# GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF THE AVIATION INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

The aviation industry is a vital component of India's infrastructure, contributing significantly to economic development, connectivity, and national integration. However, given its safety, sensitive and strategic nature, the sector requires comprehensive government regulation. This paper examines the evolution, framework, and impact of government regulation on India's aviation industry. It begins by tracing the historical developments of aviation laws from the Indian Aircraft Act 1934 to post-liberalization reforms under the Open Sky Policy of 1991. The study analyses the roles of major regulatory bodies including the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and Airports Authority of India (AAI), in ensuring safety, security, and operational efficiency. It further explores the rationale and mechanisms of regulation across key domains—safety and security oversight, economic regulation, consumer protection, and environmental sustainability. The paper highlights how government intervention has been essential in maintaining safety standards, promoting fair competition, safeguarding consumers, and fostering regional connectivity through schemes such as UDAN. At the same time, it identifies major challenges such as regulatory capture, airline insolvencies, infrastructural bottlenecks, and gaps in enforcement and grievance redressal. A comparative analysis with international frameworks like the FAA (U.S.) and EASA (EU) underscores areas where India lags in institutional independence and passenger rights but also where it innovates through developmental regulation. The paper concludes that India's aviation regulation must continue to evolve through stronger institutional capacity, enhanced transparency, and sustainability-oriented policies to ensure balanced growth and global competitiveness in the aviation sector.

## INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry is one of the most actively developing and strategically vital sectors of any advanced economy. In India, the aviation sector has grown into an essential part of the nation's infrastructure and had the potential to connect cities, facilitate trade and tourism, and become a driving force of economic activity. With a population of over 1.4 billion and a quickly-growing middle class, India's civil aviation sector has developed into one of the fastest growing in the world due to the general trend of economic liberalization and integration into the global marketplace. However, there are unique characteristics and circumstances encountered in aviation that does not entitle it to be as governed by unregulated market forces as other industries, because of the character of the industry and its extraordinarily high level of government regulation. Government regulation is necessary for a variety of reasons, including aviation's safety-sensitive nature but also because of the geopolitical, economic, and environmental contexts of civil aviation. The importance of government regulation in the field of Aviation depends on how various interests related to passenger safety, consumer welfare, environmental sustainability, and future of commercial aviation and airports are balanced by regulators. Aviation regulation also represents the power of the government or state, as technically, the airspace above any country is under their sovereignty. In India, the place for government regulation of aviation sectors is more acute given the challenges the sector faces including inconsistent infrastructure, airline financial failures, environmental challenges, and conflicting policies. Regulation has also been front and center in transitioning the industry from the tightly controlled, monopolistic, state-run model to a competitive, liberalized sector of the integrated global economy.

The objective of this research paper is to examine government regulation in India’s aviation sector, starting with the historical evolution of aviation law and policy in India, moving to an overview of the regulatory framework and institutional arrangements, and finally reviewing specific areas related to safety, security, economic regulation, consumer protection, and environmental sustainability. The emphasis will be on India, but it is important to view India’s regulatory practices in light of international frameworks for the global context of aviation regulation.

## EARLY BEGINNING OF AVIATION LAWS IN INDIA

India's civil aviation story started in the early 20th century from 1911, when the first recorded

flight was made from Allahabad to Naini. The importance of aviation for commerce and connectivity was recognized and hence rudimentary aviation infrastructure was put in place under colonial rule. Subsequently, the British administration in India was slow in creating regulations for aviation, in consideration of its infancy. However, the importance of air transport for national security was realized after World War I, which catalyzed legislation.

The Indian Aircraft Act of 1934 was a major milestone at the time, and it established the legal framework for civil aviation regulation in India. The Act gives the central government the power to make rules concerning establishment, possession, use, operation, sale, and import of aircraft, and power to regulate airworthiness, licensing of pilots, air navigation service and safety. The Act created a regulatory regime as encountered today in aviation law in India. The Indian Aircraft Rules of 1937, issued under the Act, contained very specific specifications on airworthiness, personnel licensing, and operational procedures. The Rules also reflected an early parallel of India to international standards for civil aviation, once India became a member state to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) after independence in 1947.[1] After independence, India viewed aviation as an important infrastructure sector and maintained a strong state presence. The new government continued with the regulatory framework established under colonial occupation but expanded the framework to align with national priorities. In 1948, the government created the Air Transport Licensing Board to regulate the airlines and provide orderly development of the industry.

