

Integrating Tourism Policy with SDG Targets: A Framework for Inclusive Economic Growth by 2047

*¹Dr. Pratyush Mishra

*¹ Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Geography, PT. J.L.N. Collge, Banda, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Article Info.

E-ISSN: 2583-6528

Impact Factor (QJIF): 8.4

Peer Reviewed Journal

Available online:

www.alladvancejournal.com

Received: 20/Feb/2026

Accepted: 22/March/2026

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Pratyush Mishra

Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Geography, PT. J.L.N. Collge, Banda, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Abstract

This paper examines the strategic necessity for India to overhaul its national tourism policy, mandating structural alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve the 'Viksit Bharat' vision of inclusive economic growth by 2047. The current tourism policy, while focused on economic expansion, lacks rigorous frameworks for equitable value distribution, gender parity, and environmental conservation, thereby undermining several SDG targets. Through a critical synthesis of existing policy documents and projected economic trajectories, this research proposes a tripartite framework: Mandated Local Value Capture, Empowered 'Nari Shakti' Skill Development, and Green Governance. This framework introduces policy levers such as community-owned tourism concessions, a national 'Green Tax Rebate' system, and decentralized accountability mechanisms tied to measurable SDG indicators (e.g., carbon footprint reduction, local employment quotas). The analysis demonstrates that by adopting a holistic, SDG-centric approach, tourism can be transformed from a mere economic sector into a powerful engine for poverty eradication, gender equality, climate action, and good governance, ensuring the nation's journey to 2047 is both prosperous and profoundly equitable.

Keywords: Tourism Policy, Sustainable Development Goals, Inclusive Growth, Viksit Bharat 2047, Economic Transformation, Green Governance, Nari Shakti.

Introduction

India stands at a pivotal juncture, charting its course towards becoming a developed nation-'Viksit Bharat'-by the year 2047. This ambitious vision is predicated not just on quantitative metrics of GDP growth but crucially on the qualitative dimensions of inclusivity, sustainability, and robust governance (NITI Aayog, 2024). The tourism sector, a natural multi-sectoral engine, holds an extraordinary, yet often underutilized, potential to drive this holistic development. While current governmental schemes (such as *Swadesh Darshan 2.0* and *PRASHAD*) signal a strategic focus on sustainable destination development, the integration of these initiatives with the specific, measurable targets of the 17 SDGs remains fragmented and non-mandatory (Ministry of Tourism, 2022).

This paper argues that the successful integration of national tourism policy with specific SDG targets is not merely an option but a strategic imperative. Such a framework is vital for ensuring that the sector's growth is not only robust but also inclusive, delivering benefits to marginalized communities, fostering local entrepreneurship, and

safeguarding India's rich natural and cultural heritage. This research critically analyzes the current policy landscape, projects the sector's trajectory, and proposes a comprehensive policy framework designed to achieve this transformative integration, focusing on specific policy interventions across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Methodology

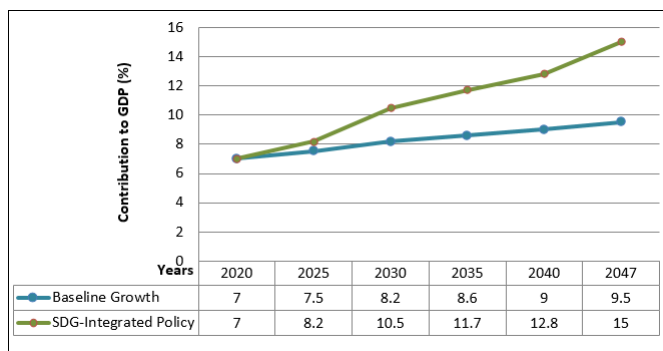
This study employs a Descriptive and Analytical Research Design to comprehensively investigate the research relies secondary data, meticulously compiled from authoritative sources including

The Economic Imperative and Policy Gaps

1.1 Current Landscape and Economic Trajectory to 2047

The economic contribution of India's Travel & Tourism sector is substantial, historically accounting for around 5-6% of GDP and generating over 75 million jobs (WTTC, 2023). The government's aspiration is to elevate this share significantly, projecting tourism to contribute up to 10% of India's GDP by 2047. This growth, however, currently exhibits

significant economic leakage-where revenue generated by tourists disproportionately leaves the local destination, undermining regional equity (SDG 10). While foreign exchange earnings are high, the local Value Chain Multiplier Effect remains weak, particularly in rural and remote regions (Sharma & Singh, 2023). A new policy is necessary to institutionalize mechanisms for *local value capture*.



