

Azad Jammu & Kashmir



"Nation's Next Holiday Destination"



TOURISM
Policy 2019

AJK TOURISM & ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Message from Minister Tourism

Tourism has emerged as the largest global industry of the 21st century. It has become the mainstay of many developing economies in the world and is considered a relatively better option for earning foreign exchange, creating jobs, stimulating sluggish economies, reducing economies disparities, promoting good-will and intra-regional harmony besides being a benign activity both socially and culturally.

The state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is blessed with immense potential for both domestic as well as international tourists (unfortunately international tourism is too low in AJK). There is number of locations which are untapped and can be developed as major tourist destinations, having all the natural as well as the cultural resources for attracting tourists. Some of the important natural sources have excellent climate, beautiful high altitude lakes, locations for adventure sports, wild life, trout fish, flora and fauna, alpine forest, natural waterfalls and streams, etc. For the cultural sources, the state has some of the most important famous religious shrines of Sufi saints, 6th kingdom of Sikhs (Muzaffarabad), Hindu Temples, historical monuments, plethora of local festivals, distinct cuisine, craftsmanship skills for intricate and fine woodwork, woolen carpets, textiles, paper machie, etc. The southern part of the State abounds with the biggest of the fresh water lake Mangla Lake. A large number of smaller lakes in the higher reaches of the mountain ranges in the north provide surprises for trekkers. The state is blessed with the potential of adventure, nature, culture and history where every tourist has something to get himself entertained, enjoy, explore and experience. These potentials remained to be harnessed well so that the State can get maximum benefits through development of tourism. Needless to say, Tourism is the lifeline of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and all possible efforts need to be undertaken for retaining, maintaining and sustaining it.

Realizing the importance of domestic tourism for strengthening our State economy, to promote employment, create harmony at State and national level, enhance mutual understanding among our own people as well as the peoples of Pakistan and GilgitBaltistan, Ajk Tourism Department in consultation with all stakeholders and afterwards organizing a two days long workshop by inviting prominent tourism experts from Pakistan/AJK (Public and Private stakeholders) has drafted the State Tourism Policy.. The policy defined the role of the Government and the Private Sector in tourism, provided strategies to achieve the long and short term goals for the next 20 years and for onwards planning. The policy was formulated after thorough consultations with all stake-holders in public and private sector and their valuable inputs have been incorporated in the policy to make the policy direction-oriented and acceptable to all stake-holders by devising an implementation mechanism to achieve its goals and targets. Hope the readers will be benefitted maximum with this first ever AJK Tourism Policy 2019. Wishing all the best



Mushtaq Ahmed Minhas
Minster for Tourism, GoAJ&K



Message from the Chief Secretary

Tourism is one of AJ&K most important industry with huge potential. The scenic landmarks, hilly countryside and unique culture are magnets for visitors from all over the Pakistan and abroad. The tourism provides employment in our most rural communities. Tourism is an often underestimated but tremendously important sector in any country's economy. This policy will provide opportunities to grow the sector, making it more productive, competitive and profitable.

The policy contains an appropriate strategy combined with long-term plan, vision and branding Kashmir as "Best Tourist Destination", through development of sustainable tourism. Augmenting the role of Government as facilitator and regulator while encouraging private sector with standardization and development of hospitality sector is main feature of this policy. Eco-friendly tourism will be promoted by using media and marketing tools for a responsible travel to natural areas, conserving the environment and improving the well-being of the local people with diversification of tourism products and services. AJK Tourism Corridor, a signature project of present government warrants Tourism Policy to travel along the conceptual path of Tourism Corridor.

The AJK Tourism Policy 2019 a step towards the same direction. Quantity or numbers of tourists will be second priority while quality tourism will be the top priority of the policy. Accommodation & hospitality services both in public & private sector will be regulated & ensured up to the mark. Broadening of tourist destinations and products will be the hall mark of the policy. To prove tourism sector a best option as industry, innovative interventions will be introduced and implemented by involving tools of media. Capacity building of locals in tourism industry in collaboration with key organizations will be prioritized

Objectives of the Policy have carefully been deliberated with enabling strategies and targeted outputs. We are on the verge of paradigm shift for which policy guides us towards right direction. Institutional as well as legal strength in the form of AJK Tourism Promotion Act, 2018, Rules and Acts to regulate hotels & restaurants, travel guides & travel agencies and operator manuals are in place for regulation in the sector. These shifts of public sector to act as facilitator & regulator and operator manuals are in place for regulation in the sector. This shift of public sector to act as facilitator & regulator only will boost the private sector involvement for boosting tourist activities in the State.

I am confident that we can grow this potential industry and make the coming years the best ever for tourism in AJ&K. With this policy document, we are bringing whole new approach to tourism, removing barriers to growth and backing the industry all the way. The challenge now is to make sure we deliver on these plans and make the most of this opportunity to make State's tourist industry thrive.

All the Best
(Mathar Niaz Rana)
Chief Secretary GoAJ&K



Message from the Secretary

Tourism sector is being rated as tourism industry in global economic discussions & seminars. Globally this industry is contributing 10% of global GDP. Pakistan's contribution in this regard is only about 0.09% which is very low as per its potential. To tap these un-utilized resources Pakistan Government has geared up its strengths to harness tourism potential. AJK Tourism has also been declared as tourism industry which can create jobs and contribute to the prosperity for the area.

Tourism Promotional Act 2018, Tourism Corridor document and some regulatory enactments strengthened its functioning to facilitate and encourage private sector to share their efforts in this regard. AJK needs a Tourism Policy as the umbrella document with its broader vision, clear mission & concrete enabling strategies. Owing to huge potential of tourism in AJK it needs a well-articulated & comprehensive Tourism Policy without which we are handicapped to move forward.

A well laid-out tourism policy would demonstrate long term commitment of govt. in the sector. It may form the basis for shared understanding of tourism sector and coordinated planning and implementation strategies by all stakeholders.

Keeping in view the importance of a comprehensive tourism policy framework in AJK, Tourism Department is presenting its first ever AJK Tourism Policy 2018". It has broader vision of sustainable tourism with key targeted partner of public sector i.e tourists, private sector and local community. It has twelve broader objectives encompassing standardization, branding, marketing, private investment with infrastructural improvement and heritage conservation, diversification of tourist destination and effective coordination of all stakeholders. All these objectives have been annexed with comprehensive enabling strategies to act upon the targets. The master plan of AJK Tourism in the form of "Tourism Corridor" will remain the basis for overall guidance while treading through the path of tourism policy.

Over the next five years, the policy is aimed to achieve its vision through string institutional framework, coordinated public private involvement and adequate resource mobilization. It will definitely bring in a paradigm shift in Govt's role by making it a facilitator and regulator rather than implementer.

