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CITIZEN-CENTRIC GOVERNANCE: SHAPING A BETTER FUTURE

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, in his monthly radio program *Mann Ki Baat*, India's Prime Minister, highlighted the critical importance of citizen-centric governance. This emphasis underscores the government's commitment to placing citizens at the core of policymaking and governance processes. By advocating for more inclusive, transparent, and accountable systems, the Prime Minister aims to ensure that governance reflects the needs, aspirations, and welfare of the common people. This focus on citizen-centric governance is seen as a step toward strengthening democracy, enhancing public participation, and fostering a deeper connection between the government and its citizens.

WHAT IS CITIZEN-CENTRIC GOVERNANCE?

Citizen-centric governance refers to a governance approach that prioritizes the needs, interests, and well-being of the citizens at the heart of public administration and policy-making. It emphasizes creating systems and processes that are responsive, efficient, and transparent, ensuring that government actions align with the demands and expectations of the people it serves.

1. Inclusion and Participation: Actively involving citizens in decision-making processes, such as policy formulation, legislative decisions, and community development. This ensures that people have a say in matters that impact their lives.

2. Transparency: Ensuring that government processes, decisions, and actions are open to scrutiny, making information accessible to citizens and allowing them to hold government officials accountable.

3. Responsiveness and Efficiency: Delivering public services that are effective, timely, and meet the needs of the citizens. This includes reducing bureaucracy, improving service delivery, and addressing public concerns promptly.

4. Accountability: Citizens are empowered to hold public officials responsible for their actions, demanding action when promises are not kept and ensuring that policies are implemented as intended.

PRINCIPLE OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC GOVERNANCE:

Citizen-centric governance prioritizes the needs, welfare, and rights of citizens in government actions.

1 . Rule of Law: Ensures clear legal rights and swift access to justice for all citizens, protecting individual rights.

2. Transparency: Promotes open decision-making processes, making information about policies and governance readily available to foster trust.

3. Accountability: Holds government officials responsible for their actions, allowing citizens to demand explanations and report grievances.

4. Decentralization: Empowers local communities by delivering services and decision-making closer to citizens, enhancing responsiveness.

5. Responsive Institutions: Establishes agile government institutions that can quickly adapt to the needs and challenges of the population.

6. Efficiency: Delivers government services effectively and promptly, minimizing delays and ensuring optimal use of public resources.

RECENT INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE *CITIZEN-CENTRIC GOVERNANCE:*

Initiative	Description	Key Achievements/Impact
Sushasan Saptah & Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur Campaign	Nationwide campaigns addressing public grievances and improving service delivery.	Over 51,000 grievance camps, 2.99 crore applications disposed, 3.4 lakh grievances redressed.
Digital India	Promoting e-governance and digital platforms for citizen services.	Increased access to online services like MyGov and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
CPGRAMS	Upgraded grievance redressal system to resolve public complaints efficiently.	Over 3.4 lakh grievances were redressed during the 2024 campaign.
Abhinav Pahal	Encouraging districts to adopt	Districts implementing best practices

Initiative	Description	Key Achievements/Impact
	successful governance models.	from award-winning initiatives.
National Good Governance Webinars	Webinars on best governance practices, particularly in e-governance and public service delivery.	Over 1,000 field officers participated in 6 webinars in 2024.
State Collaborative Initiative Scheme (SCI)	Supporting state governments with projects to enhance governance and public service delivery.	Rs. 16.22 crore was released for 15 new projects in various states.
POSH Act Awareness	Workshops raising awareness on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, ensuring safer workplaces.	Key workshops were conducted for awareness of POSH Act 2013 provisions.
Rajbhasha Kirti Award	Award for excellence in promoting Hindi in official communications.	DARPG awarded First Prize for Hindi usage in official functions (2023-24).
Women in Civil Service	Empowering women leaders and promoting gender inclusivity in governance.	Virtual roundtable with key women leaders on International Women's Day.