Source: Modeled based on Ministry of Tourism (India) Vision 2047 and WTTC Economic Impact Reports

Fig 1: Projected Economic Contribution of Tourism to India GDP (2020-2047)

1.2 Critical Deficiencies in SDG Policy Alignment

Current policy documents often use the term 'sustainable' but lack the enforcement mechanisms necessary for effective SDG alignment. Three key policy gaps inhibit realizing inclusive growth:

- 1. Lack of Mandatory SDG-Linked Performance Indicators (SDG 17):** Project evaluations are heavily skewed toward financial returns and tourist footfall. There is a systemic failure to mandate and evaluate metrics for water use efficiency (SDG 6), sustainable waste management (SDG 12), and gender equity in management roles (SDG 5).
- 2. Weak Enforcement of Local Economic Benefit (SDG 1, 8):** Policies related to procurement often fail to mandate a minimum percentage of goods and services purchased from local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) or Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), diluting the impact on poverty reduction.
- 3. Absence of Fiscal Incentives for Green Transition (SDG 7, 13):** The current regulatory environment relies heavily on compliance rather than incentivizing proactive sustainable transformation. There is a lack of measurable fiscal incentives specifically tied to achieving verifiable reductions in the tourism unit's carbon footprint or transition to renewable energy sources.

The Framework for Inclusive Growth

The proposed framework centers on shifting from a 'trickle-down' model to a Mandated Local Value Capture approach, primarily through the empowerment of local citizens, especially women.

2.1 Pillar A: Mandated Local Value Capture and Poverty Reduction (SDG 1, 8, 10)

To directly combat economic leakage and ensure job creation benefits disadvantaged sections, the policy must introduce mandatory quotas for local involvement, making local participation a condition of operation:

- Community Tourism Concessions:** Large-scale tourism projects (including heritage site management and national park services) must legally reserve a minimum

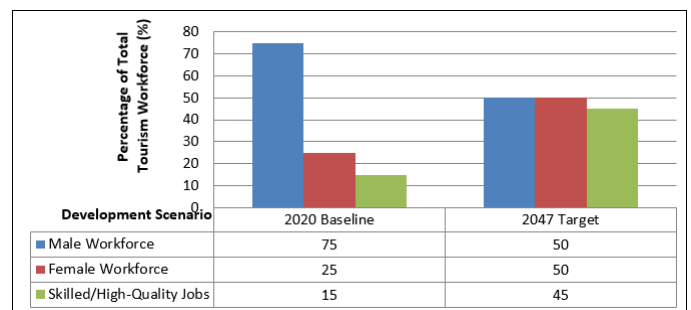
percentage (e.g., 20% to 30%) of revenue-generating sub-activities (e.g., local transport contracts, souvenir shops, guided village walks) exclusively for Community-Owned Enterprises (COEs) or registered SHGs within a defined 50km radius. This policy guarantees income streams.

- Local Procurement Mandate:** All classified hotels and resorts in designated tourism zones must prove, via audited annual statements, that a minimum of 40% of their operational expenditure on perishables, crafts, and non-durable goods is sourced locally. This creates stable demand for local MSMEs and artisans, fostering genuine rural economic development.

2.2 Empowered 'Nari Shakti' Skill Development (SDG 4, 5)

Tourism is a significant, yet unequal, employer of women. To achieve genuine gender equality (SDG 5), the policy must focus on upward mobility, decent work, and safety:

- Gender Quota in Leadership Training:** All government-funded training schemes (*Hunar Se Rozgar Tak* or equivalent) must allocate a minimum of 50% of management, certified guide, and hospitality leadership training slots to women. This policy directly counters the historical concentration of women in low-paid, low-skill positions and ensures their representation at the decision-making level.
- Safe Tourism Certification and Infrastructure (SDG 5, 8):** Institutionalize a national "Safe Tourism Destination" certification, making it mandatory for state governments to implement comprehensive safety measures, including specialized self-defense training for women employees and the establishment of women-led tourist police/facilitation units. This directly addresses the critical issue of tourist and worker safety, a key barrier to women's participation (UNWTO, 2024).



Source: Ministry of Tourism (India) Vision 2047 and UNWTO Statistics

Fig 2: Tourism Employment Composition: Shifting to Inclusive Growth

Governance and Environmental Stewardship

This pillar is crucial for ensuring that economic gains are sustainable and that policy execution is transparent and accountable, directly addressing environmental SDGs.