The effort of Tourism Department need special appreciation for submission of first ever "AJK Tourism Policy 2019". Best wishes & Prayers,



(MidhatShahzad)

Secretary Tourism & Archaeology GoAJK

Abbreviations

ADP	Annual Development Program
AJKEXP	Azad Jammu & Kashmir Expert Program
AJ&K	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
AJ&KTAD	Azad Jammu and Kashmir Tourism & Archaeology Department
CA	Chartered Accountant
CPL	Commercial Pilot license
DGTA	Directorate General of Tourism & Archaeology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoAJ&K	Government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir
GST	General Sales Tax
HT	High Tension
EMIC	Exhibitions, Meetings, Incentives, and Conferences
NSDI	National Skill Development Initiatives
PPL	Private Pilot License
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RFP	Request for Proposal
Rs.	Pak Rupee
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
STEC	State Tourism Executive Committee
VAT	Value Added Tax
PPU	Project Planning Unit

PRELIMINARY

Whereas, over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses growing number of new destinations. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress

And whereas, tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and at the same time one of the main income resources for many developing countries. This global spread of tourism in industrialized and developed states has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors-from construction to e-commerce or teleagriculture-communications. The contribution of tourism to economic well-being depends on the quality and the revenues of the tourism offer

And whereas, it is necessary to develop, create and promote eco-tourism and to develop the tourism economy in prime destinations in AJ&K to a level that is comparable to that of Swat and Kaghan Valleys, to promote social and economic development of local communities and strengthen environmental education, to take measures to improve quality of visitor and to ensure that tourism does not contribute to deterioration of quality of landscape and environment;

And whereas, existing laws/policies does not regulate the issues related to tourism in AJ&K and there is need to have a specific policy to provide simplest mechanism and to facilitate investors for development and promotion of tourism sector;

And whereas, it is necessary to adopt legislative and regulatory measures for improvement and access to tourism destinations, amenities available to the visitors, maintain environmental quality and create awareness through increased dissemination of tourism information to the public;

And whereas, to achieve the above purposes, it is necessary to frame a policy of the Government so as to obtain the desired objectives in this connection;

Now, therefore in view of cabinet decision on _____, the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is pleased to approve Azad Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Policy, 2019 as follows:-



Section 1

INTRODUCTION



Tourism is one of the most rapidly growing industries in the world which appreciably adds to the GDP. It is an important source of income generation, jobs creation, poverty reduction, foreign exchange earnings, promotion of cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. It complements several allied services regarding transportation, communication, hospitality, catering, entertainment and advertising etc. Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) is blessed with abundant natural resources. It has hilly & mountainous topography characterized by deep ravines, rugged and undulating terrain, thick forests, fast flowing rivers & winding streams, lakes, waterfalls, valleys, beautiful landscapes, biodiversity and other tourist attractions. It has good number of archaeological & historical heritage and monuments which have withstood the ravages of time and other factors to unfold the ancient history of the State of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The State, however, has not yet capitalized its tremendous tourism potential due to lack of market-oriented approaches, capacity issues, inadequate road infrastructure, lack of connectivity to various locations and deficient communication/ information and accommodation facilities. However, over the past four, five years, AJK Tourism has grown substantially. It provided a number of economic benefits and creates varied economic activities in different regions of AJK. It also contributes to tax revenue both directly through sales tax and indirectly through property, profits and income taxes. It provides employment, brings infrastructure improvements and help in regional development.

It is imperative that if this potential sector flourishes, it would yield economic growth and income generation besides area development. It has been recognized that tourism is one of the potential areas to provide employment opportunities and to become driver of economy in a more inclusive manner. Keeping all this in view Government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir has declared Tourism as an Industry for the area.

Owing to such rapid development in Tourism Sector of AJK and taking it as a top govt. priority, it has become imperative to have a comprehensive Tourism Policy of AJK.

In the next chapters attempt has been made to chalk out detailed objectives and strategies properly aligned with National Tourism Vision. It defines the role of government as facilitator and regulator while private sector's role in tourism sector has also been elaborated. Institutional mechanism, Regulating authorities, official private contributions responsibilities and community participation has also been explained via this policy. This document is the product of recommendations from stakeholders, conferences, held during _____2016. Three round table conferences Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Islamabad during 2018 and 2019 and thorough deliberations of government officials and private experts. Careful effort has been exerted to chalk out applicable strategies along with all objectives.





Section 2

AJK TOURISM PROFILE

2.1. GEO-CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN AJ&K

The State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is considered as one of the most beautiful places on earth and have full potential in attracting tourists. It falls within the Himalayan orogenic belt and lies between longitude 73°-75° & latitude 33°- 36°. It comprises of an area of 5134 square miles (13,297 square kilometers). The elevation varies from 360 meters in the south to 6325 meters in the north. AJK is divided into ten administrative districts namely; Neelum, Muzaffarabad, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Poonch, and Sudhnoti in the north and Kotli, Mirpur, and Bhimber in the south. The south contains dry subtropical climate while the north has most moist temperate. AJK has a wide range of climatic conditions with significant variation in the rainfall pattern across different regions both in terms of amount and distribution. Average annual rainfall ranges from 1000 mm to 2000 mm. However, precipitation in the northern districts is 30% to 60% in the shape of snow. In winter, snow line lies around 1200 meters while in summer it is 3300 meters. Temperature ranges between 20°C to 32°C in summer while minimum temperature in winter remains below Zero to 07°C.

2.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF AJK:

In AJK, rural population mostly depends on forestry, livestock, agriculture and non-formal employment to earn livelihood and majority lives under economic subsistence level. Some salient demographic and social indicators are:

- Rural/Urban population ratio is 88:12.
- Average family size according to MICS (2007-08) Survey is 6.7 members.
- Population density per square kilometer is 328.
- National average per capita income has been estimated to be 1512 US\$
- According to Labor Force Survey unemployment rate is 14.4%.
- Literacy rate 74% (2015) has shown progressive trend.

2.3. IDENTIFICATION OF LOCAL TOURISM SPECTRUM

The AJK Government established the AJK Tourism Department for harvesting the existing tourism treasure through a well-established promotional and regulatory mechanism. The department was mandated to develop tourism for tourist facilitation by identifying different sites and providing basic infrastructure at various locations in AJK. The tourism development activities remained limited due to nonexistence of tourism policy, limited resources, inadequate technical know-how, absence of public-private partnership, frequent man-made & natural calamities and absence of basic infrastructure etc. Main focus of tourist influx remained Neelum Valley which attracts tourists on account of its scenic beauty. Around 8.4m tourists visited in all parts of AJK during 2010-2017. The north AJK is rich in snow bound areas and has the potential of paragliding, skiing, para trooping facilities etc. The tourist activities are however, dependent upon the border situation with India and in a number of time, the Neelum Valley road has to be closed on account of security reasons. However, the south of AJK consisting of Bhimber, Mirpur and Kotli has mainly heritage religious tourism

potential all over the year. The area has rich religious and archeological tourism on account of shrines, historical monuments and water sports as vital attractions for the tourists besides availability of adequate lodging facilities facing Mangla Lake. With this huge of tourism well throughout Tourism policy along with doable enabling strategies is need of the hour to harness its full potential.



