



भारत सरकार/Govt of India

लक्षद्वीप प्रशासन/ Lakshadweep Administration

पर्यटन विकास विभाग/(Department of Tourism)

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NOTICE

The Hon'ble Administrator of Lakshadweep has announced in his address to the people of Lakshadweep on 26th January, 2020 that the Administration would come up with a new and revised tourism policy for the promotion and development of high end eco-tourism in various islands of the Union Territory. Accordingly under the guidance of the Hon'ble Administrator, the Department of Tourism has drafted the "Lakshadweep Tourism Policy- 2020" in consultation with various concerned stakeholders.

In this connection, "Lakshadweep Tourism Policy- 2020" is published herewith for the comments and suggestions from people of Lakshadweep, representatives of Panjayati Raj institutions, District Panchayat/Village Dweep Panchayat Memebbers Head of the Departments, Deputy Collectors/Sub Divisional Officers and other Stakeholders.

The comments/suggestions to the draft guideline if any may be sent to the undersigned by 10.06.2020 by post or e-mail to adtourism.lk@gmail.com. The comments/suggestions furnished should be specific.

S.ASKER ALI. IAS
Director (Tourism),UTLA

To,

1. All the HOD's with a request to publish in the Notice Board
2. The DC-Agatti, Kavaratti & Minicoy and SDO's in all islands with a request to give vide publicity.
3. The Chairperson, VDP in All Islands with a request to distribute copies to DP and VDP members of all Islands.
4. PA to Hon'ble Administrator for kind information.
5. PA to Secretary (Tourism) for Kind information.
6. The SIO, NIC with a request to publish in the official website of UTLA
7. The Editor, Lakshadweep Times with a request to publish in the next immediate edition of Lakshadweep Times.



LAKSHADWEEP TOURISM POLICY

2020

Department of Tourism, U T of Lakshadweep
Government of India



ISLANDS OF
lakshadweep
the world can wait!

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Introduction:

Tourism sector on a global scale has emerged as one of the biggest and most exponentially growing economic sector over the last six decades with continuous expansion and diversification. Importance of tourism to a nation's development is widely recognized due to its contribution to balance of payment, GDP and employment. Currently, the footprints of tourism as a dynamic economic activity accounts for 10% of global GDP, 7% of exports resulting in substantial benefits to local communities, local business prosperity and infrastructural development, mutually benefiting tourists and local communities. Tourism sector has the potential to boost and enrich the social, economic and environmental aspects of a region through direct, indirect and induced impacts since environment and tourism are interdependent. Seizing this opportunity by the stakeholders involved in the sector will aid in the nation's growth and ensuring that all such actions leave a positive mark on the society.

Lakshadweep formerly known as the Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands is a group of Islands in the Arabian Sea, 200 to 440 km off the south western coast of India. It comprises of 10 inhabited islands; 17 uninhabited islands/islets; six submerged bank and three coral reefs. Its total land area is 32 sq.km but it is bestowed with 4000 sq.km lagoon area; 20,000 sq.km of territorial waters and 4,00,000 sq.km of exclusive economic zone.

Lakshadweep's nature is at its pristine best, it is home to many rare species of flora and fauna. The islands have the scenic beauty of white sandy beaches, crystal clear sea water, shallow lagoons, rich bio diversity and diversified marine eco systems. The sea water is calm and ideal for water sports such as scuba diving, snorkeling, wind surfing, water skiing, parasailing etc. Lakshadweep is one of the popular holiday destinations of both international and domestic tourists and was awarded the National Eco-Tourism Award in 1997.

Indeed it has been the primary focus of the Lakshadweep Administration to usher this beautiful island group into a renewed era of growth and vitality that knows no bounds.

Strengthening and promoting sound tourism initiatives with a holistic human face for the well being of all will touch the lives of all islanders positively and make a stellar contribution in releasing the utmost potential of the place and its people. Nevertheless tourism as an increasingly high demanding activity has to be infused with caution and tourism development will have to be strictly regulated and supervised. And the Administration will gradually withdraw from its present role as tourism service provider, but steadily perform as a facilitator and regulator.

