

FIFTEENTH KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

(2021-23)

THIRTY FIFTH REPORT

(Presented on 10th August, 2023)



SECRETARIAT OF THE KERALA LEGISLATURE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

2023

FIFTEENTH KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**COMMITTEE
ON
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(2021-23)**

THIRTY FIFTH REPORT

on

**Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the One
Hundred and Tenth Report of the Committee on Public Accounts (1998-2000)**

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

(2021-2023)

Composition

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Shri Sunny Joseph

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Legislature Secretariat

Shri. A. M. Basheer, Secretary

Shri. P. S. Selvarajan, Joint Secretary

Shri. Jomy K. Joseph, Deputy Secretary

Smt. Mable Antony, Under Secretary.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Public Accounts, having been authorised by the Committee to present this Report, on their behalf present the Thirty Fifth Report on Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the One Hundred and Tenth Report of the Committee on Public Accounts (1998-2000).

The Committee considered and finalised this Report at the meeting held on 12th July, 2023.

Thiruvananthapuram
10th August, 2023.

SUNNY JOSEPH,
Chairman,
Committee on Public Accounts.

REPORT

This Report deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 110th Report of the Committee on Public Accounts (1998-2000)

The 110th Report of the Committee on Public Accounts (1998-2000) was presented in the House on 18th December, 2000. The Report contained forty five recommendations related to General Administration (Tourism) Department. The government was addressed on 06-01-2001 to furnish the statement of action taken on the recommendations contained in the report and final reply was received on 22-11-2018.

This Report contains 45 Recommendations and the Committee conducted two meetings for taking evidence on para 153 on 28.10.2002 & 28.09.2004 in Kerala House New Delhi and certain suggestions are given and these are incorporated in Chapter I of this Report.

The Committee examined the statements of action taken on the remaining recommendations contained in the 110th Report of the Committee (1998-2000) in its meetings held on 17-09-2003, 30.04.2014, 26-11-2014, 30-11-2016, 7-8-2019 and 20-9-2017 and decided not to pursue further action in the light of the replies furnished by government. Such recommendations and government replies are incorporated in Chapter II of this Report.

AG suggests some points to be inserted in the action taken statements on certain recommendations as remarks to the department while vetting the action taken statements on certain recommendation (Annexure **D**)

CHAPTER I

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF WHICH ACTION TAKEN BY
GOVERNMENT IS NOT SATISFACTORY
AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION.**

General Administration (Tourism) Department

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 28, Para No. 153)

1.1 The Committee notice that in a number of cases important registers/records such as DCB statement are not properly maintained. The Committee also came to know that dues outstanding in respect of Kerala House, New Delhi prior to January 1990 had not even been worked out and no action had been initiated to collect the dues outstanding. The Committee opine that collection of arrears and clearance of liabilities is the prime duty of the Controlling Officers of each unit of the Department of Tourism. In the circumstances, the Committee urge the Government to ensure the clearance of the amount due from various departments, towards the Department of Tourism for entertaining various guests/VIP and to take all steps for maintaining DCB and cash books by controlling officers of Guest Houses. A Hand book containing detailed instructions relating to the functioning of Guest Houses may also be issued.

Action Taken

DCB Statement of various Guest Houses.

Period upto	Demand	Collection	Balance
1.10.2002	1655172	1538229	116943

1.2 The major portion of the dues has to be settled by Government and the Department of Tourism. Necessary steps have also been taken to maintain DCB and

Cash Book by the controlling officers as suggested by the Committee. Hand Book is being prepared and will be made available before the Committee shortly.

