

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2515
ANSWERED ON 10.08.2023

MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS FOR ONLINE BOOKINGS

2515 DR. SONAL MANSINGH:

Will the Minister of **TOURISM** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is formulating any plan to control misleading advertisements through online means especially for hotel booking/travel booking and fake star rating etc.; and
- (b) whether any guidelines or guidelines have been issued in this regard, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a) & (b): The Ministry of Tourism under its voluntary scheme of classification, accords Star Ratings to hotels and recognition/approval to tourism service providers through NIDHI+ portal, adhering to the prescribed guidelines notified by the Ministry. The guidelines for classification/approval/recognition of all accommodation units and tourism service providers are available in the NIDHI+ portal i.e. at www.nidhi.tourism.gov.in.

As per the provisions made in the guidelines, it has been made mandatory for all hotels classified by the Ministry to display their classification status prominently on their websites under a separate icon on the opening page, which on click will display the order of classification issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The following conditions have been set for prevention of false advertisement: -

- i. If any hotel is found to obtain classification on a false pretext or on basis of misrepresentation of facts, or is found to display wrong classification status, or found to promote/market the hotel on the basis of wrongful claims pertaining to hotel classification, the unit / hotel will stand declassified with immediate effect and it shall be debarred from applying for classification under any category for a minimum period of two years from the date of debarment by the competent authority.
- ii. If a hotel which has applied for classification under any category to the Ministry of Tourism is found to display false classification status, or found to promote/market the hotel on the basis of wrongful claims pertaining to hotel classification, then the application of the unit/hotel will stand summarily rejected and it shall be debarred from applying for classification under any category for a minimum period of two years.

- iii. In case of debarment, a hotel will have an opportunity for revocation of the debarment by paying a penalty prescribed after due procedure.

Amount of Penalty to be paid for one-time revocation of debarment:

- 1 Star- Rs. 25,000/-
- 2 Star- Rs 50,000/-
- 3 Star- Rs 1.00 Lakh
- 4 Star- Rs 2.00 Lakh
- 5 Star & 5 Star Deluxe- Rs. 3.00 Lakh

Similarly, for Tourism Service Providers such as travel agents, tour operators and tourist transport operators, it has been outlined in the guidelines that in case of non-fulfilment of required service standards and serious complaints of deficiency in service, or if the agency is found to have attained recognition on the basis of false or fabricated documents, the Ministry may consider to withdraw/terminate/revoke the recognition granted, with an opportunity for the agency to offer clarifications.