However this policy will not apply to the pilot projects which are proposed to be taken up by the Lakshadweep Administration in coordination with NITI Aayog for Public Private Partnership based development of island water villa resorts projects in the islands of Kadmat, Minicoy and Suheli Cheriyaakara. And these projects shall be dealt separately by the administration on a case to case basis.

1. Vision:

“To develop Lakshadweep as a unique tourism destination with a key focus on responsible tourism management and a sustainable development: thereby minimizing the negative social, environmental and economic impacts, with a simultaneous development of optimum infrastructure, alternate economic avenues and the society as a whole.”

2. Mission:

- To gain a distinct position for Lakshadweep in the World Tourism Market.
- Tourism as a driving force to balance social, economic and ecological development.
- To position Lakshadweep as the best dive destination in the world.

3. Objectives:

- To promote tourism in such a way, which is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, socially acceptable and culturally desirable.
- To promote tourism with the main objective of catering meaningful employment opportunities to local unemployed youths of Lakshadweep.
- To encourage people's participation in tourism related activities so that it is community based thereby generating synergies between guests and locals.
- To attract investments both public and private in promoting sustainable and responsible tourism in Lakshadweep.

4. Strategies:

- Individual Island Level Master Plans must be prepared in consonance with the larger vision statement and the approved IIMP of the various islands of Lakshadweep.
- Creation of world class eco tourism infrastructure in all the islandshaving tourism potentialof Lakshadweep within the approved carrying capacity of the respective islands.
- Establishing cheaper, faster and reliable transport network to connect all the islands of Lakshadweep with each other and with mainland.
- Promotion of high value low volume tourism by conducting tour packages through SPORTS or LTDC and operators of Private Tourist Homes and Resorts.
- Creation of trained manpower in tourism sector in association with reputed organizations.

5. Issues, Potentials and Constraints:

The islands of Lakshadweep present a variety of potentials for developing tourism in its premises however underperformance of previous endeavors and critical limitations of the islands have restrained the islands from tapping its full potential. Briefed below are key issues affecting the islands at present and associated potentials and constraints.

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- The most important factor which limits the tourism potential of Lakshadweep is the connectivity. The availability of safe, reliable and faster mainland-island and inter island connectivity is vital for the development of tourism in Lakshadweep. As the tourists can arrive to Lakshadweep either by ship or by flight, non-availability of transportation makes the occupancy at Lakshadweep islands very low. The lack of all weather transportation facilities makes tourism activities in Lakshadweep highly season specific. Even though period from June to September is ideal for adventure water sports like wind and wave surfing, the complete absence of tourist transport facilities during monsoon period is limiting the exploration of tourism potential of Lakshadweep during monsoon season. This virtually causes a break in the tourism activities in Lakshadweep.

On the other hand, due to limited length of air strip at Agatti airport, only small ATR type of aircraft can land and that too with reduced load. As of now, Alliance air (Air India) is operating in the Agatti-Kochi sector with a small air craft having a seating capacity of 72. Here also tourists have to compete with the local passengers and other people travelling to Lakshadweep for official purposes.

- Next to transportation, it is the availability of accommodation facilities at the islands that limits the arrival of tourists. As per the approved carrying capacity study, the inhabited islands in Lakshadweep have tourist capacity of 918 keys (rooms) in 9 islands and the four uninhabited islands namely Bangaram, Thinnakara, Cheriya and Suheli Cheriya have 431 keys. Considering an annual average tourist occupancy rate of 45.5% in Lakshadweep, an estimated 1,54,000 tourist could be accommodated in these islands. However at present Lakshadweep has only 184 bed capacity in the islands.

