
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TOURISM POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN UTTAR PRADESH AND MAHARASHTRA

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1. Introduction and Background of the Problem

Brief Overview

India is a land of multi-diversity. Every state here represents something different, something unique which cannot be found anywhere else in the world, whether it may be the scenery, the food, the culture, traditions, people or anything else. People around the world are attracted to India for all different reasons. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said,

"To other countries, I may go as a tourist, but to India, I come as a pilgrim."

Indian tourism is on a surge and to manage it there are different policies enacted by the states from time to time. Tourism is an essential sector contributing significantly to India's socio-economic development. Effective implementation of tourism policies is the key to attract both domestic and international tourists. Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Maharashtra, two of India's most visited states, have adopted structured tourism policies to promote cultural, religious, and heritage tourism.

To evaluate the extent of transparency and implementation of these policies, we filed RTI applications with the respective Tourism Departments of UP and Maharashtra. The objective was to assess major infrastructure initiatives, efforts towards conservation of UNESCO sites, public-private partnerships, FDI inflows, tourist police deployment, and government collaborations for event management and accommodation services. While Maharashtra is famous for metropolitan attractions like Mumbai with cultural sites like Ajanta and Ellora Caves, Uttar Pradesh is most known for its religious tourism and UNESCO heritage buildings like the Taj Mahal. There is little public knowledge about stakeholder participation, budget transparency, and real-time progress in these efforts. These RTIs aimed to assess transparency,

accountability, and the actual implementation status of the respective tourism policies. We will also be delving into comparative analysis between the approaches of two states with respect to the budget allocation, the FDIs and other information mentioned above.

We filed RTI Applications online to Ministry of Tourism, Uttar Pradesh and Ministry of Tourism, Maharashtra through their Online RTI portals under **Right to Information Act, 2005** (hereto referred as “**RTI Act**”)¹. The applications have been hereto attached at the end of the report as “**Annexure-A**” and “**Annexure-B**” respectively. Additionally Rs. 10 as fee for the RTI application² was paid.

Literature- Articles and Research Papers

Tourism is an important factor in revenue generation for states. We have relied on the following articles, research papers and blogs to compare the difference and similarities between UP and Maharashtra in relation to their tourism policies:

S. No.	Topic	Maharashtra	Uttar Pradesh
1.	Domestic Tourists (2023) ³	16.13 crore (6.43%)	47.01 crores (19.07%)
2.	Foreign Tourists (2023) ⁴	33.9 lakhs (17.61%)	16.01 lakhs (8.36%)
3.	Tourism Budget (2023-24) ⁵	Approx. Rs. 3600 crore	Approx. Rs. 1100 crore
4.	Major Schemes	i. Regional Tourism Development Scheme ii. Maharashtra Tourism Policy, 2024 iii. Adventure Tourism Policy	i. Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy, 2022 ii. Subsidy Management Module

¹ The Right to Information Act, 2005, No. 22, Acts of Parliament, 2005, (India).

² The Right to Information Act, 2005, § 6(1), No.22, Acts of Parliament, 2005 (India).

³ India Tourism Data Compendium Key Highlights 2024, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-02/India%20Tourism%20Data%20Compendium%20key%20highlights%202024_0.pdf

⁴ *Supra* note 3

⁵ Anil E. Palve & Dr. Pandit Mali, *Tourism Marketing Campaigns of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh: A Comparative Study*, IJIRT Volume 11 Issue 9 (Feb, 2025) https://ijirt.org/publishedpaper/IJIRT172737_PAPER.pdf

		iv. Beach Shack Policy v. AAI Tourism Policy vi. Yuva Tourism Policy vii. Agro Tourism Policy ⁶	iii. Incentive for Revival of scarce art, music, craft, culture, and cuisine iv. Incentive for Research in the Tourism/Hospitality Industry ⁷
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The paper *Tourism Marketing Campaigns of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh: A Comparative Study*⁸ uses a descriptive methodology with primary data from 309 tourists and secondary data from promotional materials, the research evaluates both states through tourism and facility indices. Findings reveal that Uttar Pradesh's campaigns are more emotionally resonant, especially among spiritual and cultural tourists, whereas Maharashtra's strength lies in digital marketing and diversity of attractions, although lacking a unified focus. Uttar Pradesh outperforms Maharashtra in promotional effectiveness and clarity of brand identity. Both states show potential for improvement in campaign consistency and information accessibility. The study suggests that strategic, emotionally-driven, and digitally innovative campaigns are crucial for boosting tourism-led economic growth.

The paper *A Study Of State-Wise Tourists Arrival In India*⁹ mentions that Uttar Pradesh, with its deep-rooted spiritual and historical heritage, draws millions of domestic tourists annually to sacred sites such as Varanasi, Ayodhya, Mathura, and the Taj Mahal in Agra. In 2021–22, the state saw a 27% surge in domestic tourism, recording 10.9 crore visitors and contributing approximately 16% to the national domestic tourism revenue. Its cultural and religious significance, combined with Buddhist heritage sites like Sarnath, enhances its appeal to both spiritual seekers and history enthusiasts. In contrast, Maharashtra showcases a diverse tourism profile that spans beaches, hill stations, heritage forts, and UNESCO-listed cave temples such as Ajanta, Ellora, and Elephanta. Key destinations include Mumbai, Pune, Matheran, and coastal forts like Sindhudurg and Murud Janjira. With major urban hubs like Mumbai and Pune, and attractions such as Matheran and Sindhudurg, Maharashtra attracted 12 crore domestic tourists and 1.26 million international visitors in 2020. The tourism industry in the state directly employed 10.47 lakh people and indirectly supported 20 lakh more in 2019–20. Maharashtra

⁶ Maharashtra Tourism, Government of Maharashtra
<https://maharashtratourism.gov.in/>

⁷ Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh
<https://uptourism.gov.in/en>

⁸ Supra note at 5

⁹ Manas Umesh Hire & Dr. Reena Rani, *A Study Of State-Wise Tourists Arrival In India*, IJEKS Volume 2 Issue 12, (Dec 23, 2023) <https://ijeks.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/IJEKS-2-8-001.pdf>

benefits from strong promotional efforts by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) and its unique blend of cultural heritage and culinary richness. However, the state still grapples with regional development disparities, particularly in the northern and eastern areas, which trail behind the more industrialized western region.