ISSUES STILL PERSIST:

1. Digital Divide: Limited internet access in rural areas excludes many from digital services like e-Governance and DBT.

2. Bureaucratic Delays: Slow grievance redressal and application processing hinder timely resolution.

3. Lack of Awareness: Many citizens remain unaware of their rights and available services, limiting engagement.

4. Corruption & Lack of Transparency: Despite reforms, corruption and opacity still obstruct effective service delivery.

5. Uneven Implementation: Disparities in the adoption of initiatives across states create inconsistent service delivery.

6. Gender & Social Inequalities: Gender and social biases persist, affecting access to services and representation.

7. Rural Grievance Resolution: Grievance systems are less accessible in rural areas, limiting timely support.

8. Overload of Grievances: High volumes of complaints overwhelm systems, causing delays and unresolved issues.

CONCLUSION

Citizen-centric governance in India has gained momentum through initiatives like Sushasan Saptah, Digital India, and CPGRAMS, aiming to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency. These efforts focus on improving service delivery, addressing grievances, and fostering accountability. Challenges like the digital divide, bureaucratic delays, uneven implementation, and gender/social inequalities persist, requiring further reforms. Despite these hurdles, the push for citizen engagement and responsive governance continues to strengthen democracy and better align government actions with the people's needs.

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Citizen-centric governance aims to prioritize the needs, interests, and welfare of citizens in government actions.

2. The Sushasan Saptah & Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur Campaign primarily focuses on promoting digital literacy in urban areas.

3. CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) is an initiative to resolve public complaints efficiently.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

A. Only one

B. Only two

C. All three

D. None

Answer: A

Q. Discuss the concept of citizen-centric governance and examine the recent initiatives taken by the Indian government to promote it. What challenges persist in its implementation, and how can these be addressed to ensure more inclusive and efficient governance? (250 words, 15 marks)

Ritik singh

LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM IN INDIA: ILLUMINATING MARITIME HERITAGE AND DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH
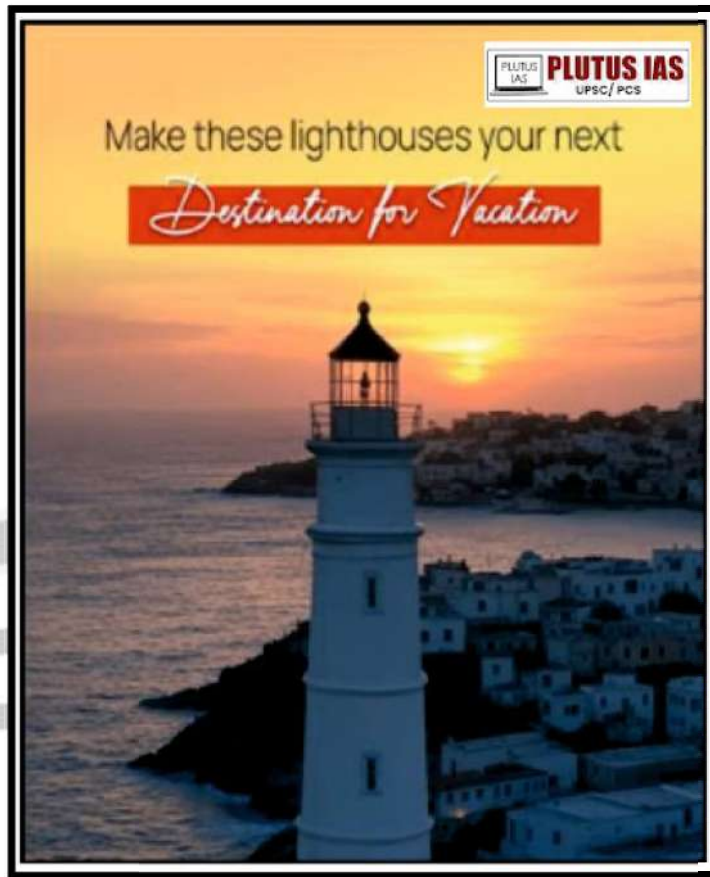
WHY IN THE NEWS?

India, with a coastline spanning over 7,500 kilometers and home to 204 lighthouses, is now witnessing a transformative initiative by the Government of India. Traditionally serving as navigational aids for seafarers, these iconic structures are being reimagined as tourism destinations under the government's developmental vision. This initiative seeks to preserve the historical and architectural significance of lighthouses while unlocking their potential for economic growth and community empowerment.

WHAT IS LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM?

Lighthouse tourism involves transforming lighthouses and their surrounding areas into vibrant tourist attractions. Often situated in scenic coastal or island settings, these structures uniquely blend natural beauty, maritime history, and recreational activities. The Central Government is promoting lighthouse tourism as part of its Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 to preserve India's cultural heritage and maritime legacy. This initiative seeks to boost India's tourism potential, create employment opportunities, and foster local economic growth.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM:

Significance Of
Lighthouse
Tourism in India

A 400% rise in footfall, from **4 lakh visitors in 2014** to **16 lakhs in 2023-24**

Dedicated 75 iconic lighthouses across 9 coastal states and 1 union territory, lighthouses now feature museums, amphitheaters, and parks, enhancing their appeal.

