

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5790
ANSWERED ON:17.05.2007
PAINTINGS IN AJANTA CAVES
Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Mane Smt. Nivedita

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the paintings in the Ajanta caves are not safe;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government has investigated the matter; and
- (d) if so, the preventive measures taken by the Government to protect the paintings in the Ajanta caves?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) & (b) The paintings at Ajanta are safe and are in good state of preservation

(c) & (d) Apart from undertaking regular conservation, preservation and maintenance, the Archaeological Survey of India has assigned Geological Survey of India (GSI) to conduct geo-technical studies of the Caves and recommend methods for conservation of the Caves and prevent them from natural disintegration. The GSI would also recommend methods for arresting seepage of water into the Caves.

As already suggested by the Panel of Experts, Archaeological Survey of India has taken up a programme for providing surface water drainage which is expected to minimize seepage into the Caves. It is proposed that the design of the surface drainage would be prepared by the Central Water Power Research Station (CWPRS), Pune.

Sustained preservation measures are implemented as per annual programme. These include consolidation of painted plasters, monitoring of environmental parameters, dusting of painted surface, spraying of insecticides on the unpainted portions of the plaster; other preventive measures include regulating the movement of visitors inside the painted caves to control the relative humidity and Fibre optic light system is installed in five painted caves eliminating the harmful effects of heat and other ultraviolet and infrared radiations.