

Tourism Policy-2005

Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation

TOURISM POLICY

2005

Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-9

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MISSION STATEMENT:

“TO MAKE TOURISM THE PRIME ENGINE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE STATE BY POSITIONING IT AS A LEADING GLOBAL DESTINATION BY THE YEAR 2020”

1. Introduction

1.1 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 of this industry is evident from the fact a new job is added to the sector every 2.5 second.

1.2 This pattern and dynamic character of the Sector necessitates the 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.

1.3 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 potential of the State for Development of tourism, which in turn can be a prime engine for economic growth and prosperity of the State, 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 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 characterised 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.

1.6 Tourism, as we understand it today, in Himachal Pradesh, received recognition only in the 19th century, when the British established their chain

of hill 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 up -gradation 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 and 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 wisdom of hind sight the State is now more equipped to deal with the problems of yesteryears and this document attempts to address those very problems.

1.7 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 focussing 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.

1.8 In order to increase the duration 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 be 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 Seasons and All Reasons.”

1.9 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:

2. Policy Objectives

- (1) To establish Himachal Pradesh as a leading tourist destination in the country and abroad;
- (2) To make tourism a prime engine for economic development and prosperity of the State and as a major means for providing employment;
- (3) To encourage a strong and sustainable private sector participation in creation of tourism infrastructure especially through public private partnerships;
- (4) To promote sustainable tourism, which is not only environmentally compatible but also leads to economic betterment of the rural people;
- (5) To attract quality tourist and to increase their stay in the State;

- (6) To safeguard the State's natural and manmade heritage ;
- (7) To encourage civil societies & non-governmental organizations for promotion & the conducting of tourism related activities;
- (8) To position Himachal Pradesh as a one stop destination for adventure tourism;

3. Himachal Tourism - A SWOT

Analysis

3.1 An analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT):

4.1 STRENGTHS:

1. One of the rare places in the world offering five distinct seasons, thus having potential to attract tourist inflow round the year;
2. Political and Social stability;
3. Recognized as a peaceful and hospitable State;
4. Salubrious climate;
5. Pollution free environment;
6. Offers a rare conglomerate of eco-tourism, pilgrimage, adventure, culture, heritage, leisure, wilderness etc.;

7. Fairly good infrastructure;
8. High literacy;
9. 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;
10. Special package of incentives for setting up of tourism units;
11. Strong political will to promote tourism;

4.2 WEAKNESSES:

1. Negligible air and rail link in the State;
2. Inadequate flow of foreign tourists;
3. Non-disbursal of tourists round the year, putting severe strains on civic infrastructure during the peak season;
4. Lack of trained tourist guides at important tourist places and historical tourist sites;
5. Saturation at the established tourists destinations;
6. No new major tourists destination has come up recently;
7. Lack of adequate parking places at important tourist places;
8. Poor marketing of the State abroad and inadequate marketing within the country;
9. Very little budget;
10. Problem of land acquisition;
11. Problem of conversion of forest land;

4.3 OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Strong potential for activity based tourism such as white water rafting, Para-gliding, trekking, mountaineering, water sports, mountain biking, Car Rallies etc.;
2. A strong base for heritage tourism to attract persons from all walks of society and religious beliefs;
3. To develop an ideal destination for nature lovers by promoting eco-tourism;
4. Create synergy between heritage and pilgrimage tourism;
5. Development of wetlands of the State to attract nature lovers especially bird watchers;
6. Promote the State as an open university and learning centre in mythology, anthropology and ornithology etc.;
7. Position it as an ideal destination for the film industry;
8. Himachal has something to offer to persons of all ages, groups, beliefs and interests. There is unlimited scope for development of varied tourist packages;
9. Himachal can become one of the leading adventure destinations in the world;
10. Promote wilderness tourism for lovers and seekers of nature, peace and quiet.
11. Create new destinations in yet unexplored but beautiful areas. This would also ease the burden on established tourist destinations.