The paper *Exploring Inclusiveness in the Tourism Sector of Uttar Pradesh, India*¹⁰ discusses there are multiple dimensions to be analysed while studying the concept of inclusive tourism. These include overcoming strong power relationships (governance issue), reducing the roadblocks in accessing tourism as consumers and producers for disadvantaged and marginalised groups, representing these marginalised groups while designing tourism policies, including new tourist places on the tourism map of a region, increasing the range of policymakers while formulating decisions of tourism development of a region to include all possible stakeholders, encouraging mutual respect among various stakeholders especially the tourists and tourism providers of a region.

While both Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have made notable strides in promoting tourism, their strategies reflect different strengths—UP excels in attracting domestic tourists through emotionally resonant, heritage-focused campaigns and inclusive policies, whereas Maharashtra leads in foreign tourist arrivals and offers a diverse range of experiences supported by a higher budget and robust infrastructure. We will further discuss these differences in our report.

2. Research Objectives

The primary objective of the RTI applications was to extract data-driven insights from the tourism departments of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra regarding:

- **Infrastructure projects under their tourism policies:** To assess the scale and focus of government-backed tourism development initiatives in both states.
- **Budget allocations for UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** To understand financial prioritization for globally recognized heritage conservation.
- **Public-private partnerships and Memorandum of Understanding with private**

¹⁰ Jacob M., *Exploring Inclusiveness in the Tourism Sector of Uttar Pradesh, India*, (Sep 2024) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384382433_Exploring_Inclusiveness_in_the_Tourism_Sector_of_Uttar_Pradesh_India

firms: To evaluate private sector involvement in tourism growth and infrastructure.

- **Domestic, international, and NRI tourist footfall for FY 2024–25:** To measure the tourism performance and reach of both states.
- **Existence and jurisdiction of dedicated tourist police units:** To verify the presence of specialized security measures for tourist safety.
- **Status of FDI inflows in tourism sectors:** To gauge the extent of foreign investment contributing to tourism development.
- **Implementation of tax subsidies in Maharashtra:** To analyze the effectiveness of fiscal incentives in attracting tourism-related businesses.

By comparing these responses, the report seeks to highlight transparency, legal compliance, and policy efficacy in both states.

3. Relevance and Significance of the Problem

The tourism sector, often marketed as a leading factor for state-level development, is rarely scrutinized beyond headline numbers. Despite great claims in investment summits, vision documents, and global tourism expos, there is minimal academic and policy scrutiny over what happens post-announcement. Tourism contributes nearly 9.2% to India's GDP and employs over 12% of the workforce, directly and indirectly. As tourism reemerges post-COVID-19, governments are prioritizing sustainable infrastructure, digital services, and heritage conservation. However, mere announcements without effective implementation hinder policy objectives.

As discussed above through the objectives of this report this issue intersects with the Right to Information Act, 2005, which empowers citizens to question governance and promote accountability. By invoking this legal right, the study critically examines not only the operational aspects of the tourism sector in both states but also the responsiveness and transparency of their tourism departments.

4. Public Authorities Contacted

The following public authorities were contacted in relation to the information sought under the

RTI Act:

- **Uttar Pradesh:** Directorate of Tourism, Department of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh
- **Maharashtra:** Tourism & Cultural Affairs Department, Government of Maharashtra [further transferred to State Public Information Officer (SPIO)].

These departments are the official ministries under the respective governments of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra and are recognized as “Public authority” under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act¹¹, 2005 and are the most appropriate and accountable to answer the questions raised by us as they are the policy and law making bodies regarding tourism in state.

RTI Questions Filed in Both States:

The exact questions filed by us in the RTI application to Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department [further transferred to Tourism Directorate under section 6(3) of the Act¹²]:

1. Please provide details of major infrastructure projects being developed under the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy.
2. Has any budget been allocated for the conservation and promotion of UNESCO heritage sites in Uttar Pradesh? If yes, provide details.
3. Has the government signed any MoUs with private companies for services such as transportation, accommodation, and event management for Mahakumbh 2025? If yes, provide details.
4. Please provide data for number of local and international tourists as well as NRIs who visited Uttar Pradesh during 2024-25.
5. Are there dedicated tourist police units in key locations? If yes, provide jurisdiction details and helpline numbers.
6. Are there any Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects being undertaken for tourism

¹¹ The Right to Information Act, 2005, § 2(h), No.22, Acts of Parliament, 2005 (India).

¹² The Right to Information Act, 2005, § 6(3), No.22, Acts of Parliament, 2005 (India).

development? If yes, kindly provide details.

