

Safety of Women at Tourist Destinations

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Safety and Security of tourists is essentially a State subject. There is no proposal in the Ministry of Tourism to formulate a national policy regarding women safety.

However, the Ministry of Tourism has been continuously taking up the matter with all the State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations for setting up of dedicated Tourist Police to strengthen on-ground safety mechanism for tourists. With the efforts of Ministry of Tourism, States/UT's viz Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh have deployed tourist police.

As a part of the Ministry's continuous endeavors to make travel for tourists safe and secure, the Ministry of Tourism has set up a 24x7 Multi-Lingual Tourist Helpline on the toll free number 1800111363 or on a short code 1363 in 12 Languages including 10 international languages (German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic), Hindi and English for domestic and foreign tourists to provide support service in terms of information relating to travel in India and to offer appropriate guidance to tourists in distress, while travelling within India.

In addition, it is stated that the Government has set up a dedicated non-lapsable corpus fund - Nirbhaya Fund, being administered by Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, which can be utilized for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women.

Ministry of Tourism has been periodically requesting all State Governments and Union Territories for availing the benefits of the 'Safe Tourism Destinations for Women' under Nirbhaya fund which can be utilized for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women tourists.

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.

The Women Safety Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, has conveyed that 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The responsibility of maintaining law and order, protection of life and property of the citizens including women and children rest with the respective State Governments and the State Governments are competent to deal with such offences under the extant provisions of laws. However, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been supplementing the efforts of the State Governments and UTs by taking various initiatives and measures in this regard and these efforts are summarized as below:

- (i) MHA have also provided financial assistance to all States and UTs for setting up Women Help Desk (WHD) in each police station of States and UTs. As per available information, out of targeted 16469 Police Station, 14658 WHDs have been set up and 13743 WHDs are headed by the Women Police officials. Objectives of setting Women Help Desk are making Police Stations more accessible and friendly to women, Women Help Desk shall be the single point of contact for women, Officials in Women Help Desk will be adequately trained in sensitively dealing with complaints by women.
- (ii) Ministry of Home Affairs has been issuing advisories to States/UTs to deal with crime against women and children. These Advisories inter-alia includes detailed steps/action to be taken by Police in preventing crime, investigation and prosecution, measures to prevent crime, registration of FIR,

sensitization of Police Personnel towards women, providing training to the Police in dealing with crime against Women, features of Criminal laws, night patrolling etc. These advisories are available on MHA's website at www.mha.gov.in.

This information was given by Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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