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# SYNOPSIS ON INDIA SPACE POLICY 2023

## INTRODUCTION

On 23 August 2023, India became the first country to land on the south pole of the Moon. Not only this, a week later, on 02nd Sept. 2023, India successfully launched Aditya L1 - first space-based observatory class to study the Sun. These developments in the space sector are not achieved overnight, rather are the result of decades of hard work. Beginning from the launch of Aryabhata - India's first satellite, in the year 1975, from where our great Nation has gone through many leaps and bounds in the space exploration. In this long journey of space exploration, Indian Government has also come up with numerous Space Policies for the regulation and growth of space sector in India. Recently, in April 2023, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released 'Indian Space Policy - 2023' outlining Government's vision for the space exploration in India and the roles and responsibilities of various organizations in the space sector, categorically with regard to commercial exploration of the space sector. This short article provides a synopsis on the same.

## PREVIOUS POLICIES ON SPACE

So far, 5 (five) space policies have been released and shaped the landscape of India's space sector.

1. Indian National Space Policy, 1969: The First Space Policy in India outlined the goals for the upcoming space programmes by creation of the space technology and the necessity of international collaboration for nation's benefit.
2. Satellite Communication Policy, 1997: This second policy led the rules for the usage of satellite communication in India to ensure that all residents could access the services and to encourage the growth of India's satellite communication industry. The policy also laid certain guidelines for the foreign direct investment (FDI) in the satellite sector which were further liberalized.
3. Remote Sensing Data Policy, 2001: India's third space policy governed the use of remote sensing data in India to make sure that the same may be used only for lawful purposes and not be abused, thereby, compromising and jeopardizing national interest and security and invading privacy. The policy was later amended in 2011 and finally was replaced in 2016 by the National Geospatial Policy.

4. National Geospatial Policy, 2016: The fourth space policy governed the usage of geographical data in India to ensure its lawful usage. The Policy was recently amended in 2022.
5. Space Activities Bill, 2017: This was a proposed law providing a legal framework for the authorization and supervision of space activities by Indian entities. The bill sought to ensure safety, security, and peaceful use of outer space, while also promoting commercial space activities. However, the bill presented in 2017, lapsed ultimately in 2019.

## INDIAN SPACE POLICY, 2023: IN BRIEF

This is India's 6th (sixth) and the most recent space policy and also a significant departure from the abovementioned space policies in India. The policy is very ambitious and liberal in its approach towards private sector participation in the space arena. Further, a greater emphasis is given for the utilization of space technology for the socio-economic development and becoming a leading nation in the space exploration.

**Government Entities:** The Policy has clearly delineated the roles of various entities established by the government. **IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre)** is set-up to act as a single window entity for promotion and authorization of various space activities. **New Space India Limited (NSIL)** will be responsible for commercializing space technologies and platforms created through public expenditure, as well as, manufacturing, leasing, or procuring space components, technologies, platforms and other assets from the private or public sector. **Department of Space** will provide overall policy guidelines and be the nodal department for implementing space technologies and, among other things, co-ordinate international cooperation and coordination in the area of global space governance and programmes in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs. It will also create an appropriate mechanism to resolve disputes arising out of space activity. Whereas, the role of ISRO has been rationalized: It states that ISRO will *“transition out of the existing practice of being present in the manufacturing of operational space systems. Hereafter, mature systems shall be transferred to industries for commercial usage. ISRO shall focus on R&D in advanced technology, proving newer systems and realization of*



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*space objects for meeting national prerogatives*". ISRO will share technologies, products, processes and best practices with other government and non-government companies. This will make ISRO use its all its strength on cutting edge research and development and long-term projects such as Chandrayaan and Gaganyaan.

**Non-government entities (NGEs):** The NGEs (this includes the private sector) are "allowed to undertake end-to-end activities in the space sector through establishment and operation of space objects, ground-based assets and related services, such as communication, remote sensing, navigation, etc.". Satellites could be self-owned, procured or leased; communication services could be over India or outside; and remote sensing data could be disseminated in India or abroad. NGEs can design and operate launch vehicles for space transportation and establish their own infrastructure. NGEs can now make filings with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and engage in commercial recovery of asteroid resources. In short, the entire gamut of space activities is now open to the private sector. Security agencies can task NGEs for procuring tailor-made solutions to address specific requirements.

## NEED OF COMMERCIALIZING THE SPACE SECTOR

- **Indian space economy:** Despite having achieved number of laurels in the space exploration, India contributes only 2% of the \$360 bn global space economy. While Indian space economy is worth \$9.6 bn, the budget allotted to ISRO is \$1.6 bn approx. With the enabling environment created by the new space policy, the Indian space industry is expected to create more than 2 lac jobs and grow to \$60 bn by 2030.
- **Decreasing foreign dependence:** Indian space and defence agencies currently largely procure earth observation data and imagery from foreign sources and spend approx. \$1 bn every year. The space policy seeks to change this course.

- **Promoting Atmanirbharta:** Looking at the potential of companies like SpaceX, Virgin Galactic, etc. which have revolutionized the space industry, there is a need to promote private sector activity in India as well. Further, opening up the space sector for NGE will enable it to be globally space competitive while remaining cost effective.

## CONCLUSION

ISRO has hitherto largely shaped the Indian space exploration journey. Whereas, the commercial participation of NGEs was limited to manufacturing and delivering equipment design and specifications. The India Space Policy 2023, a result of work of some years, is definitely a progressive step in a new space age by allowing NGEs to carry out end-to-end activities as well. Not only this, as the vision of the Policy goes, the space capabilities need to be augmented for the nation's socio-economic development and security, protection of environment and lives, pursuing peaceful exploration of outer space, stimulation of public awareness and scientific quest. The only thing for which it has been commented upon is that the policy is very much required to be followed by a suitable legislation and accompanied by clear rules and regulations.