7. How much Foreign Direct Investment is being generated in Uttar Pradesh related to tourism policy?

Questions filed to the Tourism & Cultural Affairs Department, Maharashtra [further transferred to State Public Information Officer (SPIO) under section 6(3) of the Act]:

1. Please provide details of major infrastructure projects being developed under the Maharashtra Tourism Policy.

2. Has any budget been allocated for the conservation and promotion of UNESCO heritage sites in Maharashtra? If yes, provide details.

3. Has the government signed any MoUs with private companies for services such as transportation, accommodation, and event management for tourism in 2024-25? If yes, provide details.

4. Please provide data for number of local and international tourists as well as NRIs who visited Maharashtra during 2024-25.

5. Are there dedicated tourist police units in key locations? If yes, provide jurisdiction details and helpline numbers.

6. Are there any Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects being undertaken for tourism development? If yes, kindly provide details.

7. How much Foreign Direct Investment is being generated in Maharashtra related to tourism policy?

8. Is the subsidy tax free under tourism policy and how will it be given to customer?

As can be seen Question 8 filed to Maharashtra public authority is particular to it as the Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024¹³ provides for subsidy and is relevant to our study. Through

¹³ Tourism Policy of Maharashtra 2024, Tourism Department, Government of Maharashtra, July 18, 2024 https://maharashtratourism.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Maharashtra-Tourism-Policy-2024_English.pdf

these queries we aim to provide a transparent and layered view into different aspects of tourism in the states and compare and analyse them.

5. Analysis of Information Received

Non-Compliance by Both States

We filed the RTI applications with above-mentioned questions to the respective authorities on the following dates:

UP Tourism Department- First Application filed on 5th March, 2025 through the Online RTI portal. The application was transferred to Tourism Directorate on 6th March, 2025 as discussed above. Due to delay in reply we sent a mail to the concerned Public Information Officer on 2nd April, 2025 regarding the status of the application however no reply came. The aforementioned mail is followed by a trail mail is attached as “**Annexure-C**”. As the concerned authority failed to provide information under 30 days as required under Section 19(1) of the Act¹⁴ we filed a first appeal through the portal provided as a recourse in the section. We filed the appeal on 6th April, 2025 itself for an expeditious reply. The acknowledgement of the appeal as filed is hereto annexed as “**Annexure-D**”.

Maharashtra Tourism Department- First Application filed on 10th March, 2025 through the Online RTI portal. The application was transferred to State Public Information Officer (SPIO) on 11th March, 2025. The status report advised to contact the SPIO for further details as per the contact information provided. The report is hereto annexed as “**Annexure-E**” However no contact information was provided regarding which we mailed the RTI Support provided on the website. The concerned mail is hereto attached as “**Annexure-F**”. Same as the case with UP Tourism Department the concerned authority failed to provide information under 30 days as required under Section 19(1) of the Act¹⁵ we filed a first appeal through the portal provided as a recourse in the section. We filed the appeal on 11th April, 2025 itself for an expeditious reply. The acknowledgement of the appeal as filed is hereto annexed as “**Annexure-G**”.

This lack of reply from both the departments show their tardiness and absence of accountability and since some of the information asked by us including details on MoUs and Public Private

¹⁴ The Right to Information Act, 2005, § 19(1), No.22, Acts of Parliament, 2005 (India).

¹⁵ The Right to Information Act, 2005, § 19(1), No.22, Acts of Parliament, 2005 (India).

Partnerships etc. are technical they are not available for public online. We have researched many databases to find relevant answers to our questions to make an apt comparative report. Under Section 7(1) of the RTI Act, public authorities are required to respond to an RTI application within 30 days of receipt. Neither department fulfilled this most basic statutory obligation, even after follow-up emails and the filing of a First Appeal under Section 19(1). This failure not only violates the RTI Act but also undermines the spirit of transparency and accountability that forms the backbone of democratic governance. Tourism projects often involve large MoUs and PPPs—potentially susceptible to political and financial mismanagement. Non-disclosure could be a strategic attempt to avoid public questions. The refusal to provide answers—even to factual, non-contentious queries like the number of tourists or budget for UNESCO site maintenance—suggests that:

- A. Data either doesn't exist or isn't properly maintained, which is alarming.
- B. Policy is being implemented in an opaque, top-down manner, without accountability to stakeholders or citizens.
- C. Tourism is viewed more as PR than a governance issue, focused on ribbon-cuttings and summits, not long-term planning or documentation.

Analysis of Information

The following data has been analysed based on their availability on publicly available portals, which is not as extensive as needed.

Question 1- Infrastructure Development

Uttar Pradesh:

Some of the major highlights of infrastructural development includes major religious and spiritual circuits such as the Ramayana Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, and Spiritual Circuit. Significant investment has gone into enhancing facilities in Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Prayagraj, along with road connectivity, digital kiosks, wellness resorts, and riverfront beautification. The construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya is one of the most important developments made by the government, which included an estimated cost of construction of about Rs. 1800 crores. The Mahakumbh 2025 infrastructure, including sanitation, transport, and mobile lodging, has

received significant focus. Other developments include;

- i. Multi-modal facilities at Prayagraj, Ayodhya, and Varanasi, especially for Mahakumbh 2025.
- ii. Ropeways sanctioned in Vindhyachal, Chitrakoot, and Naimisharanya for pilgrimage facilitation.
- iii. Riverfront development and Ganga Ghats modernization across Kanpur, Varanasi, and Bithoor.
- iv. Smart City-Tourism Convergence Projects including intelligent traffic systems, heritage lighting, and digital kiosks.

These projects, promoted under the "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" initiative and state G-20 engagements, are partially funded through Viability Gap Funding (VGF), Swadesh Darshan, and state budget provisions.