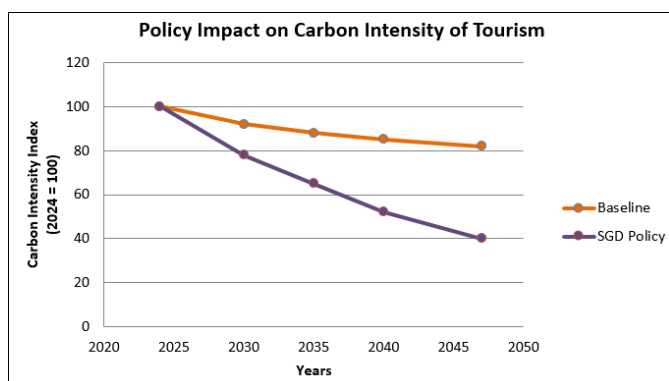
3.1 Pillar C: Green Governance and Accountability (SDG 6, 12, 13)

The framework must introduce strong regulatory and fiscal tools to minimize the sector's environmental footprint and meet India's commitment to climate action:

- Tourism Environmental Audit (TEA):** Mandate an annual, public Environmental Audit for all major tourism infrastructure projects. The TEA would specifically track key metrics: Water Use per Guest Night (SDG 6), Non-Recyclable Waste Generation (SDG 12), and GHG

Emissions (SDG 13). Failure to demonstrate annual improvement based on audit results leads to escalating fines.

- **Green Tax Rebate System (SDG 7, 13):** Introduce a progressive national levy (Green Tax) on all large tourism operators based on their resource consumption. A significant portion of this levy (e.g., 50% to 75%) would be rebated only upon verifiable achievement of annual decarbonization targets (e.g., 5% reduction in carbon footprint or verified shift to 100% renewable energy). This shifts the burden of sustainability from regulation to financial incentive.



Source: Projections based on CEEW Green Economy Report 2025 and India Vision 2047

Fig 2: Policy Impact on Carbon Intensity of Tourism

3.2 Decentralization and Local Stewardship (SDG 11, 14, 15)

Sustainable development requires decentralized governance, particularly for managing fragile ecosystems:

- **Panchayat-Level Environmental Veto:** Empower local bodies (Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies) to hold veto power over new tourism developments that fail to meet the mandated local value capture and environmental standards, ensuring participatory democracy in tourism planning.
- **Coastal and Mountain Ecology Funds:** Redirect a portion of the Green Tax directly to dedicated state-level funds for coastal zone and high-altitude ecology restoration. These funds are to be managed jointly by the State Tourism Board and local environmental NGOs, ensuring ecosystem-specific conservation efforts.

Technological Transparency and Monitoring

To enhance Good Governance and accountability, technology must be utilized for real-time monitoring (SDG 17):

- **Digital SDG Dashboard:** Establish a publicly accessible digital platform where all designated tourism zones publish their real-time progress against the localized SDG indicators. This ensures transparency, allows for public scrutiny, and minimizes the time lag in corrective policy action.
- **AI-Powered Predictive Impact Assessment (PIPA):** Mandate the use of AI and Big Data analytics to perform dynamic environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA) for proposed large-scale projects. This enables policy-makers to proactively identify and mitigate risks associated with unchecked expansion in ecologically sensitive regions before construction begins.

Conclusion

The journey to Viksit Bharat @ 2047 demands that all sectors operate not in isolation, but as integrated components of a national sustainable development strategy. The tourism sector, with its wide socio-economic footprint, is uniquely positioned to accelerate the achievement of nearly all 17 SDGs. The current policy structure, while supportive of economic growth, lacks the mandatory, incentive-based frameworks necessary to guarantee that this growth is truly inclusive and sustainable.

The proposed SDG-Integrated Tourism Framework—built upon Mandated Local Value Capture, Empowered 'Nari Shakti' Skill Development, and Green Governance—is the essential blueprint for the required paradigm shift. By introducing policy instruments like the Local Procurement Mandate, Gender Quotas in training, and the Green Tax Rebate System, India can ensure that its tourism boom translates directly into reduced poverty, enhanced gender equity, and a minimized climate footprint. Adopting this framework is not an expenditure; it is a critical, high-return investment in the holistic development of the nation. This strategic shift will successfully establish India's tourism sector as a global exemplar of sustainable and inclusive economic growth by 2047.

References

1. Ministry of Tourism. National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism. Government of India, New Delhi, 2022.
2. NITI Aayog. Viksit Bharat @ 2047: Strategy for Decarbonization and Sustainable Growth. Government of India, New Delhi, 2024.
3. Sharma V, Singh P. Ecotourism and Community Empowerment in India, Green Horizons Publications, New Delhi, 2023, 112.
4. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2024). Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition. UNWTO Publications, Madrid.
5. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). (2023). Economic Impact Report: India. WTTC, London.
6. Porter ME. The Competitive Advantage of Nations, the Free Press, New York, 1990, 210-215.
7. Sen A, Development as Freedom, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1999, 85.
8. Bhandari RK, Governance and Public Policy in Developing Economies, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2021, 4.