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- Lakshadweep is barely connected to the world of internet with the very low satellite bandwidth of 1.3 Gbps which is divided further to distribute among different islands and also for SWAN communication system for administrative purposes. This is because of the non-availability of optical fiber cable connectivity. Kavaratti being the Administrative capital has facility for 4G telecommunication connectivity. Apart from Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy are now being connected with 4G network. However poor networking system in various islands seriously hampers the growth of IT enabled tourism services and leads to dissatisfaction among the guests.
 - The Lakshadweep archipelago at present does not have an international presence due to lack of public outreach and marketing across various print and visual mediums. The island's websites do not present an exciting and adventurous image and severely lacks in directing and guiding interested visitors. The beauty and magnetism of these islands is vaguely acknowledged due to a lack of brochures, maps and advertisements aimed at capturing potential visitors. Lakshadweep can gain impressively from a proper branding and marketing strategy.
 - All tourism establishments in Lakshadweep islands lack well-trained and skilled manpower to support the tourism operation and resort functioning. The future establishment and operation will also require skilled labour that the islands will not be able to provide due to the absence of training or skill development institutes. To attend to this issue, it is possible that various skill development programs and institutes be established on the various islands of Lakshadweep to provide islanders with the opportunity and empowerment to participate in the island's developing economy.

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- The coral island ecosystem is highly fragile and sensitive to even a slight change in their environment. Any activity which will affect the coral activities will endanger the very base of the island eco system. Increased arrival of tourists will lead to generation of more waste, which has to be disposed in an ecologically sustainable way.
 - The availability of clean drinking water is next major issue. Presently, the desalination plants are available only in three islands i.e Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy. For Kalpeni, it is scheduled to be completed in 2020. Absence of desalination plants in other islands will limit the availability of clean drinking water to visiting tourists.
 - Ninety percent of the electricity is generated by using the diesel generators. The availability of uninterrupted power supply will be essential for promotion of tourism in Lakshadweep islands. The cost of power generation is very high. Besides, the power generation through DG sets will have its own effects on the coral island ecosystem.
 - Even though Lakshadweep people are not against tourism, the local customs and culture will warrant a sensible tourism which will respect the socio-cultural traditions of local population. Presently, there is a total prohibition in Lakshadweep with an exception of Bangaram islands.

6. Action Plan

6.1. Augmentation of Accommodation Infrastructure

6.1.1. Tourist Homes:

Lakshadweep Administration will encourage local residents of Lakshadweep to establish and operate Tourist Homes in islands wherever feasible within the approved carrying capacity of the island concerned in tune with the overall vision and objectives of this policy. The tourist homes shall be constructed in the uninhabited portion of inhabited islands identified for tourism purpose in the Integrated Island Management Plan (IIMP). Lakshadweep Administration has already framed and notified the guidelines for setting of tourist homes in Lakshadweep. This will be taken up on a priority basis by the Administration.

6.1.2. Eco Friendly Resorts in Inhabited Islands:

To cater the needs of high end tourists, resort infrastructure will be created in the inhabited islands wherever possible, so that fruits of tourism development will be available to the entire population of Lakshadweep and balanced development of all islands of Lakshadweep will be achieved. Lakshadweep Administration will promote and facilitate the construction of eco friendly tourist resorts through public investment, private investment or public private partnership in each inhabited islands with minimum bedding capacity compatible with the carrying capacity of the islands as well as within the counters of approved IIMP of the islands. The resorts will be of eco-friendly structure, having non-conventional sources of energy supply to the extent possible and environment friendly waste and sewage disposal system. Lakshadweep Administration will frame guidelines granting permission for construction and operation of resorts as well as for bringing tourists licensed resort operators.

6.1.3. Tourism in Uninhabited Islands:

Uninhabited Islands in Lakshadweep are suited for international tourism based on sun, sea, coral, lagoon and beach as they will not affect the strict social customs and tradition of the insular habitants. However, these islands lack underlying infrastructure and connectivity facilities, and large portion of the land is privately owned by the islanders. Lakshadweep Administration shall promote holistic development of ecotourism projects in the uninhabited islands specially Bangaram, Thinnakara, Suheli and Cheriya through public investment, private investment as well as public private partnership. As a method of policy framework, preference should be given to adopt the unique model of P4 (People, Public and Private Partnership) approach for tourism development in these islands. The P4 model envisages for project implementation in the islands with the participation of islanders through a consortium of land owners and public participation through UT Administration. As huge investment will be needed to develop infrastructure in the uninhabited islands except Bangaram, a detailed roadmap for the development for tourism in uninhabited islands will be prepared in consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and NITI Aayog.

