

21

**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2022-23)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Welfare of Indian Diaspora: Policies/Schemes']

TWENTY FIRST REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

APRIL, 2023 / CHAITRA, 1945 (Saka)

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*Presented to Lok Sabha on 03.04.2023
Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 03.04.2023*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

APRIL, 2023 /CHAITRA, 1945 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2022-23)

Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal
3. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
4. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
5. Shri E. T. Mohammed Basheer
6. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
7. Smt. Preneet Kaur
8. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
9. Smt. Poonam Pramod Mahajan
10. Shri Srinivas Reddy Manne
11. Shri P. C. Mohan
12. Smt. Queen Oja
13. Shri Ritesh Pandey
14. Dr. K. C. Patel
15. Shri N.K. Premachandran
16. Smt. Navneet Ravi Rana
17. Shri Soyam Bapu Rao
18. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
19. Shri Rebati Tripura
20. Dr. Harsh Vardhan
21. *Vacant*

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
23. Smt. Misha Bharti
24. Shri Anil Desai
25. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
26. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
27. Shri Prakash Javadekar
28. Dr. Wanweiroy Kharlukhi
29. Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal
30. Shri Kapil Sibal
31. Shri Abdul Wahab

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai | – | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | – | Director |
| 3. | Ms. K. Muanniang Tunglut | - | Deputy Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2022-23) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty First Report (17th Lok Sabha) on action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifteenth Report of the Committee on the subject 'Welfare of Indian Diaspora: Policies/Schemes'.

2. The Fifteenth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 03 August, 2022. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received on 3 November, 2022 (English Version) and 23 March, 2023 (Hindi Version).

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their Sitting held on 29 March, 2023. The Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee has been given at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs is given at Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI
29 March, 2023
8 Chaitra, 1945 (Saka)

P.P. CHAUDHARY,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER-I

This Report of the Committee on External Affairs deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Fifteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Welfare of Indian Diaspora: Policies/Schemes' which was presented to the Lok Sabha on 03.08.2022 and laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on 03.08.2022.

2. The Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the 55 observations/recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows: -

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -

Recommendation Nos.1, 2, 3, 4,5, 7, 11, 12,14, 15, 16,17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25,26,27,28, 29,30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38,39, 40, 41, 42,43,44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, and 54

Total-43

Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:-

Recommendation No.8 and 9

Total- 2
Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -

Recommendation Nos. 6, 10, 13, 21, 36,37, 47, and 55

Total-8

Chapter-IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: -

Recommendation Nos. 24 and 35

Total-2
Chapter-V

3. The Committee desire that final replies to the comments and observations/recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report and recommendations included in Chapter V may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

REGISTRATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND STUDENTS ABROAD WITH INDIAN MISSIONS/POSTS

Recommendation No. 6

5. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad works with the motto 'Indian Embassies: Home away from Home'. A robust system of grievance redressal which includes bringing issues through e-mails, twitter and through CPGRAMS portal has been maintained. Keeping in view the fact that the Indian Missions/Posts are the direct link between India and its diaspora community, the Committee desire that they should play a greater and effective role in the welfare of the diaspora and in reconnecting them with the motherland. The Committee, however, find that a large chunk of the diaspora community including migrant workers and students are yet to be registered with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee, therefore, desire that the diaspora community should be encouraged to register with our Missions/Posts and based on an evaluation study fresh initiatives to bring the Indian diaspora closer to their roots may be taken so that the Indian Embassies could truly become a 'Home away from Home' for them'.

6. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply has stated as under:

“Missions/ Posts have been directed make rigorous efforts for reaching out to the diaspora; which Missions have been doing on traditional platforms as well as through new initiatives. Various forums and initiatives including portals are used to encourage the diaspora for registering on Missions/ Posts’ portal. Since registration is voluntary, so 100% diaspora might not be registered with the Mission/ Post. However, enough mechanisms have been created, where Missions/ Posts are able to reach out to the diaspora during times of crisis and diaspora members can also keep in touch with the Mission. This has been seen during the Covid-19 crisis, and also during crises in Ukraine and Afghanistan”.