Azad Kashmir has great potential for development of tourism. Its numerous picturesque spots, dense forests, winding rivers, turbulent foaming streams, majestic towering mountains, flora & fauna, bracing climate and historical & cultural heritage all together make it an excellent tourist resort. Some of the famous tourist potential destinations are as follow;

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neelum Valley,• Jhelum Valley,• Leepa Valley• SudhanGali and Ganga Choti• Haveli Kahuta | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pearl Valley• Ghori Maar and Toli Peer• Bana Valley• Mangla Lakes and Surrounding• Samahni Valley |
|---|---|

2.4: Neelum Valley

Running through the Lesser Himalayas, the valley of the Neelum River (called Kishan Ganga before partition) is main attraction of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. This Valley is well recognized due to its snow-covered peaks, flowering trees, plants, and profusion of wildlife. Moreover waterfalls at about every 10 kilometer distance, plenty of gushing nullahs, hundreds of opportunities for mountain trail trekking and hiking and fascinating virgin lakes of about 72 in number all scattered in 242 kilometer of bow shaped Neelum Valley are its hallmarks. The area is covered with thick forest of pine, fir and deodar. “Sarwali Peak” with 6326 meters height, the highest peak of AJK, lies in Neelum valley. Adventure Tourism,eco-tourism& health tourism are special features of the valley.

Moreover, like Kaghan Valley it is famous for fishing and angling activities in Neelum River and JagranNullah, which are stocked with trout fish. Skiing resorts and golf courses are other an attraction for which valley provides best opportunities.

2.5: Jhelum Valley:

This is an ideal valley for both the domestic and international tourists. The curling river Jhelum passes through the high green mountains of this



valley and joins the river Neelum at domel near Muzaffarabad city.

A 59 Kms long metal road runs along the river Jhelum from Muzaffarabad to Chakothi, which is located adjacent to line of control (LOC). Buses & wagons ply on this route regularly while the route also used for Muzaffarabad to Sri Nagar trade. White water rafting, canoeing, boating and angling are salient opportunities of Jehlum River. High

mountains with infrastructure of public sector guest houses can accommodate nature loving tourists. Passages towards Leepa valley and Sudhan Gali/Ganga Choti run through Jehlum Valley as well.

2.6: Leepa Valley:

This is the most fascinating & loveliest valley in Azad Kashmir. A metal road branches off for Leepa from Naily, 45 kilometers from Muzaffarabad, climbs over the Reshian Gali 3200 meters high and then descends to 1677 meters on the other side into the Leepa Valley. The valley remains open only from May to November. Its rice fields and gushing streams display the sight of mini Srinager. enters into Jehlum River. Apple and walnut are famous products of the area. Old Kashmiri architecture of “Larri” can be seen there with



for domestic tourists from November. Its rice streams display the Chashma Veri Nag from the same valley. famous products of architecture of “Larri” historical ages.

2.7: Sudhan Gali

and Ganga Choti



SuddhenGali located at a height of 2134 meters, links Chikkar with District Hattian as well as with District Bagh. This scenic spot also serves as a base camp for those interested in hiking/Trekking to the nearby 3045 meters high mountain ” Ganga Choti”..Buses & vans ply daily for Bagh, Chikkar &Muzaffarabad to this place. A tourist rest house & PWD rest house provide reasonable accommodation facilities to the tourists.

2.8: Haveli Kahuta

The widest valley of AJK is situated at distance of 162 kilometers from Muzaffarabad, capital of AJ&K and at distance of 250Kilometers from Rawalpindi. Its total area is 598 Sq. Kms. According to census of 1998, its total population is 0.112 million. Annual growth rate is 2.00%. Administratively this district has two subdivisions, Haveli and Khurshid Abad.



It has many picnic points like Bedori Peak (5230 meters high from sea level). Hajji Peer Pass, Hillan valley and Ali Abad are presenting a most eye catcher view for tourists. People from all parts of the country come here in summer and spring seasons. The region is popular for all weather fruits, crops, dry fruits and pure Honey.

2.9: Pearl Valley



Rawalakot famous as pearl valley is situated in the heart of district Poonch. The altitude of this beautiful valley



is 1615 meters. Situated at a distance of 76 kilometers from Kohala and 110 Kms from Rawalpindi, it is linked with Rawalpindi/Islamabad via Azad Pattan and Dhalkot and with Muzaffarabad via Kohallah by black top roads. The construction of GoiNullah road between Rawalakot and Azad Pattan has reduced the distance and journey time considerably. During summer the place becomes full of green grass and beautiful flowers including many varieties of Roses. Rawalakot offers very pleasant climate during the summer. The city has some good hotels and private guest houses that provide comfortable and enough accommodation. Community participation in hospitality hotel and adventure tourism sector took the valleys image to a remarkable level. Its pleasant climate and easy access from other regions makes it a favorite tourist destination. **Banjosa**Lake is just 20 kilometers from Rawalakot at an altitude of 1981 meters. Its picturesque beauty and impressive surrounding is compelling and attract tourists to reach here and enjoy the nature. An aroma of wild roses and white phulwari gives it a special name of perfumed valley.

2.10: Ghori Maar and ToliPir

Ghori Maar is situated at a distance of 30 Kilometers ahead of Rawalakot. A fair-weather road via Khai Gala leads to this place. On reaching Ghori Maar, one can explore the fascinating beauty over-looking the sub valleys of Rawalakot&Bagh. AJK Tourism Department provides reasonable accommodation facilities to visitors here camping sites are also available there. The road from Ghori Maar leads to Tolipir a place that offers calm atmosphere with vast green meadows stretching over a big area. The place holds the potential to mesmerize visitors. That is why the most frequently visited place of the valley.



2.11: Khoiratta/Valley Benah

About 38 kilometers from Kotli ahead, a road leads to Khoiratta. Khoiratta and the nearby area "Valley Benah provides remarkable attraction to tourists because of the remains of gardens and fountains of the older times. From four kilometers ahead of Khoiratta is famous shrine of "Mai Totti Sahiba" which is visited by hundreds of people daily. Caves with beautiful carvings called "Paryoon ka Kotha" (Fairy houses) are wonder of that area. Hindus' religious spots like bi naara, shamshan ghatt etc. are other attraction of the valley. Rising gradually towards the high mountains of Poonch district. Its climate is more moderate than that of Mirpur due to the sub-mountainous topography.

2.12: Mirpur and Mangla Lake

District Mirpur is located at the extreme South of the State and linked with Pakistan and the districts of Azad Jammu & Kashmir through several routes. District Mirpur comprises partly plain and partly hilly areas. It's hot climate and other geographical conditions closely resemble to those of Jhelum and Gujrat, the adjoining districts of Pakistan. The people of this area are basically agriculturists. During the last four decades a large number of people from this district have gone abroad,(about 1.4m) especially to United Kingdom. Today they are the major foreign exchange earning source of Pakistan as it adjoins the industrial cities of Pakistan.



