

GOVT. OF JHARKHAND.
DEPARTMENT OF FOREST ENVIRONMENT
& CLIMATE CHANGE.

RESOLUTION

File No-5/Van & Prayavaran (Eco Tourism)-102/2015

Sub : Jharkhand Eco Tourism Policy 2015 Reg.

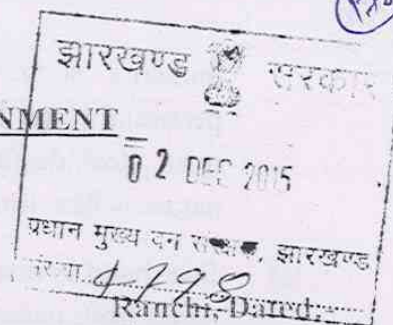
1. PREAMBLE

1.1 The Jharkhand State is one of the newly established states of Indian Union carved out of the state of Bihar in November 2000. The state comprises of the Chotanagpur Plateau, which forms a part of Deccan bio-geographic province. It is a hilly undulating plateau characterized by predominantly tropical forests and tribal settlements. This State is endowed with natural resources that need to be conserved and utilized in a sustainable manner for all-round development of the state in general and the marginalized tribal population in particular. The total geographical area of the state is 79,714 Sq km and lies between 21° 58' 00" to 25° 20' 00" N latitude and 83° 20' 00" to 87° 57' 00" E longitude.

As per India State of Forest Report, 2013 published by the Forest Survey of India, forest cover in the state is 23,473 km² which is 29.45% of the state's geographical area. Jharkhand shares its border with the states of Bihar in the north, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the west, Orissa to the south, and West Bengal in the east.

1.2 Jharkhand is endowed with rich cultural heritage and bestowed liberally with bounties of nature. The State is kaleidoscope of past splendors and present glory. A fascinating State with luxuriant forest, captivating wild life, enthralling water falls, exquisite handicrafts, sprawling water bodies, enchanting classical and folk dances and music and above all hospitable and peace loving people. The State of Jharkhand is blessed with immense bio-diversity, moderate climate, rich cultural and historical heritage, religious places of worship and ethnic aspects to make the State the ultimate destination for tourists.

1.3 The literary meaning of Jharkhand is "Land of Forest". Geographically, the state constitutes of the forest highland of Chhotanagpur plateau. The land is in eastern corner of "Vindhya" mountain series and has distinct cultural, mineral and natural resources. Jharkhand has a forest cover of 29.45%, where there is



immense scope of developing ecotourism. The lush green jungles, the perennial water falls, the terrain, the moderate climate, the rich wild life makes it an ideal destination for developing ecotourism activities like forest trails, nature walks, jungle safaris, trekking, rock climbing etc.

- 1.4 Jharkhand is one of the few destinations, which offer a perfect holiday option. Apart from natural allure, tourists can enjoy a wide range of pursuits. The state offers plethora of rolling hills, clad in luxuriant forest, crisscrossed by numerous narrow hill streams. The glorious plateau is riddled with celestial springs bubbling with water. It is endowed with many facets to entice tourists and all those who are lovers of natural beauty. Its evergreen forests, wild life, lakes, waterfalls and scenic beauty present a true bonanza to the tourists. The range of flora & fauna as well as the socio-cultural assets are really astonishing and unparalleled.
- 1.5 Ecotourism or Ecologically Sustainable Tourism can be described as responsible tourism to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well being of local communities. General public are, now, more willing to visit the forests and appreciate their splendor and imbibe their values. The cause of conservation of forests and wildlife can further be strengthened if they are allowed to be visited in a responsible manner so as to make the general public and the local population the active stakeholders in conservation efforts. Such activities would be conducted in a planned and professional manner, which promotes awareness regarding the environment and helps maintain the ecological balance.
- 1.6 Ecotourism is one of the tools whereby people are encouraged to visit natural beauty of forests to promote action to conserve it. It is about striking harmonious synergy between the cause of conservation, aspirations of local communities and need for sustainable travel. It accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains and supports the native culture. National Forest Policy, 1988 also calls for building a massive people's movement for protecting natural forest as national heritage. With this background, the Government of Jharkhand has resolved to make the promotion of ecotourism in the State a priority area.
- 1.7 The focus of ecotourism shall be on conservation of natural resources through awareness building, diversification of tourism activities and destinations, local community participation and synergy with general development of tourism sector. This Policy is aimed at informing and sensitizing the general public and related Government Departments towards ecotourism and laying down the

✓ framework for its growth in the State in an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable manner.