6.1.4. PPP Projects on Pilot Basis:

To utilize the growing potential of tourism as an economic and social development sector in the islands, the Lakshadweep Administration and NITI Aayog have coordinately proposed for three anchor projects to be taken up for Public Private Partnership (PPP) based development of island water villa resort including beach and water villa in the islands of Minicoy, Suheli Cheriya and Kadmat. Island water villas often known as over water bungalows, is a new concept in India under extravagant travel experience. Ensuring upfront clearances by the Lakshadweep Administration will be the hallmark of these projects.

Keeping holistic development of Islands as the core objective, Water villa projects will reduce the pressure for an additional accommodation infrastructure in the finite land resource and would provide a window for investment in the restricted Lakshadweep economy. It would also strengthen existing infrastructure of road and air connectivity from islands to mainland and within the islands. It will also result in substantial benefits for the local communities by providing meaningful employment opportunities and by helping promoting local businesses, arts and crafts. In addition the proposed infrastructural upgradation will mutually benefit the tourists and the local communities.

However, the proposed development will be implemented with minimal impact on the island ecosystem by effective implementation of management plan and mitigation measures. UT Administration of Lakshadweep and Department of Science and Technology Lakshadweep will strictly monitor and check the compliance on regular interval. Moreover to an extent possible, preference should be given to adopt the unique model of P4 (People, Public and Private Partnership) approach for tourism development in Kadmat, Minicoy and Suheli Islands.

6.1.5. Permit Criteria:

The number of 'Resorts' and private 'Tourist Homes' to be licensed by the Administration should be limited so that the total tourist capacity at any given point of time does not exceed the permitted tourist carrying capacity of the respective islands. 'First come first basis' principle and an appropriate standard size of each unit (key) of the resort or private tourist home will be taken into account while giving permission to the intended promoters.

As tourism activity will put additional burden in regard to available infrastructure and resources particularly relating to electricity, water and sanitation, the grant of license to resorts and tourist homes shall require the applicant for license to provide for the following:

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- i) Self Generation of electricity using solar plants, diesel generation, bio gas system or other alternate sources.
 - ii) Development of extra water resources through rainwater harvesting and construction of exclusive tanks or by purchase of water from the desalination plants at a price to be fixed by Lakshadweep Administration.
 - iii) Provision of bio-toilets and mini sewage treatment plants wherever necessary as prescribed by Lakshadweep Administration.

License /permission for 'Resorts' or private 'Tourist Homes' shall be granted by the Lakshadweep Administration subject to the applicant producing a 'no objection certificate' from the Island Panchayat, Lakshadweep Pollution Control Board and the Department of Environment & Forests, UTLA. However, all the clearances required from the various departments of Lakshadweep Administration should be made available to the promoters under one roof, the Department of Tourism. This single window clearance system shall be implemented in letter and spirit so as to promote "minimum government, maximum governance" in the Administration.

6.1.6. Scale of Development:

- a. Though Lakshadweep has a huge potential for the development and promotion of tourism in the islands, the scale of development should be gradual to prevent an unplanned development and also to ensure a level playing between contenting parties. Hence maximum capacity of tourist home or resort at the initial stage shall not be more than 10 units (key). Any increase in the number of units/keys will be considered at a later stage after the examination of the infrastructure, functioning and management of the tourist home/resort.

- b. Detailed area analysis by taking Agatti island as an example:

The total area of all the plots within the tourism demarcated area (including NDZ/RDZ area) = 166270.5 sq.m.

NDZ/RDZ area within the tourism demarcated area = 64200 sq.m.

Total developable area (all the plots) within the tourism demarcated area (excluding NDZ/RDZ area) = 102070.5 sq.m

The total area available for beds after applying the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) as per Justice Raveendran Committee report = 55280.27 sq.m.

Maximum number of beds estimated = 3071 nos.