7. Having noted that a large chunk of the Diaspora including migrant workers and students do not get themselves registered with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee, had desired that all out efforts should be made to encourage them towards such a registration and fresh initiatives based on an evaluation study be made to make our Embassies a ‘Home away from Home’ for our Diaspora. The Committee agree to the fact that since registration is voluntary, 100% Diaspora might not be registered with the Missions/Posts and enough mechanisms have been created to reach out to them during times of crisis. The various forums and initiatives including portals are used to encourage them for registering on Missions/ Posts’ portal. The Committee, however, are of the view that nothing less than a complete database is desirable and for that the Missions/Posts abroad should be more proactive in reaching out to each Indian in that foreign country. The Committee, hence reiterate that fresh initiatives based on an evaluation study of the existing constraints be taken to register

every Indian abroad bringing the Indian Diaspora closer to their roots and make our Missions a 'Home away from Home' for them, particularly under any crisis.

ONE STOP CENTRES FOR DISTRESSED INDIAN WOMEN ABROAD

Recommendation No. 10

8. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee have been informed that guidelines for establishment of One Stop Centres for helping distressed Indian women abroad has been finalized and conveyed to the Missions/Posts where such centres are due to be opened in the first phase. In view of the pivotal role likely to be played by these centres in providing timely assistance to the vulnerable distressed Indian women, the Committee desire that the Scheme should be launched without any delay and the status in this regard may be furnished to them'.

9. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply has stated as under:

"The recommendation of the committee has been noted for compliance. The preparation for the launch of the One Stop Centre Scheme is underway. As soon as it is launched the funds will be allocated to the Indian Missions/Posts abroad where OSCs are to be set up.

10. Having been informed that the guidelines for establishment of 'One Stop Centres' for helping distressed women have been finalized and conveyed to the Missions/Posts where such centres are due to be opened,

Committee had desired for its expeditious launch. However, from the reply of the Ministry it is seen that the One Stop Centre Scheme is yet to take off. In view of the pivotal role likely to be played by such centres in providing timely assistance to the distressed Indian women abroad, the Committee reiterate that 'One Stop Centres' should be opened immediately in Missions where they have been approved and the status in this regard may be furnished to the Committee.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF GLOBAL INDIAN STUDENTS' PORTAL

Recommendation No. 13

11. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that the Ministry has undertaken a lengthy, domain-specific and time-consuming exercise to prepare a Global Indian Students' Portal which would provide information to the students to assist them in taking an informed decision while selecting courses in universities abroad. The Ministry is hopeful that the first draft template of the Portal would be ready in the near future. The Committee are of the view that once the portal is operationalized, cases of duping of students by fake universities and fraudulent agents would be reduced. They, therefore, urge the Ministry to expedite the process of data collection, collation

and operationalization of the Students' Portal along with provisioning of adequate resources for the project'.

12. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"The Recommendations of the esteemed Committee are noted and efforts are being made to expedite the process of operationalizing the GISP portal".

13. Having noted that the Ministry has devised a 'Global Indian Students' Portal' for providing information to the students in taking an informed decision while selecting courses in universities abroad, the Committee had desired to expedite the operationalization of the said GISP portal. However, it is seen that the same is yet to be operationalized. In view of the usefulness of such a portal in minimizing cases of fake universities/fraudulent agents duping Indian students, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation to see the portal operational at the earliest.

CRISIS FACED BY INDIAN STUDENTS FROM UKRAINE AND CHINA

Recommendation No. 17

14. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

The Committee are deeply concerned about the plight of thousands of Indian students pursuing medical and other courses in Ukraine and China, who could not return back to these countries due to closure of their universities. These students have been left in a quandary as they could not re-join their courses physically or complete their internship or training in India. The Committee have been informed that MEA had recommended to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to consider allowing Indian private medical institutions to enroll returnee students from Ukraine in their institutions on a one-time exemption basis. The Committee urge the Ministry to pursue the matter with the MoHFW vigorously as this step alone may solve the current crisis being faced by the students enrolled in Ukrainian universities and enable them to complete their courses.