- 1.8 Wild life tourism is an integral part of eco-tourism. Jharkhand has a varied topography, unlimited forest cover and is endowed with a vast variety of flora and fauna. There are a number of sanctuaries, national parks and-wild life reserves, which would be utilised for the purpose of promoting eco-tourism. The department of Forests & Environment, would actively work to further develop and improve wild life parks/safaris/zoos bird watching towers and other public utility services for tourists.
- 1.9 The instant Ecotourism Policy envisages new initiatives towards making tourism as a catalyst in employment generation, environmental regeneration, development of remote areas and development of women and other disadvantaged groups in the state, besides promoting social integration which is so vital to our society. It endeavours towards upliftment of local communities with more earnings and aims to create conditions more conducive to investment in these areas.
- 1.10 The policy aims to encourage cooperative tourism through people's participation in ecotourism promotion and to extend economic benefits to the people through such active participation and cooperation.
- 1.11 The policy also intends to encourage involvement of non-Governmental organizations, voluntary agencies and such bodies involved in tourism promotion and development, by providing them support, assistance and making use of their expertise for development of ecotourism.

2. DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM

- 2.1 In 1983, the first definition of ecotourism was put forward by the Mexican architect Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin. He defined it as "That form of environmentally responsible tourism that involves travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the object of enjoying, admiring and studying the nature (the scenery, wild plants and animals), as well as any cultural aspect (both past and present) found in these areas, through a process which promotes conservation, has a low impact on the environment and on culture and favours the active and socio-economically beneficial involvement of local communities".

- 2.2 The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has defined Ecotourism as "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." (TIES, 1990). However the TIES has refined the existing definition in January 2015 and added the factors namely "Interpretation and Education" to its earlier definition.

After revision the TIES defines Ecotourism as "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015). Education is meant to be inclusive of both staff and guests.

- 2.3 In this backdrop, the state of Jharkhand adopts the following definition of Ecotourism:

"Ecotourism is the responsible travel to natural areas keeping carrying capacity of that area / place in mind and seeks to promote and support the understanding, appreciation and conservation of the environment and culture, raising awareness for biodiversity and for local cultures emphasizing on preserving their indigenous features. It also promotes employment as well as economic and social development, acting as an alternative source of income to economically and socially marginalised people."

3. BROAD PRINCIPLES OF ECOTOURISM

- 3.1 Eco-Tourism has been broadly defined as tourism which is ecologically sustainable. The concept of ecological sustainability subsumes the environmental carrying capacity of a given area. The general principles of ecotourism are as under:

3.1.1 The local community should be involved leading to the overall economic development of the area.

3.1.2 The likely conflict between resource use for ecotourism and the livelihood of local inhabitants should be identified and attempts should be made to minimize the same.

3.1.3 The type and scale of eco-tourism development should be compatible with the environment and socio-cultural characteristics of the local community, and

- 3.1.4 It should be planned as a part of the overall area development strategy, guided by an integrated land-use plan avoiding inter-sectoral conflicts and ensuring sectoral integration, associated with commensurate expansion of public services.
- 3.2 Thus, Ecotourism being an activity uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel, those who implement, participate in and market ecotourism activities should adopt the following functional principles:
 - 3.2.1 Minimize physical, social, behavioral, and psychological impacts.
 - 3.2.2 Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
 - 3.2.3 Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
 - 3.2.4 Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
 - 3.2.5 Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.
 - 3.2.6 Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host political, environmental, and social climates.
 - 3.2.7 Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
 - 3.2.8 Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the local people and work in partnership with them to create empowerment.

4. VISION

- 4.1 To strive to establish Jharkhand as national leader in ecotourism sector by providing meaningful and unique learning experiences of nature to the tourists through conservation of the environment and showcasing the culture with the empowerment and meaningful involvement of local communities.

5. OBJECTIVES

- 5.1. To develop community based sustainable ecotourism in nature rich areas.
- 5.2. To create and develop eco-friendly infrastructure at ecotourism destinations.
- 5.3. To take steps towards capacity building of local communities in areas like hospitality, showcasing culture and natural heritage, interpretation and communication skills.
- 5.4. To establish coordination and cooperation amongst all stakeholders including Water Resource Department (various Government Departments, local communities including displaced persons from reservoirs, tourists etc.) towards development and promotion of ecotourism destinations.
- 5.5. To encourage entrepreneurship and to broadbase the employment opportunities available to the local people residing near ecotourism destinations.

- 5.6. To offer high quality learning experience to children, school and college students and visitors to enjoy and appreciate nature based activities so that in future they behave responsibly towards nature conservation efforts.
- 5.7. To encourage cooperative tourism through peoples participation in ecotourism promotion and to extend economic benefits to the people through such active participation and cooperation.
- 5.8. To encourage involvement of non-governmental organizations, voluntary agencies and such bodies involved in tourism promotion and development, by providing them support, assistance and making use of their expertise for development of ecotourism.
- 5.9. To encourage universities and other institutions to undertake research work in the field of nature conservation and ecotourism.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ECOTOURISM

6.1 Legal Framework:

6.1.1. All ecotourism activities shall be in conformity with the existing environmental laws of the country, including the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 and notifications issued under the said rules for eco-sensitive zones, the guidelines issued by National Tiger Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment & Forests, GoI and other guidelines issued from time to time by the Government of India and the Government of Jharkhand.