Kerala House, New Delhi

1.3 There was no proper maintenance of Registers such as DCB and allied Registers for monitoring the dues till 31.3.96. More over many of the records such as bill books, cash books etc related to the period prior to 1990 are not available now to find out of the whereabouts of the defaulter so as to take action to collect the dues. However based on the available records the outstanding dues prior to 1990 has been worked out it and comes to Rs.47000/- (Rupees Forty seven thousand only). All possible action is being pursued to realise the dues from the guests whose whereabouts are known. For want of current details of address and whereabouts of the defaulters, the action to collect the dues are not complete. Based on the report of the Accountant General Kerala, necessary office order have been issued on 15.3.96 with clear instructions to be complied with by various divisions of Kerala House. At present the duty of checking of DCB statements and Cash and allied registers has been assigned to an officer by which the short collection and other dues could be closely watched and monitored so as to realise the dues in time. More over at present no persons except the Governor, the Chief Minister and other Ministers are given credit facility and the expenditure in this connection are being reimbursed by Government from time to time.

Further Recommendation

1.4 The Committee directs to furnish the following details :

1. Dues remittance of a Minister directly instead the protocol Officer, General Administration (Political) Department
2. Collection of dues Prior to 1990
3. Details of daily wage employees

4. Feasibility of recruiting efficient security personnel through private agencies.
5. Detailed statement showing annual income from each source

1.5 While taking evidence from the officers on 17.09.2003 on the above para (Recommendation 153) the Committee also deplored the poor administration of Kerala House, New Delhi and decided to take evidence from the Resident Commissioner, who is the present authority about the present condition of performance of administration in Kerala House, New Delhi.

Action Taken

1.6 1. As directed by the Committee, Communication regarding dues are now being sent to the General Administration (Political) Department

2. As directed by the Committee, the Resident commissioner has furnished a proposal to write off the old dues up to 1990 and the Resident Commissioner has been directed to furnish some clarifications in the matter and the same is awaiting from him.

3. The details of daily wage employees engaged in different category of posts in Kerala House, New Delhi has already been forwarded to Legislature Secretariat vide letter No.4666/TB3/01/GAD dated 27.04.2004. However a copy of the same is enclosed for ready reference

4. Security system in Kerala House, New Delhi has already been given w.e.f 01.03.2003 to Private agencies functioning in the field.

5. As directed by the Committee detailed statement showing annual income from each source has already been forwarded to Legislature Secretariat vide letter No.4666/TB3/01/GAD dated. However a copy of the same is forwarded herewith information. (Annexure III)

Further Recommendation

1.7 A meeting for taking evidence on para 153 of 110th Report of PAC (1998-2000) was held on 28.09.2004 in Kerala House, New Delhi as per its earlier decision mentioned above.

In that meeting the Committee made the following suggestions for the better management of the issues and affairs connected with Kerala House.

1. Convene meeting at the Secretary level and also at the heads of department level at once in a year to see the problems which have to be taken up by the Kerala House for liaison work and such other activities in New Delhi.
2. Planning for effective and result oriented liaison work.
3. Conduct study about the working of Andra Bhavan and other major State Houses in New Delhi and examine the feasibilities of introducing those activities being undertaken by them for their states in Kerala House also.
4. Conduct seminars to develop a right vision of Kerala.
5. Arrangements for conducting cultural programmes.
6. Proper record of accounts and break up of every account.
7. Review of the entire purchase and cost analysis of the articles purchased.
8. Expeditious action for framing Special Rules.
9. Package for the legitimate utilisation of electricity.
10. Quality test of water.
11. Attention for a hygienic atmosphere.
12. Feasibility study for introducing internal audit.
13. Planning for the proper utilisation of Travancore House and Kapoorthala Plot.
14. Possibility of entrusting the administration of Kerala House, New Delhi to a separate department.

1.8 The Committee recommends that the details of the present status of the action taken by the department on the above recommendations should be made available to the Committee within one month.