However by applying the Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation (URDPFI) guidelines, the area covered under each category is determined and is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Calculation of area based on standards for Agatti Island

Land-use category	Percentage cover in the developable area	Area covered (sq.m)
Residential	50%	51035.25
Commercial	3%	3062.12
Public/Semi-public	8%	8165.64
Recreational	14%	14289.87
Transport & communication	12%	12248.46
Total		88801.34

- As 88801.34 sq.m of area will be occupied by the above land-use categories, the remaining area will be reserved for beds.
- Area available for determining number of beds = $102070.5 - 88801.34 = 13269.17$ sqm

Calculation for determining the number of beds:

The total number of beds will be calculated based on the thumb rule i.e.

A = Area within the tourism demarcated area.

B = Total number of beds calculated.

C = Final area available for accommodating beds after adopting URDPFI guidelines.

Estimated number of beds that can be accommodated = $(B / A) \times C$

For the total area of 102070.5 sq. m, the number of beds is 3071.

So, for an area of 13269.17 sq.m, the number of beds that can be accommodated would be: $(3071/102070.5) \times 13269.17 = 399$ (~400 beds)

Hence Agatti island can have 200 rooms (400 beds) in the tourism demarcated area and the standard area to be used as a yardstick for determining the number of rooms for which license is to be given to the private operator shall be 66.35 sq.m per room. $(13269.17/200=66.35)$. However the principle of FAR shall be applied again and three categories are differentiated:

- i. For plots up to 200 sq.m - max FAR of 1.00
For this category, permission for one room for every 66.35 sq.m of land area will be given. Hence, a 200 sq.m plot can have tourist home with maximum 3 bedrooms.
- ii. For plots between 201 sq.m and 500 sq.m – max FAR of 0.80
For this category, permission for one room for every 82.94 sq.m of land area will be given [66.35 sq.m (80%) + 16.59 sq.m (20%)]. Thus, a 500 sq.m plot can have a tourist home with maximum 6 bedrooms.
- iii. For plots between 501 sq.m and above – max of 0.50
And for this category, permission for one room for every 132.70 sq.m of land area will be given [66.35 sq.m (50%) + 66.35 sq.m (50%)]. Thus, a 1000 sq.m plot can have a tourist home with maximum 8 rooms.

The same model shall be applied in other islands also while giving permission for the development and operation of private tourist homes and resorts in the islands of Lakshadweep.

6.2. Enhancement in Connectivity:

The most important factor which limits the tourism potential of Lakshadweep is the connectivity. The availability of safe, reliable and faster mainland-island and inter island connectivity is vital for the development of tourism in Lakshadweep. Lakshadweep Administration proposes multipronged strategy to overcome the connectivity problem.

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- **Expansion of Agatti Island Airport:** Lakshadweep Administration will pursue the matter with Airport Authority of India as well as with Government of India for the speedy implementation Agatti Island Airport expansion project in a time bound manner to improve the flight services between mainland and Lakshadweep for increasing frequency of flight services to Lakshadweep. The Lakshadweep Administration has already initiated necessary steps to increase the frequency of flight service between Cochin and Agatti.
 - **Airport at Minicoy:** Minicoy Island is not connected to any other islands or the mainland via air transportation. The lack of air connectivity at island is the focus point and a rationale for the airport project, envisaged to facilitate easy, convenient and comfortable journeys for local residents and tourist alike. It would be a great opportunity for Lakshadweep tourism to grow and operate from its international gateways i.e Agatti and Minicoy, once the airport at Minicoy is operational. Connecting Maldives will be very advantageous considering the high volume of Western tourists it attracts every year. By connecting Maldives to Minicoy via air, Lakshadweep will be able to tap into a booming tourist base directly. Lakshadweep Administration in coordination with Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, will initiate steps to realize the dream of having an airport at Minicoy.
 - **Sea Plane operation:** Sea Planes will offer a safe, reliable and faster mode of transport for the visiting tourists. Lagoons of Lakshadweep islands provide ideal location for waterdrome in the islands and facilitate operating the sea plane services. Interested players shall be permitted to operate sea plane service between mainland-island sectors as well as inter island sector on commercial basis. This is already under the consideration of Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India.

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- **Dedicated Tourist ship:** Having a dedicated ship for tourism promotion will provide a reliable mode of mainland-island and inter-island transport for the visiting tourists as more and more tourist are willing to experience the ship journey. Besides it will reduce the increasing pressure on passenger ships and help us to operate the resorts during monsoon season.