6.1.2 Ecotourism related activities shall be carried out in strict compliance with the orders passed by the Honourable Apex Court/ High Court of Jharkhand and the National Green Tribunal from time to time.

6.2 Ecotourism-A Conservation Centric Activity:

Ecotourism plan for forest areas and nearby tourism destinations shall be conservation centric and in consonance with the Wildlife Management Plan in case of Protected Areas and with the Forest Working Plans in case of other areas.

6.3 Ecotourism-Community Based Activity:

Emphasis shall be laid upon active involvement of the local communities in order to enhance their economic conditions through ecotourism activities. The type and scale of ecotourism activities shall be compatible with environmental and socio-cultural characteristics of the local communities leading to sustainable development of the area.

6.4 **Capacity Building:**

Capacity of the local communities and government agencies involved in ecotourism activities shall be strengthened and developed for responsible and sustainable tourism. Need based customised training courses shall be conducted for those engaged in community-based ecotourism enterprises: in natural and cultural heritage interpretation, hospitality, business management, communication skills etc.

6.5 **Infrastructure Development:**

6.5.1 Infrastructure is the most critical component for ensuring total ecotourism development. Accordingly, the Government would take all possible steps to provide an appropriate framework for private sector participation in infrastructure development in the State so as to supplement the efforts made by the Government in this regard.

6.5.2 Creation and development of infrastructures at ecotourism destinations shall be ecofriendly having least impact on natural resources and local culture. Preference shall be given to the use of already existing infrastructures and facilities in the area.

6.5.3 The utilization of non-conventional sources of energy, such as solar power, wind power, bio-mass gas power, geo thermal energy etc. would be encouraged to be utilized at various ecotourism destinations.

6.5.4 With the help of the Government of India and the private sector, wherever feasible, all possible modern telecommunication facilities will be made available so as to connect even the remotest areas of the State and making them technologically accessible.

6.6 **Environmental Awareness:**

Creation of environmental awareness among all sections and age groups of the society, especially the youth, shall be incorporated as a major activity for each ecotourism destination. Preference shall be accorded to the quality of experience rather than to the number of visitors as such.

6.7 **Partnership:**

Multi stakeholder partnership in developing and operating facilities and activities shall be encouraged. Development and operations of facilities and activities shall be undertaken either by government agency or in partnership with local community and private enterprises.

6.8 **Marketing:**

178

Suitable marketing strategies shall be developed on the basis of market survey and analysis, making wide use of electronic, print and cyber media for marketing Jharkhand ecotourism as multifaceted ecotourism destinations.

7. STRATEGY

The above mentioned objectives shall be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

7.1 General Strategy:

The unique values (Unique Selling Points) of Jharkhand will be identified and agreed through a participatory, consensus-building process involving all stakeholders such as key government departments, non-government organisations, private sector entrepreneurs and the community concerned. This will provide the basis for establishing as a Jharkhand brand and responsible marketing of sustainable tourism, in which community-based ecotourism in and around protected areas will play a significant role. Outputs from this participatory process will include:

- 7.1.1. Strategy for marketing a responsible and sustainable tourism in Jharkhand, of which community based ecotourism, will comprise the core.
- 7.1.2. Establishment of partnership between the stakeholders namely Tourism, Art and culture, Industry, Forest Department and local communities, to steer and coordinate the development of community-based ecotourism in and around protected areas and other wilderness areas.
- 7.1.3. The income generated from ecotourism activity shall be ploughed back for the welfare of the community managing eco-tourism and for provision of eco-development and ecotourism facilities.

7.2 Organisational Setup:

To promote ecotourism in the state, the Forest & Environment Department, Government of Jharkhand, shall be the Nodal Department and the Jharkhand Ecotourism Authority (hereinafter referred to as "JETA") shall develop necessary methods and standards for the purpose of promotion and development of ecotourism in the state and for this the Society shall be provided with the required technical, financial and administrative resources.

7.3 Ecotourism Plan:

The Ecotourism Plan shall be an integral part of the Wild life Management Plan in case of Protected Areas and that of the Forest Working Plan in case of

other forest areas. In case of any conflict, the management of Protected Areas, Wildlife and Biodiversity interests shall take precedence over ecotourism.

