

=====

BIHAR TOURISM POLICY- 2009

=====

Resolution

**SUBJECT:- BIHAR TOURISM POLICY- 2009 FOR ACCELERATED
TOURISM GROWTH OF THE STATE.**

Tourism has grown into one of the world's largest industries with a growth rate in excess of 5 percent per annum over the past twenty years. Globally, tourism accounts for 11 percent of the global GDP and 8 percent of the world trade employment. There is growing recognition worldwide of the essential role tourism can play in reducing poverty, employment generation, environmental regeneration and promoting sustainable development.

In India, tourism and travel sector generate employment to 9.3 million people with optimism of raising this to 12.9 million jobs to the people by 2010. This will mean that the tourism industry would provide job to one person out of 15 people by 2010 in the country. Every rupee spent by a tourist in the state changes hands thirteen times. Every hotel room generates direct employment to three persons and indirect employment opportunities to eight persons.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BIHAR – CURRENT SITUATION AND PROSPECTS

Bihar is famous for religious and cultural heritage sites. Bihar draws its name from the word 'vihara' or monastery, and was the early home of Buddhism. Steeped in history and religion, Bihar is the birthplace of the great Emperor Ashoka and Lord Mahavir. All major religions of India have left their mark here and this has made Bihar a great religious melting pot. It is that great land where once Buddha attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya under the sacred Bodhi tree. Bodh Gaya is now a World Heritage Site and is attracting the Buddhist tourists from across the world. Pawapuri being the Nirwan Sthal of Bhagwan Mahavira attracts people following the Jain religion. Patna Sahib- birth place of Guru Govind Singh, Xth Guru of Sikhs attracts tourists. It also has the Ashoka's installed pillar with Lion capital that has braved more than two millennia raising its head in all its splendors. Historical importance of Bihar has been established again with the discovery of 'biggest ever Buddha stupa' at Kesariya by the Archeological Survey of India.

The states' wealth of religious and historical monuments has, in one way or another, defined tourism in the state. However, the tourism sector's contribution to the state's development priorities and strategies has so far been relatively limited. A review of the sector's competitive strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis) indicates that it has considerable growth potential.

Bihar's great competitive strength from tourism point of view is its ancient and yet living civilization that gave rise to two of world's great religions namely Buddhism and Jainism. Bihar was the nerve centre of religious activities of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and Islam. Endowed with a rich cultural and religious heritage, Bihar was a seat of power of the vast and powerful Magadh Empire, whose might had checked further onslaught of Alexander the Great. This is a land of ancient universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila, the seat of higher learning, which spread knowledge far and wide through its students coming from different countries of the world. The remnants of these two ancient universities, the antiques and artefacts are already attracting tourists. Bihar has in fact been attracting domestic and foreign tourists

from the ancient times. The Travelogues of the Chinese travelers Huen Tsang and Fa-Hien describe historical splendor of Bihar, which offers much to tourists irrespective of their age and class. Bihar's contact with other civilizations is reflected in the rich cultural diversity of its people, traditions, customs, religious practices and festivals, architecture and art and craft. A trip to the state offers revelations in history, architecture, yoga, eco-tourism, fairs and festivals, art and crafts besides a unique cuisine.

The main competitive constraints faced by the tourism sector in Bihar have been the poor quality of the environments surrounding many of state's main tourist sites, the security scenario in the state that affects the perception of Bihar as a safe and secure destination, the quality of facilities and services at tourist attraction places, the quantity and quality of transportation service and related infrastructure, limited availability of tourist information in-source markets and at destination, insufficient marketing of Bihar in its domestic and international markets, limited and poor facilities and services especially in rural areas and limited financing of attractive projects by the private sector.

The key competitive opportunities before Bihar are: 1) develop its strength as a major religious destination attracting tourists of diverse religious beliefs; 2) promote the Buddhist circuit to attract Buddhists from a number of countries; 3) leverage its rich cultural history to increase its share of the huge international travel market; 4) harness the huge potential of promoting rural tourism revolving around its rich tradition of art, craft and handloom and 5) leverage its strength in yoga to develop well-being centres to attract a sizeable number of international and domestic tourists.