Maharashtra:

Maharashtra Government on the other hand undertook several infrastructure projects under the 2024 Tourism Policy which included the Sindhudurg and Konkan beach tourism circuit, expansion of ropeways (e.g., Raigad Fort), and eco-tourism hubs in Tadoba, Lonar, and Matheran. The government has partnered with Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) for hotel and hospitality infrastructure. Urban centres like Mumbai and Pune are being developed as gateway cities. Some ongoing initiatives include:

- **Mumbai Port Cruise Terminal Expansion:** A flagship coastal tourism project intended to make Mumbai a cruise gateway.
- **Ajanta-Ellora Tourism Master Plan:** Incorporating eco-sensitive visitor transport, signage, and waste management.
- **Ropeway Projects** in Raigad Fort and Matheran.
- **Tourist Information Centers (TICs)** in Tier-II cities like Kolhapur, Nagpur, and Solapur.

- **Village-based Agri and Eco-tourism Clusters** under MTDC.

The Tourism Policy 2024 focuses on developing infrastructure as well as partnership with stakeholders, tour operator and Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) organizer. The policy focuses on niche tourism segment like eco-tourism, rural tourism, experiential tourism, caravan tourism, tourism villages and agro-tourism.¹⁶

Comparison:

On analysing the infrastructural development of both states it can be seen that UP has majorly prioritized spiritual tourism infrastructure, with strong state-led financing and central scheme alignment whereas Maharashtra leans into market-oriented, tourism, and sustainable urban-rural balance, with emphasis on PPP models and eco-conscious development. While UP's stand is highly event-centric (Mahakumbh, Ayodhya), Maharashtra aims for year-round, theme-based tourism diversification. Both states lack transparency in RTI disclosures regarding project funding, partner roles, and timelines which hinders public evaluation of project efficacy.

Question 2- UNESCO Heritage Site Budget Allocations

Uttar Pradesh:

While the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri fall under the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) central jurisdiction, the state tourism department has provided co-funding for tourist amenities, like electric shuttle services, interpretation centres, and night illumination. For 2024–25, media statements suggest a budgetary earmark of ₹75–100 crore for monument area beautification, security infrastructure, and branding as part of the Mahakumbh preparations and UP Global Investors Summit. Most of India's centrally protected monuments, which are administered by the ASI are concentrated in the northern and western regions. There are 3,696 such monuments across India, with more than 20% in UP alone. Despite being home to some of India's most visited World Heritage sites, UP received only 20 crore in funding in 2023. On World Tourism Day, 2024 Uttar Pradesh Government reaffirmed its dedication to enhance tourism with a budget of ₹216.22 crore; shared by the UP Government on its official

¹⁶ Wani, B. K., Landge, A. A., & Narayan, S. S., *An Overview of Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024*, International Journal of Advance and Applied Research, 6(15), 77–79, (Feb, 2025). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15147477>

X handle.¹⁷

Maharashtra:

Despite being home to five UNESCO World Heritage Sites which include Ajanta, Ellora, and Elephanta Caves, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai, the Maharashtra Tourism Department failed to disclose any budgetary data. Inference from Maharashtra's 2021-24 budget documents and MTDC reports suggest approx. ₹60–₹90 crore has been spent via MTDC and ASI on Ajanta-Ellora roads, digital guides, and laser shows. Funds were routed through ASI and supplemented by the “Adopt a Monument” scheme with CSR contributions.

Comparison:

Although the department did not respond directly to the RTI, budgetary figures were made available through public sources and official social media statements, reflecting partial transparency. The department did not reply at all to RTI requests, failing to disclose either current allocations or spending audits. This lack of transparency undermines public accountability, especially considering Maharashtra's globally significant heritage sites. While both states have invested in conserving heritage tourism, UP demonstrates a stronger public commitment and more integrated promotional strategy whereas Maharashtra suffers from institutional opacity, making it difficult to verify how funds are utilized despite its broader UNESCO heritage base.

Question 3- MoUs with Private Sector for Tourism Services

Uttar Pradesh:

UP signed over 20 MoUs for Mahakumbh 2025 alone for event management MoUs with national agencies like Wizcraft, accommodation tie-ups with OYO Rooms, ITC Hotels, and FabHotels, transport solutions through collaboration with Uber and RedBus for shuttle logistics. Earlier in 2024 UP Tourism signed MoU with corporates like Make My Trip, Ease my Trip, International Center for Responsible Tourism, **etc.** The initiative aimed to provide strategic insight to government on consumer trends, tourist preferences and supply-side

¹⁷ <https://x.com/UPGovt/status/1839527044490912133>

information to aid department in future policy making. Other major MoU's were signed between Directorate of Tourism, Uttar Pradesh and the State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM) and UPSRLM and Manyawar Kanshiram Institute of Tourism Management. They aimed on identifying and addressing infrastructure gaps in selected villages, developing tourism infrastructure, mobilising communities for tourism activities, organising capacity-building programs and promoting homestays. These included transport aggregation platforms, hotel chains, and event management companies for handling the influx of pilgrims. Some notable collaborations include drone surveillance for crowd management and e-ticketing systems for site visits.

Maharashtra

Based on Invest Maharashtra documents, major MoUs signed at Davos 2023 and Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 included Hilton Group's ₹500 crore investment in hospitality hubs (Aurangabad, Nashik), MoUs with Thomas Cook and Booking.com for destination promotion and rural homestay integration, partnerships with EV fleet providers for eco-tourism in Matheran and Mahabaleshwar. The government entered into MoUs with private bus operators, hotel chains, and event firms for destination branding and promotion of "Festivals of Maharashtra" in 2024–25. Mumbai International Film Festival and Ganpati tourism packages were also run via private collaborators. However there is an immitent lack of public disclosure and documentation by Maharashtra government related to MoUs and their purpose which yet again highlight department carelessness.