7.4. Strategy for Forest Areas:

7.4.1 In forest areas the strategy for implementation of ecotourism activities shall be based on the observation of the National Forest Commission, 2006 which enunciates that "Tourism, which was earlier thought to be adversary to conservation goals, is now recognized not only to be compatible but facilitative to the same. The average tourist is now better informed about the environmental impact of his travel and behaviour. Such awareness is expected to persuade people to pay more and generate a fund stream to finance conservation as well as the development of local communities. Ecotourism, as it is called, is the mantra of the new age travel industry. As Ecotourism has mostly to do with nature and wilderness, the Forest Department becomes a key factor in the activity centred on Ecotourism. The Department's capacity needs to be augmented, infrastructure raised and mechanisms of inter-department and inter-sectoral collaboration worked out."

7.5. Strategy for Protected Areas:

7.5.1. The strategy for implementation of ecotourism in protected areas shall be based on comprehensive guidelines for tiger conservation and tourism, dated 15th October, 2012 notified by National Tiger Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment & Forests as provided under Section 38-O (1) (c) of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

7.5.2. Fostering Tourism or Ecotourism in tiger reserves needs to be ecologically sustainable nature-tourism. This is emerging as an important component of tourism industry. It is distinct from 'mass tourism', having sustainable, equitable, community based effort for improving the living standards of local, host communities living on the fringes of tiger reserves.

7.5.3. Ecotourism is proposed to be fostered under 'Project Tiger' to benefit the host community in accordance with tiger reserve specific Tourism Plan forming part of the Tiger Conservation Plan, subject to regulation as per carrying capacity, with a focus on buffer areas. Since, tourism has been happening in areas of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries which are now designated as core or critical tiger habitat, regulated low impact tourism (visitation) would be allowed in such areas subject to site specific carrying capacity. However, no new tourism infrastructure

should be permitted in such core and critical tiger habitats. Further, the buffer forest areas should also be developed as wildlife habitats with the active involvement of local people living in such areas. This would provide extended habitat to tiger population for its life cycle dynamics, besides benefitting local people from ecotourism activities in such areas while reducing the resource dependency of people on core or critical tiger habitats and human-tiger interface conflicts.

7.5.4. The opportunities for stakeholders would include management of low cost accommodation for tourists, providing guide services, providing sale outlets, managing excursions, organizing ethnic dances and the like.

7.5.5. The Chief Wild Life Warden, Jharkhand shall determine the carrying capacity and delineate the tourism zone in the Management Plan of Protected Areas (PAs).

7.6. **Strategy for Ecosensitive Zones:**

The development of facilities and activities related to Ecotourism in Ecosensitive zones shall be subject to provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 and in compliance with the notifications issued in connection with ecosensitive zones under the said rules from time to time.

7.7. **Strategy for Wetlands:**

The important wetlands of Jharkhand are Udhwa lake Bird Sanctuary, Getalsud dam, Chandil dam, Kansjor dam, Konar dam, Tilaiya dam, Massanjore dam, Maithon dam and Tenughat dam etc. These wetlands harbour avifauna and attract migratory avifauna in winters. There is an immense ecotourism potential in these wetlands. Conservation of these wetlands with engagement and empowerment of local communities including displaced persons from reservoirs where ecotourism activity is proposed to be taken up can play major role in maintenance of the water cycle and water regime of that area. While preparing site specific plan of ecotourism the unique character of wetlands shall be conserved.

7.8. **Strategy for Wild Life Tourism :**

The wild life sanctuaries and national parks would be integrated as an integral part of Jharkhand tourism product and priority would be given for professional visitors management. The quality of tourist facilities available at the park would be enhanced and steps would be taken to improve visitors information.

Safaris and Zoological parks shall be set up at various places in the State as per the guidelines issued by Central Zoo Authority (CZA).

7.9. Identification and Selection of Ecotourism Destination:

Identification of ecotourism related areas/destinations shall be carried out primarily based on the following features/factors:

- 7.9.1 Proximity to forest area.
- 7.9.2 Ease of access-good road/rail connectivity.
- 7.9.3 Proximity to water bodies.
- 7.9.4 Better chances of sighting animals, birds near destinations.
- 7.9.5 Historical and Cultural relevance.
- 7.9.6 Location of Mountains/ Waterfalls/ Streams near the destination.
- 7.9.7 Residents/communities and forest staff around the destination should be sensitive to nature.
- 7.9.8 Easy accessibility of medical facilities near destination.
- 7.9.9 These special features of an ecotourism destination shall be promoted as Unique Selling Proposition (USP) for attracting tourists.
- 7.9.10 After assessing the infrastructure etc. the selected ecotourism destinations shall be categorized into three classes viz. short term, medium term and long term in order to strategize towards their development.

7.10 Infrastructure and Facilities at Ecotourism Destinations:

7.10.1 Basically ecotourism is sustainable, minimal impact and small scale tourism to promote and support the understanding, appreciation and conservation of the environment, biodiversity and culture. Therefore, necessary infrastructure and facilities at these destinations should be environmental friendly.