The key development of this period was the Air Corporations Act of 1953 that nationalized the airline industry. Under the Act, the assets of private airlines were transferred into two corporations owned by government - Air India International for international routes and Indian Airlines Corporation for the domestic routes. The justification for the nationalization was based on ensuring safety of passengers, safety from destructive competition and the government owning of a strategic industry. For close to forty years, Air India and Indian Airlines had the monopoly, while the regulation of the sector was only focused on safety oversight, route allocations, and tariff regulation. Nationalization brought stability, but it also curtailed competition and innovation. The absence of competitive pressures contributed to inefficiencies, poor service quality, and financial issues, which would become more pronounced as global

[1] *Dwivedi, Poonam, Navigating the Skies: An Overview of Aviation Law in India (November 28, 2023). International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR), Volume 5, Issue 6, November-December 2023, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4708702*

aviation continued to liberalize.[2]

## LIBERALIZATION AND OPEN SKY POLICY

The 1990s signified a turning point in Indian aviation history with the government allowing a private-player role within the domestic aviation sector, as part of a larger economic liberalisation initiative and brought about under the Open Sky Policy of 1991. The Open Sky Policy "permitted private airlines to operate alongside state-owned carriers and private carriers would be subject only to regulatory approvals" (Bhadra, 2020) and private carriers like Jet Airways, Sahara, and Modiluft began challenging the duopoly of Air India and Indian Airlines.

At the same time, the liberalization and the emergence of new private players brought significant size and regulatory changes to civil aviation in India. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which was originally created during the Colonial Period, assumed an even larger role with compliance, licensing and safety oversight. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) which was created in 1995, allowed for the consolidation of airport infrastructure development and airport management. The arrival of low-cost carriers (LCCs) in the 2000s, initiated by Air Deccan in 2003, marked a period of major change in the regulatory climate. Regulating authorities were now faced with new alternatives, new business models, new pricing behavior and a much larger number of passengers that they had to oversee. The government began to enact reforms on foreign direct investments (FDI) that allowed for more foreign participation in Indian airlines and they were constantly searching for the proper approach that will balance liberalization with national sovereignty.

By the early 21st century, India's aviation sector was wholly embedded in a global context. The regulatory milieu was rapidly becoming more complex, dealing not only with safety and licensing, but also consumer protection, environmental and sustainability aspects and competition law.[3]

## REGULATORY BODIES IN INDIA

### Ministry of Civil Aviation:

[2] *Neha Bhatia, Air Corporations Act 1953 Lecture Note | PDF | Airlines | Government, Airlines https://www.scribd.com/document/473951178/Air-corporations-act-1953-lecture-note.*
[3] *(No date) Open sky policy: A step towards efficiency & growth | cargo talk. Available at: https://cargotalk.in/open-sky-policy-a-step-towards-efficiency-growth/ (Accessed: 29 August 2025).*

At the top of the regulatory framework is Ministry of Civil Aviation (hereinafter MoCA), which develops the policies for the development and regulation of civil aviation. The ministry covers international treaties and agreements, oversees aviation laws and other bodies such as DGCA, BCAS, and Airports Authority of India.

**Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA):**

DGCA is the main governing instrument for civil aviation safety and operational standards. DGCA's functions include licensing pilots, issuing aircraft airworthiness certificates, conducting safety audits, conducting accident and incident investigations, and making Civil Aviation Requirements (CARs) which are binding on air operators and others. DGCA represents India at ICAO and ensures that Indian regulations meet international standards.

**Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS):**

In the realm of aviation security, the BCAS plays a central role. Established in 1987 following the hijacking of an Air India aircraft, the BCAS formulates security standards and ensures compliance through audits, inspections, and training. Its responsibilities expanded after the 9/11 attacks, as global standards for aviation security became more stringent.