CHAPTER II**RECOMMENDATION IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE COMMITTEE DOESN'T PURSUE FURTHER
ACTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE
REPLIES FURNISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT****General Administration (Tourism) Department****Recommendation**

(Sl. No. 1, Para No. 126)

2.1 The Committee notice that the overall functioning of the Department of Tourism in the State to handle the task of promoting tourism, disclose a dismal picture in the growth of tourism when this sector is poised for rapid progress. The Committee understand that no remarkable progress has been achieved in those matters commented upon by Audit with regard to handling of Government money, maintenance of proper accounts, settlement of accounts of festivals/melas, events etc. and failure in final adjustment of advance paid to officers of other Departments or agencies. Implementation of various schemes assisted by Central Government, have not shown the desired progress and substantial infrastructures intended to be brought under the schemes for tourism development could not be materialized.

Action taken

2.2 Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala plays a key role in the current scenario of the financial growth of the state as well as providing directly and indirectly. Several new projects are being implemented led to promote and market the Tourism products of the God's Own Country. Stringent action has been taken in the matters commented by audit with regard to handling Government money, maintenance of accounts, settlement of accounts of fairs/festivals and final

adjustment of advances paid to officers of other Departments and other agencies. In order to achieve central financial assistance, the following proposals have been sent to the department of Tourism, Government of India this year.

- (a) Nehru Trophy Boat Race
- (b) Elephant Festivals of Kerala
- (c) Nishagandhi dance & Music Festival

2.3 It is expected to achieve the desired progress in the promotion of Tourism of the State with the assistance of Central Government in the forth coming years.

Action taken

2.4 Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala plays a key role in the current scenario of the financial growth of the State. Several new projects are being implemented to promote and market the Tourism products of the God's Own Country. Stringent action has been taken in the matters commented by audit with regard to handling Government money, maintenance of accounts, settlement of accounts of fairs/festivals and final adjustment of advances paid to officers of other Departments and other agencies. Specific directions have already been issued to subordinate offices to settle the advances within 2 weeks after the event. The delay occurred in settlement is mainly due to delay in passing of bills/vouchers of Governmental as well as private institutions.

2.5 Central assistance is being received to Nehru Trophy boat race every year. During the current financial year for the President's Trophy Boat race central assistance is received. Elephant race is not being conducted during the past 12 years

2.6 It is expected to achieve the desired progress in the promotion of Tourism of the State with the assistance of Central Government in the forth coming years.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 2, Para No. 127)

2.7 It has come to the notice of the Committee that two parallel agencies viz., Bekal Tourism Authority and Bekal Resorts Development Corporation are in existence for the integrated development of Bekal area. The Committee urge the Government to wind up the functions of Bekal Tourism Authority. The Committee would like to be intimated the details of amount kept in the accounts of Bekal Tourism Authority.

Action taken

2.8 As per G.O.(MS) No. 449/2001/GAD dated 3-12-2001 (copy enclosed) ^(Annexure IV) it has been ordered for the winding up of Bekal Tourism Authority and settlement of accounts. Balance amount available in accounts with State Bank of India, Nanthancode Branch stands transferred to Bekal Resorts Development Corporation Limited. Action is being taken for closure and transfer of balance in TPA No. 3461. No further action is pending in this regard.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.3, Para No. 128)

2.9 Bekal in Kasargod District was selected by Government of India as one of the special tourism areas to be developed as an international tourist destination. The Committee feel that if the development of Chandragiri Fort is linked with the proposed Bekal Project, it would help to accelerate the planned and integrated development of Kasargod and Kannur areas and the tourism potential of those areas could be tapped to a greater extent.

Action Taken

2.10 BRDC is giving wide publicity for Chandragiri Fort through Brochures and other publicity materials. Photographs and relevant details are included in the Web site of Bekal Resorts Development Corporation. A road leading to the Fort has also been development Corporation.

2.11 The Director, Tourism has requested the District Collector, Kasargod to hand over the Chandragiri Fort (the land in which the fort is constructed which comes to nearly 7 acres with all movable and immovable properties in the said land) to the Department for its proper upkeep and maintenance and also to promote the spot as one of the attraction points. The District Tourism Promotion Council, Kasargod has submitted proposals for development of the fort to Department of Tourism and sanctioned financial assistance for the same.