7.10.2 An exhaustive list of infrastructure/facilities, viz., nature trails, nature interpretation centre, night stay places etc. already available at ecotourism destinations shall be prepared. If available infrastructure/facilities require upgradation, action shall be taken to make the facilities comfortable, hygienic and of minimal desirable standards to attract the tourists. Further, all possible endeavours to create and develop new infrastructure/facilities to meet the ends of ecotourism shall be explored and taken up.

7.10.3 Development of private Guest Houses and tourist lodge/hotels/restaurants etc on way to ecotourism destinations and

outside the Protected Area / Forest limits shall be taken up in a planned and phase wise manner through government / private agencies or through public private partnership.

7.10.4 Concept of Home stays will be promoted. Host families in nearby villages having reasonable accommodations can accommodate visitors on paying prescribed rates. Nodal agency of ecotourism in Jharkhand with the help of Department of Tourism will notify and regulate such entities after selection.

7.10.5 The facilities and activities at ecotourism destinations will be managed by the Authority involving local communities, as far as possible.

7.11 Feasible Activities at Ecotourism Destinations:

Activities to be identified and developed at any ecotourism destination shall be site specific. Following is a list of representative activities and facilities that may be undertaken for promoting an area as ecotourism destination:

7.11.1 Nature Camps:

Camping sites may be identified and provided with basic infrastructure facilities and public convenience services to enable the tourists to stay in natural surroundings either solely to experience the wilderness or for participating in any other activity/activities requiring overnight stay in forests. Private sector shall be encouraged for setting up of camping sites at various suitable locations on environment friendly basis.

7.11.2 Eco-friendly Accommodation:

Adequate facilities for boarding and lodging of tourists would be developed at the specific sites. The infrastructure would be eco-friendly and strictly in accordance with government guidelines laid down in this regard. Where feasible, local community members will be encouraged to provide lodging and boarding facilities to the tourists, subject to fulfilment of prescribed quality standards.

The Government will take steps to provide accommodation to the tourists by opening the Forest Rest Houses (FRH) to the public. These Forest Rest Houses would as far as possible be managed through public-private partnership with capable and committed

168

partners having good track record of promoting eco-tourism. Marketing outlets catering to basic requirements of the tourists and for promoting traditional art, culture and handicrafts, etc. of the State shall be set up to ensure unique experience to the visiting tourists.

7.11.3 Trekking and Nature Walks:

There is great potential for trekking in Jharkhand. A master plan for development of Trek routes would be prepared and implemented. Trekking routes of varying distances and guided nature trails through designated paths may be identified and developed for tourists in scenic landscapes rich in biodiversity, causing minimum disturbance to the natural vegetation and soil.

7.11.4 Wildlife Viewing and River/Reservoir Cruise:

Wildlife viewing in eco-friendly vehicles would be promoted at appropriate sites. Sites having water bodies would be developed for providing river/reservoir cruise facilities in non-polluting boats.

7.11.5 Adventure Sports:

Jharkhand has a number of big water bodies, enthralling terrain, hills, dense forests, which are the pre-conditions for promoting adventure tourism activities. Comprehensive adventure tourism promotion plan would be prepared to lay down the regulatory framework for enforcement of safety standards.

Facilities for adventure sports such as rock climbing, rappelling and parasailing along with water sports such as rafting, boating and canoeing would be developed in consultation and cooperation with experts in and around the forest areas. Proposals of Tourism Department in respect of adventure tourism like trekking, camps & cultural programme will also be taken up.

7.11.6 Herbal Ecotourism:

Herbal ecotourism would be made the thrust area at suitable locations having a rich herbal heritage. Traditional medicinal practices of such locations would be explored and identified, and based on these, authentic herbal products having appropriate certifications and recognition would be made available to the tourists.

7.11.7 Nature Interpretation Centers:

Existing Nature interpretation facilities would be strengthened to make them more comprehensive to accommodate the requirements of different groups of visitors. Measures will be taken at each ecotourism destination to enrich visitor experience.

7.11.8 Conservation Education:

Conservation education would be promoted in and around each destination for creating awareness amongst school and college students, local communities, government staff and visitors in order to maintain and enhance support for ecotourism and environmental conservation.

7.11.9 Tree Plantation:

Tree plantation as an ecotourism linked activity will be given special attention and efforts would be made in a planned manner to deal with the problem of non-biodegradable wastes. Intensive campaign to regulate plastic and other hazardous waste will be launched with the assistance of the private sector and non-government organizations (NGOs).

7.11.10 Developing Guides:

Guides will be trained and employed from among the locals, who will also be assigned the task of protecting both the tourists and the environment. Steps will be taken to set standards and regulations for this purpose.

7.11.11 Water Sports:

Water sports activities, like river rafting, canoeing, kayaking etc. are becoming increasingly popular which would be further promoted/extended to various potential areas. Other water sports activities will also be developed and extended to various water bodies in and around the forest areas.