Mangla is a small beautiful modern town. It is situated at a distance of 110 kilometers from Islamabad and 15 kilometers short of Mirpur city. The construction of Mangla reservoir having perimeter of 100 kilometers and surrounded by Mangla Fort and Ramkot Forts of Mughal period have turned this place into an attractive tourist spot. Mangla has special attraction for the tourists coming on short visits because of its proximity to Jhelum, Lahore and Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Water sports, raft visit and boating are its attractions.



2.13 Samahni Valley

It is located 17 kms in the North of *Bhimber City* and 30km in the North-East of *Mirpur*. The valley is guarded by high mountains on all sides, offers breathtaking and mesmerizing natural scenes to its visitors, waterfalls come down mountain slopes as well as streams and nalas of crystal clear waters. The mountains across the whole valley dressed in jungles of pine trees add an extra touch to the stunning view. The valley holds a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere with pollution free environment from one end to the other. Its mangoes are very famous all over Pakistan. Huge orchards of mangoes and mango parties during summer attract a lot of visitors there Peacocks in Bandala Smahni roaming freely in forests and many mughal remains of dak banglas and saraces are its other attractions. The entire valley of Samahni is approximately 35 km long and 8 km wide, stretching from *Chawlian* to *Behmlain* the West.



The valley's inhabitants are simple, peace-loving and law abiding. The ideal time to visit the valley is in March & April and then in July, August and September. Since the vegetation and the scenery during these months are at its best.

To conclude Tourism sector of AJ&K is blessed with rich cultural heritage, centuries old civilizations, natural resources with scenic locations, sites for adventure tourism, cultural and traditional attractions, best opportunities for eco tourism, religious tourism, medicine tourism, winter and summer tourism and heritage tourism. However to harness this huge baggage of opportunities and potential we need to do as per following:-

- a. Involve comprehensive and doable tourism policy and further regulations.
- b. Create an enabling environment for investors and marketing actors,
- c. Involve local communities for sustainable tourism,
- d. Invest in infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms,
- e. Ensure supply of professionally trained human resources,
- f. Attract tourists through focused marketing/promotion and provide quality services.

For the above mentioned purpose next chapter starts with an articulated and comprehensive tourism policy to be followed in next at least five years.



Section 3

3.1.Vision.

Best Tourist Destination through Sustainable Tourism development & inclusive growth.

3.2 Mission.

Provision of enabling environment and best facilitation for tourists, creating investment opportunities for private sector in harmony with the environmental ,cultural and social values While keeping intact empathy towards custodian communities

3.3 Objectives.

- i. To ensure tourism being declared as an “Industry” will be the source of income generation, employment opportunities and main investment potential in AJK. It will be made top priority sector of AJK with exploration of potential allied industries/business to strength the economy of AJK.
- ii. To brand AJK as “Best Tourist Destination” by diversified tourist destination each with its own special features.

- iii. To ensure quality services, food, transport and approach roads. Standardization and regulation of hospitality sector and well maintained communication transport sector be ensured.
- iv. To create conducive business environment with legal authentication and basic infrastructure development. Govt. as facilitator and regulator should augment the private sector to encourage up gradation of infrastructure and promotion of new initiatives. To seek local as well as foreign investment and donor funding/technical assistance to upgrade and develop tourism infrastructure ,which may lead to economic prosperity of the area.
- v. To ensure uniform and harmonious tourism development, diversification of tourism products, services and destination be ensured.
- vi. To chalk-out an effective and comprehensive media and marketing strategy for branding and promoting new initiatives in tourism sector of AJK.
- vii. To attach Heritage/Religious Tourism with overall recreational tourism promotion. Conservation, preservation and development of Heritage sites are coupled with overall tourism promotion.
- viii. Coordination of all relevant departments be strengthen to portray the vision of Govt. that Tourism is the responsibility of whole nation which needs complementary assistance from other relevant department as well.
- ix. To ensure inclusive economic growth with full participation, collaboration and sense of ownership of local community. Community mobilization via active involvement of local places be ensured.

3.4 Enabling Strategies

After chalking out broader & comprehensive objectives in line with Mission & Vision of the Tourism Policy, concrete enabling & doable strategies are needed. Following are the strategies and doable actions attached with each above mentioned objective

3.4.1. Tourism as an Industry can be main source of income in AJK:-

Tourism has been declared as Industry by AJK Government so it needs a practical approach to tap its potential job creation capacity. It also complements a lot of related sectors supporting tourism sector. Tourism itself is a big source of job creation in service sector. However allied industries like hotels, resorts, food beverages, sports, artisans of handicraft and many other value chains can be created if tourism flourished in the area. So strategies to achieve this objective can be categorized as;

Strategies

- Inclusive growth by providing more job opportunities.
- Allied industries like Hotel, resorts and restaurants, camp sites transportation, food and beverages, sports and trekking, handicrafts, wood artisan, travel services, skill development centers, entertainment, sanitariums' etc. may be developed as value-chain cottage industries

Actions

- Tourism Department to supervise quality of services, create job opportunities for local community and regulate & ensure more job creation by private sector in tourism sector.
- Tourism Department to share integrated plans with allied departments for value chain promotion e.g. small industries for handicraft production & display centers, forest to spare land for private investment and facilitate locals for artisan work in cottage industries and creation of display centres for handicraft/soveniours etc.
- Tourism Department, AJK TEVTA, technical Educational Institutes, Universities and other such organizations to impart relevant trainings as per assessment to local community. Training needs and syllabus be finalized in consultation of the tourism department & AJK TEVTA

3.4.2. Branding Kashmir as best tourist destination:-

To match to vision with its overall image creation branding Kashmir as best tourist destination is direly needed. This can be done with proper planning & area-wise identification of Specialties. To achieves this objective following are:

Strategies

- Branding & marketing of tourism facilities
- Area-wise branding with specific slogans and specialty of that area.
- Specific product development of that area.
- Any other planning related to branding pyramid
- In consultation with public and private experts to develop national as well as regional (area wise) slogans for AJK Tourism
- Declare two to three years as “Tourism Years”

Actions:

- To brand Tourism related areas and products a comprehensive area-wise report on a format including the information about specialty of that area, its unique flora and fauna, specific tourist attraction sites and any story or myth related to that area be developed by the Tourism Department and marketed via media.
- Agriculture, Forest Small Industries Departments be requested to identify or establish Farm Tourism spots, birds watching places, protected areas and handicraft bazaars in different areas of AJK. Tourism Department will market those spots via print, electronic and social media.