Action Taken

2.12 If the Fort assigned to the Department is handed over to Bekal Resorts Development Corporation, action can be taken to preserve the monument and also to make it as a tourism point by carrying out necessary innovations.

2.13 Since the Chandragiri Fort is now under the purview of District Tourism Promotion Council, Kasaragod, no action is pending on the part of BRDC on this regard.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.4, Para No. 129)

2.14 The Committee notice shortage of essential facilities in the Bekal Fort due to the resistance from the authorities of Archaeological Survey of India. Therefore, the Committee suggest to construct toilets and to provide water supply and other amenities for the tourists and visitors without causing any damage to the fort.

Action Taken

2.15 Bekal Fort is one of the historic Fort in Kerala under the control of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Even though a lot of tourists and other people

are coming to visit the Fort, the facilities available are not sufficient. To overcome the same, BRDC has constructed a basic tourist facility center viz 'Thanal' near Bekal Fort in 1.61 acre land area which comprises toilet blocks, a restaurant, vehicle parking area, children's park, Tourist Information Center, drinking water points etc. A walkway along the fort has been developed for the benefit of the people. To maintain the area waste free, necessary FRP bins have been placed inside the Fort for collection of waste. BRDC is further planning to do some landscaping inside the Fort to make it more attractive. It is also proposed to put signboard in the area highlighting the safety of the sea etc. Some of the development options proposed by BRDC could not be taken up due to the resistance of ASI authorities. If the authorities give permission, these interventions will be carried out in a phased manner.

2.16 There is no further action pending in this regard

Recommendation

(Sl. No.5, Para No. 130)

2.17 The Committee opine that wide publicity should be given so as to attract more tourists to the Bekal fort. The Committee recommend to publish pamphlets or brochures in English, Malayalam and Kannada languages highlighting the historical importance of Bekal fort to attract both inland and international tourists.

Action Taken

2.18 BRDC has already published brochures on Kasargod and surrounding area with due importance to Bekal Fort. A separate pamphlet has been prepared on the history of Bekal Fort. These brochures are widely distributed through the Tourist Information Center at Bekal. Efforts are also being made for printing of Brochures in Kannada and Malayalam languages for use of the people. More information on Fort is available in the web site www.bekal.org with photographs on Bekal Fort.

2.19 Further steps for giving more publicity to this historic Fort will be taken up in future.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 6, Para No. 131)

2.20 The Committee understand that the dangerous points on the way from Fort to beach and two dangerous points inside the Fort likely to endanger the visitors. It is likely that even the construction of a pathway without any harm to the fort has been banned by Archaeology Department. The Committee urge the Government to evolve measures for the security of the visitors in the fort in consultation with the Archaeology Department.

Action Taken

2.21 Necessary caution Boards had been installed but this has been removed by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) authorities later. This aspect has to be taken care of by ASI authorities itself.

Action Taken

2.22 Necessary caution Boards have been installed by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at all necessary points.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 7, Para No. 132)

2.23 The Committee view very seriously the fact that in spite of specific recommendations of the Committee on Public Accounts in its 37th Report (1987-89) and 74th Report (1993-95) to curb major irregularities such as violations of codal provisions and norms of financial management, lapses in maintaining cash books and connected records, settlement of advances and other serious flaws in keeping accounts, etc. still persists. The Committee observe that it is difficult to bring to book the delinquent officers who have criminally wasted or misappropriated public money since the Department or Government failed to pinpoint the names of officers who were responsible for such serious irregularities. The Committee desire that Government should enquire the reasons for the persistence of such irregularities in the Department and initiate stringent action against the officers found guilty. The Committee further recommend that responsibility of financial matters in respect of festivals, melas, events etc. held under the auspices of Department of Tourism should not be entrusted to the officers of other Departments or District authorities;

but should be vested with a single officer of the Directorate, who should be held responsible and answerable for the pecuniary loss if any sustained by Government. Strict vigilance should be bestowed on expenditure, accounts should be properly maintained and all accounts of advances should be settled within the stipulated time frame and got audited annually. The financial principles should not be overlooked and irregularities detected should be brought to the notice of higher authorities in time and necessary action initiated to recover the loss to Government at the earliest.

