

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1107

ANSWERED ON:27.07.2015

Recommendations of Planning Commission on Tourism

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Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of recommendations of the Working Group of Planning Commission on Tourism for 12th Five Year Plan; and
(b) the status of implementation of various recommendations made by the Working Group?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) and (b): The recommendation of the Working Group of Planning Commission on Tourism for 12th Five Year Plan mainly emphasises the need to adopt a 'pro poor tourism' approach aimed at increasing the net benefits to the poor from tourism and ensure that tourism growth contributes to poverty reduction. The benefits may be economic, social, environmental or cultural. For this purpose, the Approach Paper identified the need for developing a comprehensive set of strategies for a diversity of actions, from micro to macro level, including product and infrastructure development, marketing, branding and promotion, planning, policy and investment and increasing the spread of benefits to the weaker sections. It also prescribes that the 'principal strategy' to realise the tourism potential of India's enormous assets, namely historical sites, places of religious significance, and its vast range of national attractions, must be to focus on developing clusters or circuits around such assets.

Ministry of Tourism has tuned its tourism promotional efforts and has adopted a "pro-poor" approach aimed at increasing the net benefits to the poor from tourism and ensure that the tourism growth contributes to poverty reduction. The contribution of tourism to total employment of the country during 2012-13 was 12.36%.

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT) promotes India as a holistic destination and as part of its on-going activities, annually releases print, electronic, online and outdoor media campaigns in the international and domestic markets, under the Incredible India brand-line, to promote various tourism destinations and products of the country. MoT also promotes the tourism destinations and products through its websites and publicity and promotional material produced by it from time to time. In addition, a series of promotional activities are undertaken in important and potential tourist generating markets overseas through the Indiatourism Offices Overseas with the objective of showcasing India's tourism potential and increasing tourist arrivals to the country. These include participation in travel fairs and exhibitions; organising road shows, 'Know India' seminars & workshops; organizing and supporting Indian food and cultural festivals; publication of brochures; offering joint advertising and brochure support and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

The Ministry of Tourism has taken the initiative of identifying, diversifying, developing and promoting niche products of the tourism industry. This is done in order to overcome the aspect of 'seasonality', and to promote India as a 365 days destination, attract tourists with specific interests, and to ensure repeat visits for the unique products in which India has comparative advantage.

The Ministry of Tourism has launched following two new schemes pursuant to the Budget 2014-15 announcements.

1. Swadesh Darshan for Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits around Specific Themes.
2. National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) to beautify and improve the amenities and infrastructure at pilgrimage centres of all faiths.

Under Swadesh Darshan, integrated development of theme based circuits has been taken up for holistic and inclusive development which can provide engaging and complete tourism experience to both domestic and foreign tourists. The Scheme envisage enhancement of tourist attractiveness in a sustainable manner by developing world class infrastructure in the circuit destination. The scheme also envisages to create employment through active involvement of local communities with pro-poor approach in a sustainable and inclusive manner through development of a 'Responsible Tourism' Initiative.

Twelve theme based circuits i.e. North East Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit and Ramayana Circuit have been identified for development under "Swadesh Darshan".

The PRASAD Scheme guidelines envisage the integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in a planned, prioritized and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience to both domestic and foreign tourists.

Under PRASAD, initially twelve cities have been identified namely Ajmer, Amritsar, Amravati, Dwarka, Gaya, Kedarnath, Kamakhya, Kanchipuram, Mathura, Puri, Varanasi and Velankanni.
