

National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)

Under the Ministry of Tourism, the Government of India launched the PRASAD Scheme in the year 2014-2015. The PRASAD scheme stands for Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spirituality Augmentation Drive. However, the name of the scheme was changed to "National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)" in October 2017.

This article will read details regarding the PRASAD Scheme, its aims and objectives and more for the government exams such as the UPSC Civil Service Exam and others. For detailed information on the PRASAD Scheme candidates can check the official website (tourism.gov.in).

Candidates can also download the PRASAD Scheme PDF in the article.

The highlights of this scheme have been mentioned in the table below:

Name of the scheme	National Mission on PRASHAD
Full-Form of PRASHAD	Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)
Year of launch	2015
Government Ministry	Ministry of Tourism

Like the PRASAD Scheme, there are various other schemes launched by the Government of India in order to address the social and economic welfare of the citizens and the nation. The links to two related schemes launched by the government are given below.

PRASAD Scheme is covered under Government Schemes which is an important static GK topic with regards to UPSC or any other competitive examination.

For aspirants of UPSC, the PRASAD Scheme is an important topic as questions related to this can be asked in the Preliminary examination as well as in GS II and GS III of Mains exam.

PRASAD Scheme

- The Ministry of Tourism launched the PRASAD scheme that aims at the integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in a prioritised, planned, and sustainable manner in order to provide a complete religious tourism experience.

- The focus of the previously launched PRASAD Scheme was on the development and beautification of the identified pilgrimage destinations under the HRIDAY Scheme.
- But, the Ministry of Housing and Urban's scheme HRIDAY, was discontinued, and the PRASAD Scheme was renamed PRASAD to encompass the development of Heritage Destinations.
- Due to the presence of significant pilgrimage centres adjacent to rural areas, which results in the creation of jobs and the growth of ancillary infrastructure, pilgrimage and rural tourism are intertwined, benefiting both visitors and residents.
- Under the "Swadesh Darshan" and "Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive" programmes, the Ministry of Tourism offers financial support to State Governments, Union Territory Administrations, and Central Agencies with the aim of developing the nation's tourism infrastructure (PRASAD).
- **Implementation Agency:** The corresponding State/Union Territory Government shall carry out the projects outlined under this scheme through the designated agencies.

PRASAD Cities

- It strives to create a comprehensive religious tourist experience by integrating the development of pilgrimage places in a planned, prioritised, and sustainable manner.
- Earlier, the scheme identified 12 cities for the development of pilgrimage and heritage destinations. The criterion for the selection of these cities is their rich heritage and cultural history.
- The 12 cities identified under the scheme at first are as mentioned below:
 1. Kamakhya (Assam)
 2. Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh)
 3. Dwaraka (Gujarat),
 4. Gaya (Bihar),
 5. Amritsar (Punjab),
 6. Ajmer (Rajasthan)
 7. Puri (Odisha),
 8. Kedarnath (Uttarakhand)
 9. Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu)
 10. Velankanni (Tamil Nadu),
 11. Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh),
 12. Mathura (Uttar Pradesh)

Objectives of PRASAD Scheme

PRASAD Scheme is launched with the following objectives:

- To enhance tourism attractiveness in a sustainable manner
- To harness pilgrimage tourism so that it directly affects and multiplies the employment generation and economic development.
- To promote local art and culture, handicraft and cuisines etc.
- To develop world-class infrastructure in religious destinations
- To follow community-based development and pro-poor tourism concepts when creating the venues for pilgrimages.
- To use resources and knowledge from the public sector.

The development of infrastructure under the PRASAD Scheme includes the development of lighting and illumination with renewable energy sources, eco-friendly modes of transport, first aid centres, drinking water,

waiting rooms, toilets, parking, craft bazaars/souvenir shops / haats / cafeteria, rain shelters, telecom facilities, internet connectivity etc.

Development of basic tourism facilities like road, rail and water transport, last-mile connectivity, like Information and interpretation centres, Money exchanges and ATMs.



The banner features a purple background with a network of white dots and lines. On the left, there is a graphic of a lightbulb with a question mark inside, and the text 'FREE QUIZ' in yellow. To the right, the text 'Free Online Quizzes for Upcoming Government Exams 2022' is written in white and yellow. Below this, a smaller line of text says 'Prepare for Bank, RRB, SSC, Insurance and Other Exams at BYJU'S'.

Funding of PRASAD Scheme

- To implement the PRASAD scheme a Mission Directorate is set up in the Ministry of Tourism. The Ministry provides Central Financial Assistance to State Governments for the promotion of tourism at identified destinations.
- For components within public funding, the Central Government provides 100% funds and for the improvement in the sustainability of the project the scheme seeks to involve Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as well.
- The Budget provision of rupees.15.60 crore was made in revised estimates 2014 – 2015. The first instalment of rupees.85.78 lakh was released under this scheme for the development of basic facilities at Vishnupad Temple, Gaya in Bihar.

Eligible/ Ineligible Components under PRASAD Scheme

The following project elements are eligible to receive Central Financial Assistance under the programme:

- Online Presence which includes-
 - Data analysis and reporting.
 - Project management system.
 - GIS-based interactive and intelligent portal development and mobile applications.
 - Permission-based knowledge portal.
- Capacity Development, Skill Development and Knowledge Management which include-
 - Broadbasing of travel and hospitality education and training and engagement of Vocational Training Providers.
 - Documentation and preservation of the knowledge base in tourism for future use.
 - Emphasis on tapping the local potential and expertise in arts and crafts.
 - Short duration skill development and training program under 'Hunar Se Rozgar Tak' and 'Earn While You Learn' programmes.
- Infrastructure Development which includes the following:
 - First aid centres, toilet facility, waiting for areas and cloak-rooms.
 - External infrastructures such as sewerage, water supply, drainage, electricity and roads.
 - Development of passenger terminals such as rail, road, air and water transport.
 - Directional/informatory signage.

- Improvement in communication through telephone booths, mobile services, internet connectivity and Wi-Fi hotspots.
- General improvements such as landscaping, earth filling, water fountains, lighting, fencing, pavements, garbage bins, seating/shelters, drinking water points, etc.
- Restoration, illumination and conservation of historic structures and monuments.
- Tourism information/interpretation centres with ATMs or money exchange counters.
- Wayside amenities with emergency vehicle repair, breakdown and refuelling facilities.

The following are the project components that are not permitted under the scheme and are not qualified to receive funding:

- Resettlement and rehabilitation package, operation, maintenance and management of the assets created.
- Improvement or investments in assets or structures owned by private entities.
- Land acquisition for development.

Prioritizing, planning, and sustainably developing pilgrimage sites is the goal of the PRASAD programme, which seeks to offer a full-fledged religious tourist experience. The government must, in cooperation with other stakeholders, make investments in the comprehensive development of the chosen pilgrimage destinations in order to fully realise the potential of pilgrimage tourism.

Candidates appearing for any competitive exams must keep up to date with information on PRASAD schemes.