Action Taken

2.24 Time bound action is being taken to settle the accounts of the pending case regarding the following festivals conducted by Department of Tourism.

- i. Tourism week celebrations
- ii. Great Elephant March
- iii. Nishagandhy Dance Festival

2.25 Stringent action has been taken to avoid the irregularities such as violations of codal provisions and norms of financial Management, lapses in maintaining cash books and connected records, settlement of accounts, etc pointed out by the Public Accounts Committee. Considering the recommendations of the Committee, Department of Tourism has taken decision not to entrust the responsibility of financial matters in respect of festivals, Melas, events etc to the officers of the other Departments of District Authorities. Strict Vigilance is also keeping to ensure that all accounts of advances are get settled within the stipulated period of time.

2.26 Regarding the settlement of advances, the officers have drawn advances as required for conducting various events such as work shops, inauguration of projects etc pertaining to plan schemes and which are always settled in due time. But in some cases the settlement of advances is delayed due to the non availability of bills/vouchers connected from the concerned offers. Necessary steps have been taken to settle the accounts by communicating these who delayed to submit the accounts repeatedly till the accounts is settled. However, we will strictly adhere to all the codal provisions and norms of financial Management in future events.

Action Taken

2.27 Director of Tourism is appointed as a single officer at the Directorate to manage financial matters of Department of Tourism (copy of Government Order enclosed). Annexure II.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 8, Para No. 133)

2.28 The Committee find that the negligence and lapses on the part of the former Directors and other controlling Officers in the Department paved the way for the violation of codal provisions and poor performance in financial management by subordinate officers. Pointing out the several specific instances of irregularities during evidence, the Committee desired to be furnished with the names of Directors of Department of Tourism during these periods. But the details have not yet been furnished to the Committee. Therefore, the Committee recommend that Government should conduct an enquiry into the delay in settlement of huge advances and in collection of arrears and to initiate action against the concerned officers.

Action Taken

2.29 The long pending unsettled advances are settled. The unsettled advance as on 1-12-2008 was Rs.8,60,000/-.

2.30 All long pending advances as on 1.12.2008 except two have been settled. The present unsettled advances is Rs.5.5 lakhs. Now utmost care is taken to settle all the advances of such nature then and there. The name of directors of Department of Tourism during the reported period are –

- 1) Sri. T.Balakrishnan IAS-8-4-1985 to 15-7-1988.
- 2) Sri.K.Jayakumar IAS-15-12-1988 to 30-9-1991
- 3) Sri.T.Balakrishnan IAS-1-10-1991 to 19-6-1993
- 4) Smt.Nalini Netto IAS-20.6.1993 to 7-10-1995

2.31 Para may be dropped as action has been taken to settle the advances.

Further Recommendation

2.32 The Committee decided to give direction to the department to settle the arrear advance amount of ₹ 5,50,000/- within three months.

Action Taken

2.33 All long pending advances as on 01.12.2008 as envisaged in para 133 of the above report have been settled except two cases and the position of unsettled advances for both the case is ₹5.15 lakhs only, and not ₹5.50 lakhs as reported earlier. Now, the unsettled two cases of pending advance amount of ₹5.15 lakhs has been settled. :-

2.34 The details of advance settlement, and the name of officers are as follows :

Sl. No.	To whom sanctioning	Purpose	Sanctioned Order No. & date	Amount	Settlement Order No. & Date	Bill No.
1	Sri. A. Charles, Planning Officer	For earmarking boundaries & to avoid encroachment by fixing jendas at department land at Wagamon	C4-12973/1999 dt. 23.11.2002 AC Bill No. Inframatch 32/02-03	4,90,000	P3 (C4)-12973/99 dated 28.04.2015	DC Bill No. Inframatch 02/15-16
2	Sri. K.N. Ajayakumar, Senior Superintendent	For meeting the expenditure in connection with the inspection conducted on Boat Yards at Pune & Mumbai on 28.05.2014	C4-8593/2003 dt. 28.05.2004. AC Bill No. Inframatch 01/4-05	25,000	P3(4)-8593/2003 dt. 19.01.15	DC Bill No. upinfra 11/05-06

