LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.292
ANSWERED ON 05.02.2024

PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
PRACTICES TO ATTRACT TOURISTS

292. SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU:
SHRI RAHUL RAMESH SHEWALE:
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Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a)   whether India is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse geography and historical landmarks, which attract tourists from all over the world;

(b)   if so, whether the country particularly Odisha has immense potential to become one of the top tourism hubs in the World;

(c)   whether activities such as trekking, rafting and skiing are popular among tourists;

(d)   if so, whether India has a diverse geography with mountains, beaches and forests, which makes it an ideal destination for adventure tourism;

(e)   if so, the steps taken by the Government to develop facilities for trekking, rafting and skiing to attract domestic and foreign tourists;

(f)   whether India faces several challenges that need to be addressed to realize its full potential as a top tourism centre; and

(g)   if so, the steps taken by the Government to address the challenges and promote sustainable tourism practices particularly in Odisha to attract more tourists and become a top destination in the World?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM   **(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)**

(a) to (e):   India is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse geography and historical landmarks, which attract tourists from all over the world. India including the State of Odisha has immense potential to become one of the top tourism hubs in the World. India has a diverse geography with mountains, beaches and forests, which makes it an ideal

destination for adventure tourism. Activities such as trekking, rafting and skiing are popular among tourists.

To position India as a preferred destination for adventure tourism globally, Ministry of Tourism has formulated a National Strategy for Adventure Tourism. A National Board for Adventure Tourism has been constituted under the Chairpersonship of Secretary (T), comprising of representatives from identified Central Ministries/organizations, State Governments/UT Administrations and Industry Stakeholders. The Board guides the operationalization and implementation of the strategy to promote and develop adventure tourism in the Country.

Central Financial Assistance has been extended to various State Governments/Union Territory Administrations under Swadesh Darshan scheme of the Ministry for development of Tourism Infrastructure in destinations including Adventure Tourism destinations.

Indian institute of Skiing and Mountaineering undertakes various adventure courses including courses on trekking and skiing.

National Institute of Water Sports, Goa trains water sports operators through various skill developing courses.

(f) & (g):   Considering the challenges, Ministry of Tourism has taken several steps/measures under various schemes/initiatives for development and promotion of tourism sector in the country including Odisha as per details given below:

i.   Ministry of Tourism promotes India in a holistic manner, through various initiatives under its Schemes of "Domestic Promotion & Publicity including Hospitality" (DPPH) and "Overseas Promotion & Publicity (OPP)" including State of Odisha. As part of its on-going activities; it regularly releases print, electronic, online and outdoor media campaigns in the international markets, under the "Incredible India" brand-line, to promote various tourism destinations and products of India. The Ministry of Tourism also regularly promotes various tourism destinations and products through its website and social media promotions.

ii.   Ministry under the schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan', 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' provides financial assistance to State Governments/Union Territory

Administrations/Central Agencies for the development of tourism-related infrastructure in the country.

iii. Ministry of Tourism has revamped its Swadesh Darshan Scheme as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0) with the objective to develop sustainable and responsible destinations following a tourist & destination centric approach. Under SD2.0, Koraput, Debrigarh along with special attraction of 'Khinda Village' destinations have been identified for development in the State of Odisha.

iv. Ministry of Tourism has formulated National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism. In line with the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, Ministry of Tourism has launched the Travel for LiFE Initiative. Travel for LiFE aims to promote sustainable tourism in the country, through mindful and deliberate actions mobilized toward tourists and tourism businesses in the consumption of tourism resources.

v. In order to promote sustainable and responsible tourist destinations and promote sustainable tourism in the country, Ministry of Tourism in association with Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI) organised Regional Workshops covering States/ UTs of different regions in the country. Workshop for States/UTs of Eastern Region including the State of Odisha was organised on 11.01.2023 at Kolkata, West Bengal.

vi. With an aim to enable lawful inward movement of foreigners including foreign tourists, Government has taken a number of initiative over the last few years to liberalize, streamline and simplify visa regime with a view to facilitate the legitimate foreign travellers. Facility of e-Visa for 07 sub-categories i.e., e-Tourist visa, e-Business visa, e-Medical visa, e-Medical Attendant visa, e-Ayush Visa, e-Ayush Attendant Visa and e-Conference visa for the nationals of 167 countries has been provided. Visa fee has also been substantially reduced.

vii. For improving air connectivity to important tourist destinations, Ministry of Tourism has collaborated with Ministry of Civil Aviation under their RCS-UDAN Scheme. As on date, 53 tourism routes have been operationalized.

viii. With an aim to provide enhance tourist experience of the visitors Ministry of Tourism is running Pan – India Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (IITF) Certification Program, a digital initiative that aims at creating an Online learning platform with the objective of creating a pool of well trained and professional Tourist Facilitator/Guides across the country.

ix.   Thematic tourism like rural tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, MICE etc., amongst other niche subjects are vigorously promoted so as to expand the scope of tourism into other sectors as well.

x.   Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) has been set up to provide specialized training, education, research and consultancy in sustainable management of Tourism, Travel and allied sectors.

xi.   68 Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs), comprising 21 Central IHMs, 33 State IHMs, 2 State IHMs (running under PPP mode) and 12 Food Craft Institutes (FCIs) have come up with the support of the Ministry.

xii.   Conducting Programmes under the 'Capacity Building for Service Providers' (CBSP) Scheme to train and up-grade manpower to provide better service standards.

xiii.   To conform to the expected standards for different classes of tourists, especially from the point of view of suitability for international tourists, Ministry of Tourism classifies hotels under the star rating system. The Ministry of Tourism has set up National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry, (or NIDHI), a technology driven system, aligned with our Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of an "Atmanirbhar Bharat", which is to facilitate digitalization and promote ease of doing business for hospitality & tourism sector. This initiative has been upgraded as NIDHI+ to have more inclusivity, that is, of not only classification of Accommodation Units, but also registration/classification/recognition/approval of Travel agents, Tour Operators, Tourist Transport Operators, Food & Beverage Units, Online Travel Aggregators, Convention Centers and tourist Facilitators.

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