6.3. Institutional Upgradation & Monitoring

6.3.1. Lakshadweep Tourism Website:

- An interactive and fully comprehensive website of Lakshadweep Tourism will be launched wherein all required informations for any prospective domestic or international tourist will be readily available at the fingertip. The website will contain linkages to all sorts of information and bookings including Tourist Homes, Details of Tourist destinations, packages, Fairs and events, tourist maps, Do's and Don'ts etc.
- A vigorous campaigning through social media such as Face book, You-Tube, Twitter, Blogging sites will be launched to attract the younger upcoming generation of Tourists. A special cell for maintenance & updating of information will be created for sustainability. A separate statistical cell shall also be created for Management Information System, generation of statistics and their analysis.

6.3.2. Tourism Facilitation Center:

The department of Tourism shall establish a modern and well equipped Tourism Facilitation Center at Agatti, which is considered as the gateway for the tourists to Lakshadweep. This center shall operate 24 x 7 centralized tourist helpline and would provide information on tourist sites, tour packages, travel manifest of each tourists as well as safety and security measures being taken up at the destinations. And this

will act as an emergency response center for stranded tourists in case of any disaster or pandemic.

6.3.3. Tourism Coordination Committee:

In order to implement and achieve the objectives of this policy, and keeping in mind that different agencies are involved in delivery of the tourism product, an Empowered Committee for Coordinated decision making will be constituted under the Chairmanship of Administrator, U T of Lakshadweep. Modalities for the constitution and operationalization of this committee shall be decided by the Lakshadweep Administration from time to time.

The Empowered Committee would meet at least once in a year and take decisions on multi-sectoral issues related to the promotion and development of tourism in Lakshadweep. Those departments which are directly associated with the Tourism sector would comply with the orders of this committee in a time bound manner.

6.3.4. Lakshadweep Tourism Development Corporation Ltd (LTDC):

Presently Society for Promotion of Nature Tourism and Sports (SPORTS), a society established in 1982, under Societies registration Act, 1860, is acting as a nodal agency for promoting tourism in Lakshadweep. The activities of SPORTS have increased many folds in the 30 years of its existence. The pace and nature of tourism development in Lakshadweep is also changed over the years. And the present situation demands more professionalism, transparency and accountability in the system.

Lakshadweep Administration has initiated a proactive measure to transform SPORTS into Lakshadweep Tourism Development Corporation Ltd (LTDC) as a wholly owned company of Lakshadweep administration registered under Companies Act for better management, effective control and to fulfill various legal requirements. LTDC, which is responsible for the development and promotion of Lakshadweep tourism at domestic as well as international level, has been incorporated on 11th October 2018 under the

Companies Act, 2013 (18 of 2013). The Lakshadweep Administration shall ensure that LTDC becomes a fully functional corporation soon.

6.3.5. Facilitate Easy Entry Permit System:

Lakshadweep is a restricted area and as such an entry permit is required for non-natives of Lakshadweep to enter any island in the Union Territory. However, tourists sponsored by the SPORTS and other designated officials are exempted from taking entry permit as per the notification F.No. 1/7/88-Genl, dated. 6th September, 1988. And for the sponsored tourists, travel manifest is being provided to them instead of entry permit.

All the tourists who wish to come to Lakshadweep and stay in the registered private tourist homes or resorts or any tourism based establishment shall be allowed to book through a web based centralized system. This system shall be operated by LTDC/SPORTS. These tourists or guests shall also be assumed to be sponsored by the SPORTS/LTDC to avoid complications relating to issue of permit and delays causing inconvenience to the tourists as well as private tourist homes or resort operators.

6.3.6. Environment Monitoring Program:

While tourism promotion in the islands is a great source of economic activity to the community and provides opportunities to locals in terms of employment, art & culture, the associated impacts on the ecology and environment is of great concern. These islands are also subject to erosion due to natural causes like high energy waves generated during cyclone and sea level.