4.4 THREATS:

1. Tremendous strain leading to collapse, at times, of civic amenities at leading tourist destinations during the season;
2. Haphazard growth & construction threatening the environment, especially at the leading tourist destinations;
3. An alarming growth of concrete structures creating a disharmony with the local environment;
4. Unscrupulous commercialization of tourism could erode the social and cultural values;
5. Aggressive competition amongst the leading tourists States and a strong promotion of tourism by other States;
6. Lack of coordinated strategy by the different Government Departments;
7. A large increase in volume and limited increase in value;
8. Poor garbage/ waste disposal posing threat to the environment.

5.Strategy

5.1.1 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 PWD, Urban Development, I&PH, 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.

5.1. 2. In addition to the above the TSP will include the budget of the Tourism Development Board/Department as well as the private investment likely to flow in through public private.

5.2.1 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/TDB through GOI 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.

5.2.2. 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 cum Hotel Management Institute at Kufri. The Department will endeavor to open FCI's one in Kangra District and another in Kullu.

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

- i. Creation of 'Destination Himachal Funds' which will be a joint effort of Tourism Development Board, the major Temple Trusts and the private sector.
- ii. Printing of new brochures, posters and other tourist literature.
- iii. Developing 10 minutes, 20 minutes tourism films in order to telecast in the electronic channels and also display during the tourism fairs/ marts.
- iv. Up-gradation of Information Centres. These centers will not only provide information but also provide booking facilities for HPTDC & Private Hotels for reservation of accommodation/ transportation, cloakroom etc.
- v. Installation of touch screen kiosks with full information about the State at important international airports/national airports and railway stations of the country.
- vi. 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'.
- vii. Organization of tourism events in the State particularly during the off season in order to attract the large number of tourists.
- viii. Providing information about the state through modern means like website, e-mail, around the clock toll free tourist assistance, and helpline etc.
- ix. Release of advertisements in the electronic and print media.

- x Organize familiarization tours of the leading tour operators of the country and overseas in the State.
- xi. Conduct of buyer- seller meets.
- xii Professional guides to be trained and encouraged .
- xiii. Signage's of the international class will be installed on the national, state and at the important tourist highways and stations.**

5.3.2: Himachal, because of its natural scenic beauty attracts several film makers for shooting of films, TV 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. Pro active action would also be taken to attract film shooting parties to Himachal.

5.4.1. Improving connectivity: Connectivity whether by road, rail of air is of essence if tourism has to grow.

5.4.2. 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.

5.4.3. 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 higher end tourists to soak in the delights of culturally and 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 borders. 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.

5.5.1 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 charges levied being level

by Tourism Deptt., 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.

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

5.6.1 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.

5.6.2. 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 (SRT) in Transport Department. The funds so collected by the department shall form part of the resources of the Board.

5.6.3. 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 open competitive bidding basis.

5.7.1 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 over charging sub standard service etc. The Government proposes to carry out the inspection work by delegating necessary powers and also by involving the Hotel Associations.

5.7.2. 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.

5.7.3. The Tourist Information Centres will be manned apart from the Deptt./TDB staff by the students of Hotel Management Institute and MTA(University).

5.7.4. 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.

5.7.5. 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.

5.7.6. 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.

6.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:-

6.1 Rural Tourism

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

- Rural Tourism villages are identified and notified by the Deptt. The precondition for declaring these as RT 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 Govt 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 Deptt / Board funds.
- In such notified villages there would be no luxury tax or commercial rates for electricity up to 5 bed room home steads.
- The existing schemes of the Deptt 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 Deptt would actively work with the Deptt of Rural Development and nationalised banks for tying up in this regard.
- The government proposes that in these home steads 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.

6.1.2 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.

6.1.4 Shimla evokes memories linked to the Raj, the freedom movement and in more recent time's events such as the 'Simla 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. Tourism Deptt./ Board will endeavour to preserve these heritage buildings including churches and graves and promote nostalgia tourism linked to the colonial and freedom struggle era.

