

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1625
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31.07.2023

Sustainable Tourism in Biodiversity Heritage Sites

1625. SHRIMATI APARAJITA SARANGI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the steps being taken by the Government to promote sustainable tourism in Biodiversity Heritage Sites in the State of Odisha;
- (b) whether the Government has taken any steps to promote local livelihood opportunities while preserving ecology of biodiversity heritage sites, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of steps taken by the Government for creating awareness amongst tourists and encouraging their active participation in the preservation of biodiversity heritage site?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) to (c) Government of Odisha has notified three Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) i.e. Mandasaru Hills, Kandhamal district, Mahendragiri Hills, Gajapati district and Gandhamardan Hills in the Bolangir and Bargarh district.

Community based eco-tourism is an alternate source of livelihood for the forest dependent communities. Surrounding communities are engaged in eco-tourism activities and benefits are shared among them to supplement their livelihood. A Nature Camp has been developed by the Government of Odisha in Mandasaru Hills and Gandhamardan Hill. Activities including visit to the water falls, watch tower, cycling, children's park, plantation, dining hall, nature walk, trekking, birding and visit to pilgrimage place at Harishankar and Nrusinghnath, are undertaken in these eco-tourism destinations.

Eco Development Committees, Vana Sanrakshyana Samities and Eco-tourism groups have been formed in the villages for management of the Nature Camps. 16 Eco-tourism Group members are engaged in Mandasaru Valley Nature Camp whereas 06 Eco-tourism Group members are engaged in Nrusinghnath Nature Camp. Local people have also been trained as eco-guides which generates alternate livelihood for them. For upgrading their skills in respect of various activities, training programmes are conducted by Institute of Hotel Management and Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management for providing training, capacity building and exposure visit on hospitality, housekeeping, sanitation, cleaning, communication skills, foodcuisine and check-in and check-out protocols.

The Odisha Biodiversity Board has been provided with funds for providing training and capacity building of Eco Development Committees, Vana Sanrakshyana Samities , Eco-tourism Group members for developing eco- guides for identification of rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, conservation of indigenous species and organising trails and trekking routes for better awareness of the eco-tourists in that locality.