2.35 The Committee approved the statement of action taken on above para

Recommendation

(Sl. No.9, Para No. 134)

2.36 The Committee note that the advances given to Departmental officers of Tourism department and officers of other departments had been outstanding from 1987-88 onwards. From the evidence tendered before the Committee as well as from the additional information furnished by the Department, the Committee

understand that the Special Cell constituted to clear all the pending festival accounts could not succeed in this direction since the supporting vouchers could not be traced out. The Committee hope that the accounts pending adjustments for want of connected vouchers and receipts should be settled shortly and that in future Government should take care to see that the advances of such nature are adjusted then and there. The Committee recommend to initiate stringent action against the officers who had failed in settling advances aggregating to Rs. 337.53 lakhs given during 1987-88 to 1994-95.

Action Taken

2.37 The long pending unsettled advances are settled. The unsettled advance as on 01-12-2008 was Rs. 8,60,000/-. Earnest efforts are being taken for the settlement of these advance.

2.38 All non pending advances as on 01.12.2008 except two have been settled. The present position unsettled advances is Rs.5.5 lakhs. Now utmost care is taken to settle all the advances of such nature then and there. The name of directors of Department of Tourism

1. T. Balakrishnan IAS,
08-04-1985 to 15-07-1988
2. K. Jayakumar IAS
15-12-1988 to 30-09-1991
3. T. Balakrishnan IAS
01-10-1991 to 19-06-1993
4. Nalini Netto IAS
20-06-1993 to 07-10-1995

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 10, Para No. 135)

2.39 The Committee are led to the conclusion that the absence of a well organized internal audit wing is the main reason for the persistence of irregularities in cash management. The Committee find that the audit wing now functioning in the Department of Tourism could not complete even the audit of accounts of Guest

Houses properly and in time. It is understood that the Department had submitted a proposal to Government for strengthening the present system of internal audit. The Committee recommends that an independent full fledged audit wing may be sanctioned for ensuring the concurrent audit.

Action Taken

2.40 Director of Tourism has forwarded a proposal for creation of additional post for the strengthening of Inspection Wing in Tourism Department as the present staff strength is not sufficient to inspect all major Government Guest Houses once in three months. Government have examined the proposal in detail and the proposal was declined as it will cause additional financial commitment to the State exchequer. Hence Director of Tourism was requested to explore the possibility of strengthening the inspection wing by redeploying the existing staff from other wings in the Department. On a reply the Director of Tourism has pointed out the difficulties to strengthen the Inspection Wing by re-deploying the existing staff from other wings.

Further Recommendation

2.41 The Committee was not satisfied with the reply furnished by the Department and strongly recommended that the department should take earnest steps to strengthen the Internal Audit Wing and ensure its effective functioning and the same should be intimated to the Committee within two months.

Action Taken

2.42 In order to strengthen the Internal Audit wing and its effective functioning, an Internal Audit wing and an Audit Monitoring Committee have been constituted at the Directorate of tourism and the Internal Audit Wing is now set to work.

2.43 The Committee approved the statement of the action taken on above para.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.11, Para No. 136)

2.44 The Committee notice that the revenue collected by way of room rent and Government share of catering charges in the Guest Houses were not being remitted in the treasury in time and that the Managers used to divert these collections for meeting the day to-day expenses of catering, fuel charges, hire charges etc. The Committee are also not quite convinced of the reasons adduced for not maintaining a fixed amount in the Guest Houses in the form of a permanent advance to meet the expenses in connection with the visit of the VIP/VVIP. The Committee urge the Government to evolve a system, to meet urgent and unforeseen expenditure, in strict conformity with the principles of public accountability and without violating the codal provisions. The Committee also recommend that in view of the peculiar nature of the Department a permanent system should be evolved in consultation with the Finance Department to entrust a fixed amount by way of permanent advance to the Managers of Guest Houses to meet contingencies.

