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Kerala set to become women-friendly tourism destination

Kerala launches a project to encourage the participation of women in all tourism activities and attract more women tourists to the State

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THE HINDU BUREAU





With a view to becoming a women-friendly tourism destination, Kerala has launched a project to encourage the participation of women in all tourism activities and attract more women tourists to the State.

The 'women-friendly tourism' project, an initiative of the State Responsible Tourism Mission (RT Mission), launched here on Wednesday, aims to establish women-friendly tourism centres and empower women. The project will be implemented ensuring the participation of women from all sections of society.

Through the project, the RT Mission aims to create a network of women's units and tourism centres manned by women. The project will also ensure that tourism destinations in the State are fulfilling the needs of women tourists. As part of taking the initiative to all districts, the mission will provide training to selected women to work as tour coordinators, storytellers, community tour leaders, auto/taxi drivers (guest Handling), homestay operators etc.

All basic infrastructure will be made available for the project, which will have a monthly evaluation process, led by the Tourism Minister.

Launching the project, Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said though Kerala already enjoyed the reputation as the safest destination for women tourists, the State needed a paradigm shift at a time when the world was witnessing a sharp increase in solo trips by women as well as in groups.

"This initiative is conceived not just as a stand-alone package, but as a comprehensive project to ensure presence of ordinary women in various tourism activities and bring more women travellers to the State. Through this project, the RT Mission will ensure safe and hygienic tourism destinations for women tourists. The all-women tour packages will be controlled and operated by women," he said.

The Minister also inaugurated a one-day workshop organised as part of the project.

Delivering the keynote address, Deputy Representative, UN Women India, Kanta Singh, said creating a safe, reliable and hygienic infrastructure that addressed the needs of women was vital while implementing the project.

Calling for more debates to evolve solutions for the problems regarding safe journey of women and encouraging solo trips by women, P.B. Nooh, Kerala Tourism Director, said while ensuring the safety of women tourists, the project would bring about a holistic change in the tourism sector.

State coordinator of RT Mission K. Rupeshkumar unveiled the project.