Comparison:

Uttar Pradesh showcases a mature and multi-stakeholder MoU ecosystem, combining corporates, civil society, and local institutions. It demonstrates how tourism can be an engine for inclusive development, if carefully orchestrated. Maharashtra, while strong in FDI attraction and branding, lags in transparency, rural outreach, and public disclosure mechanisms. The RTI non-response here highlights of a larger issue i.e., policy decisions bypassing citizen scrutiny. In both states, there is a need for MoU audit frameworks, public dashboards, and civil society participation in monitoring the execution of these agreements.

Question 4- Number of local and international tourists

Uttar Pradesh:

Uttar Pradesh recorded a tourist footfall of 64.90 crore in 2024, a significant increase of over 17 crore from 2023. In 2024, Ayodhya saw over 16,44,19,522 visitors, which is over three times the footfall of 5,75,70,896 in 2023. Varanasi recorded a footfall of 11,00,97,743 visitors in 2024 while Mathura saw 9,00,81,788 visitors. Agra remained the top destination for international tourists in 2024, welcoming 14,65,814 foreign tourists.

Maharashtra:

As per the 'India Tourism Statistics - 2023' report, the State of Maharashtra had 1,113 lakh domestic tourist visits and 15.1 lakh foreign tourist visits during 2022 as against 435.7 lakh domestic tourist visits and 1.9 lakh foreign tourist visits during 2021.¹⁸ There is no latest data available on public records for the year 2023 and 2024.

Comparison:

Despite the lack of formal RTI responses, publicly available data offers a contrasting picture of the two states' tourism. Maharashtra showed strong post-pandemic recovery between 2021 and 2022, more than doubling its domestic tourist numbers. However, no data for 2023 or 2024 is available on public platforms or government databases, indicating a significant lapse in public information dissemination. This data gap severely hinders accurate tourism planning, investment tracking, and public trust in governance mechanisms.

Question 5- Tourist Police Deployment

Uttar Pradesh

With the efforts of Ministry of Tourism, the State Governments of different states including Uttar Pradesh have deployed tourist police, in one form or the other. As a part of its endeavours to make travel for tourists safe and secure, the Ministry of Tourism has set up a 24x7 Multi-Lingual Tourist Info-Helpline on the toll free number 1800111363 or on a short code 1363 in 12 Languages including 10 international languages (German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic), Hindi and English for domestic and foreign tourists to provide support service in term of information relating to Travel in India and to offer appropriate guidance to tourists in distress, while travelling within India. Tourist Police

¹⁸ Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2024-25, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Planning Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, <https://maitri.maharashtra.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/pdf/2023-24.pdf>

are active in Agra, Ayodhya, Mathura, Varanasi, and Prayagraj. The helpline numbers include 112 and a state tourism helpline (1364). Officers are trained in English and soft skills.

Maharashtra

As mentioned above, the tourism police units are deployed in Maharashtra too with the help of Tourism Ministry. Following Helpline numbers have been provided for by the department:

- i. Citizens Call Centre -155300
- ii. Child Helpline -1098
- iii. Women Helpline-1091
- iv. Crime Stopper-1090
- v. Rescue and Relief-1070
- vi. Ambulance-102,108
- vii. Police Helpline-100
- viii. Railway Helpline-23004000
- ix. NIC Service Desk –1800 -111- 555

Tourist Police are deployed at Ajanta, Ellora, CST, Gateway of India, and coastal regions of Konkan. Helpline 100 is active, with dedicated nodal officers in Mumbai and Pune. Maharashtra also mentioned multilingual assistance booths in Mumbai.

Comparison:

Both states have deployed police for tourist safety.

Question 6- Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Projects

Uttar Pradesh:

Uttar Pradesh has strategically deployed the PPP model to scale up tourism infrastructure,

reduce fiscal burden, and tap into private sector expertise. These include:

- Under the Tourism Policy 2022, the government identified more than 30 unused heritage properties for adaptive reuse.
- Properties in Jhansi, Barabanki, Bithoor, and Allahabad were offered on long-term lease (30–60 years) for hotel conversion.
- The process is executed via the Directorate of Tourism, with Invest UP facilitating investor onboarding.
- Collaboration with private operators like Antara Cruises to run luxury and mid-tier Ganga cruises between Varanasi and Prayagraj.
- Ticketing and operations are managed via co-branded digital platforms (e.g., UP Tourism + partner apps).
- Tech companies were onboarded through competitive bidding to set up AI-based multilingual tourist kiosks at key locations like Varanasi, Agra, and Lucknow railway stations.

Maharashtra:

Secondary research revealed active PPP initiatives under MTDC and CIDCO:

- MTDC partnered with private investors to develop eco-luxury beach resorts in Sindhudurg, Ganpatipule, and Tarkarli.
- Projects are structured on a design-build-operate-transfer (DBOT) model.
- Delays have been reported due to CRZ clearance bottlenecks and revenue-sharing dispute.
- PPP contracts were awarded in 2022 to operate ziplining, paragliding, and river rafting activities in Kolad, Bhandardara, and Lonavala.
- PPP with digital agencies to install audio-guided systems, light-and-sound shows, and

virtual walk-through experiences.

