

Making tourist destinations and monuments disabled friendly

450. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has conducted any country-wide study to assess the problems of accessibility faced by disabled people at major tourist destinations, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government has taken any step to make important tourist destinations and monuments disabled friendly; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Tourism conducted a study on “Problems and Prospects of Accessible Tourism in India”, finalized in 2010.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) has advised all the State Governments/ Union Territory (UT) Administrations to mandatorily ensure the creation of facilities for differently-abled persons in tourism projects availing Central Financial Assistance (CFA) from MoT. The guidelines also provide for release of final installment of CFA to States/UTs only after getting a certificate and other documents from them regarding the provision of barrier free environment in the tourism projects.

Further, the guidelines of the MoT for classification of hotels have the following provision for making the classified hotels accessible to differently-abled person: “Facilities for the differently-abled guests: dedicated room with attached bathroom, designated parking, ramps, free accessibility in public areas and at least one restaurant, designated toilet (unisex) at the lobby level, etc.”.

Decline in tourism due to rising crimes

451. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of tourists visiting various religious and historical monuments in Odisha has come down during the current year as compared to the last two years, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether increasing cases of rapes/gangrapes and political agitations are the major reasons for decline in foreign tourists, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) The number of Domestic Tourist Visits (DTV's) and Foreign Tourist Visits (FTV's) to the State of Odisha, which include the visits by tourists to various religious and historical monuments in Odisha, during 2011, 2012 and 2013 are given below:

Year	DTV's	FTV's
2011	8271257	60722
2012	9052871	64719
2013	9800135	66675

This data is not available for 2014. There has been an increase in the number of DTVs and FTVs to Odisha in 2013 over 2012 and 2011. Ministry of Tourism does not compile purpose-wise data of DTVs and FTVs.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The details of initiatives/steps taken to promote tourism in the country as a whole are given in the Statement.

Statement

The details of initiatives/steps taken to promote tourism in the country are as follows:

1. Visa:

- (a) The Government announced Tourist Visa-on-Arrival in 2010. At present, it provides Tourist Visa on Arrival facility (TVoA) to the nationals of 12 countries namely Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Laos, Myanmar and South Korea. South Korea was added to this list on 15.04.2014.
- (b) The facility of TVoA was initially available at the international airport of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. However, with effect from 15 August, 2013 this facility has been extended through Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.
- (c) The restriction of two-month gap on re-entry of foreign nationals coming to India on Tourist Visa and Tourist Visa on Arrival has been lifted.
- (d) Ministry of Tourism organised a two day training program covering 450 officials of Bureau of Immigration handling Tourist Visa on arrival at Kochi, Chennai, Goa, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad Airports.

- (e) Tourist Visa on Arrival fee payment can now be made by credit cards. Earlier it was only to be paid in rupees.

2. Low Cost Airlines:

The Ministry of Tourism regularly interacts with the Ministry of Civil Aviation in matters pertaining to air connectivity to the tourist destinations and development and upgradation of airports. Government has identified development of low cost airports in the Tier II and Tier III cities as one of the thrust areas.

3. Safety of Women Tourists:

The measures taken by the Ministry of Tourism towards safety and security of domestic and foreign tourists including women travellers are:

- (a) The Ministry of Tourism had advised the State Governments/UT Administrations to set up Tourist Police at prominent tourist spots. As a result, the State Governments/UT Administrations of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha have deployed Tourist Police, in one form or the other.
- (b) The Ministry of Tourism along with all stakeholders, including the Tourism Departments of all States and UTs, have adopted the 'Code of Conduct for Safe & Honourable Tourism' which is a set of guidelines to encourage tourism activities to be undertaken with respect for basic right like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourists and local residents in particular, women and children.
- (c) Ministry of Tourism is running the Social Awareness Campaign on television to sensitize the masses and the stakeholders on the traditional Indian values and concept 'Atithi Devo Bhava'. The campaign consists of two commercials; one on sensitizing against misbehavior with tourists and the other against cleanliness of tourist sites and streets.
- (d) Grant of Central Financial Assistance to the State Governments of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh for setting up of Tourist Facilitation and Security Organization (TFSO) on a pilot basis.
- (e) The National Tourism Ministers' Conference was convened on 18th July, 2013 and 21st August 2014 in New Delhi which resolved; that the Departments of Tourism of all States and UTs will work for ensuring the safety and security of tourists, especially women.