Action Taken

2.45 Instruction have been given to all concerned not to divert fund to other purpose in future. Due to financial crisis the Taxi and Fuel charges could not be drawn in time from Treasury. So immediate arrangements had to be made for engaging Taxi for State Guest and Ministers. The managers were forced to use the cash from the Revenue Receipts.

2.46 Due to Treasury ban the temporary Receipt also could not be encashed.

Action taken

2.47 At present the department maintained a fixed amount in Guest houses as permanent advance to meet the expenses in connection with VIP/VVIP visits. At Guest Houses, Thaycaud, and Ernakulam the amount of permanent advance is Rs.5,000/- and other Guest houses it is Rs.2,000/-. The proposal of the Director of Tourism to increase the permanent advance is under

Recommendation

(Sl. No.12, Para No.137)

2.48 Apart from the scrutiny of irregularities mentioned in audit paragraphs, the Committee made an effort to gather information about the problems that impede the growth of tourism in the state.

Action Taken

2.49 Action will be taken to find out the problems that empede the growth of Tourism in the state.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 13, Para No. 138)

2.50 During the course of the indepth study, the Committee expressed concern over the future progress of the 24 centres identified under the scheme of "Destination Kerala". The Committee also found that various other schemes launched for tourism promotion activities like Dream City, Kozhikode, Mattupetty, Neyyar Dam, Palaruvi etc. have come to a stand still due to non-co-operation of other Departments like Irrigation, Forest and Wildlife, Kerala Water Authority etc. The Committee urge, the Government to settle the issues or disputes that stand in the way of schemes for tourism promotion immediately and to issue specific guidelines for the implementation of such schemes on a priority basis.

Action Taken

2.51 It is true that many tourism promotion activities like Green City, Project Kozhikode, Neyyar Dam, Palaruvi etc. came to a standstill due to non-co-operation of other relevant departments. However, Department of Tourism and District Tourism Promotion Councils are taking maximum efforts to promote developmental activities at these places. Action is being taken to settle the issues.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.14, Para No. 139)

2.52 The Committee understand that the two travel circuits started in Kerala have not connected many places of tourist attraction. The Committee notice that the lack of exploration or investigation for linking highranges and other places of tourism prospects adversely affected the development of new travel circuits. The Committee are of the view that new travel circuits linking air service from Kozhikode, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram connecting Manglore and Mysore would be highly desirable for tourist traffic by developing additional places having tourism potential.

Action Taken

2.53 The recommendation for a new travel circuit linking air service from Kozhikode, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram connecting Mangalore and Mysore will be explored after making a feasibility study of the project.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 15, Para No. 140)

2.54 The Committee believe that information and publicity are the core of tourism promotion anywhere. In order to achieve this objective Government should open new information centres abroad for developing worldwide advertisement. Acknowledging the effectiveness of publicity the Committee urge the Government to adopt modern means of publicity in addition to existing modes.

Action Taken

2.55 As the Committee assumed, information and publicity are, of course, the core of Tourism Promotion in our state also. Wide publicity is being provided on behalf of Department of Tourism World Wide through various travel trade fairs such as WTM, KTM, ITB etc. Modern techniques are also applied for proper marketing and publicity for Kerala Tourism through internet, magazines and other medias.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.16, Para No.141)

2.56 The Committee are alarmed to note that there is shortage of 4000 hotel rooms/beds per year to cater to the needs of all types of tourists and our state is far behind some of the other states in providing hotel accommodation and other facilities. The Committee underline the need for the qualitative as well as quantitative

improvement in availability of accommodation for tourist attraction. Therefore, the Committee recommend that the department may evolve schemes for providing more hotel facilities in public sector, private or as a joint venture to overcome the inadequacy of accommodation facilities for domestic as well as international tourists.