7.11.12 Other Facilities:

Facilities for any other eco-friendly activities like- photographic safari, Fossil observation, flora and fauna rescue programmes, swings, monkey crawls, Burma Bridge, star gazing, camel ride, canoeing, boating, cycling, nature walk etc. would also be provided.

7.11.13 Rescue Systems:

Adequate facilities will be developed to provide a high level rescue system for adventure sports and other tourism related activities. This will include provisions of various rescue equipments like recovery vans, medical support, communication system etc.

7.12 Capacity Building:

7.12.1 Capacity of the local communities and government agencies shall be strengthened and developed for responsible and sustainable tourism. As far as possible, members of local communities residing near ecotourism destinations will be involved to run/manage the facilities and activities at the designated places in a professional manner.

7.12.2 Capacity in the designing, establishment and management of ecotourism initiatives including destinations, will be strengthened and developed by:

7.12.2.1 Establishment of a centre of excellence for responsible tourism to build capacity within the local communities, government and private sector to take responsibility for achieving sustainable tourism, and to create better places for people to live in and for people to visit.

7.12.2.2 In-house training in responsible and sustainable tourism within public sectors (tourism, culture, forests, wildlife, etc.).

7.12.2.3 Responsible and sustainable tourism will be reinforced through eco-clubs and Green Volunteers.

7.12.2.4 Customised training courses for those engaged in community-based ecotourism enterprises; in natural and cultural heritage interpretation, hospitality, business management, communication skills etc.

- 7.12.3 The skills and capabilities of the government functionaries officials engaged in ecotourism shall be upgraded to ensure professionalism in the area of ecotourism management.

7.13 Setting Standards and Quality Benchmarks:

- 7.13.1 For setting standards and quality benchmarks related with different aspects of ecotourism, the best practices, guidelines, codes, standards, audits, accreditation schemes and models will be prepared and promoted.

7.14 Promotion, Publicity and Marketing:

- 7.14.1 Promotion and marketing is an important component of ecotourism development and needs to be undertaken along with product development in conformity with consumer profiles and product characteristics. The policy of the Government would be, thus, to develop and implement cost effective marketing strategies based on market research and segmentation analysis of each of the ecotourism destination.

- 7.14.2 Promotion, publicity and marketing is one of the most critical activity not only to attract a large number of tourists but also to educate the tourists regarding the kind of tourism products, which the state offers. It also facilitates the travel and stay of the tourist to the state. To achieve all these, there is a need for well-defined advertising and publicity plan. Thus, a separate and dedicated team of professionals on outsourcing basis would be set up to assist in marketing the ecotourism product of the state in a professional and result-oriented manner to the outside world as well as amongst the domestic tourists.

- 7.14.3 A multi pronged strategy will be evolved to make optimal use of media for promoting ecotourism in Jharkhand as an attraction for tourists. Sufficient literatures will also be distributed to important travel agents/tour operators/airlines/ hotel groups etc. for distribution amongst important people connected with the tourism industry.

- 7.14.4 Keeping in mind the above objectives, the following initiatives would be taken :

- 162
- 7.14.4.1 Organize familiarization tours and conventions of eminent and renowned travel writers, tour operators and travel agencies.
 - 7.14.4.2 Production of high quality informative audio-visuals and tourist literatures in English and other foreign Indian languages.
 - 7.14.4.3 Participations in exhibitions and festivals organized by various reputed and experienced agencies at state, national and international levels.
 - 7.14.4.4 Encouragement of joint publicity campaigns with private partners.
 - 7.14.4.5 Display of attractive hoardings at strategic locations and in the vicinity of various tourist destinations highlighting their special significance.
 - 7.14.4.6 Display of way indicators on the roads to highlight to location and importance of different tourist destinations.
 - 7.14.4.7 Promotion of various sports events, corporate convention and conferences, youth congregations, academic needs, national and international cultural conferences with the active support various departments, corporate bodies, universities and other organizations.
 - 7.14.4.8 Projecting the state as the ultimate destination to cater to the emerging market in the East and South East.
 - 7.14.4.9 Organising publicity campaigns through print media and the audio-visual media. The private sector would also be motivated to partner with the government to achieve these objectives.
 - 7.14.4.10 Production of films on tourist locations and facilities, local fairs and festivals, flora and fauna etc. will be encouraged to publicize the tourism potential of the state through television network and electronic media.
 - 7.14.4.11 Use of electronic, print and cyber media for aggressive marketing of Jharkhand as a premier tourist destination.
- 7.14.5 A website to promote ecotourism shall be launched so as
- 7.14.5.1 to promote marketing as such and to effect coordination amongst various agencies involved in the marketing of ecotourism facilities.