In order to ensure and maintain the environment's health and quality in its pristine state, the administration shall take up an environment monitoring program regularly and also an EIA study shall be undertaken at least once in 5 years for the islands where tourism activity is permitted. Moreover, the Department of Tourism shall undertake Corals Regeneration Program as a part of CSR activity of LTDC, SPORTS and LDCL, in consultation with the Department of Science and Technology, UTLA.

6.3.7. Safety & Security of Tourists:

Safety and security of the tourists as well as for the staffs are paramount to providing quality service in tourism. In Lakshadweep all the tourist spots are in beaches and open to the vagaries of monsoon. When the year around tourism is envisaged, the risk factor will be greater during the monsoon period. So a cadre of Tourism Police and Life Guards at beaches shall be established in due course to instill a sense of comfort and security among tourists.

Tourist police should work exclusively to ensure a pleasant stay for tourists and mitigate and solve any safety and security related issues that tourists could encounter in the islands. On the other hand, Life guards shall be deployed on the beaches and they must be equipped with rescue tubes, life buoys, rescue boats and ropes. And they will be given adequate training to get familiarized with dangers in the waters of the beaches and ensure effective rescue operations as and when needed.

6.3.8. Branding & Marketing:

Lakshadweep is relatively an unknown brand in the country as well as in the international market. A comprehensive marketing strategy will be chalked out in consultation with professional agencies. A brand image of Lakshadweep as “Coral Paradise of India” will be created portraying Lakshadweep its uniqueness and exotic beauty. Branding and marketing will be promoted through newspapers, lifestyle magazines, in-flight magazines, TV advertisement, Talk shows, unipoles and hoardings at major airports among others. Participation in national & International Tourism Fairs & festival as well as Travel marts will be encouraged by the Administration. Department of Tourism will promote and facilitate production of short films, printing of pamphlets and brochures for marketing Lakshadweep as the best tourist place worth visiting in a life time. Conclusively, though the islands will be able to achieve their potential through marketing, it must be targeted strategically.

6.4. *Engagement with the Locals*

6.4.1. People Centric Tourism:

Tourism is not just about employment opportunities and income that the sector can offer. Often better quality infrastructure has to be built to support the industry and the local population benefits too from improved roads, water supply, internet access and waste disposal. Benefits of tourism need to be felt by everyone in the local community.

However in a remote area like Lakshadweep any investor or project proponent will invest only in development of that tourism projects. The most critical components for the development such as logistics requirement, roads and other means of transport, sanitation etc. have to be ensured by the Administration. Therefore heritage fee (Developmental fee) will be levied separately for domestic tourists (Rs 100 per person per day) and foreign tourists (Rs 200 per person per day) with effect from the financial year 2020-21. The total collection will be equally distributed to the respective island Panchayat and LTDC. The amount due to Panchayat shall be transferred quarterly and should be utilized only for the upkeep of surrounding of the tourist places and last mile development of the islands. And the fee to be levied will be updated yearly.

6.4.2. Skill Development:

There is a large gap between demand and supply of skilled manpower in the tourism sector. Attempts would be directed towards making the hospitality and tourism sector a popular career option by providing training and skills that can bring attractive wage offers. Local youths including women, differently-abled category shall be trained in skill development courses such as food processing, bakery, gardening, tourist guides, life guards, booking, ticketing, marketing, front desk management and hospitality services.

6.4.3. Local Employment:

Employment opportunities the tourism sector provides tend to benefit those that need it the most. Not only it will give the son of the soil the chance to get his job at his own place by promoting his local destinations to the tourists but also as the brand ambassador of his place to the world. With the intention of promoting the local youths, Lakshadweep Administration will strive to guarantee at least 75% of the employees at all level of operation at any given point of time in all the tourism based establishments in Lakshadweep.

6.5. *Diversification of Tourism Products*

6.5.1. Dive Tourism:

The underwater view at Lakshadweep is kaleidoscopic and breathtaking. The pristine beauty, crystal clear water, shallow lagoon, rich marine wealth, ancient ship wrecks and a variety of corals ecosystem makes Lakshadweep an ideal destination for scuba diving. Probably Lakshadweep is the best place for scuba diving in the country and one of the best in the world. And it has the potential to emerge as a global destination for SCUBA diving. Presently Lakshadweep Dive Academy, which is under LTDC, is a Five Star rating organization as recognized by Professional Association for Diving Instructors (PADI) and has been providing diving courses in various islands for the last 25 years. The Union Territory has many qualified dive instructors, dive masters and rescue divers.