**Airports Authority of India (AAI):**

The AAI, established in 1995, manages airports across the country, ensuring the provision of air traffic services, airport infrastructure, and navigation facilities. While several airports have since been privatised under public-private partnership (PPP) models (such as Delhi and Mumbai), the AAI continues to play a regulatory and operational role in most airports.[4]

## SIGNIFICANCE OF GOVERNMENT REGULATION IN INDIA'S AVIATION INDUSTRY

There are many reasons for government regulation in India. The concern of safety is the most apparent: many people are flying, and millions of low-cost carriers are taking off with many people on board (sometimes lacking proper training or cost cutting shows in an unsafe airworthy aircraft). India has already seen a number of accidents (e.g., the Mangalore air crash

[4] *Organization Setup, Ministry of Civil Aviation (Aug. 29, 2025), https://www.civilaviation.gov.in/about-ministry/organization-setup.*

in 2010) where there were discussions after the incident about the concerns related to safety only being addressed after the incidents, thereby showing the possible avenues of strictly regulated safety in aviation.

National security is a second key consideration for regulation. India's geographical and internal security issues present significant challenges in terms of hijacking and terrorism. Aviation security in India concerns national security as there are numerous restrictions on foreign ownership of an airline and ownership of airports to limit foreign influence in these avenues.[5] In terms of economics, regulation addresses both competition and availability. In India's aviation market, there tends to be intense price competition with low-cost carriers offering fares that are sometimes unsustainably low in order to gain market share. This creates an option for consumers but, also negatively affects the sustainability of the market as seen with Kingfisher Airlines (2012) and Jet Airways (2019); thus, regulators must navigate competition vs. sustainability. In addition, India's government has also regulated cost of air travel in regional schemes, like UDAN, to ensure that air connectivity is available to under-served populations and spaces, thereby allowing air travel to act as a vehicle of social and economic development.

On the consumer advocacy side, there have been numerous and increasing complaints surrounding denied boarding, cancellations, refund times, delays at security, etc. Thus, the DGCA, which provides regulatory oversight, issued guidelines that forced commercial airlines to provide compensation when issues arose with denied boarding, canceled flights, and/or delays at the airport. While enforcement is inconsistent for airlines, this type of consumer protection is common in most other economically developed countries.

Finally, discussion of environmental regulations about climate change goals is starting to enter policy talks in aviation. India has national commitments to climate goals under the Paris Agreement which has pushed the aviation sector toward greater efficiencies like builders using greenfield airports as opposed to brownfield airports, as well as gradually introducing biofuels into the nexus of aviation fuel.

## INDIA'S SAFETY AND SECURITY REGULATION

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is the main safety regulator in India,

[5] *B738, Mangalore India, 2010, SKYbrary Aviation Safety (May 22, 2010), https://skybrary.aero/accidents-and-incidents/b738-mangalore-india-2010.*

responsible for aircraft certification, pilot and engineer licensing, and operational standards under which airlines operate. Aircraft operating under the DGCA must hold a Certificate of Airworthiness issued by the DGCA, and airlines must undergo periodic audits to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Pilot licensing and pilot training has been a regulatory concern for the DGCA, especially following incidents of forged pilots' licenses that were uncovered in 2011. In response to reported incidents in the Indian Aviation Industry, the DGCA tightened pilot licensing and other requirements, ensuring higher medical fitness for pilots, and increased the use of flight simulators in pilot training.

Aviation accident data in India demonstrate the need for regulatory oversight yet challenges surrounding its effectiveness. For example, pilot error leading to an accident in a 2010 Mangalore crash, which claimed 158 lives, highlighted regulatory shortcomings in monitoring that the airlines adhere to crew rest requirements. Similarly, the 2020 crash of Air India Express in Kozhikode again drew attention to runway safety at airports in poor geographical locations. These examples emphasize how ongoing regulation and effective safety regulation have benefits, yet challenges surrounding the aviation industry remain in India.

In India, aviation security is the statutory duty of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), which was established in the wake of growing incidences of hijacking and the potential for terrorist attacks. BCAS's function is to set the security standard for airports, airlines, and air cargo, as well as perform audits and training.

