

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2414

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2006

REVAMPING OF CATERING AND TRAVEL TOURISM SEGMENTS

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Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Railways have recently decided to revamp its catering and travel tourism segments;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard ;
- (c) whether the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation has embarked on an action plan to make eating on trains a more tolerable exercise ;
- (d) if so, the details thereof ; and
- (e) the other steps taken by the Railways to provide qualitative food in trains to the passengers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU)

(a) & (b): As an ongoing process, catering and tourism activities receive constant attention of the Zonal Railways and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), a wholly owned Company of Indian Railways. IRCTC has been entrusted to revamp catering services at stations and in trains. These include setting up of Multi-cuisine Food Plazas, Automatic Vending Machines, Water Vending Machines, etc. Comprehensive on-board services which include catering, bedroll services, coach cleaning etc. on trains are also being provided by IRCTC.

Ministry of Railways, keeping in view the vision, strategy and action plan for the development of tourism has formulated the Tourism Policy. For the implementation of the same, IRCTC has been designated to facilitate and coordinate with the Zonal Railways. Following are the broad elements of the envisaged tourism activities

- i) Luxury Tourist trains
- ii) Fairy Queen
- iii) Hill Trains
- iv) Special facilities for foreign tourists
- v) Value Added Tour Packages
- vi) Bharat Darshan Trains (Village on Wheels)
- vii) Setting up of the budget Hotels.

(c) & (d): In order to ensure that standardized hygienic food and beverage are supplied to rail users, prescribed hygienic norms are followed by the base kitchens and other cooking units. IRCTC have already undertaken renovation of base kitchens/cooking units. Replacement of old/defective furniture, food service equipments and other gadgets, gas pipelines etc. is undertaken on need basis. In addition to above, massive training programs are conducted for catering staff to upgrade the quality of services. Good quality raw materials are procured from reputed cooperative societies approved by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Agmark standards as applicable. To ensure the quality of food, "Services Monitoring Cells" (SMC) have been created at Zonal level by IRCTC to take immediate remedial action.

(e): Improvement in catering services is an ongoing process. This includes maintenance of hygiene, standard and quality of food services, introduction of good quality packaging/use of biodegradable material, revision of menus, procurement of raw material from approved sources etc. Regular/surprise checks are conducted by the railway administration to monitor the catering service and remedial action is taken.