- (f) An advisory has been posted on the Ministry of Tourism website www.incredibleindia.org indicating that India remains safe destination for international tourists including women tourists.
- (g) The Ministry of Tourism has issued the Guidelines on Safety and Security of Tourists for State Governments/Union Territories and Tips for Travellers in September 2014. These guidelines are offered to the State Governments/Union Territories and other relevant authorities to stress the importance of safety and risk management, assist in identifying best practices and encourage closer cooperation for ensuring a pleasant experience to the tourists. The Guidelines are indicative references that may be useful to the States in sharing or adopting the best practices and design their domestic measures to better protect tourists. In addition to these guidelines “Tips to Travellers” are also offered to make the visit of tourists to Incredible India, a memorable experience.

4. Cleanliness and Hygiene:

To tackle the problem of hygiene and cleanliness at tourist destinations, the Ministry of Tourism has taken the initiative of launching the Campaign Clean India with a vision to ensure an acceptable level of cleanliness and hygiene practices at tourist destinations. This campaign is to be sustained through adoption and involvement of private and public sector stakeholders as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

5. Highway Facilities en route to tourist places:

Development of tourism infrastructure including wayside amenities is primarily undertaken by State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Ministry of Tourism, however, provides financial assistance based on the proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priority. The Ministry of Tourism accords high priority to the sanctioning of wayside amenities to the States/UTs during the prioritization of tourism infrastructure projects.

6. Trained Language Speaking Guides:

Selection and Training of Regional Level Tourist Guides including linguist guides is an ongoing process and the Ministry conducts the training programmes through the Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management (IITTM) periodically based on the demand of guides and foreign tourist arrivals from a particular country to the respective region.

7. Rationalisation of Taxes:

- (a) The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and the State Governments of NCT of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh has made an arrangement whereby taxes would be collected centrally at each of the four starting nodes at Delhi, Gurgaon, Jaipur and Agra in such a way that the taxes thus collected are apportioned and the tourist coach/car would be allowed unhindered movement in the Golden Triangle.
- (b) Empowered Committee of officers on the 'Issue of National permit System' for tourist buses and goods vehicles (below 7.5 tons) has been constituted.
- (c) Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) - Hotel and Tourism related industry declared as high priority industry and FDI up to 100% under the automatic route Enhancement of FAR in Delhi from 150 to 225 for hotels excluding Lutyens Zone.
- (d) An investment linked deduction Under Section 35 AD of the Income Tax Act had also been announced in the Union Budget 2010-2011 for establishing new hotels of 2 star category and above, all over India thus allowing 100% deduction in respect of the whole or any expenditure of capital nature excluding (land, goodwill and financial instruments) incurred during the year.
- (e) In a Notification dated October 7, 2013 the Ministry of Finance expended its "Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure Sub-Sectors" to include such hotels and Convention centres for benefit of Hospitality Industry. Hotels with a project cost of ₹200 crore and above each at any place in India and of any star rating, and Convention Centre with a project cost of more than ₹300 crores has been included in the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure Sub-Sectors. This is equivalent to granting infrastructure status to the hospitality industry.

8. Use of ICT:

- (a) The Ministry has signed an agreement with M/s Genesys International Corporation Limited, for creating, developing and maintaining Walking Tours product which is an online, interactive web product that help national and international tourists, plan and take walking tours in all major cities in India.
- (b) The Ministry has also signed an agreement with M/s Audio Compass (India) Pvt. Ltd to deliver guided, multimedia and interactive walking tours on its website through a dedicated API link or a separate website and/or mobile application.
- (c) The promotional website of the Ministry of Tourism www.incredibleindia.org has been comprehensively revamped and updated.