

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3987**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2018 /PHALGUNA 29, 1939 (SAKA)**

**NON-OFFICIAL VISITORS TO PRISONS**

**3987. DR. KIRIT P. SOLANKI:**

**Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

**(a) the steps taken by the States to implement the advisory of Ministry of Home Affairs issued in 2011 for appointment of 'concerned citizens' as Non-Official Visitors (NOVs) to prisons;**

**(b) the details of the States that have Board of Visitors (BOVs) constituted in all their jails;**

**(c) the total number of jail visits by NOVs since January 2017, State-wise;**

**(d) whether the Government provides or proposes to provide any assistance to the States for training the NOVs and if so, the details thereof; and**

**(e) the details of the mechanism put in place by the Government to monitor the working of BOVs and NOVs?**

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS  
(SHRI HANSRAJ GANGARAM AHIR)**

**(a) to (e): The Ministry of Home Affairs had issued an advisory to all States and UTs in 2011 informing them that the prison visiting system relating to Non-Official Visitors (NoVs) needs to be streamlined. The Prison authorities were advised that individuals who are selected as NoVs should have sufficient knowledge and expertise in areas of prison reforms, legal rights, social work, adult education etc. The prison authorities have been**

**informed that guidelines for Interviewers and NoVs have been prepared by the Bureau of Police Research and Development and these should be provided to the Superintendents of all Jails. The Prison authorities were further advised that Non-official Visitors must be sensitised and trained about their duties, role and responsibilities. Prison authorities have been advised that sensitisation and training programmes have to be organised by the Prison headquarters in association with Regional Training Institutes. They have also been advised to hold workshops of NoVs across the State by the State Prison Training Institute for sharing experiences and learnings and documentation of good practices models. States have been advised that DG/IG (Prisons) should obtain six monthly reports from prison superintendents about the regularity of visits and the nature of work done by NOVs. The Board of Visitors (BoVs) are required to submit quarterly reports to State Governments under intimation to State Human Rights Commission.**

**A dedicated chapter on Board of Visitors (BoVs) has also been provided in the Model Prison Manual 2016 which has been circulated to all States and UTs for their guidance.**

**Information on BoVs constituted in jails and visits by NoVs are not maintained centrally.**

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**Sensitization and training programmes on various aspects of prison administration, including guidance to officials regarding BoVs and NoVs, are integral part of the training modules conducted by State Prison Departments, Bureau of Police Research and Development and Regional Correctional Institutes.**

**The Ministry of Home Affairs has recently taken up the issue of BoVs and NoVs with State Governments and has advised them to take following actions:**

- a) issue appropriate directions regarding criteria of appointment, training and functioning of Non-Official Visitors based on MHA's advisory issued in 2011.**
- b) ensure that Board of Visitors is constituted for each prison as also directed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the case titled 'Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons'.**
- c) formulate mechanisms to conduct regular internal inspections of prisons.**

**Since Prisons is a State subject, it is for respective State Governments to monitor these issues on a regular basis.**

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