With regard to the Indian students enrolled in Chinese universities, the Ministry has stated that the Indian Embassy in Beijing is preparing a list of students to be shared with the Chinese side for consideration for their return to China, on a need-assessed basis. Moreover, National Medical Commission has issued a circular on 04 March 2022 stating that it has decided to accept application from such affected foreign medical graduates to complete the remaining part of their internship in India. The Committee appreciate the efforts made in this regard and desire that the Ministry should finalize the list of students at the earliest and make all out efforts to ensure their smooth return through continuous interaction with the Chinese authorities at the Highest level, especially as COVID-19 related health protocols are in place and vaccination has also been widely done. Keeping in view the fact that China has nearly five lakhs foreign students from various countries, the Committee urge the MEA to get in touch with the

Embassies of other countries so that coordinated efforts are made to facilitate the return of such students to China for resumption of their in-person classes. The Committee also urge the Ministry to coordinate with the MoHFW and National Health Commission so as to facilitate the medical students enrolled in medical colleges in China also to complete the remaining part of their internship in India'.

15. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"The Ministry has been consistently taking up the matter of return of Indian students with the Chinese authorities both in New Delhi and through our Embassy in China.

The Government of People's Republic of China had restricted travel to China by suspending visa and residence permits with effect from 28 March 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

During the External Affairs Minister's meeting with Foreign Minister of China on 25 March 2022, he raised the issue of medical students noting that such a restrictive policy puts the future of many Indian students in jeopardy.

The Chinese side expressed its willingness to consider facilitating the return of a limited number of Indian students on a trial basis depending upon need. Accordingly the Embassy of India in Beijing issued a Press Release on 29 April 2022 seeking the details of students who intend to return to China to continue their studies. A list of all such students willing to return to China was provided to the Chinese side for their consideration.

On 13 June 2022, Chinese Embassy in India issued a notice updating its visa policy for Indian citizens. The notice stated they will start accepting visa applications from (i) foreign nationals and their accompanying family members going to China for resumption of work and production in all fields; (ii)

Family members of Chinese citizens and foreigners with Chinese permanent residence permit going to China for family reunion or visiting relatives.

The two sides continued to work out further modalities for facilitating the return of Indian medical students to China. The two sides also discussed this issue during External Affairs Minister's meeting with Foreign Minister of China on 07 July, 2022 in Bali, Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Indian students who are studying in China were advised to continue checking our Embassy website for regular updates on the matter. They were also advised to remain in touch with their universities for any updates.

The Chinese side later conveyed that their universities are reaching out to Indian students to inform them about their eligibility to return. From 24 August 2022, the Chinese Embassy in India updated its visa requirements, indicating application procedures for students returning to China to resume their studies.

The Ministry and Embassy have been continuing to pursue the Chinese side to complete the necessary formalities enabling the students' return at an early date. In parallel, efforts are being made to raise with Chinese authorities issues being faced by Indian students (including difficulties in travel owing to restrictions imposed by the Chinese side). We have been actively seeking facilitation from the Chinese side for students' return.

The Ministry has been in contact with the NMC and MoHFW regarding the issues pertaining to Indian medical students unable to return to China.

Issues relating to education of Indian medical students from overseas are dealt as per extant rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the National Medical Commission (NMC).

NMC has devised a scheme under which Indian medical students who did not undergo physical clinical training due to the extraordinary situation, but were granted certificates of completion of degree by respective institutes in foreign countries, on or before 30 June 2022, will be permitted to appear in the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE). Upon qualifying the FMGE, such students will be required to undergo Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship (CRMI) for a period of two years in order to be eligible for registration in India”.

