

Expansion of Tourism Infrastructure

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Development of tourism infrastructure in the country including tribal and hilly areas is primarily the responsibility of concerned State Governments/UT Administrations. Further, the tourist material and signage in local and vernacular languages is also developed by the concerned State Governments/UT Administration.

However, the Ministry of Tourism through its central sector schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan (SD)', 'Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0)', 'Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD)' – a sub-scheme of Swadesh Darshan and 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' schemes complements the efforts of tourism infrastructure development by extending financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations/Central Agencies; subject to availability of funds, adherence to scheme guidelines, submission of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) by the State Government etc. In addition, Government of India under its initiative for 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI)' has also provided financial assistance to the States for development of tourism projects. The projects sanctioned under the schemes cover multiple components including those related to green mobility, signage etc. to provide enhanced tourism amenities and augmented tourism experiences for the visitors and tourists.

Further, the Ministry of Tourism in consultation with Ministry of Tribal Affairs has taken up an initiative for 'Development of Tribal Home Stays' under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism with an idea to tap the tourist potential of tribal areas and to provide an alternative livelihood to the tribal community. The initiative includes funding support to the tribal household and villages for:

- (a) Up to Rs.5 Lakh for village community requirement
- (b) Up to Rs.5 Lakh for construction of two new rooms for each household
- (c) Up to Rs.3 lakh for renovation of existing rooms for each household

Ministry of Tourism has accordingly issued schematic guidelines for Development of Homestays in Tribal Areas. The said schematic guidelines do not specifically refer to the Provisions of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act. However, as per the said schematic guidelines, the State Governments/UT Administrations shall be required to identify suitable tribal village(s) and tribal beneficiary (ies) in tribal areas for construction/ renovation of homestays and this shall be done in consultation with the local community. Further, the State/UT will submit the project to the Ministry under this scheme and funds will be released to the implementing agency of the concerned State/UT, which will further be responsible to disburse funds to individual beneficiaries/village communities in a well-defined and transparent manner. The schematic guidelines also suggest the concerned States to frame the operation guidelines for implementation of the scheme, in compliance with extant laws, rules and regulations in place.

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

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