The importance of aviation security was highlighted by Indian Airlines Flight IC 814 in 1999, which showed the gaps in existing security preparedness for hijackings. After the 9/11 attacks, India's security protocols were modified to meet international standards established by ICAO's Annex 17. These standards mainly cover passenger screening, baggage inspections, and access control at airports. [6]

Security has also been a recent concern with the emergence of private airports and the sheer volume of passengers traveling through the air. BCAS is challenged to provide a consistent

[6] *India Today, In IC 814 Kandahar hijack, the mystery of black briefcase and two red bags, India Today (Sept. 3, 2024), https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/ic-814-kandahar-hijack-jaswant-singh-foreign-minister-mystery-black-briefcase-two-red-bags-taliban-afghanistan-2592663-2024-09-03.*

application of security standards across a diverse and rapidly merging network of airports.[7]

## ECONOMIC REGULATION OF AVIATION IN INDIA

There are two sides to regulation of the aviation sector in India - safety/public good versus economic development/efficiency/competition. Economic regulation of the aviation sector in India focuses on price, competition, foreign investment, and infrastructure ownership. The significance of air connectivity to national development has kept the Government of India involved in determining the economic direction of the aviation sector in India.

Price regulation is arguably the most controversial component of Indian aviation. In most liberalized markets, price or ticket fares are determined by the airline. However, even with deregulation, the Government has been involved in price regulation to ensure that predatory pricing is prohibited and the consumer is protected. Case in point was the issue to price regulations laid by the Ministry of Civil Aviation by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) when fare bands were enforced during COVID-19, to prevent excessive pricing during a crisis, while ensuring that air carriers could remain viable. The tension between public good regulation and free market principles has and will continue to feature in debates about the nature of economic regulation of aviation in India. Critics of price regulation would argue that it distorts competition in the market, while proponents of price regulation would argue that it is a necessary feature of developing countries like India, where affordability and access matter.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is also a key component of economic regulation in aviation. India's aviation sector has undergone liberalization from a regulated sector with very little scope for foreign investment. Today, there is considerable foreign investment in scheduled air transport services with limits of 49% FDI permitted under the automatic route, and 100% FDI in non-air transport services such as ground handling. Also, the connection between foreign airlines to India, through strategic investments, such as Etihad Airways' stake in Jet Airways, illustrated the opportunities yet in terms of wanting liberalization of FDI was that many questions arose dealing with their oversight especially when foreign influence lead operations and activities in the firm and any business conducted in India.[8]

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[7] *Aviation Safety in India: An Overview of Aviation Laws, The Law Codes https://thelawcodes.com/article/aviation-safety-in-india-an-overview-of-aviation-laws/.*
[8] *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy in Civil Aviation, (Aug. 29, 2025), https://www.vjmglobal.com/blog/foreign-direct-investment-policy-civil-aviation.*

Airport privatization in India is one of the most serious aspects of economic regulation. Airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru were governed entirely by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) in the early 2000s prior to privatization. This event marked a definite move toward a public-private partnership (PPP) model where airports were private-operated under regulatory oversight. The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) was established in 2008 to regulate airport tariffs, oversee quality of service, and to establish a reasonable balance between the economic interests of private operators and affordability to airlines and passengers. There are still considerable criticisms over high airport charges affecting ticket prices, but there is no arguing that privatization largely improved passenger experience and airport infrastructure at major airports.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIAN AVIATION

Consumer protection has become one of the most rapidly evolving areas of aviation regulation in India. Following the low-cost carrier revolution, many airlines have democratized air travel for millions of new passengers, bringing first-time travelers into the aviation system. In this environment of increased first-time travel, regulators have had to enhance protections so consumer rights would not be compromised by profit motives.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) plays the key role in representing consumers' interests - primarily through Civil Aviation Requirements (CARs). The DGCA's CARs regulate important topics like refunds, cancellations, denied boarding, baggage compensation, and transparency in fares. For example, the CARs detail when airlines must compensate passengers when overbooked, and outline the amount of time airlines must take to process refunds. Protecting consumers is very important, particularly in a market where airlines are incentivized to minimize costs, or 'hard-sell', even if it is not consumer-friendly.

One of the most important regulatory actions was the introduction of the UDAN in 2016. While UDAN is less of a consumer protection action and more of an economic and regional connectivity enhancement programme, it is still full of consumer protection intentions. The UDAN scheme included prescribed airfares on certain regional routes, and the government provided viability gap funding to the airlines on these routes, so passengers living in underserved regions would be able to access air travel at an affordable price. The UDAN scheme serves to promote all passengers as equals in the aviation marketplace while also signaling that the government has an important role to protect the public interest for some

essential services that individuals may need take in times of highly discretionary spending.