The main internal threats to the development of the tourism sector have been the inability to fully resolve the constraints identified above. These are security, safety, absence of trained manpower, inadequate connectivity, accommodation and other basic infrastructure like roads, electricity etc., and failure to market the tourist destinations in the state. External threats are not addressing the competition from other states like Rajasthan, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. The Tourism Policy 2009 proposes to concentrate on addressing the identified threats and harnessing the opportunities by adopting and implementing appropriate plans to handle the threats and overcome our weaknesses with the objective of increasing the tourist inflow into the state significantly.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Key Objectives

- Position tourism as state priority
- Focus on domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth.
- Promote Bihar for cultural, religious and 'wellness' tourism
- Improve the efficiency of the industry, for enhanced social and economic benefit, and consequential increased economic benefits, including increased employment generation.
- Ensure the participation of all the stake holders in society, including the travel trade and tourism industry.
- Create world class infrastructure
- Plan and implement a professionally managed integrated communications strategy to be called the 'Tourism Awareness and Promotion Campaign'
- Provide quality services to all domestic & international consumers and stake holders.
- Improving connectivity of important tourist sites.

Strategy for Development

- 1) Establishment of Tourist Security Force:

- The State Government shall recruit security personnel to provide security services to the tourists to instill in them a sense of security while visiting to any particular tourist spot and also to offer a helping hand to co-operate with them. For this purpose, competent and skilled force shall be identified or through outsourcing qualified and smart security personnel from private sector will be posted at different important identified tourist spots.
- 2) Preparing and Implementing Master Plans for Integrated Development and Marketing of Identified Circuits:
- The tourism projects implemented under Central assistance and the State plans have not been able to create an impact in terms of creation of international standard tourism infrastructure. A Master Plan with a time frame of 10 years giving year-wise phasing of investment both by the government and the private sector would be developed and implemented. Such a plan would clearly state the short term and long term plans, targets and ground realities.
 - Efforts will be made to dovetail external assistance, central assistance and state plan resources with private investments to attain the set goals as under the Master Plan.
- 3) Upgrading and Augmenting of Accommodation, Catering and Recreational Facilities:
- The hotel accommodation in Bihar is grossly inadequate and there is need to not only increase the number of average beds per thousand by building budget hotels, but also build star category hotels at all the important tourist destinations to provide quality services to the high end international and national tourists. ‘Land Banks’ will be developed to offer land identified for construction of star hotels to private sector at market price/lease/joint venture within the identified circuits.
 - Way side facility is an important part of tourism. In this vein, comfortable rest houses fitted with basic amenities on highways’ flanks, alongside the fuel filling stations (petrol pumps), would be created with public and private investments.
 - The state government would also encourage establishment of Heritage Hotels in Bihar by identifying heritage buildings and mansions to convert them to Heritage Hotels in order to provide quality accommodation to tourists.
 - The state government will explore and develop the possibilities for launching Paying Guest Scheme by identifying and registering the houses, house owners and families interested in this stream of tourism development.
 - Light and Sound shows, Laser shows, Multi-media museums etc. would be developed in partnership with private sector for entertaining tourists at important tourist sites including the historical sites.
 - The state government would encourage private sector to set up world class Amusement Parks, Golf Courses, Casinos, Floating restaurants etc. to attract more tourists.
- 4) Augmenting Connectivity and Transport Facilities by:
- Connecting tourist spots with world class roads.
 - Introducing more specialized vehicles
 - Introducing special Tourist Trains with a preset itinerary
 - Introducing Air Taxi service and helicopter services in identified circuits with Hub-Airport concept
- 5) Improving and Expanding Tourism Products to meet new market requirements:

- Improve infrastructure in identified circuits like Buddhist, Jain and Sikh circuits by converging all resources and expertise for development of these circuits as international standard destinations.
- Develop and promote new circuits like Ramayan, Sufi and Gandhi circuits.
- Bihar has a unique cultural heritage. It has a vast array of protected monuments and one world heritage site. There are several other sites like the ruins of Nalanda, the oldest University in the world, that have the potential of being a world heritage site. Scope of cultural tourism shall be expanded by conservation, preservation and integrated development of the area around historical monuments.
- Promote and develop Rural Tourism around art and crafts of Bihar to spread the socio-economic benefits of tourism to rural areas. Select villages engaged in Madhubani painting, Patharkatti, Handloom and Tussar weaving in districts of Madhubani, Gaya, Nalanda and Bhagalpur shall be taken up for development of tourism facilities to promote rural tourism. With a view to promote handloom and handicrafts of Bihar, 'Shilp Grams' (Craft villages) and handicrafts market shall be established near the tourist place.
- Promote 'Wellness Tourism' based on yoga and aqua therapy using sulphur water from hot water springs in Rajgir and Munger. Bihar is home to an internationally known Yoga University and has several sulphur water springs having therapeutic quality. This can be Bihar's most unique tourism product offering holistic healing and rejuvenation of the individual from every dimension- physical, mental and spiritual. Knowledge of 'yoga' is something which they can take back with them and practice in their daily lives to distress and keep physically fit.
- Promote Eco-Tourism by integrating Wildlife Sanctuaries and Valmiki National Park into tourism product. The state would endeavour to develop tourist facilities near its Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Park and develop special packages to attract tourists to these sites.
- Promote Ganga as a unique tourism product by introducing cruise along the river connecting historical sites near its banks. Riverfront development will be undertaken at identified places like Patna, Bhagalpur to promote tourism. Aqua Tourism shall also be promoted by developing water sports like river rafting, para sailing etc.

5) Establishing and Strengthening Institutions for the Development of Human Resources

- Set up Hotel Management Institutes, Food Craft Institutes and Travel and Trade Institutes to create a pool of trained manpower in the hospitality and travel and trade sector.
- Training of Guides, especially foreign language speaking guides shall be undertaken to fulfill the need for well informed guides speaking different languages at all tourist sites.
- Short term training would be organized for all the stakeholders in tourism like Immigration officers, Customs officers, Police officers, Taxi drivers etc. under the 'Capacity Building Programme' of Government of India.

6) Effective Marketing of Destinations both in the Domestic and International Market

- Shift its current traditional marketing to one that is more aggressive and competitive
- Differentiate itself from competing destinations, including developing a unique market position, image and brand
- Establish an effective and on-going market representation presence with the travel trade in each source market
- Participate in important national and international tourism fairs to showcase tourist destinations in Bihar
- Organize familiarization trips for leading national and international tour operators and media persons to give them first hand information about tourist sites in Bihar

- Strengthen Tourist Information Centres of the state by equipping them with modern information and communication technology (ICT) - computer, fax, internet, email etc. This would help in providing information to the tourists regarding tourist places, hotel bookings, transport facilities etc.
- Establish an Internet portal in various languages to service the information, product description, and product sales requirements of the target market segments in each source market.

7) Focus on Domestic Tourism and Regional Tourism/Cooperation:

While developing tourism to attract foreign tourists the importance of promoting domestic and regional tourism has also to be kept in mind. Domestic tourism market is mostly local or regional and efforts shall be made to attract the domestic tourists, especially religious tourists, to Bihar by facilitating their arrivals, augmenting accommodation facilities and developing tour packages. Also, packages in coordination with Tourism Development Corporations of the neighbouring states shall be promoted to tap the unlimited potential of tourism within the region.

8) Promotion of Arts, Crafts, Festivals and Cuisine of the State

- Bihar has unique events, fairs and festivals like Sonapur fair, Chath festival, Saurat Sabha, Rajgir festival and Boudh festival that need to be promoted as tourism products. These unique events would be integrated with tourism and special tourist packages shall be developed and promoted to attract more international and domestic tourists during these events. A 'Calendar of Events' shall be drawn up every year and promoted in all the source countries and states.
- The unique cuisine of the state like Khaja, Lai, Belgrami, Tilkut, Litti-chokha, Sattu and Makhana preparations will be promoted by holding 'Food Festivals' and ensuring their sale at tourism fairs and through restaurants.

ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT:

- 1) The role of the state government will that be of a catalyst, facilitator, promoter and provider of infrastructure.
- 2) An administrative body 'Tourism Promotion and Development Council' shall be established in coordination with all the agencies endeavoring to develop and promote tourism. Its main objective will be to work out strategies for the comprehensive development of tourism while establishing synchronization and harmony with all the stakeholders of the tourism industry as well as to make regular analysis about the state of tourism and issue necessary directives thereafter. The Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation shall work as an executing agency to this council.
- 3) The State Government will continue its efforts for infrastructure development in the tourism sector.