3.4.3. . Standardization and Regulations of tourism Sector:

The research undertaken to find out the satisfaction level of the tourists indicates that the attitude of those involves in providing services to the tourists plays an important role to meet the tourist satisfaction level. The strategy of service delivery rests on provision of quality services along with standardization, which provides impetus for better prospects for customer satisfaction. Adoption of certificate courses for professional qualification to upgrade services is another aspect of this strategy. It also demands raising awareness among stakeholders to ensure total quality management

Therefore, it is important to develop standard protocols for handling the tourists. The protocols be disseminated amongst hospitality service providers. Well behaved and uniformed manpower operating transport facilities is the first step to interact with the tourists. While same type of service delivery is needed in resorts, hotels, rest houses and tuck shops. Following are some enabling strategies in this regard.

Strategies:

- Providing leadership and direction for implementation of the Policy
- Upgrading the obsolete laws governing the tourism sector
- Setting up of standard and benchmarks for tourism sector
- Enforcement of standards and certification
- Training and development of human resources in Hospitality sector.
- Development of tourism products and adoption of Promotional strategies.
- R&D in tourism in collaboration with academia, research institutes and corporate sector (tourism entities).
- Research and development in tourism sector be ensured in all relevant organizations. Tourism related courses be introduced in technical schools, colleges, institutes and universities. Govt. Seminars, workshops and conferences be planned in this regard.

Actions:

- Professional courses for the frame work officials of tourism Deptt be ensured.

- New regulatory mechanism for Hotels, tour operators, guide & service defining roles and responsibilities of two partners of public and private sectors may be chalked out environment conservation
- Regulatory body and other mechanism for implementation of regulations be ensured to be in place.
- Appropriate regulatory arrangements should be placed for smooth running of the sectoral activities without compromising the service quality.
- Proper plan of action for environmental, cultural & heritage preservation be chalked out by the Deptt.
- Provision of public funds be ensured for launching of awareness program and joint inspection campaigns.
- Buildings by laws specific to an area be in place at appropriate office and ensured to be followed in letter and spirit.

3.4.4: Augmenting the role of Government as facilitator and encouraging private investment in tourism

Similar to the planning strategy, the investment strategy stresses on removing all bottlenecks and skepticism by addressing the doubt and concerns as certification of investment. All the stakeholders of Tourism sector must fulfill set criteria containing certain pre requisites and standards on quality of tourism services and facilities. There must a legal mechanism to engage private sector to contribute in tourism sector of AJK. Incentives as well as one window operation should be available for maximum investment by private sector. The strategy will suggest giving incentives specific to area, site, or creation of tourism activities. The government has also developed tourism promotion Act, 2018 containing incentive on tourism endeavors. Following may be some strategies in the direction of private investment.

Strategies:

- Special legislation (enactment, rules, policy etc.) for provision of one window operations for tourism investors.
- Develop tourism promotion and development policies containing incentives for tourism activities.
- Integrate procedures and inducement leading to diversification of the tourism activities spread over the whole year rather than single season.
- In place mechanism containing adequate room for technical assistant and financial support/grants to improve tourism efforts toward different tourism segments including cultural and historical heritage, winter, summer and faith and tourism, water sport, melas/fairs, etc.
- Supporting businesses that directly benefit from tourism such as handicraft, furniture, agriculture, food processing etc. These may be facilitated with easy loans from the banks
- Considering the peculiar geographical conditions of the region, government will give priority for small and medium level investments.

Actions:

- Provide adequate incentives that include amount, terms, regional characteristics and enforcement determined on yearly basis and on regular studies.
- Extending loaning facilities on easy terms and at low interest rate for improving tourism facilities. Tourism department recommended local entrepreneurs especially female be given priority in lending loan process of banking sector.

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- Tourism department recommended local entrepreneurs especially female be given priority in lending loan process of banking sector.
- Government may ensure preparation of investment guidelines marketing strategies, data base creation and R&D facilitation.
- Assist and finance Tourism industry training and manpower development for achieving excellence in quality service.
- Identify investment opportunities along with facilitation in land allocations
- Instantly eliminate all sort of procedural delays and bureaucratic hitches in the process of awarding investment permissions by introducing one window operations/reduce process to facilitate the investor's desire to undertaking tourism projects.
- An investment facilitation cell will be created in AJK Tourism Department to provide necessary support to the investor's tourism projects. Government will also offer land on long lease on subsidized rates for tourism projects in less developed areas.
- Tourism Sector should certify all companies/entrepreneurs inclined to provide investment counseling and consultancy services to enhance the quality of tourism projects prior to their working in this sector.

3.4.5: Diversification of Tourists destinations and Product Specification.

Destination and product diversification are direly needed to harmonize all areas of AJK, provision of equal opportunities to flourish and managing the tourist influx amicably.

A product is defined in tourism "anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a 'want or need'. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organization, and ideas .Tourism being a service sold to the customers, tourist experience is the product, which is intangible, and non-storable. The quality of the tourist experience as a product is directly proportional to the quality of the service a tourism business provides The strategy for diversion focus on tourism diversification based on through analysis of various types/ area of tourism would be help to determine future priorities of AJK Tourism. Following are some objectives in this regard:-

Objectives;

- Improved accessibility to prominent tourist destinations in collaboration of C&W, LG&RD and other relevant departments.
- In order to ensure equitable distribution of tourist foot-fall the off-beat destinations be developed with the help of private sector.
- Promotion of Adventure tourism, heritage tourism eco tourism, health, thermal tourism, rural tourism, herbal tourism and sports tourism etc.
- Tourist resorts, camping sites, polo, golf courses.
- Chairlift, Cable Cars, water sports, trekking, wildlife, caravan culture and heli-pots.
- Various facets of adventure tourism like White Water Rafting, Roller coaster, Bonji Diving and Zip line etc
- Circuit theme like heritage and religious circuits etc. be framed and specific circuits be declared for the tourist.

a) : Health and Thermal Tourism

AJK is gifted ample opportunity to harvest potential of health and thermal tourism in its southern regions. The already identified tourism potential at TATTA Pani shall be evolved into regional destination having thermal facilities and cultural them and will be integrated with other alternative tourism types to incorporate faith, cultural and natural heritage of the neighboring areas of Mirpur, and Poonch.