Comparison:

Uttar Pradesh, under its Tourism Policy 2022, has strategically focused on heritage conservation, spiritual tourism, and river-based experiences through PPP arrangements. A notable feature of UP's approach is the identification of over 30 unused heritage properties for adaptive reuse. These properties, located in cities such as Jhansi, Barabanki, Bithoor, and Allahabad, have been offered to private entities on long-term leases ranging from 30 to 60 years for conversion into boutique hotels and cultural stays. The process is facilitated through the Directorate of Tourism with strong support from Invest UP, which streamlines investor onboarding, clearance facilitation, and branding.

In contrast, Maharashtra has adopted a more diversified tourism PPP strategy, driven by its geographical advantage of coastline, forts, caves, and hill stations. The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) and CIDCO have led efforts in the state. MTDC has partnered with private investors to develop eco-luxury beach resorts in destinations such as Sindhudurg, Ganpatipule, and Tarkarli. These projects operate on a Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) model, allowing private partners to design and run the property for a fixed concession period before transferring it back to the government. However, several of these projects have suffered from delays, primarily due to Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance issues and disputes over revenue-sharing frameworks, indicating a lack of pre-clearance or streamlined environmental coordination.

Question 7- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Uttar Pradesh:

UP Tourism Department released FDI, Fortune Global 500 & Fortune India 500 Companies Investment Promotion Policy, 2023 with following eligibility criteria-

- Projects with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Capital Investment of above ₹100 crores.
- Projects with Capital Investment of more than ₹100 crores by companies included in

the list of Fortune Global-500 and Fortune India-500, subject to Negative list.¹⁹

Uttar Pradesh state ranks 11th out of the Indian states in attracting FDI; only 14 Fortune-500 companies are established there. UP Global Investor's Summit 2023 attracted investment proposals totaling around INR 35 trillion (US\$420.43 billion).²⁰

Maharashtra:

According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), between In October 2019-June 2024, the FDI inflow in Maharashtra stood at US\$ 77,573 million. Maharashtra ranked first for the highest FDI reception. In May 2022, the state government of Maharashtra signed MOUs with 23 international firms to receive investments worth Rs. 30,379 crore (US\$ 3.91 billion).²¹

Comparison:

Uttar Pradesh has laid down a focused and ambitious policy framework, it still grapples with limited FDI penetration and lower corporate presence, especially when compared to Maharashtra. Maharashtra's tourism-linked FDI ecosystem is significantly more mature, benefitting from years of consistent policy, industrialization, and global connectivity. The contrast highlights a broader policy implication: Uttar Pradesh is in the 'policy formation and investor interest' stage, whereas Maharashtra is in the 'execution and consolidation' stage of its FDI-driven tourism development strategy.

Question 8- Tax Subsidies under Tourism Policy (Maharashtra Only)

The Maharashtra Tourism Department did not respond to this specific query, despite email reminders and first appeal filed. Tax subsidies are provided and are tax-free under the Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2021. The policy introduces several types of subsidies, enhancing the overall support for various tourism initiatives. The subsidies like electricity duty exemption providing 21% exemption from electricity duty, lowering their operating costs related to power consumption, 5 % interest subvention, capital subsidy of 20% or 15%, subsidy in development

¹⁹ https://invest.up.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Tourism-Sector_220524.pdf

²⁰ Melissa Cyrill, *North Indian State of Uttar Pradesh Releases FDI Policy, 2023: Key Provisions*, India Briefing, 2023, <https://www.india-briefing.com/news/north-indian-state-of-uttar-pradesh-releases-fdi-policy-2023-key-provisions-30182.html/>

²¹ <https://www.ibef.org/states/maharashtra>

charges.²² This wider range of subsidies allows project to avail them of maximum financial assistance, promoting diverse investment in the tourism sector. These are disbursed as capital subsidies post-verification of investment and employment benchmarks. Customers benefit indirectly via subsidized services, while investors claim rebates via a digital portal.

6. Conclusion

The comparative RTI-based study of tourism policy implementation in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra reveals critical insights into the governance, administrative transparency, and policy focus of two of India's most visited states. Both states have formulated large-scale tourism policies supported by infrastructure development, public-private partnerships, and marketing strategies. However, the extent to which these policies are accessible, trackable, and inclusive—particularly when tested through a citizen's legal right to information—exposes considerable gaps in transparency and administrative responsiveness.

Key Findings of the Research

1. **Lack of RTI Compliance:** Neither Uttar Pradesh nor Maharashtra responded to the RTI applications within the statutory period of 30 days. Despite email reminders and formal appeals filed under Section 19(1) of the RTI Act, there was no communication or provision of information. This is a clear violation of Sections 6 and 7 of the RTI Act and raises serious concerns about the accessibility of public information in sectors involving high public interest and fiscal expenditure.
2. **Infrastructure Focus Divergence:** Uttar Pradesh's tourism infrastructure is deeply rooted in spiritual and religious circuits, with major investments in Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Mahakumbh 2025. Maharashtra, by contrast, has adopted a broader tourism mix—urban, coastal, and eco-tourism—focusing on diversified year-round attractions like Konkan beaches, Ajanta-Ellora heritage zones, and Mumbai as a cruise and MICE hub.
3. **FDI and MoUs:** Maharashtra leads in attracting FDI and corporate partnerships, receiving over US\$77 billion between 2019 and 2024. Uttar Pradesh, though having launched a strategic policy in 2023 targeting Fortune 500 companies, still lags behind with only 14

²²<https://www.maharashtratourismsubsidy.com/blog/maharashtra-government-subsidies-for-hotel-motel-restaurant-and-other-tourism-projects>

such companies operating in the state. MoUs in UP have targeted community-level tourism and cultural initiatives, while Maharashtra's focus is more commercial and hospitality-centric. However, both states failed to disclose MoU details officially, restricting public evaluation of project delivery and accountability.