16. Due to their concern about the plight of thousands of Indian students who were pursuing medical and other courses in Ukraine and China, the Committee had desired MEA to take up with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare the proposal to allow returnee medical students from Ukraine and China to enroll in Indian private medical institutions on a one-time exemption basis to complete their courses. The Committee had also desired MEA to make coordinated efforts with Missions to facilitate the return of Indian students to China for resumption of in-person classes for those who desire so. The Ministry have informed about various actions taken by them in seeking facilitation from the Chinese side for students to return and also the efforts made with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the National Medical Commission (NMC) regarding medical students who were unable to return to complete their studies. The Committee

note in this regard that the NMC has devised a scheme under which Indian medical students who did not undergo physical clinical training due to extraordinary situations, but were granted certificates of completion of degree by respective institutes in foreign countries, on or before 30 June 2022, have been permitted to appear in the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) and upon qualifying the FMGE, such students are required to undergo Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship (CRMI) for a period of two years in order to be eligible for registration in India. The Committee hope that this option devised by the National Medical Commission (NMC) will be a respite for those medical students who had returned due to emergency situations in Ukraine and China. The Committee desire that the updated status of medical students who have been benefitted from NMC's option along with the data of students who returned to the respective countries, particularly China, may be apprised to them.

OUTCOME OF GIRMITIYA CONFERENCE

Recommendation No. 21

17. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that as an outcome of the first ever Girmitya Conference organized virtually in September 2021, the MEA has written to the Ministry of Education to introduce the history of indentured labour in the school education. The Ministry would also try to conduct more events at regional level to promote interaction between India and Girmitya countries and would propose to establish a Girmitya university/faculty/chair. The Committee are pleased at the positive outcome of the said Conference and urge the Ministry to take follow-up action in this regard so that the said initiatives are implemented at the earliest and the Committee may be apprised of accordingly'.

18. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"The Recommendations of the Committee are noted by the Ministry".

19. The Committee, while noting the positive outcomes of the first ever Girmitya Conference organized virtually in September 2021 had desired MEA to take up the proposal to introduce the history of indentured labour in school curriculum with the Ministry of Education and establish a Girmitya university/faculty/chair along with organizing more events to promote interaction between India and Girmitya countries. However, the reply of the Ministry just states that the recommendations of the Committee are noted and is silent about the actions taken. The Committee, therefore reiterate their earlier

recommendation and urge the Ministry to take all follow-up actions without any further delay and apprise the Committee accordingly.

VIDESH SAMPARK PROGRAMMES

Recommendation No. 24

20. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that the Ministry has launched State Outreach Programme in 2017 under the banner 'Videsh Sampark' which is an in-depth dialogue between Ministry of External Affairs and State Governments with the objective of seeking cooperation in addressing issues pertaining to welfare and protection of NRIs living abroad and also to brief the State Governments about the Ministry's initiatives pertaining to engagement and welfare of the overseas Indian community and curbing illegal migration. However, only six States viz, Telangana, Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka could so far be covered under the programme because of the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Committee are of the view that welfare and protection of Indian diaspora as well as deeper engagement with the said community could be effectively achieved only with the active participation of the State Governments and also by maintaining close coordination with them. The Committee, therefore urge the Ministry to organize more 'Videsh Sampark' programmes prioritizing the States with migration hotspots and thereafter in other States in a time bound manner since the

COVID-19 Pandemic situation has improved. The Committee also urge the Ministry to share with this Committee the outcome of Videsh Sampark programmes held so far and step up its efforts of coordination and closer interaction with the State Governments for successful implementation of its programmes and schemes'

21. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"The recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance. The Ministry is in consultation with various state governments for organizing of the Videsh Sampark Programme.

The Ministry has also undertaken outreach activities to Telengana, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and other states aimed at promotion of ties with diaspora and emigrant worker community through dedicated state outreach programmes, PGE Conferences, etc".