Lakshadweep Administration will frame the guidelines for setting up and operation of dive centers and water sports centers in Lakshadweep by the locally qualified people and for bringing tourists by licensed dive centers and water sports centers. This will also encourage educated youths to become entrepreneurs and take up self employment opportunities.

6.5.2. Cruise Tourism:

Lakshadweep Administration will take necessary steps to promote Cruise based day tourism wherever feasible and desirable without affecting the quality and operation of resort based stay tourism. Here the tourists come by ship and stay in the ships, visit the island only during day time. This will reduce the pressure on the limited land resource.

6.5.3. Film Tourism:

Lakshadweep is still not much known in the film industry for shooting. The pristine beauty, crystal clear water, white sandy beaches, calm lagoons and unique social life offer a different experience for the film industry. So far seven Malayalam movies, one reality show and one ad film for promotion of Samsung India have been shot in the islands. Keeping in view the emerging potential of Lakshadweep as a new destination for film shooting, this policy calls for devising guidelines to regulate and promote film tourism in Lakshadweep Islands. The film tourism will have an added advantage of free advertisement for the unique beauty of Lakshadweep.

6.5.4. Recreational Fishing:

The territory of Lakshadweep with 4200 Sq.km of Lagoon Area, 20,000 Sq.km of Territorial Water and 4,00,000 Sq.km of exclusive economic zone offers vast potential for development of Sports fishing. The waters of these islands are abound with sport fishes like Tuna, Kingfish, Barracuda and Snappers to name a few. And Lakshadweep is ideally situated on the migratory routes for varieties of sport fishes. However Sports Fishing Guidelines will go in hand in hand with the Lakshadweep Marine Fishing Regulation 2000 and the rules thereon without impacting traditional fishing by local fisherman.

6.5.5. MICE (Meetings Incentives Conferences and Exhibitions) TOURISM:

Today, 'Conventions and Conferences' are being acknowledged as a significant segment of the tourism industry. A large number of conferences are held around the world every year. The seminar/conference on board the ships, in inhabited islands as well as uninhabited islands will be hot product to sell in the coming days. 'STAPCORE-2018' (International Conference on Status and Protection on Coral Reefs) and 'Save Turtle - 2019' (National Conference on Marine Turtle Conservation) were organized successfully in Bangaram and Kadmat respectively. Besides, MICE, people are interested in celebrating the birthday party, engagement party and marriage anniversary in the remote islands of Lakshadweep. Lakshadweep Administration shall promote islands like Kadmat, Minicoy and Bangaram as an ideal place for MICE tourism.

6.5.6. Ethnic Tourism:

Lakshadweep Administration proposes to develop ethnic tourism in the islands. The tourists who are in search of exotic and ethnic cultural experience through interaction with distinctive ethnic minority groups will be promoted. Through this, the tourist will be able to experience unknown and unexplored facet of Lakshadweep and support economic development of the minority community in Lakshadweep. This will at the same time add to the cultural preservation of minority groups. Islands like Minicoy which has a unique language, culture, diet, cuisine and costumes will be an ideal place for developing ethnic tourism. Due to intervention of the Department of Tourism, many forms of art and culture of Minicoy like traditional race boats (JahaaDhoni), Lava dance and other forms of art and culture have been revived through the National Minicoy Fest conducted every year at Minicoy. Ethnic tourism will also be promoted in other islands.

6.5.7. Ziyarat Tourism:

Lakshadweep has huge potential for the promotion and development of Ziyarat (Pilgrimage) Tourism. Most of the islands have tombs of well known Sufi saints and mention may be made of Juma Masjid, Androth ; Ujra Masjid, Kavaratti; PambinPalli, Amini and MohiyudheenPalli, Kalpeni among others. Lakshadweep Administration shall support and promote religious tourism under the PRASAD Scheme, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in consultation with the religious leaders and the respective island Panchayat.