6.1.4 Apple and orchard tourism is also an area of focus as in the Distts of Shimla , Kinnaur , Kullu and parts of Mandi Distt traditional farm houses could be converted into home steads wherein the tourists could enjoy the beauty right from apple blossom to harvesting.

6.1.5 Apple Festival celebrated annually would be continued with active involvement of the Horticulture Deptt and the Hotel Association.

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

6.2 Eco Tourism

6.2.1 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.

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

6.2.3 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 eco tourism tenets or through public private partnership with companies with good track record of working in Eco - tourism.

6.2.4 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 Parks are Pin Valley National Park, Spiti and the Great Himalayan National Park, Kullu; the Nature parks are at Kufri (Shimla), Manali (Kullu) and Gopalpur (Kangra). The Tourism Deptt proposes to work actively with the Wild life Wing of the Forest Deptt 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.

6.2.5 Development of Lakes and wetlands is also part of eco tourism .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. 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 organised to popularize these destinations. Maharana Pratap Sagar will be developed as a world class water sports 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.

6.3 Pilgrimage Tourism

6.3.1 Himachal has emerged as an important pilgrim destination. A large number of religious tourists visit sacred shrines of Himachal Pradesh through out the year. A large number of religious places for people of almost all 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 Vaisnoo Devi

6.3.2 As a deliberate policy the Deptt / Board will make efforts to integrate the important temples of Himachal with Vaishnoo Devi in J&K or the Char Dhaam in Uttaranchal.

6.3.3 The Deptt. / Board will work in coordination with the Deptt 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.

6.4 Adventure Tourism

6.4.1 The Tourism Deptt./ 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 organised for attracting participants not only from the country but also from the abroad in coordination with the Deptt. of Sports.

6.4.2 The Tourism Deptt / 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, WaterSports, Angling, Sking, Mountaineering, Motor Sports etc. in coordination with the WHMI Manali and the State Level Associations. The Deptt / 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 Deptt and the Eco Tourism Societies to meet the above ends.

6.4.3 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.

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

6.4.5 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.

6.4.6 The Tourism Deptt 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 holiday season for school and collage students.

6.4.7 The Deptt / 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.

6.4.8 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.

6.5 Promoting Unexplored Himachal

6.5.1 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

scaping 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
- Jhanjheli
- Jot Chamba
- Rajgarh and Choor
- Nahan
- Chindi
- Barot/Jatingari
- Rohru Chansal
- Sarahan and Bashal Dhar

6.5.2 Ever since the opening-up of tribal/border areas of Himachal Pradesh to foreigners, the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting these tribal areas has increased manifold. Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur districts have emerged as important destinations. Yet compared to the potential it is 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.

6.5.3 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.

6.5.4 The Deptt. 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.

6.5.5 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 Govt of J & K and efforts would be made to link it to the Buddhist Circuits of Shimla – Kinnaur- Spiti – Udaipur -Pangi and Palampur -Dharamshala-Dalhousie.

6.6 Health Tourism

6.6.1 There is tremendous scope to set up spas, health resorts, recuperative centres etc. all over the State. Himachal Pradesh has an enormous wealth of medicinal 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.

6.6.2 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 Deptt .of Ayurveda who will then be employed in spas and health resorts.

6.7 Arts Crafts and Souviner

6.7.1 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.

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

Annexure (Action Plan).

