist
Circuits of Shimla-Kinnaur-Spiti-Udaipur-Pange and Palampur-Dharmshala-Dalhousie.

Tourism Health

There is tremendous scope to set up spas, health resorts, recuperative centres etc. all over the State. Himachal Pradesh has an enormous wealth of medical plants. Herbal Gardens, Herbal Trails Will be developed as tourist attractions. The Tourism Department / Board in collaboration with Department of Indian System of Medicine, Department of Ayurveda and Forests will organize such tours which will further develop awareness and interest about medicinal plants amongst the school children and tourists.

The Government also proposes to develop spa / health resorts in association with the private sector at various locations in the State. The Government will also harness the potential of Panchkarma and start it in a big way in the State in order to attract large number of tourist for Panchkarma treatment. Training the youth in Panchkarma will be undertaken through the Department of Ayurveda who will then be employed in spas and health resorts.

Arts Crafts and Souvenir

Promotion of local art and culture and generation of income of employment through it is a major component of tourism policy. The State Government shall endeavour to encourage the development of souvenir industry linked to local crafts, events and places which would promote a distinctive image of the State both within and without the State. The private sector will also be encouraged to patronize and promote local folk, culture and crafts for the visiting tourists.

Development of souvenir industry including standardized packaging is of utmost importance for which leading institutions
and voluntary organizations in the country like Auroville, Tilonia, etc. will be actively engaged.

The review of policies suggests that the state has made conscious but sporadic efforts to improve tourism. Though new forms of tourism have been encouraged, no constant development has been aimed at and the State needs to assess the prior tourism policies before making any new plans.