With the framework and good intentions of policy and regulation, the aviation sector faces many challenges. Fliers still experience rights violations concerning sudden cancellations, proper excursions of all refunds due to them being denied, and obscured pricing for obscure fees. For example, during the COVID-19 lockdowns, airlines were largely reticent about refunding flier accounts for cancelled flights because of their self-professed financial precariousness. However, after the Supreme Court of India (and/or the DGCA) forced the airlines to honor the federal regulation regulating reimbursements and refunds to consumers, regardless of financial situation, it displayed the airlines' continued excess as the balance of power continues to be skewed in favor of airlines and their excessive behaviors. No business should expect or tolerate this idea, and they should remain in perpetual input with properly and sufficiently proactive regulation.[9] Fines and penalties from the DGCA have been on the rise, indicating a shift to accountability, but enforcement is still uneven, and critics argue that regulators are often reactive rather than proactive. To really strengthen consumer protection, there will have to be not just regulations on paper but a cultural shift in how airlines see their obligations to passengers.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY REGULATION IN INDIAN AVIATION

The environmental consequences of aviation are gaining greater prominence around the world, and this isn’t any different in India. As one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world, India faces the challenge of increasing air connectivity while also aiming to minimize carbon emissions. As a nation, it is the government's goal to not only push compliance in keeping Indian aviation in line with global environmental standards but also provide policy measures to navigate local circumstances.

India, as a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) under the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) requires Indian airlines to calculate, monitor, report, and offset carbon emission caused by international flights. On domestic routes, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has encouraged airlines to use fuel-efficient aircraft, optimize flight processes, and look into sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). The ministry is actively promoting biofuels and there have been experimental flights using biofuels blends

[9] *Mahesh Kumar, Aviation consumer protection and liability in India, Lexology (May 14, 2018), https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=809aa382-2269-4717-bc34-44d99deec15e.*

that have been conducted by airlines such as SpiceJet. Infrastructure at airports is another important subject of environmental regulation. The establishment of airports in greenfield sites, like Kannur and Mopa, is subject to compliance with stringent environmental clearance processes under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. Significant regulatory requirements emphasize energy-efficient designs, waste management approaches, and achieving emissions targets at carbon-neutrality levels. Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), in Delhi, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in Mumbai have attained a reasonable level of carbon-neutrality (in terms of mpg or km per machine) and have achieved significant milestones in emission reductions while creating benchmarks for the Indian context.

Future considerations will have to weigh India's aspiring aviation growth targets against a strong regulatory emphasis on sustainability. This sustainability emphasis needs a regulatory incentive for research into sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), support for carbon-neutral airport implementation, and require strict compliance with significant environmental laws.[10]

## CHALLENGES AND CRITICISM OF AVIATION REGULATION IN INDIA

There are many challenges and criticisms that have raised questions about the credibility and integrity of aviation regulation in India despite its robust regulatory regime. One of the primary criticisms is regulatory capture. The DGCA is limited in its capability of overseeing and managing airlines plagued with limited resources and staff which often find themselves in close contact with the entities it regulates and questions of impartiality are raised when enforcement looks uneven. The repeated failures of Indian airlines highlight another structural shortcoming with regulation. All shared similar outcomes, Kingfisher Airlines, Jet Airways, and most recently Go First all imploded from financial distress leaving thousands of stranded passengers stranded and employees unpaid in their wake. Although business mismanagement is a contributing factor to most of the failures, spectrum of criticism articulated was the regulator's lack of oversight and assessment of the corporate [and operational] health and sustainability of airlines, exposing the fragility of the airline industry in India. The residual question the legacy of regulatory capture, was regulation excessively reactive - only intervening into the airline industry when precursors and failure developed including crises.