Important components for infrastructural development are-- Arranging accommodation for increased number of tourists, building of highways on tourist circuits, international level airports with total aviation back up facilities, local transport, rail routes linking tourist spots with full amenities and facilities, the vital telecommunication link, continuous quality electricity supply, water supply and other essential amenities like Banking and Medical facilities.

- 4) The state will create conditions for attracting private sector investment in the tourism sector. For this, it will provide fiscal incentives, assist in providing suitable sites by creating 'land bank' and remove bottlenecks especially those concerned with infrastructure development by according speedy clearances through Single Window Clearance System.

- 5) The state government will set up or assist in setting up training institutions for ensuring quality services in the tourism sector. Guidelines for selection and training of Guides at two levels, State and Local, shall be drawn up. The Department of Tourism shall provide license to the guides selected and trained in accordance with these guidelines.
- 6) Create special Tourism Security Force for deployment at major tourist destinations. This will provide travelers security through a spirit of courtesy and hospitality.
- 7) Standardizing quality of tourism product and services by drawing up guidelines for hotels and travel agents/tour operators.
- 8) Tourism entails multi-sectoral activities with participation of several stakeholders. An administrative mechanism will be evolved to coordinate the agencies participating in the tourism development endeavor.
- 9) The state government shall endeavour to create awareness about the positive role of tourism in economic growth and generation of employment by organizing seminars, quiz competitions, drawing competitions, exhibitions and display of films on tourism. Efforts would be made to include 'tourism' in school curricula. Educational tourism at school and college levels would be promoted by developing special tour packages for the students.
- 10) The state government along with Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation shall take the lead in marketing and promoting the tourist destinations and tourism products in Bihar with the help of a Marketing Plan.

ROLE OF BIHAR STATE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:

Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC), monitored by its parent Tourism Department, would act as the nodal executing agency of the state government. Its primary objective shall be to set up infrastructural facilities like hotels in untapped areas of tourist interest. Once these areas are developed, the BSTDC would seek to privatize the facilities and move to provide similar facilities in other underdeveloped areas of tourist interest.

The BSTDC shall make rapport with the Tourism Promotion and Development Council and shall work as an executing agency for the overall growth of tourism in the state.

The BSTDC shall also redefine its role to be the administrative agency in addition to the State Tourism Department for facilitating private sector investment and formation of Joint Venture Companies for setting up world class infrastructure.

The BSTDC would continue to play an important role in providing transportation facilities to tourists, especially in sectors where private services are either non-existent or insufficient. The BSTDC would also expand the facility of 'pre-paid taxis' to all important airports and stations of the state. For this the Corporation would adopt the twin strategy of increasing its fleet and entering into partnerships with private operators.

The BSTDC shall continue its efforts to operate tour packages covering prominent centres of tourist interest in the state. The BSTDC would seek to promote regional tourism by developing packages in partnership with Tourism Corporations/Boards of neighbouring states. The facility of online bookings for package tours and travels shall be augmented to allow bookings through use of credit cards.

SPECIAL INCENTIVES

Tourism as Industry:

“Tourism Industry” encompasses entire activities pertaining to the tourism industry viz. tourism attraction/ convention centers promoting tourism, art gallery, amusement park, aerial ropeway, establishment of tourist village, light and sound, sports facilities to attract tourism, recreational clubs, swimming pool, residences, hotels of all categories, motels, way-side facilities, resorts, yoga centers, transportation facilities (air, land and water transportation), establishment, construction, development and operation of all basic infrastructures of hotel-catering-tourism and travel management institutes.

The following incentives will be available for private entrepreneurs as well as the BSTDC:

- Full (100%) exemption in Stamp Duty and Registration Fee in lease / sale / transfer of land for setting up a tourism project. This facility will be granted only once.
- New Projects shall be exempt from Luxury Tax for seven years from the commencement of commercial operations.
- Full (100%) exemption in Electricity Duty for seven years.
- Full (100%) exemption in Conversion Charge.
- Reimbursement of the cost incurred in the project report preparation by the tourism units at the rate of 50% subject to a maximum of Rs. 75,000/- provided the project report is prepared by any of the firms recognized by the Industry Department. The reimbursement will be made to the unit after coming into operation.
- The Tourism Units located in Bihar Industrial Area Development Authority / Export Promotion Industrial Park / Food Park / Agri Export Zone would be eligible for the following incentive / subsidy on land/shed. These facilities / concession to the tourism units will be made available only after coming into operation:

S. N.	Tourism Unit	Grant
1.	Small / Tiny units Financial Limit.	50% of 7.50 lakh (maximum)
2.	All large / medium / mega units Financial Unit	25% of 15.00 lakh (maximum)

- If an entrepreneur obtains Technical Know-how from any recognized National Research Centre / laboratory or institution to establish or to expand his industry, he will be reimbursed 30% (maximum Rs. 15.00 lakh) of the fee paid to the institution / organization for the technical know-how. This facility will be provided to the unit after coming into operation.
- 50% (Fifty percent) of the amount spent on plant and machinery in the establishment of Captive Power Generation/Diesel Generating Set will be granted to the unit. No upper limit for this amount has been fixed. This facility will be made available after the unit comes into operation.
- New tourism units will be granted relief from payment of electricity duty under the Bihar Electricity Duty Act, 1948 for the generation and for own consumption of electricity from D.G. Set and Captive Power Units.
- The new Units will avail 80% reimbursement against the admitted VAT amount deposited in the account of the Government, for a period of ten years. The maximum Subsidy amount is payable 300% of the capital invested.

- Zero VAT means the production of items, which do not attract VAT. Such units which produce items attracting zero Vat and Pay income tax would be eligible for incentive upto a maximum utilization of 70% of the installed capacity (maximum limit).
- SC/ST/Women/Handicapped entrepreneurs will avail 5% additional grant /exemption / subsidy over the limit fixed under the policy.
- Up to a turnover limit of Rs. 30 lakh per annum, S.C. / S.T. / Women/ Handicapped category entrepreneurs who run small and tiny industries will avail 100% subsidy of the deposited amount in the account of Government in the form of VAT for a period of ten years.
- Working units at present and new units will avail exemption from AMG / MMG from the date of declaration of the New Industrial Policy. This facility will be granted for five years.
- Only 1% CST will be payable on the items produced by the registered small and medium units in Bihar.
- Existing units which are undergoing Expansion / Diversification / Modernization will be eligible for incentives, on their incremental facilities.
- 75% of cost incurred in obtaining certificate of I.S.O. standard (or equivalent) from reputed national/international level organizations, would be reimbursed by the State Government.

Land:

- Constitution of Land Bank for private investment.
- Government land will be offered with the approval of State Investment Promotion Bureau (SIPB) as equity participation on behalf of the government at current market value for setting up Joint Ventures.

Entertainment Tax:

- Entertainment Centres will be exempt from Entertainment Tax for seven years from the commencement of commerecial operations.

Order:- It is ordered that a copy of the resolution should be sent for publication in the special edition of the Bihar Gazette, Reputed Journals and Newspapers and be circulated among all the Departments / Departmental heads and Subordinates officials of the Government.

By the order of the Governor of Bihar

Sd/-

(Vivek Kumar Singh)

Secretary to Government,

Department of Tourism, Bihar, Patna

Memo no. 1482

Patna, Dated: 24.07.2009

Copy with enclosure forwarded to the Superintendent, Government Press, Gulzarbagh, Patna for its publication in the special edition of Bihar Gazette. You are requested to make available 500 copies of the published gazette to the Department.

By the order of the Governor of Bihar

Sd/-

(Vivek Kumar Singh)

Secretary to Government,

Department of Tourism, Bihar, Patna

Memo no. 1482

Patna, Dated: 24.07.2009

Copy with enclosure forwarded to the Chief Secretary, Bihar / Development Commissioner, Bihar/ Industrial Development Commissioner, Bihar, Patna/ Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Bihar, Patna/ Principal Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat Department, Bihar, Patna/ All Departments / Departmental Heads / Commissioner, Commercial Taxes, Department of Commercial Taxes / Managing Director, Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation, Patna/ Bihar Industrial Development Authority / Chairman, Bihar State Electricity Board, Patna / All Divisional Commissioners / All District Magistrates / All Deputy Development Commissioners / Director, Technical Development / Director, Industry / Resident Commissioner, Bihar Bhawan, New Delhi / Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Transport Bhawan, 1- Parliament Street, New Delhi / Officer In-charge, all tourist information centers, Govt. of Bihar for information and needful action.

By the order of the Governor of Bihar

Sd/-

(Vivek Kumar Singh)

Secretary to Government,

Department of Tourism, Bihar, Patna