4. **Tourist Footfall and Safety Measures:** Uttar Pradesh has witnessed a tremendous surge in domestic tourism—driven largely by religious events and temple openings—while Maharashtra, although strong in foreign tourist visits, lacks updated public data for recent years. Both states claim to have tourist police units and helplines, but the RTI silence leaves the operational scope, training, and coverage of these forces largely unverifiable.
5. **PPP Models and Heritage Conservation:** Uttar Pradesh has actively repurposed unused heritage assets under PPP arrangements, supporting cultural tourism with community linkages. Maharashtra has emphasized luxury resorts and eco-tourism under MTDC, yet CRZ disputes and operational delays have slowed execution. Again, lack of publicly disclosed contracts and outcome reports limits independent scrutiny of these initiatives.
6. **Budget Transparency for UNESCO Sites:** Both states support globally significant World Heritage Sites, yet neither disclosed comprehensive data on budget allocation or maintenance activities. While some figures were inferred from government statements and public reports, critical financial accountability remains obscured.
7. **Maharashtra's Tourism Subsidy Mechanism:** Maharashtra failed to clarify whether the tax exemptions under its 2021 Tourism Policy are directly beneficial to customers or routed through service providers. While public policy documents suggest the presence of interest subventions, capital subsidies, and electricity duty exemptions, their practical implementation and beneficiary coverage remain unknown.

Differences in Transparency, Governance, and Public Access to Information

Uttar Pradesh displayed partial transparency through government press releases and investor summit materials, which allowed some triangulation of facts. Maharashtra's data portals were significantly outdated, and most MoUs, investment figures, and tourism budgets were absent from any real-time public disclosure.

Maharashtra exhibits more institutional maturity in handling FDI, project diversification, and

tourism-marketing platforms. Uttar Pradesh has shown innovation in integrating community tourism, homestays, and spiritual circuits. However, both lack standardized performance indicators or third-party audits. The absence of RTI replies, coupled with the lack of structured public databases or dashboards, shows a clear disconnect between policy formulation and citizen engagement. Even basic data like annual footfall, project status, and tourist police deployment is not systematically shared.

Policy Recommendations

1. Both states must operationalize well-trained RTI centres within tourism departments, with digital tracking and grievance redressal linked to their state portals.
2. Government MoUs, merchant agreements, and tourism contracts should be uploaded in public domain, with project scope, partners, timelines, and compliance audits.
3. Real-time financial tracking of schemes, subsidies, and heritage site maintenance should be made accessible via public dashboards, aligned with open data norms.
4. Publish district-wise deployment of tourist police units, response times, and multilingual capabilities for visitor confidence and improve global rankings.
5. The Ministry of Tourism at the national level should introduce a model RTI-compliance framework for state tourism departments.

02/04/2025, 21:38

RTI Online ::

Online RTI Request Form Details

Public Authority Details :-		Print
* Public Authority	Tourism Directorate	
Personal Details of RTI Applicant:-		
Registration Number	DRTUR/R/2025/80014	
Date of Filing	06/03/2025	
* Name	Sanya Kukreja	
Gender	Female	
* Address	806, Civil Lines, Vivekanandpuri, Sitapur	
Pincode	261001	
State	Uttar Pradesh	
Educational Status	Literate	
	Above Graduate	
Phone	Details not provided	
Mobile	+91-810805XXXX View	
Email	sanyakukreja[REDACTED]	
Citizenship	Indian	
* Is the Applicant Below Poverty Line ?	No	
RTI Application Details u/s 6(1) :-		
((Description of Information sought (upto 500 characters))		
* Description of Information Sought	1. Please provide details of major infrastructure projects being developed under the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy. 2. Has any budget been allocated for the conservation and promotion of UNESCO heritage sites in Uttar Pradesh? If yes, provide details. 3. Has the government signed any MoUs with private companies for services such as transportation, accommodation, and event management for Mahakumbh 2025? If yes, provide details. 4. Please provide data for number of local and international tourists as well as NRIs who visited Uttar Pradesh during 2024-25. 5. Are there dedicated tourist police units in key locations? If yes, provide jurisdiction details and helpline numbers. 6. Are there any Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects being undertaken for tourism development? If yes, kindly provide details. 7. How much Foreign Direct Investment is being generated in Uttar Pradesh related to tourism policy?	
* Concerned PIO	Dr. Kalyan Singh	
Designation	Deputy Director	
Mobile	944466XXXX View	
Email	rtochennai[at]gmail[dot]com	
Supporting document ((only pdf upto 1 MB))	Supporting document not provided	

21/04/2025, 17:19

Online RTI Information System :: RTI Online ::

Online RTI Request Form Details

Public Authority Details :-

* Public Authority	Tourism & Cultural Affairs Department
--------------------	---------------------------------------

Personal Details of RTI Applicant:-

* Name	
Gender	Male
* Address	
Pincode	440001
Country	India
State	Maharashtra
Status	Urban
Educational Status	Literate
Phone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email-ID	h[redacted]tjedu[dot]in

Request Details :-

Citizenship	Indian
* Is the Requester Below Poverty Line ?	No

(Description of Information sought (upto 500 characters))

* Description of Information Sought	1. Please provide details of major infrastructure projects being developed under the Maharashtra Tourism Policy. 2. Has any budget been allocated for the conservation and promotion of UNESCO heritage sites in Maharashtra? If yes, provide details. 3. Has the government signed any MoUs with private companies for services such as
* Concerned CPIO	narvandatta kadam
Supporting document (only pdf upto 1 MB)	Supporting document not provided

Print

Close

21/04/2025, 17:32

Symbiosis Law School Mail - Request to provide information.