Strategies:

The objective of developing thermal tourism facility is to:

- Redesign it keeping in view the existing infrastructural as well as the additional requirements for converting it as a unique health and thermal tourism destination along with Tourism conservation and Development area and Tourism center with focus on quantity and variety of good thermal spring.
- Offered potential site could be for development through private sector.
- Initiate some specific interventions in extended form corresponding to the emerging need of health and thermal tourism keeping in view the provision for development of area already made.
- Launch extensive promotional moves to harvest the tourists community desiring to benefit from the natural endowment at Tatta Pani;

Actions:

- Appropriate promotional campaign should be launched through symposia, seminars, and promotional program at various levels-provincial and national-for sensitize the private sector and general society.
- Sound linkages have to be developed and maintained with healthcare and social aid organization in the country.
- Adequate mobility by linking with Tourism corridors along with appropriate accommodation should be ensured at the sites

b) : Ecotourism and Plateau Tourism

Environmental impact assessment is part of all types of private intervention to ensure promotion of eco-friendly tourism. Our objective is to ensure environment friendly tourism activities and infrastructure intervention. The Ecotourism & Plateau Tourism also needs to be promoted in AJK with an aim at promoting this kind of tourism:

Strategies:

- Planed development Ecotourism and Plateau Tourism keeping in view the existing and additional requirement pertaining to Ecotourism and Plateau tourism activities.
- Develop ecotourism and plateau tourism of better quality tourism infrastructure related to the activities catering these type of tourism.
- Map main travel routes, destinations, sites/areas, intermediate stations and substation spots at first step and thereafter, undertake planning initiatives based on the scenario to be adopted for certain areas/region hosting nature tourism, activities and events.
- Set up action plan and implement it for actualizing adventure and ports tourism through public and private participation.

Actions:

- Extend training to people working in the tourism potential areas in developing touristic product and souvenir making, services quality and small business activities.
- Encouraged the local community in the tourist potential areas to develop local product indigenously representing their ethnographic and ecological features.
- Impart training in hospitality, catering, housekeeping, etc., to the people interest in working in the tourism sector.

- Ensure Appropriate arrangements at entry point of the tourist potential areas to facilitate tourist through site maps with different routes, regional peculiarities, and it itinerary to the tourist sites along with accommodation areas with parking plots.
- In place adequate arrangements for completion of fountains, toilets, shelters, distance and directional signs and configuration of trekking routes and news vehicle passages, identification of auto workshops and health facility along with linkage to contact in emergency in the areas reserved for natural tourism.
- Make appropriate environmental layout arrangement in the area meant for nature tourism to enhance tourist attraction on their route with falls, interesting trees, rocky mountains, sporting and recreational areas, camping filed, roadside restaurants and tuck shops, etc.
- Impart adequate training to the local community in hospitality and guesthouse operation and management.

C): Winter Tourism

AJK endowed with lot of options for winter tourism in its northern region spread over 5 district needs to be explored and exploited. For harvesting this potential a comprehensive exercise is required to ascertain the potential and thereafter, plan activities as per suitability and appropriateness leading to certain targets.

Strategies:

- The appropriate sites/areas identification with sound suitability locations for different tourist activities (winter, thermal, cultural, mountainous, nature etc.,) should clearly be marked out and a unified approach in treatment and their development subsequently.
- Youth will be proactively engaged while promoting winter tourism to encourage them to learn and play this kind of sport.
- The area for such tourism should be developed in collaboration with the local departments (land allocation, etc) and infrastructure should be provided by the Tourism department in collaboration with the private sector.

Actions:

- There should be a master plan for promoting winter tourism, a unique activity in AJK as per international standard.
- Access to the tourism sites will be provided through adequate road link or chair lift connection.
- Sufficient space for boarding, landing waiting and parking along with recreational facilities should be provided.
- Scrutinize the distance between accommodation facilities and ski runs to make appropriate arrangements for direct link among these.
- The winter sport site should provide with temporary boarding lodging facilities sufficient to cater the need of ski run at the time of operating at full capacity.
- The sites should be enabled to meet the municipal needs covering electcity, waste rand sanitation, garbage picking arrangements, crews, etc.
- The road link between ski adjutant town and other tourist sites/points be developed/improved instantly.
- The ski events and competition should be organized at ski points as prominent winter sports activities with the help of national / state government departments Tourism, Sport and Youth Affairs. The happening of such events and completions would be given wide speared publicity through print and electronic media.

d) Congress and Expo tourism

One of the most important means for promoting tourism is to organize, conferences, malas, expo/galas and congresses and the same tools could be deployed to promote/exploit the tourism potential of AJK. This sort of activities could be promoted in areas and cities like Rawalakot, Mirpur, Kotli, Bagh and Muzaffarabad, where suitable infrastructure already available and climatic/weather condition are alternatively favorable in both seasons. While at other prizing sites/ areas lacking in infrastructure for similar events may also be strengthened and upgraded including Neelum Valley, Chikkar and Sudan Ghali, Tolipeer, Ghorimar, Banjosa, etc. These potential and attractive sites could be improved and harvested in a most advantageous way with small inputs. Only there is a need to develop some basic civic facilities while accommodation and conference halls/ venues could be hired from educational institutions in the vicinity during summer as well as in winter.

Strategies:

- The stratagem here would rest achieving upon the following objective:
- Provide guidance for organizing conference/ events could be provided to encourage private sector along with sound incentive policies.
- Initiate some better organizational and administrative interventions in existing cultural events/Mellas/Uras. As these events are already happening at larger scale throughout AJK so these could be brought under such arrangements easily.
- Extend new traveling facilities to these cities/points and improved the existing facilities up to the appropriate standard.
- Organize well structured environmental layout plan, city/site specific transportation plan and an outlay of restaurant services and boarding lodging facilities to yield maximum benefits from tourist related such initiatives.
- Give guidance for realization of environmental layout plans, sites transport plan city/site related transportation plan and an outlay of restaurant service and boarding lodging to make these event more meaningful and consequential
- Invite tourism fraternity for guidance and support in planning and organizing such activities sustainability.
- Prepare introductory material and brochures for promotional campaigns within AJK and outside it.

Actions:

- Consultative meeting should be arranged with a view to work out the organizational needs for the development of congresses, melas, tourism areas and improve these activities where such events are already in practice and thereafter, at other potential sites.
- Tourism department should take lead and play active role for initiating and sustainability of these vents through close collaboration with other actors working in the tourism filed.
- Adequate arrangements for transport, accommodation/ bed space and other creational activities be in placed and organizations capable to attract and handle tourist inflow be actively engaged.
- Fairs and exposition events should be taken as strategic interventions for promoting and sustainability of tourism activities in AJK.
- For such event in targeted places/ cities, some concerted efforts should be made to bring local administration / government, educational institutions and chamber of commerce on board.
- Make well structured environmental layout plan, city /site specific transportation plan and an outlay of restaurant services and boarding lodging facilities to yield maximum benefits from tourist related such initiatives.

- Universities should be persuaded to work for starting associated degree program for event management , fair organizers and allied staff.
- Provide guidance for realization of environmental layout plans, sites transport plan city/site related transportation plan and an outlay of restaurant services and boarding lodging to make these event more meaningful and consequential.

3.4.6: Media and Marketing tools for Tourism Promotion

For harvesting tourism potential optimally, numerous promotion and marketing tourism activities have to be undertaken at each site/area or destination, which may needs multifaceted information about the subject markets and their trends and characteristics The main objectives of the promotion and marketing strategy to introduce a line of action that concentrate on the tourist aspirations and desires of the tourists to benefits from these activities.

