



# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Development of Tourism Infrastructure

- The Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture (Chair: Mr. T.G. Venkatesh) presented its report on ‘Development of Tourism Infrastructure in the country’ on March 28, 2022. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
  - **Establishment of a tourism police:** The Committee noted that safety of domestic and foreign tourists is important for projecting the country as a favourable tourist destination. It recommended establishing and deploying a tourism police in every tourist space, as a separate wing of the police force. As law and order is a State subject, the Committee recommended that the Ministry of Home Affairs should issue an advisory to state governments for creating a tourism police.
  - **Improving connectivity:** The Committee noted the importance of connectivity among roads, railway, ports, and air, to boost the competitiveness of Indian tourism across the world. To achieve this, the Committee recommended: (i) expediting funding from the Central Road Fund for connectivity projects, (ii) developing port cities for their lower logistical costs, better infrastructure, and employment generation ability, and (iii) promoting seaplane services to enhance air connectivity to remote, religious, and unexplored places near water bodies.
  - **Improved public amenities** The Committee noted that public amenities such as public toilets, drinking water, standardised signage, souvenir shops, and accessibility provisions improve the likelihood of tourists choosing to visit a destination. The Committee recommended the Ministry to ensure the establishment such public amenities by business houses under Corporate Social Responsibility. It also noted the importance of haats for promoting tourism during festivals, which also support indigenous artisans.
  - **Restoration and conservation of historic structures:** The Committee noted the importance of buildings with a rich historic background in adding character, distinctiveness, and a sense of identity to the place they belong to. The Committee recommended that the Ministry should adopt a systemic approach to restore and conserve such historic structures. It recommended that privately-owned culturally-rich buildings should be assessed, pre-listed, and preserved by the Ministry.
  - **Promoting religious tourism:** The Committee noted that religious tourism is separate from leisure tourism, and that it is important to build community participation in case of religious tourism. The Committee noted that due to the wide range of people who undertake religious tourism, there is a need for budget and economical hotels. It recommended identifying local families that are willing to provide homestays and homemade meals, and be trained to cater to tourists.
  - **Promotion and publicity:** The Committee noted the importance of publicity for attracting foreign tourists to any tourist destination. To attract increased footfall, the Committee recommended: (i) adding educative elements through the construction of museums, open-air amphitheatres, and parks around lighthouses, (ii) making its website attractive and user-friendly to attract both foreign and domestic tourists, and (iii) specially highlighting unexplored and lesser-known tourist spots on the Ministry’s website to increase international interest in Indian tourism. Further, the Committee also recommended improving reception/facilitation/information centres with the help of travel agencies and local businesses.
  - **Promoting new forms of tourism:** The Committee notes the wealth generating ability of seaport tourism, cruise tourism, and monsoon tourism. It recommends that the Ministry should actively promote these upcoming forms of tourism.
  - **Assistance to central agencies:** The Committee noted that to ensure holistic development of tourism infrastructure, resources, experts, and management experience of central agencies needs to be converged with the resources of the state governments. Central agencies such as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Ports Trust of India do not have the required resources to develop tourism infrastructure. The Committee recommended that state governments should assist the Ministry to devise mechanisms for building transport infrastructure.
  - **Sustainable development:** The Committee recommended that tourist destinations should transition into using renewable energy (such as solar energy), and utilising waste water (through wastewater recovery) and rainwater (through rainwater harvesting). The Committee noted that this will reduce the environmental impact of tourist destinations and generate benefits for local communities.

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