22. In view of the fact that the active participation of the State Governments and their coordination is required in effectively achieving the welfare of Indian Diaspora, the Committee had urged the Ministry to organize more 'Videsh Sampark' programmes prioritizing States which are migration hotspots and thereafter in other States in a time bound manner since the COVID-19 Pandemic situation has improved. However, from the action taken replies, it is seen that the consultation with various State Governments is still going on for organising Videsh Sampark Programmes. The Committee look forward to

getting the complete details and therefore, urge the Ministry to share with them, the outcome of all Videsh Sampark programmes held so far and step up its efforts of closer interaction with the State Governments.

FRESH STRATEGY ON MEDIA AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Recommendation No. 36

23. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

The Committee note that based on a recommendation of theirs, the Ministry has got an Impact Assessment Study done by the IIMC regarding media awareness campaigns on safe and legal migration run by its OIA II Division. The IIMC has submitted its final report which is under consideration by the Ministry. Based on the findings of the Impact Assessment Study, the Committee feel that media campaigns of the Government are not having the desired impact in curbing unsafe practices in migration of unskilled workers. The Committee are of the view that vigorous campaigns is required to achieve the desired objectives and in this digital age, there is an urgent need to make use of social media platforms like SMS, YouTube etc. in addition to advertisements in the print and the electronic media. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make increasing use of internet, mobile technology and social media platforms for greater awareness and outreach among prospective emigrants on safe and legal migration. A fresh strategy on media awareness campaigns may also be worked out based on the findings of the

IIMC. The Committee also recommend that the State Governments should be made to play a greater role in the dissemination of information on safe and legal migration at the grass-root level through Gram Sabha, Panchayat and Sarpanch'.

24. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"The Recommendation of the esteemed Committee have been noted".

25. Based on the findings of the Impact Assessment Study done by the IIMC regarding media awareness campaigns on safe and legal migration run by OIA II Division, the Committee had recommended the urgent need for vigorous campaigns using digital media platforms in addition to advertisements in the print and the electronic media. However, the reply is silent about any fresh strategy initiative on media awareness campaigns based on the findings of IIMC. The Committee therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire the Ministry to take proper action on them under intimation to the Committee.

IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY AGREEMENTS

Recommendation No. 37

26. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements that provide the overarching framework for cooperation on labour and manpower related issues are in place with the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries and Jordan. Specific Labour Mobility Partnership Agreements were signed between India and Denmark in 2009 and with Japan on Specified Skilled Worker in January 2021. A similar Labour Mobility Agreement has been concluded with Portugal. Further, MoUs on Migration and Mobility are under process with Germany, Mauritius, Portugal, BNL (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg), Australia, Russian Federation etc. India had also signed on to the Global Compact for Migration as part of our partnership with the International Organization for Migration and with the International Labour Organization. The Committee acknowledge that Migration and Mobility Agreements are aimed at providing safe and legal migration opportunities to Indian workers in potential employment destinations all over the world. However, the impact of such MoUs/Agreements and the manner in which they have translated into better deals and more job opportunities for potential migrant workers are not known. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should carry out an impact assessment of the existing Migration and Mobility Agreements and monitor the implementation aspect of such MoUs/Agreements and ensure that the issues of interest of the migrant workers including their grievances are actually addressed through the said MoUs/Agreements'.

27. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

“Presently, the procedures for modifying the eMigrate system to suit the requirements of the Agreement between India and Portugal for recruitment of Indian citizens to work in Portugal, is ongoing. Afterwards, the eMigrate portal can be used as a facilitating tool for recruitment of Indian citizens for overseas employment. The portal can also provide data for impact assessment for Migration and Mobility Agreements in case of recruitment for overseas employment” .