Action Taken

2.57 Now the private sector in the state is coming forward in a big way to start new quality accommodation facilities in all the major tourist destination in the state. Moreover KTDC, TRKL etc are also coming out with more number of hotel projects in the state. Department of Tourism also evolved schemes of Yatrinivases and wayside facilities for the low budgetted tourists coming to the state.

Action Taken

2.58 Noted, Department of Tourism is encouraging private sector to develop more hotels by providing attractive incentives. KTDC, the public sector undertaking is also planning to construct more rooms in its existing hotels and develop more hotels at new tourism destinations.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.17, Para No. 142)

2.59 The Committee understand that all the required facilities in tourism sector could not be arranged or fulfilled by Government alone. The Committee observe that the development of tourism industry depends to a great extent upon the active participation of private enterprises with constructive co-operation. Therefore, the Committee urge the Government to create a healthy atmosphere for total involvement of private sector in the tourism promotional activities in our State by giving incentives, providing training, awards for excellent services, arranging bank loans etc.

Action Taken

2.60 Government is giving full support to the private sector the promotional activities in the Tourism field. Financial incentives such as investment subsidies and electricity tariff subsidy, Tourism Awards for excellent services etc are being offered to the private sector as a part of encouraging them in building up quality tourism infrastructure.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.18, Para No 143)

2.61 The Committee view very seriously the deterioration of the forests, mural paintings, caves, pictures of archaeological, architectural and historical importance and antique articles belonging to royal families and exquisite heritage items of rare character. The Committee emphasise the need to preserve these monuments, paintings, pictures without causing any destruction, modification to damage to the existing structure and urge the Government to explore possibility of taking over the preservation and conservation of these forts, caved paintings and other items of antiquity in consultation with the Archaeological Survey of India which now handles all these activities.

Action Taken

2.62 In connection with the preservation and conservation of age old buildings and other monuments of Kerala, Government have formulating a new heritage protection scheme called "Grihasthali". Conservation and preservation of Fort Kochi Heritage area is also being taken up by the Department.

Recommendation

(Sl.No.19, Para No 144)

2.63 The Committee fail to understand the rationale behind moving ahead with popularisation of ecotourism, which pose danger to the ecology, by creating facilities for viewing towers, tree top huts in wild life sanctuaries etc., for promoting educational component of wild life tourism. The Committee would like to point out the possible risk of ecological 'imbalances' while promoting ecotourism and to cautious about the danger of mass tourism behind the concept of ecotourism. The Committee, therefore, recommend the popularisation of tourism to the interior parts of forests

should be strictly regulated and Government should issue specific guidelines while permitting ecotourism which may pose danger to ecology.

Action Taken

2.64 The Eco-Tourism activities are in a new phase to the State, Accepting all the anxious points in this sector, Government have taken steps to promote eco-tourism in the state. As an initial effort, Thenmala in Kollam District is being developed as a unique eco-tourism destination.

2.65 The tourism based activities in the interior part of the forests are controlled by the Forest Department and these are done in a strictly regulated way.

Recommendation

(Sl. No.20, Para No 145)

2.66 The Committee learn that no effective survey or study has been conducted by the Department of Tourism before launching most of the tourism promotion scheme in the State. Projects like wayside amenity at Parassala, tented accommodation at Ponmudi, Microlight aircraft, dredging of channel from Aakulam to Veli lake have failed to have to be abandoned midway, Luxury cruisers could not be advantageously utilised and Beach Resorts, Varkala and Kappad could not be leased out in time. The Committee are of the view that schemes evolved towards development of tourism should have been taken up only after conducting a detailed survey as to their financial viability and feasibility.

Action Taken

2.67 The Committee's observation in this regard is accepted. Even though detailed study in each and every project is not possible, the viability and feasibility of projects can be assessed before starting of the project.

Action Taken