[10] *Karina Pinto, Learn about Sustainability in the Aviation Industry, (June 14, 2024), https://reportyak.com/blog/sustainability-aviation-industry/.*

Airport infrastructure poses another key challenge. Even after privatization, congestion at metro airports is still severe, emphasizing the perennial challenge of delays due to flight congestion and slot shortages. It is unclear if the regulatory interventions that seem to be unblocking the bottlenecks in air traffic management and facilitating airports are sufficient given rising demand. The smaller airports which have emerged from UDAN airports are in the opposite situation of low usage rates – bringing to bear questions of whether public resources will be sustainably used at these airports.[11]

A third key criticism was the reduction of a mechanism for consumer grievance redressal. The approach taken by the DGCA for regulating airlines has significant complaints and passenger rights issues - even though the aircraft rules are extensive. In practical terms passengers usually face barriers to recover their rights. Additionally, the absence of an independent aviation ombudsman means that passenger complaints often are referred back to the same regulator that poses oversight. This presents never-ending conflicts of interest. Overall, more institutional reform may be necessary to effect grievance redressal with regulatory oversight.

Lastly, Indian aviation regulations are frequently behind recent changes in international best practices. ICAO audits have certainly acknowledged progress, and have consistently highlighted India's safety oversight deficiencies. Reason and evidence support many of these critiques. Reforming the regulations is one way of addressing some of these critiques, however reforming aviation's regulatory environment often requires more than legislative intervention - it typically involves a combination of investment in institutional capacity, training, and regulatory modernization.[12]

## COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: INDIA AND INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

A comparative lens through which to view India's aviation regulatory model illuminates both its strengths and weaknesses. For example, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) combines regulatory authority with strong safety innovation and consumer protection, while the EU has an extensive regulatory authority (i.e., the European Union Aviation Safety Agency

[11] *India's Aviation Sector: Status, Challenges & Way Ahead, (Mar. 21, 2025), https://www.pmfias.com/indias-aviation-sector/.*
[12] *ISSUE VII : Aviation in India: Great challenges and great opportunities, PSA Legal Counsellors (June 1, 2008), https://www.psalegal.com/issue-vii-aviation-in-india-great-challenges-and-great-opportunities/.*

(EASA)) that encompasses a comprehensive, and harmonized approach to regulation among member states so as to maintain a high safety standard while harmonizing consumer protection.

While the DGCA performs many of these regulatory roles, the DGCA does not have the same level of independence and institutional capacity or resources. For instance, while both the FAA and EASA can maintain strong surveillance programs with transparent reporting, DGCA has struggled with consistently enforcing, with many public reports identifying systematic understaffing. Similarly, while the DGCA has passenger rights rules, the passenger rights frameworks in the EU secure stronger compensation entitlements for delays and cancellations under Regulation (EC) No. 261/2004.

That said, India's model does have some notable strengths - notably its approach to emphasizing regional connectivity through its UDAN scheme, which does not have any comparison in its Western counterparts. This scheme exemplifies how regulation can be flexible in aligning with related developmental objectives, such that aviation is accessible to segments of population that might otherwise remain disconnected. In this light, India's regulatory model is an important example to other developing nations to consider integrating growth with a sense of equity.[13]

**Conclusion**

Aviation regulation in India is at the intersection of safety, consumer protection, economic development, and environmental sustainability. While the government has taken meaningful, significant steps to the regulatory framework as a whole, there are real obstacles to enforcement, institutional capacity, and reconciling competing interests.

In the realm of economic regulation, India is addressing the goal of liberalization and foreign investment while trying to balance consumer protection against the potential for exploitation. The consumer protection system has evolved significantly; however, there remain significant enforcement gaps. Environmental regulation is still in its infancy—and another area of potential consumer protection—but it also is encouraging in that it indicates a desire on India's part to pursue sustainability in as it pursues ambitious growth targets. Nevertheless, continued

[13] *Vivek, Pattabiraman. (2024). Analyzing India's National Civil Aviation Policy and Global Trends in Contemporary Civil Aviation Policies P Vivek. International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research. 6. 10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i04.26520.*

airline bankruptcies, demand exceeding supply and unduly putting steps in place against regulatory capture to maintain oversight over the system reminds us of the limitations of the current system in conjunction with the need for continued development.

From a comparative perspective, there is room for India to improve with regards to safety oversight and consumer entitlements but simultaneously the initiatives that are uniquely Indian, e.g., UDAN, demonstrate the merits of developing regulation with reference to developmental need.

Ultimately, the future of aviation regulation in India will in large part rely on its ability to improve institutional independence, improve enforcement, and build sustainability into the DNA of any aviation system. For India to aspire to be a global aviation leader in the years to come, a balanced approach to development—one that allows for growth while, equally protecting the public interest—will be critical.