28. Having acknowledged that the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on migration and mobility that are in place with various countries and which are under process are aimed at providing safe and legal migration opportunities to Indian workers in potential employment destinations all over the world, the Committee had desired to know the impact of such MoUs/Agreements and the manner in which they have translated into better deals and more job opportunities for potential migrant workers. For this, they had recommended that the Ministry should carry out an impact assessment of the existing Migration and Mobility Agreements and monitor their implementation aspects. However, the reply of the Ministry is not reflective of the concerns of the Committee. They, therefore, reiterate their original recommendation and urge the Ministry to assess the impact of Migration and Mobility Agreements, be it through a study or using e-Migrate

portal and inform the Committee about outcome of the same.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR FACILITATING EMPLOYMENT OF INDIAN WORKERS ABROAD

Recommendation No. 47

29. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that a monitoring committee of Secretaries headed by Secretary (CPV&OIA) has been constituted to establish a coordinated institutional mechanism on availing employment opportunities abroad. The committee also includes Secretaries of MSDE, M/o Labour & Employment, M/o Education and D/o School Education. Under the mandate of this committee, the Ministry has been carrying out an assessment of employment opportunities abroad with the help of Indian Missions, India Centre for Migration, Industry bodies, State Governments etc. and this endeavour is currently underway. The Committee desire that assessment of employment opportunities abroad should be completed at the earliest and an institutional mechanism to facilitate employment of Indian workers abroad should be established without delay. This assumes greater significance and urgency in view of the easing of COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions, increased vaccination and opening up of labour markets in the Gulf and other countries'.

30. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

“Data related to migration for employment purpose has seen an upward trend. As per data received from the Bureau of Immigration, the number of Indian nationals, holding ECR passports, who went abroad for employment/work from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2022 are summarized herewith.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till 30.06.2022)
Number of Indian nationals	644153	136314	150852	233070

Details of number of Emigration Clearances issued during last three years, as per data available on the e-Migrate portal, are also given below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till August 2022)
Number of EC issued	368048	94145	132673	247977

The above data confirms a clear upward trend in number of Indian migrant workers going abroad since relaxation of Covid 19 related travel restrictions in 2021”.

31. Having noted that the endeavour to carry out an assessment of employment opportunities abroad with the help of Indian Missions, India Centre for Migration, Industry bodies, State Governments etc. is currently underway, the Committee had desired that assessment of employment opportunities abroad should be completed at the earliest and an institutional mechanism to facilitate employment of Indian workers abroad should be established without delay. The Ministry, while remaining silent on the issues, had provided the data of Indian nationals holding ECR passports, who went abroad for employment/work from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2022 and the number of Emigration Clearances issued during the last three years. Based on the said data, the Ministry has justified itself that a clear upward trend is confirmed in the number of Indian migrant workers going abroad since relaxation of COVID-19 related travel restriction in 2021. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to complete the assessment of employment opportunities abroad and establish an institutional mechanism to facilitate employment of Indian workers abroad without further delay. Progress achieved in this regard may be communicated to the Committee.

COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION SCHEME FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Recommendation No. 55

32. The Committee in their 15th Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee observe that though the Ministry is implementing various programmes and schemes for the welfare of the Indian diaspora, no specific scheme exists for the rehabilitation of the workers who lost their jobs including the huge population of Gulf returnees, in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Committee are aware that many workers have gone back to their employment abroad with the easing of the COVID- 19 Pandemic situation and the re-opening of doors to Indian workers by the Gulf countries. The Committee, however, feel that a rehabilitation scheme to ensure livelihood security for those workers who lost their jobs/could not return/prefer to stay back in the country, is still needed. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme may be worked out in coordination with other Ministries/Departments concerned as well as the State Governments for those workers who lost their jobs due to pandemics or other disasters to secure means of livelihood for them and their families, at the earliest. The Committee urge the Ministry to initiate consultations with all the stakeholders in this regard without delay'.

33. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"To ensure welfare of returnees, the Government of India has taken various steps which are reflected in various

financial packages announced by the Ministry of Finance for state governments. To provide assistance to States for Capital Expenditure, a new scheme 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure' was launched during the financial year 2020-21 with the allocation not exceeding Rs. 12,000 crore in the form of 50-year interest free loan for the financial year 2020-21 and with the allocation of Rs. 15,000 crore in the form of 50-year interest free loan for the financial year 2021-22. The fund allocated under the scheme can be used for new as well ongoing capital projects.