1. Short and Medium term(2 yrs to 5 yrs)

	Objectives	Strategy	Action Plan
1.	To establish Himachal as a leading tourist destination in the country & abroad.	a) Brand image of H.P. & Media strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Hire leading consultants of the country within next 6 months to have a brand image & media strategy in place. ii) Create “Destination Himachal Fund fund collaboration with all stakeholders for strengthening of brand image & media campaign. iii) Strengthen all TIC in the country and generate resources by booking for private hotels also through Tourism Board. iv) Have online reservation system through public private partnership. v) Participate in leading national & international trade fairs. vi) Update tourism related literature and ensure its adequate availability. vii) Have active and constant contact with Govt.of India offices abroad for projecting Himachal. viii) MOUs with leading States and Countries for promotion of tourism. ix) To promote H.P.through Himalayas and its brand image globally.
		b) To upgrade tourism related Infrastructure to international level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To give top priority to public Private partnerships. ii) Collaborate with international and reputed national companies which can provide world class technology, knowhow and expertise in improving infrastructure in tourism. iii) iv) To seek maximum assistance from Ministry of Tourism, Govt.of India for

			<p>funding under various schemes like Circuits, Destination, Large income generating projects, rural Tourism etc.</p> <p>v) To set up a Tourism sub Plan in the State so that funding could be integrated & monitored effectively at the State Level (Road, Sewerage, lighting, transport, telephone etc.</p> <p>vi) To actively pursue the expansion of airports so that large plans could land.</p> <p>vii) To promote the use of Heli-copters for easy access to remote & land locked areas.</p> <p>viii) To set up 4/5 Star Hotels in leading destinations.</p> <p>ix) To have more 2/3 Star Hotels for budget accommodation.</p> <p>x) To create more Youth Hostels.</p>
2.	To make Tourism a prime engine of economic growth in the State & as a means for providing employment.	a) Attract outsider investment.	<p>i) Take full advantage of the Govt. of India package of incentives which include excise & income tax exemption.</p> <p>ii) To give top priority to public private partnerships.</p> <p>iii) Collaborate with international and reputed national companies which can provide world class technology, know how and expertise in improving infrastructure in tourism.</p> <p>iv) To seek maximum assistance from Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India for funding under various schemes; Circuits, Destinations, Large Income Generating projects, rural tourism etc.</p> <p>v) To actively pursue the expansion of airport so that large plans could land.</p> <p>vi) To promote the use of Helicopters for easy access to remote & land locked areas.</p> <p>vii) To set up 4/5 Star Hotels in leading destinations.</p> <p>viii) To have more 2/3 Star Hotels for budget accommodation.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ix) To categories Hotels in the State to provide standardized services. x) To lay special emphasis to attract private fund including FDI for setting up of new hill stations, water sport related resorts, ropeways including Ski Resorts, Spas, Eco-Tourism related projects etc. xi) Recast existing schemes and lay top priority to rural tourism scheme. xii) To hold Tourism Conclave at regular intervals with the prospective investors for hand holding exercise. xiii) To setup and Investors Cell in the Board which will facilitate investment including funding from Banks & providing necessary statutory clearances. xiv) All Tourism projects will also be placed before the Single window clearance meeting chaired by Hon'ble C.M. on the lines of Industries deptts.projects.
		b) To employ maximum local people in the Industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Strengthen HMI Kufri and to set up there new Food Craft Institutes in the State. ii) To encourage setting up of leading private training institutes in the State. iii) Maximum employment will be provided to locals in the Units setup in the State. iv) To conduct special capacity building courses and seek support from GOI under its "Atithi Dev Bhava" scheme.
		c) To monitor the economic impact of tourism in the State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The tourism Board will build a strong Data base on the impact of tourism both positive & negative. ii) Conduct periodic surveys and status through leading institutions & Universities etc. iii) Tourism Board will also monitor the status of

