

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:368

ANSWERED ON:02.05.2012

IRREGULARITIES BY AIRLINES TRAVEL PORTALS

Dutt Smt. Priya Sunil;Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of various unethical trade practices and other irregularities, including fictitious bookings being indulged in by the airlines and travel portals and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether various airlines have reportedly charged exorbitant price for tickets in the trunk routes and the tickets sold by Indian Airlines through company sales counter are substantially higher than the tickets sold by the travel agencies and travel portals;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (d) the details of rules/regulations/guidelines, governing the operation of airlines/travel portals with respect to protection of consumers' interests including prohibition of fictitious bookings;and
- (e) the corrective steps taken by the Government for the protection of consumers' interest and the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI AJIT SINGH)

(a) to (e):- The Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN REPLY TO STARRED QUESTION NO.368 DATED 2.5.2012 REGARDING IRREGULARITIES BY AIRLINES/TRAVEL PORTALS.

(a): Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) received complaints from few domestic airlines in Mar 2012 that certain on-line travel portals were selling certain airline tickets under opaque/bargain fare wherein the identity of the airline and flight details were not being displayed upfront.

DGCA had stepped in and issued a Public Notice directing the airlines to immediately withdraw participation in any such scheme where the complete information about the carrier is not revealed upfront. At present, no scheduled domestic airline is participating in opaque/bargain fares and online travel portals have removed these from their respective websites, as per the information furnished by DGCA. However, no complaint of fictitious booking has been received by DGCA.

(b) and (c): Airfares are not regulated by the Government. Airlines are free to charge as per market conditions. DGCA had reported that airfares are remaining within the fare band made available by the scheduled airlines on their respective websites.

The fares established and notified by Indian carriers are same for booking offices and travel agents / travel portals. While the fare notified and reflected on the ticket issued through a travel agent is at par with tickets issued through their own offices, it is possible that a travel agent may offer a discount from his own commission /incentive to the passenger. Similarly, a travel portal may offer a discount on similar basis to passengers.

(d) and (e):DGCA has issued Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) on Computer Reservation System (CRS)/Global Distribution System (GDS), which has the provision that subscriber shall not make fictitious reservations in the CRS/GDS and shall not resort to any abusive ticketing practice. With a view to maintaining transparency in tariff publication, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has taken following steps:

Scheduled domestic airlines have been directed to display established tariff route-wise and fare category-wise in their respective websites on monthly basis and also to notify any significant and noticeable changes to DGCA within 24 hrs of effecting such a change.

A Tariff Analysis Unit has been set up in DGCA to monitor tariff on regular basis.