As of September 2024, the current fiscal year 2024-25 has already welcomed more than **10 lakh visitors.**

Creation of over **150 direct and 500 indirect jobs** in hospitality, transport, and local crafts for the local communities.

Job Creation: The initiative has led to the creation of 150 direct and 500 indirect employment opportunities in sectors like hospitality, transportation, tour operations, and local crafts, boosting livelihoods in surrounding areas.

Economic Boost: Increased tourist footfall has directly benefited local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shops, and artisans, fostering economic activity in coastal regions.

Preservation of Heritage: With a ₹60 crore investment, 75 iconic lighthouses have been developed with modern amenities like museums, amphitheaters, and children's parks, ensuring the conservation of India's maritime history while making it accessible to the public.

Tourist Attraction: In 2023-24, these lighthouses attracted 16 lakh visitors, a significant rise from just 4 lakh visitors in 2014, marking a 400% increase in footfall. In 2024-25, over 10 lakh tourists visited by September, including more than 5 lakh between April and June 2024, showcasing their growing popularity.

Community Empowerment: Tourism has empowered local communities by creating opportunities for skill development and enhancing participation in tourism-related activities, uplifting livelihoods.

Global Appeal: The initiative under Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 aligns with India's vision to showcase its maritime and cultural legacy, drawing attention from both domestic and international tourists.

Sustainable Tourism: By integrating eco-friendly practices and promoting heritage conservation, the initiative ensures tourism development aligns with environmental and cultural preservation.

Enhanced Infrastructure: The development of tourist-friendly facilities has transformed lighthouses into hubs for history, adventure, and leisure, making them unique travel destinations that appeal to diverse demographics.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND SCHEMES TO PROMOTE LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM IN INDIA

Initiative/Scheme	Details
Indian Lighthouse Festival	– The 1st **Bharatiya Prakash Stambh Utsav** was inaugurated on **23rd September 2023** at Fort Aguada, Goa by Union Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal and Goa CM Shri Pramod Sawant.
	– The 2nd Festival was held in Odisha, where two lighthouses at Chaumuck (Balasore) and Dhamra (Bhadrak) were dedicated, promoting maritime heritage and tourism.
Stakeholders Meeting	– A stakeholders' meet chaired by Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in **Kerala (July 2024)** strategized the promotion of lighthouse tourism and revitalization of these structures as vibrant tourist destinations.
Sagarmala Programme	– A national program leveraging India's coastline and waterways to promote economic development through projects like **coastal circuits**, **cruise tourism infrastructure**, and **lighthouse development**.
Swadesh Darshan Scheme	– Provides financial assistance for developing tourism infrastructure in **state and UT-administered areas**. Includes the **Coastal Circuit** as a thematic focus and a **Challenge-Based Destination Development** sub-scheme.
Incredible India Campaign	– A flagship initiative under the Ministry of Tourism to promote India as a global tourist destination, highlighting its diverse heritage, including coastal and maritime attractions like lighthouses.

Initiative/Scheme	Details
National Heritage Complex Development	– Focuses on preserving and promoting heritage sites, integrating lighthouses into broader national efforts to conserve cultural landmarks.
National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism	– Aims at sustainable tourism by emphasizing **environmental sustainability**, **resource efficiency**, and long-term management practices for tourism destinations, including lighthouses.
75 Lighthouses Development	– **75 iconic lighthouses** were developed with amenities such as **museums, amphitheaters, and parks** in **February 2024** with a **₹60 crore investment**, underlining their cultural and recreational significance.
Future National Framework	– Plans are underway to establish a **national framework** aimed at empowering coastal communities and promoting sustainable development around lighthouses.

THE POTENTIAL OF LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM IN INDIA

Scenic Locations: Positioned along India's vast coastline and remote islands, many lighthouses provide stunning panoramic sea views, making them ideal for nature enthusiasts and photographers.

Historical Significance: Some lighthouses date back centuries and are situated near UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, enhancing their cultural and architectural appeal.

Adventure and Recreation: These sites can host activities such as trekking, boating, and water sports, catering to adventure seekers and families alike.

Economic Growth: Developing lighthouse tourism creates employment opportunities in hospitality, transportation, and local handicrafts, fostering regional economic development.

Government Initiative: Recognizing their potential, the government has identified lighthouse tourism as a priority area under its Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

Modern Facilities: In February 2024, PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 75 lighthouses equipped with tourist facilities, including museums, amphitheaters, children's parks, and more, with a ₹60 crore investment.