			employment of local persons both in formal as well as informal sector.
		d) Tourism Sector will generate maximum resources on self sustaining basis form tourism related activities.	i)The tourism Board will be the vehicle for the generation of resources through the services provided by it like parking places, Sulabh Shauchalayas,Parks & Entertainment centers,T.R.C's,fee from registered units, travel agents, Tourism councils, Public Private Partnership,leases, helicopter sides etc.
3	To attract quality Tourists.	a) Brand image of H.P.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Hire leading consultants of the country in time bound manner for a complete media strategy. ii) Create “Destination Himachal Fund: in collaboration with all stakeholders for strengthening brand image & launching media campaign. iii) Strengthen all TIC in the country and generate resources by booking for private hotels also through Tourism Board. iv) Have online reservation system through public private partnership. v) Participate in leading national & international trade fairs. vi) Update tourism related literature and ensure its adequate availability. vii) Have active and constant contract with Govt. of India offices abroad for projecting Himachal. viii) MOUs with leading States and countries for promotion of tourism ix) To promote H.P. through Himalayas and its brand image globally.
4.	To safeguard States natural & manmade heritage.	a) Natural Heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To work closely with the Forest deptt. To conserve and protect forests, cold desers sanctuaries by charging fee from the tourists so that these places are preserved through Tourism councils. ii) To work towards conservation through Tourism council and Fund generated by on the Manali model.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) To change some fee from the registered travel agents & trekking companies so that these funds are used for conservation and development. iv) Promote bird watching & angling competition (on catch & release basis).
		b) Man made heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To promote conservation of heritage buildings in the State like Gaiety Theatre. ii) To work at tandem with Deptt. Of UD, TCP & LAC in the listing of these properties & conserving them. iii)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) To put up plaques on all such sites/building giving its history. iv) Protect heritage Churches & graves in Shima, Dharamshala, Kasauli & Dalhousie etc. v) Protect ancient monuments including on Monoesters in the tribal areas.
5.	To encourage strong public sector participation in creating of tourism infrastructure especially the PPP.	b) Disinvestment of H.P.TDC properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The list already identified will be disinvested in time bound manner. ii) The income from these properties will accrue partially to H.P.TDC which shall find the VRS/Golden handshake scheme. iii) The remaining fund will accrue to tourism Development Board while will go towards strengthening the tourism infrastructure in the State. iv) While disinvesting the genuine interest of the workers will be protected. v) The employees will be given a choice to take up identified properties on management lease basis for running them in lieu of retirement
6	To promote sustainable tourism which is environmentally.	a) Setting up new Units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) All new hotels will have architecture which blends with the local environment. ii) No building will be more than 4 story's. iii) Will architecture & water harvesting structure will be mandatory.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv) The basement/ground floor shall be for parking. v) Proper garbage disposal & sewerage plants are mandatory. vi) Maximum employment to local person. vii) No/minimum felling of trees.
		b) Regularly existing Units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) All hotels will be checked and must Comply with the pollution control standards. ii) Violating Units registration shall be registered.
		c) Rural tourism for uncones to rural people.	To divert tourists from over-saturated places, the concept of Rural Tourism has been adopted.
7.	To encourage Civil Societies & N.G.O;s for promotion & conduct of tourism related activities.	a) For capacity building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Tourism Development Board will find NGO's working in the field of rural tourism, eco-tourism & community basis projects. ii) For cleanliness drives & campaign against polythene bags.
		b) Active participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Will be represented on the boards & committees of Tourism Deptt./Board. ii) Will be engaged in classification of hotels, certification of dhabas. iii) Important events will be organized through the registered associations like paragliding, river rafting, mountain biking etc.
8.	Himachal as a one stop destination for adventure tourism.	a) Tourism Dev.Board/Deptt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) All media campaign will focus on adventure tourism. ii) Will encourage the activities which have possibility of generating employment like paragliding & river rafting by organizing/funding training camps. iii) Set up safety standards & enforce through Distt.Admn. iv) Assist Deptt. Of YSS/WHMI. v) Hold annual events as paragliding,river rafting mountain

			biking,motor sports, bird watching angling rock climbing,marathon races etc.
		b) WHMI,Manali	i) Will organize mass treks during Holidays for students in collaboration With Tourism Department. ii) Will train students/un-employed youths iii)Run river rafting & paragliding school set up by Tourism Deptt.. iv) Run special courses for tourists.

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3.

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