161

- 7.14.5.2 to ensure wider publicity to the concept of ecotourism and its principles.
- 7.14.5.3 to highlight special values and thereby encouraging potential visitors to explore the website (and its links) and to motivate them to travel to potential destinations.
- 7.14.5.4 to efficiently disseminate information regarding facilities available at ecotourism destinations, eco-lodges, home-stays etc.
- 7.14.5.5 to facilitate the process of online reservation and payment through payment gateway for booking accommodation and transportation.
- 7.14.5.6 to provide a transparent and objective audit of ecotourism enterprises so as to indicate the extent to which eco-lodges, home-stays and other ventures meet a predefined set of best practice criteria. This will enable the responsible traveler to make an informed choice of their destination/accommodation facility, while also encouraging enterprises to adopt and develop best practice.
- 7.14.5.7 Brochures and all other kinds of publicity materials shall be published and distributed at appropriate locations.
- 7.14.5.8 Souvenir shops, signages etc. shall also be developed to make the eco-tourism more attractive and viable.
- 7.14.5.9 Linkages with state and national tourism departments shall be developed.
- 7.14.5.10 Linkages with tour operators, hoteliers and organised corporate media shall be developed.
- 7.14.5.11 Brand Ambassador for Jharkhand Ecotourism shall be selected.
- 7.14.5.12 Logo for Jharkhand Ecotourism shall be developed.
- 7.14.5.13 Networking with all stakeholders shall be developed to establish effective coordination mechanism at local, state and national level.
- 7.14.5.14 Technical cooperation with national and international agencies, having expertise in ecotourism, shall be encouraged without compromising on local interest.

7.15 Destination Outputs:

A successful ecotourism destination shall reflect:

- 7.15.1 Increase in use of renewable energy and biodegradable resources, i.e., after the start of ecotourism activity many more households of ecotourism destinations are expected to start using renewable energy and biodegradable resources.
- 7.15.2 Empowerment at the village level as management of ecotourism facilities shall necessarily be effected by direct involvement of local communities including displaced persons from reservoirs through VFMPs/EDCs.
- 7.15.3 Activities at ecotourism destinations are of an experiential nature, enabling the visitor to see and learn by 'doing', thereby understanding the importance of ecosystem and its conservation. Trained and knowledgeable local instructors and guides will be available to lead/facilitate/interpret such activities.
- 7.15.4 Adoption of eco-friendly waste disposal methodologies.

7.16 Financial Management:

- 7.16.1 The continuous availability of financial resources is an essential component for sustenance of ecotourism activities viz. creation of infrastructure/facilities, capacity building, setting standards and quality benchmarks, extension and publicity etc.
- 7.16.2 Efforts will be made to make resources available to promote ecotourism from state budget outlay of the Forest Department, Tourism Department etc. Necessary action will be taken to garner financial resources from ongoing schemes of Government of India.
- 7.16.3 Efforts shall be made to foster partnership with private institutions to raise funds in the pursuits of ecotourism. Steps shall be taken to boost ecotourism by mobilising the funds allocated by the corporates under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

7.17 Adoption of New Technologies:

- 7.17.1 Efforts will be made to adopt the latest technological advances in the ecotourism sector to provide better facilities and services to the tourists and to effectively market the ecotourism products to ensure benefits percolating to all concerned stakeholders.
- 7.17.2 Utilization of Information Technology (IT) shall be accorded high priority in the efforts to promote ecotourism. Every endeavour in this regard would focus upon optimal utilization of e-commerce, mobile-commerce, use of internet for dissemination of tourism related information, increasing use of portals as gate-way to improve

(159)

accessibility to tourism information, development of Handy Audio Reach kit (HARK) tourist guidance system at important tourist sites, setting of tourist information kiosks, encourage private sector to use information technology and eco-friendly practices and above all taking advantage of the latest developed global technologies for promoting and facilitating tourism products.

- 7.17.3 The State Government will take steps to utilize the widespread mobile connectivity and network to disseminate information regarding various tourists' destinations and provide assistance to the tourists visiting the state in cases of exigencies.

7.18 Private Sector Participation:

- 7.18.1 Tourism has emerged as a large industry across the globe, where private sector has to play a leading role. The private sector has to consider investment in tourism sector from a long term perspective and create the required facilities, including accommodation, restaurant, entertainment facilities, shopping complex, etc. in the areas identified for tourism development.

- 7.18.2 The specific role of private sector is contemplated to be to :

7.18.2.1 build and manage the required tourist facility at all places of tourism interest.

7.18.2.2 involve the local community in tourism project and ensure that the benefits of tourism accrue to them in right measure and quanties.

7.18.2.3 undertake industry training and manpower development to achieve excellence in quality of services.

7.18.2.4 participate in the preparation of investment guidelines, marketing strategies and assist in data base creation and research.