Strategies:

- Organizing road shows in domestic markets at all provincial level.
- Celebrating fairs, festivals & galas.
- Publicity through media, T.V terms, trade representatives, film makers, distribution of literature, newsletters, posters, calendars, magazines,
- Campaign and publicity at airports, malls, busy areas etc.
- Use of information technology via websites, mobile applications, YouTube, domains, social networking and screens

Actions:

- The promotion and marketing strategy should:
- Stress on promotional efforts for enhancing Public and Private Cooperation in developing different approaches for extending grants to the Private entities in line with the promotional activities by the government as AJK's part of financing.
- Indentify some measures to promote and highlight the salient features of the AJK peaceful society, particularly with ample will and determination to serve the guests tourist community in their hospitality dominated traditional behavior.
- Proactively initiate promotion and marketing activities at each area/site with an aim of clear identification of tourism activities happening at different places.
- Decisively promote the group tourism fame tours as an effective mode to harvest tourism from the market wherein education and training play pivotal role.
- Tourism Department AJK has to take lead in promotion of educational activities, sensitization moves and training efforts seeking insight from the areas already undertaking such initiatives.
- Constantly impart input to the course content of training classes and along with the educational material already in practice in education/training institutions to make it more meaningful.
- An interactive and dynamic Tourism portal be developed and live booking.com be ensured with close collaboration of private hospitality sector.
- Enable Tourism Department AJK to interact proactively with the institutes imparting tourism related educational/training in order to align the course contacts/syllabi and training modules/material according to AJK's qualitative and quantitative needs as well as to improve the skills and capabilities of graduates joining tourism through regular training.

3.4.7: Identification and Conservation of heritage assets and religious sites

Faith Historical and Cultural tourism are the popular branches of tourism and AJK quite rich in this potential, which comprises of plenty of tourism potential-shrines, mosques, Mandir/Temples, Forts, Ruins etc. In its district Mirpur, Bhimber Kotli, Poonch, Bagh and Muzaffarabad and beside a few other attractive spots in these and neighboring districts. The faith tourism also helps to upgrade cultural and historical heritage along with health and thermal tourism potential manifold due to its wider spread and greater connection with targeted community in the State and adjacent areas of Punjab and KPK. These will also get popularity in the oversea population and thus, scope of promoting international tourists having Kashmiri origin will also be enhanced.

Strategies:

- Identification, protection and rehabilitation of the archaeological assets of AJ&K.
- Mapping of archaeological and historical religious sites
- Channelizing the expertise of private organization for conservation of heritage sites.
- Establishment of cultural historical and environmental museum.

Actions:

- Restore historical buildings and improve accommodation and other facilities at these sites through joint efforts of the Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department.
- Provide better road link and greater publicity is also needing substantial efforts to improve inter/intra city link and inter provincial road network.
- Launch wider campaigns for promoting faith tourism along with water and other sport as well as cultural, historical and thermal tourism through integrated efforts.
- Make faith tourism as an integral part of the tourism initiatives in AJK.
- Complement the services render by community, religious elites, and government departments for faith tourism promotion.
- Provide adequate technical support for planning & implementing Faith Tourism endeavor to achieve maximum benefits from effort in this area.
- Adopt holistic and integrated approach to promote faith tourism with better accessible more conveniently.
- Proactively organize stalls during fairs/Malas/tourism events to support publicity efforts for introducing these potential sites covering diversified tourism activities

3.4.8.: Improve effective coordination of other departments complementing tourism promotion and development.

This strategy stresses on the most urgent need of raising awareness among the stakeholders, particularly, the policy designer and decision makers in continuous education, customer satisfaction and total Quality management concepts in the tourism sector. Tourism cannot be promoted in isolation. It is an industry so a whole value chain be identified to get a wholesome impact. For safety and risk management, Police, Army and Disaster. Management related departments and organizations need to be taken on board. For the provision of enough quantity and better quality food, accommodation, transport etc. More department need to have shared planning. For awareness regarding environment, cleanliness and other aspects more departments to be collaborated. To achieve this important purpose following strategies are chalked out:-

Strategies:

1. Value chain or allied industries be linked with tourism sector. Collective efforts to promote allied businesses which may impact local income generation.
2. Destination Management organizations be established with all stakeholders representation.
3. The responsibility of promotion, exploration, attraction, safety and security and retaining of tourists visiting to the state will be shared by other relevant departments with Tourism Department
4. A close Coordination between stakeholders including Tourism department, Environment agency and forest department and NGOs be established to ensure efficient service delivery without posing a threat to the existing environment in the area/site.
5. Tourism police with special features of unique uniform, motor bikes and vehicles for petrolling be ensured.
6. To ensure safety and security of the tourists with complete assistance of law enforcement agencies. Disaster management and guidance be given to tourist for the assurance of peaceful environment in AJK.
7. To ensure maximum provision of local cuisine, raw material in the form of agriculture & livestock department.
8. Zoning of specialties of flora & fauna of AJK be identified and protected for tourists attraction in collaboration of Forest Department.
9. Tourists guides, volunteers for awareness campaigns, story tellers, internships in service sector etc. all these need pre-identification of interested youth. Education department be taken on board for the purpose
10. Standardization and categorization of private hospitality sector be regularly watched in close collaboration of District Administration

Actions:

1. Effective coordination with police department and private NGOs for safeguarding activities.
2. Proper code of conduct for tourists and stakeholders be adopted.
3. Dangerous sites be identified with the help of other concerned departments and assigned sign boards be fixed.
4. More vegetable farms, fruit orchards and medicinal plants be grown with the help of Agriculture Department.
5. Dairy Farms to provide local milk and yogurt to tourists be ensured. Department of Livestock to incentivize local community for venturing in this business.
6. Study to assess demand and supply of food for tourists be conducted by relevant department.
7. Marketing and trainings be imparted to the community by relevant departments.
8. Awareness campaigns, walk and workshops be arranged at grass root level by education, forest and tourism department.
9. Tourist guides training and compilation of local stories (to be handed over to guides) be materialized by Education Department.
10. Heritage sites be protected with the help of local administration and local building by laws be ensured to be in place with development authorities.

3.4.9: Inclusive economic growth

Last but not the least important part of our Mission i.e. Inclusive Growth be ensured by implementing all above strategies. Local communities to be empowered with more employment and business opportunities. Following strategies will be ensured in this regard:-

- Declaration of tourism sector as tourism industry
- Creation of employment opportunities
- empowering local communities by income generation

- Indigenous ownership of tourism industry
- public private joint ventures
- Promotion of niche products and facilities.



Section 4

RENGTHENING

Institutional strengthening of AJK tourism department is prerequisite to make it through alternative capacity building initiatives an efficient and leading organization capable to lead professionally that could provide dynamism and check vulnerability in the area due to couple of reasons including natural and manmade calamities.

