



## **TOURISM CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **SAFE AND HONOURABLE TOURISM**

To leverage the burgeoning global travel and trade and in keeping with the Indian tourism industry's objective of positioning India as a global tourism brand, the Ministry of Tourism has strategically outlined in its policy the central principle of, 'Atithi Devo Bhava' (Guest is God). In stating this, is evident the commitment of Indian tourism to ensure that every tourist in India is physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated, culturally enriched and spiritually elevated.

To meet this objective and at the core of the National tourism policy of 2002 is outlined the seven pillars of tourism, Swagat (Welcome), Soochana (Information), Suvidha (Facilitation), Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Cooperation), Samrachanam (Infrastructure Development) and Safai (cleanliness).

'Safe and Honourable Tourism' aims to strengthen the critical pillar of 'Suraksha' (Safety) and ensure that Indian tourism follows international standards of safe tourism practices, applicable for both tourists and local residents i.e local people and communities who may be impacted by tourism in some way. Its central objective is to ensure that tourism activities are undertaken, integrating the need to protect the dignity, safety and the right to freedom from exploitation of all tourists and local residents involved in or impacted by tourism.

In today's scenario, following safety guidelines is not just about adhering to the provisions of the seven pillars but also implies good business.

As the demand from travelers for safe and secure tourism services increases, this code will assist signatories to build capacities among their services chains and personnel so as to be able to respond to this demand.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

This code is a guideline of conduct to enable the Indian travel and tourism industry to:

1. Encourage tourism activities to be undertaken with respect for basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourists and local residents' i.e people and communities who may be impacted by tourism in some way.
2. Aid the prevention of prostitution, sex tourism and forms of sexual exploitations like assaults and molestations in tourism to safeguard the safety of persons, in particular women and children.
3. To enhance prevention of activities like forced or involuntary drug use, manipulated and incorrect information, cultural and social intolerance which could increase vulnerability to crime.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

**1. Information & training of personnel:** Management will take up measures to build awareness and train staff on the guidelines of this code and appropriate legal provisions to enhance vigilance and to ensure that personnel act in a manner that promotes the safety of tourists, local residents and their own staff.

**Child line – 1098 | Women Helpline – 1091 | Local police helpline - 100**

In case of misconduct by a staff member or personnel of a service provider, signatories of the code will commit themselves to act in an unbiased manner, reporting the incidence to appropriate authorities and protecting the interests of the individual whose rights are violated.

**2. Public awareness and guest notification:** Messages of intolerance to any form of exploitation must be made evident in appropriate places. Signatories of the code are encouraged to assist tourists with guidance on safety tips applicable to the specific city/place like places to visit, timings for visits, right dressing and precautions against moving alone, and against accepting eatables and favors from unknown persons etc.

**3. Regulated use of premises and official equipment:** Management/owners are encouraged to prohibit usage of the organization's premises for use or abuse of illicit substances, sexual violations.

Individuals under the permitted age shall not be allowed permission in to restricted areas like bars and pubs.

Tourism service providers shall verify and maintain a record of details pertaining to tourists, personnel and service providers like address, contact details etc and also commit themselves to maintaining confidentiality.

Internet usage that promotes, seeks any contacts for sex tourism and other sexual services, for search of pornographic material and/or to solicit the sale and purchase of illicit substances shall be prohibited.

**4. Ethical business practices and marketing:** Management/owners shall ensure that all contracts with business partners, suppliers and franchise agreements bear a clause seeking commitment to provisions of the 'Code of conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism' in their businesses.

An unambiguous company policy shall be set up to ensure that marketing and advertising does not support the promotion of sexual exploitation or promotion of sexually explicit images.

**5. Implementation and Monitoring:** All signatories are required to maintain an annual report on 'Code of conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism' and submit it to a designated authority.

**Management/owners shall report on:**

Training and capacity building initiatives carried out for personnel/staff.

Means adopted to raise awareness on safety among guests, personnel and service providers.

**KEY MESSAGES FOR AWARENESS BUILDING AND DISSEMINATION**

**1. Enhancing Safety and Security of all Tourists:** All signatories of the code are committed to act in a manner that protects the dignity and freedom against exploitation of persons especially women and children and facilitate prevention of incidences of sexual molestation, harassment of their guests and provide assistance in case of an untoward incident.

In case of exploitation please call the **Child line** – 1098 and **Women Helpline** – 1091 and/or contact relevant authorities like the police or travel and tour operators.

Like in many places in the rest of the world tourists are encouraged to follow some basic and practical safety tips such as to remain with a group or meet new people in public places, not to accept items from persons whom they have befriended recently, be wary of unexpected, unknown persons coming to their hotel room, never open the door to unsolicited room service or maintenance people etc.

Tourists are encouraged to understand local social, cultural norms and beliefs and are encouraged to conduct themselves in a manner that respects these beliefs.

Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty is an offence under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code.

Punishment for rape offences shall not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years as the case may be, according to Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code.

**2. Enhancing Safety of Local People:** Signatories to the code maintain zero tolerance to acts of sexual exploitations, including commercial sexual exploitation like prostitution, sex tourism and trafficking of persons for it.

Many tourists believe that they are protected by anonymity and thus laws are more easily violated. Any guest, staff, partner linked to this agency found to be indulging in exploitations outlined in this code or supporting it shall be reported to an appropriate authority. Under section 7 of Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956, letting out a hotel or any part thereof for prostitution is an offence for which the license of the hotel can be suspended.

Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act- Engaging in the production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, warehousing, concealment, use or consumption, import inter-state, export inter-state, import in to India, export from India or transshipment, of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances is an offence except for scientific and medical reasons. Punishment for the offence may imply imprisonment, fine or both. Handling or letting out any premises for the carrying on of any of the above mentioned activities in an offence under the NDPS act.

According to the National Security Act, 1980, the Central Government or the state Government has the power to act against any person with a view to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defense of India, the relations of India with foreign powers or the security of India. The Foreigners (Amendment) Act, 2004 - if a foreigner to the country acts in violation of the conditions of the valid visa issued to him for his entry and stay in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine. If he has entered in to a bond then his bond shall be forfeited.