7.18.2.5 facilitate safety and security of tourist.

7.18.2.6 endeavour to promote tourism on a sustained and long term perspective.

7.18.2.7 collaborate with the State government in the promotion, branding and marketing of destination.

- 7.18.3 A constructive and mutually beneficial partnership between the public and the private sectors through all feasible means would be promoted to ensure sustained growth of touris. For this, the Government would encourage emergence of such partnership through various concepts of BOT, BOOT, BOLT etc.

8. JHARKHAND ECOTOURISM AUTHORITY (JETA)

- 8.1. To implement the ecotourism policy of the State Government and to take all necessary initiatives and activities to promote, nurture, develop and sustain ecotourism in the state, an institution, namely Jharkhand Ecotourism Authority (JETA) shall be set up. This institution will strive to establish Jharkhand as national leader in ecotourism sector by providing meaningful and unique learning experiences of nature through conservation of the environment and the culture with the empowerment and meaningful involvement of local communities.

8.2 Aims and Objectives:

8.2.1 Aims of the Authority:

To facilitate and promote ecotourism in and around the forest and wildlife areas while fostering environmental and cultural understanding and encouraging preservation of wildlife and forests, as a responsible form of tourism.

- 8.2.2 To identify ecotourism with forestry activities so that necessary and meaningful development can take place in and around the ecotourism sites for benefit of tourists and the local community.

8.3 Objectives of the Authority:

- 8.3.1 To promote ecotourism in specified areas of the National Parks/ Sanctuaries/Forests and other areas as a conservation and educational tool.
- 8.3.2 To encourage tourists to visit, enjoy and appreciate the nature on sustainable basis.
- 8.3.3 To enhance the awareness about the need for nature conservation among the masses.
- 8.3.4 To empower local communities to manage ecotourism and to generate incentives for conservation through alternate and additional livelihood options.
- 8.3.5 To develop community based sustainable ecotourism in nature rich areas.
- 8.3.6 To create and develop eco-friendly infrastructure at ecotourism destinations.

157

8.3.7 To take steps towards capacity building of local communities in areas like hospitality, showcasing culture and natural heritage, interpretation and communication skills.

8.3.8 To establish coordination and cooperation amongst all stakeholders (various government departments, local communities, tourists etc.) towards development and promotion of ecotourism destinations.

8.3.9 To encourage entrepreneurship and to broadbase the employment opportunities available to the local people residing near ecotourism destinations.

8.3.10 To offer high quality learning experience to children and visitors to enjoy and appreciate nature based activities so that in future they behave responsibly towards nature conservation efforts.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 A Monitoring Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary shall be set up, which shall have the Commissioner/Secretaries of the concerned department as its members. The Secretary Department of Forest and Environment, Jharkhand, shall be the member secretary of this Monitoring Committee.

9.2 This Monitoring Committee shall also look into the hurdles/problems, if any, with respect to the implementation of this policy and also with respect to providing relief/concessions to specific tourism units/projects, if such issue is brought before the Committee.

9.3 All concerned departments and institutions shall issue follow-up notification to give effect to the provisions of this policy within 30 day of declaration of this policy.

9.4 The State Government would carry out annual/mid term review of this policy.

10. POWER OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT

10.1 Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing paragraphs of the Jharkhand Tourism Policy, the State Government by issuance of notification in the official gazette may amend or withdraw any of the provisions and / or the schemes mentioned herein above.

10.2 If any difficulty arises in giving effect to provisions of the Jharkhand Ecotourism Policy and/or if any dispute arises about the interpretation of any

provisions of the said policy, the same shall be referred to the Chief Minister through Chief Secretary and thereon the decision taken shall be final.

11. Proposal is approved by the Cabinet meeting dt. 22.09.2015, agenda no. 10

Order: It is hereby ordered that the copy of this resolution be published in the Special Jharkhand Gazette and wide publicity be given and be circulated among all Department/Heads of the Department.

By the order of Governor,

Sd/-

Sukhdev Singh
Principal Secretary

Department of Forest, Environment & Climate Change

Memo -5/Van & Prayavaran (Eco Tourism)-102/2015

Ranchi, Dated:-

Copy To-Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Governor of Jharkhand/Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Minister/Principal Secretary of Chief Minister's Secretariat/All Principal Secretary/Secretary of all departments of Jharkhand/OSD to Chief Secretary of Jharkhand/ Principal Private Secretary to development Commissioner for necessary action.

Sd/-

Principal Secretary

Memo -5/Van & Prayavaran (Eco Tourism)-102/2015, 5486 **Ranchi, Dated:-26-10-2015**

Copy To-All Principal Chief Conservator of Forest/All Chief Conservator of Forest/All Regional Chief Conservator of Forest for necessary action.

Sukhdev Singh
18/10

Principal Secretary