A sound organizational set up capable to identify rich potential sites, promote tourism initiatives and regulate the tourism sectoral activities coupled with good governance practices in AJK. This includes constitution of specific site/ village / destinations specific committees or council at local, regional and state levels.

To start with broader vision along with comprehensive mission and targeted strategies legislation is the first step to be accomplished. Apart from the Tourism Policy,

AJK Tourism Department has enacted so far following legislations:-

- AJK Tourism Promotion Act, 2018.
- AJK Hotel & Restaurant Act & Rules, 2018
- AJK Travel Agencies Act & Rules, 2018
- AJK Tour Guide Act & Rules, 2018

Having strong legal backing AJK Tourism department is all set to further strengthen the institutional mechanism of the department to get all the objectives implemented with the help of enabling strategies we need some special arrangements as part of institutional set-up. Regulatory authority, R&D Wing, Archaeology Wing, Investors, facilitation wing and addition of some more I.T professional are also being made part of the policy.

4.1 Regulatory Authority:

Keeping in view the immense tourism potential of the State, the developmental initiatives both through public and private sector require immediate necessary steps by the GoAJ&K so that a comprehensive and viable policy plan could be implemented during establishment of tourism infrastructure. A regulatory system will be put in place for registration, certification, control, inspection, and application of punitive measures such as fines and cessation of operating in case of violations. Regulation will also

require a coordinated effort with participation from the Tourism Department, Environmental Protection Agency, Police, Labour Department, Fisheries and Wildlife Department, and Food Department.

The establishment of AJK Tourism Regulatory Authority being a government body, is aimed at to minimize the bureaucratic hurdles and to:-

- Facilitate communication between the government and the private sector about tourism sector-related challenges.
- Grant license to establish hotel/Motel/Guest House and Rest House following the criteria under approved legal & regulatory framework.
- Grant license to travel agents/tour operators following the criteria under approved legal & regulatory framework.
- Offer incentives and concessions to private sector for motivation to invest in tourism business in AJK.
- The AJK TRB shall have representation from all the concerned Public and Private stakeholders.
- The Board should discuss tourism related issues concerned with different ministries and ensure quick decision making to facilitate investors interested in tourism.

It is recommended to strengthen AJK Tourism Department to cope with the new challenges and to institutionalize the reforms. Looking at the expanded role of AJK Tourism Department, following functions should be added in the organization:

- Research wing should be created in the Department for developing tourism databases, statistics and monitoring trends.
- Establishment of archaeological & cultural wings is highly recommended.
- There should be some in-house expertise of IT available in the Department to act as “one window opportunity” to make maximum use of technology for tourism promotion and tourist facilitation.
- There should be an Investor Facilitation wing in the Department with the responsibility of identifying investment opportunities, developing feasibility studies and providing all the required information and facilitation to the investors interested in tourism sector projects.
- The existing wing of Tourist Information Center (TIC) should be strengthened by adding more human resource with professional expertise.





4.2 CONSTITUTION OF AJK TOURISM REGULATORY BOARD (AJK TRB):

- (1). The constitution of AJK Tourism Regulatory Board(AJK TRB) shall be made by the Chief Executive/Prime Minister, GoAJ&K;
- (2). The “AJK TRB” to promote, facilitate, coordinate, and oversee the proper execution of tourism developmental and promotional plans shall consist of the following,-

i. Secretary Tourism & Archeology	Chairperson
ii. Additional Secretary Home	Member
iii. Additional Secretary S&GD (Regulation)	Member
iv. Director General Tourism	Member/Secretary
v. Rep of AJK Hotels Association	Member
vi. Rep of AJK Tour Operators Association	Member

ToRs:

1. To propose amendment in the legislation regarding regulation of Tour operators, tour guides, hotels and restaurants.
2. To direct and supervise regulatory committees to act according to approved legislation.
3. To formulate DMOs along with comprehensive SOPs on case to case basis.
4. To monitor activities of DMOs as per approved SOPs
5. To convene meetings of DMOs and Regulatory Committees as and when required.
6. Ensure Standardization of Hotels, Motels & Restaurants via regulation committee.
7. Monitor hospitality sector of tourism via regulation committee & DMOs.
8. To create conducive complaint redressal system to address issues faced by tourists.
9. Ensure proper waste management system via concerned organization.
10. Awareness to locals to limited commercialization & promote eco-system

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (DMOs)

- 1) The AJK TRB shall establish Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) at identified potential destinations/sites, by framing out comprehensive and doable SOP's set out mutually/unanimously during the course of time;
- 2) The DMO's shall be comprised of local community of the area to be developed as tourist destination;
- 3) The DMO's shall operate under the guidance of AJK TRB and the role of AJK TRB shall be as facilitator and

- regulator only;
- 4) Under mutually set out SOP's, the DMO's shall enter into agreement with AJK TRB to operate, promote grassroots participation in tourism planning, decision-making and to strengthen the capacity of DMOs;
 - 5) The DMO's shall engage with AJK TRB and other actors to implement tourism-related policies, projects and activities - as agreed with the AJK TRB;
 - 6) The DMO's shall Report tourism-related issues occurring in destinations that require the attention of AJK TRB to address.
 - 7) The DMO's shall be also be established by the AJK TRB by providing road access, piped water and electricity including some incentives in shape of soft loans, telephone facilities etc.
 - 8) Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) at potential tourist areas shall be established and the local people shall be persuaded / involved to:
 - i. accommodate tourists in their houses by constructing additional accommodation or upgrading existing ones and to provide bed and breakfast facilities;
 - ii. establish camping sites and youth hostels (if appropriate land is available);
 - iii. say “NO” to any inorganic food products to be used within destination area;
 - iv. Introduce and market Local/Organic Food Villages (local food, vegetable, fruits, dairy products etc.);
 - v. promote local art & craft, folk lore, local/traditional sports, story-telling etc;
 - vi. evolve solid waste management strategy which should be embraced by each and every household including the business owners across the destination.

4.3.1 Other Legal Frameworks Relevant to Tourism:

1. The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Policy 2019 shall be supplemented with the laws prevailing in the jurisdiction of Azad Jammu and Kashmir including:
 1. Land Acquisition Law 1894
 2. Crown (Khalsa) Land Law 2012
 3. Crown (Khalsa) Land Rules 2012
 4. Transfer of the Immoveable Property Law 1987
 5. Notification No. 39 of 2011 on the Right to Use of Land
 6. Notification No. 11 of 2013,
 7. Foreign Investment Rules
 8. Labour Organization Law 2011
 9. Labour Dispute Law 2012
 10. Employment and Skill Development Law 2013
 11. Social Security Law 2012
 12. Minimum Wage Law 2013
 13. Occupation Health and Safety Law (expected in 2014)
 14. Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law 1998 (Amended by Law No. 1 of 2009)
 15. Environment Conservation Law 2012

16. Environment Conservation Regulations 2014

End