Tourist Footfall: The dedicated lighthouses attracted 16 lakh visitors in 2023-24, a significant rise from 4 lakh visitors in 2014, reflecting a 400% increase. By September 2024, over 10 lakh tourists had already visited in the current fiscal year.

Sustainable Tourism: The initiative promotes sustainable tourism practices by preserving the historical and ecological integrity of lighthouses while enhancing their appeal as global travel destinations.

HURDLES LIMITING THE REALIZATION OF LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM POTENTIAL IN INDIA

Infrastructure Limitations: Many lighthouses are in remote areas with poor connectivity, like Kochi and Sundarbans, limiting access and footfall. This reduces tourism potential and revenue generation.

Environmental Concerns: Tourism development can negatively impact fragile ecosystems, as seen at Alappuzha Lighthouse in Kerala. The surrounding backwaters face ecological threats from infrastructure.

Lack of Awareness: Lighthouse tourism gained momentum after the 2023 Indian Lighthouse Festival, showing prior low awareness. This limits tourist interest and growth potential.

Regulatory Issues: Strict security measures at sites like Mangalore Lighthouse restrict public access. These regulations hinder tourist engagement and development.

Coastal Community Involvement: In places like Goa, local communities weren't initially involved in tourism planning, limiting their benefits. Tourism revenue wasn't reinvested into community development.

Seasonal Tourism Impact: Lighthouse tourism in coastal regions faces seasonal fluctuations, as seen in Odisha. Off-season declines affect profitability and operational sustainability.

Insufficient Skill Development: Limited skill-building programs in Tamil Nadu prevent locals from benefiting from tourism growth. Lack of hospitality and guiding skills restricts job opportunities.

Private Sector Challenges: High investment costs and risks deter private players, as in the Sundarbans. Developing tourism infrastructure in ecologically sensitive areas faces slow progress.

Heritage Conservation: Balancing preservation with modern tourism at Kanyakumari Lighthouse is challenging. The need for new facilities conflicts with maintaining the structure's historical integrity.

WAYS TO TAP THE POTENTIAL OF LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM IN INDIA

Strategy	Details
Sustainable Development	– Emphasis on **eco-friendly practices** to protect fragile coastal ecosystems and ensure the long-term viability of lighthouse tourism.
Integration with Coastal Circuits	– Lighthouses are integrated into **broader coastal tourism circuits** to enhance their appeal and connect them with other cultural and natural landmarks.
Awareness Campaigns	– Launching **digital initiatives** and campaigns to showcase lighthouse destinations, targeting both domestic and international audiences.
Skill Development	– Introducing **training programs** to equip local communities with skills for employment in **hospitality and tourism-related sectors**, fostering local economic growth.
Alignment with "Atmanirbhar Bharat"	– Aligning lighthouse tourism development with **Prime Minister Modi's "Atmanirbhar Bharat"** vision to foster self-reliant India, integrating maritime heritage into the nation's economic growth strategy.
Preservation of Maritime Biodiversity	– Focus on **preserving the environment** surrounding lighthouses, protecting India's rich **maritime biodiversity** while promoting tourism.
Experiential and Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel	– Catering to the growing demand for **experiential tourism** by offering tourists the opportunity to engage with local cultures, enjoy scenic landscapes, and participate in activities around lighthouses.
Lighthouse Festivals and Community Engagement	– Organizing **Indian Lighthouse Festivals** and **Stakeholders Meetings** to bring together local communities, tourism operators, and government bodies, fostering a sense of ownership and pride while benefiting local economies.
MIV 2030 Integration	– Incorporating lighthouse tourism into the **Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030)** initiative, linking lighthouses with larger coastal tourism circuits to boost global appeal.

CONCLUSION:

The government's ongoing efforts to develop lighthouse tourism are already yielding significant results, with millions of tourists visiting these iconic sites. By combining history, adventure, and natural beauty, lighthouses are becoming an integral part of India's tourism landscape. The focus on sustainable

development, community engagement, and environmental preservation ensures that lighthouse tourism will continue to drive economic growth in India's coastal regions.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. Which of the following are the advantages of the Lighthouse tourism?

1. Employment generation
2. Sustainable coastal tourism
3. Elimination of involvement of local communities.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Discuss the potential and significance of lighthouse tourism in India. What measures have been taken by the government to tap into the potential of lighthouse tourism and enhance its contribution to the economy and sustainable development? (Answer in 250 words)

Munde Dhananjay Navnath