SANYA KUKREJA <[REDACTED]@symbiosis.edu.in>

Request to provide information.

2 messages

SANYA KUKREJA <[REDACTED]@symbiosis.edu.in>
To: "rtochennai@gmail.com" <rtochennai@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 9:48 PM

Respected Sir,

Through this mail I request you to provide the status as well as reply to the information requested by me through RTI Online portal with the following details:

Registration Number : DRTUR/R/2025/80014

Name- Sanya Kukreja

This application was transferred to the Tourism Directorate on 06.03.2025 and the status is accepted as shown on the portal.

I request you to provide the information as soon as possible as it is urgent for me.

I am attaching the Status report as well as the RTI application for your reference.

Thank you
Sanya Kukreja

2 attachments

 **UP RTI Application.pdf**

106K

 **Up RTI Status.pdf**

267K

SANYA KUKREJA <[REDACTED]@symbiosis.edu.in>
To: "rtochennai@gmail.com" <rtochennai@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 4, 2025 at 10:49 PM

Sir,

I need the information on an urgent basis. I request you to provide it as soon as you possibly can.

Thank you
Sanya Kukreja
[Quoted text hidden]

06/04/2025, 15:07

RTI Online ::



RTI Online

An initiative of
Uttar Pradesh Government

Your RTI Appeal filed successfully.

Please note down the details of registration.

Registration Number :

DRTUR/A/2025/60011

Name :

Sanya Kukreja

Date of Filing :

06-04-2025

Request filed with :

Tourism Directorate

FAA Details**FAA NAME :**

Prakhar Mishra

Designation :

Director

Phone No. :827983XXXX [View](#)**Email Id :**

directorupt[at]gmail[dot]com

Contact Details**Telephone Number :**817695XXXX [View](#)**Email-ID :**

beereshkumarrti[at]gmail[dot]com

21/04/2025, 17:46

RTI Online :: View Status Form



महाराष्ट्र शासन

ऑनलाईन माहितीचा अधिकार

सामान्य प्रशासन विभाग, मंत्रालय, मुंबई यांच्या पुढाकाराने

[मुख्यपृष्ठ](#) [अर्ज सादर करा](#) [प्रथम अपील सादर करा](#) [सद्यस्थिती पाहू](#) [नेहमीचे प्रश्न](#) [संपर्क](#)

Online RTI Status Form/ऑनलाईन आरटीआय सद्यस्थिती अर्ज

Note/सूचना: Fields marked with * are Mandatory/ * चिह्नांकित रकान्यात तपशिलाची नोंद अनिवार्य आहे

Registration Number / नोंदणी क्रमांक :	DOTUR/R/2025/60047
Name / नाव	[REDACTED]
Date of Filing / भरणे तारीख :	10/03/2025
Status / स्थिती :	REQUEST FORWARDED TO SPIO / एसपीआयओ कडे विनंती पाठवली as on 11/03/2025
Details of SPIO :- Telephone Number:- , Email Id:- Note :- You are advised to contact the above mentioned officer for further details.	
View Document / दस्तऐवज पहा :	Reply Document Not Attached
Nodal Officer Details	
Telephone Number / टेलिफोन क्रमांक :	02222026900
Email Id / ई-मेल आयडी :	suman.pashte@nic.in

[Print RTI Application](#) [Print Status](#) [Go-Back](#)

मुख्य पृष्ठ | भारताचे राष्ट्रीय पोर्टल | माहिती आयुक्त, महाराष्ट्र यांच्याकडे तक्रार आणि द्वितीय अपील | नेहमीचे प्रश्न

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21/04/2025, 17:35

Symbiosis Law School Mail - Request for information.



PRATHAM MEHADIA <pratham.mehadia@symbiosis.edu>

Request for information.

1 message

PRATHAM MEHADIA <pratham.mehadia@symbiosis.edu>
To: rti.support@maharashtra.gov.in

Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 9:30 PM

Respected Sir/Ma'am,

Through this mail I request you to provide the status as well as reply to the information requested by me through RTI Online portal with the following details:

Registration Number : DOTUR/R/2025/60047

Name- Pratham Mehadia

Note :- You are advised to contact the above mentioned officer for further details.

This Note has been attached to the status report however the details of the SPIO have not been mentioned. I request you to provide the information or the details of the concerned officer as necessary.

I am attaching the Status report as well as the RTI application for your reference.

Thank you

Pratham Mehadia

2 attachments

 **MH RTI latest status.pdf**
409K

 **RTI APPLICATION MH.pdf**
134K

11/04/2025, 19:04

RTI Online :: Online RTI Information System

Government of
Maharashtra

RTI Online

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Your RTI Appeal filed successfully.

Please note down the following details for further references.

Registration Number	DOTUR/A/2025/60009
Name	Pratham Mehadia
Date of Filing	11-04-2025
RTI Appeal Fee Received	₹ 20
MAHA Online Reference number	510154958275
Transaction Status	Success
Request filed with	Tourism & Cultural Affairs Department
Contact Details	
Telephone Number	02222026900
Email Id	suman.pashte@nic.in

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