As per data received from the Bureau of Immigration, the number of Indian nationals, holding ECR passports, who went abroad for employment/work from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2022 are summarized herewith.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till 30.06.2022)
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Details of number of Emigration Clearances issued during last three years, as per data available on the eMigrate portal, are also given below:

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Number of EC issued	368048	94145	132673	247977

The above data confirms a clear upward trend in number of Indian migrant workers going abroad since relaxation of Covid 19 related travel restrictions in 2021”.

34. Despite a large number of Indian workers returning from different countries having had lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee had observed that no specific scheme was planned or put in place for their rehabilitation. Since the Committee felt the need for the same, they had recommended for a special rehabilitation scheme to ensure livelihood security for those workers who had lost their jobs/could not return/preferred to stay back. Replying to this, the Ministry has referred to the ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure’ scheme launched during the financial year 2020-21, the funds of which could be used for new as well as ongoing capital projects. However the Committee are not sure, how the same could be treated as a special rehabilitation scheme for those who returned jobless during the pandemic. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that a comprehensive and exclusive rehabilitation scheme may be worked out in coordination with other Ministries/Departments concerned as well as the State Governments for those workers who lost their

jobs due to pandemics or other disasters under intimation to the Committee.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1)

The Committee note that the Indian diaspora comprising of over 18 million PIOs and 13 million NRIs spread across the globe is one of the largest overseas community of any country. Moreover, the composition of the Indian diaspora is diverse, consisting of labourers/workers, traders, political leaders, professionals and students. The Committee further note that as per the World Bank report on remittances, India is the largest recipient country of the world in 2021 and its remittances is expected to grow by 2.6% in 2022. The Committee are, however, surprised that authentic data of the Indian diaspora is not available in the Ministry. The Ministry has put forth the justification that since registration by the diaspora is voluntary, the entire diaspora does not register with the Indian Embassies/Posts abroad and the data also varies because of the mobility of the diaspora. The Committee strongly feel that the Ministry may not be able to implement welfare schemes for the said community as well as address the challenges being faced by them effectively in the absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date database. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Indian Embassies/Missions/Posts abroad should play a more pro-active

role, maintain greater outreach and develop closer contact with the diaspora community and encourage them to register themselves with the Embassies/Missions/Posts in coordination with the various diaspora associations, cultural organizations and student bodies so that authentic database is maintained in each Embassy/Mission/Post with the Ministry and based on such authentic updated data received from various countries, concerted efforts may be made to collate an authentic database of the Indian diaspora at Ministry level and use it appropriately in preparing and implementing welfare scheme for diaspora community.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry makes all out effort to maintain an updated database from various reliable sources of Indian Diaspora, including data received through various means from Missions/ Posts abroad, and use the same in preparation of various welfare schemes. The registration on Mission/ Post and Ministry's portals by the diaspora is on voluntary basis. The Ministry also uses its other sources like statistical collection of data from foreign countries. Since the collection of data is on voluntary basis, most of the Diaspora members do not give generic information on oneself. However, the Ministry receives inputs on various challenges faced by the Diaspora through grievances portals and

other sources. A number of steps have been taken by the Ministry and the Missions/Posts abroad to address the issues faced by Diaspora abroad, including but not limited to creation of CPGRAMS Portal, MADAD portal, Global Pravasi Rishta Portal, etc. For such countries with a sizable presence of Indian diaspora, 24X7 helplines have been opened in Missions/ Posts, along with active outreach programmes through social media, open houses conducted by Missions/ Pots etc. The Government has also put together various mechanisms along with the foreign governments, like Consular Dialogues, Labour Mobility Partnership Agreements, opening of shelter homes in Missions. Various other initiatives have also been adopted by the Ministry for workforce migrating to ECR countries, like Pre Departure Orientation Training and Pravasi Bhartiya Beema Yojna etc.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2)

The Committee observe that the Ministry had begun a project involving a study on the practices of data management across countries to develop a module for migrant workers and students studying overseas. In Committee's view an authentic database of migrant workers and overseas students is long overdue as they constitute the most vulnerable section of the Indian diaspora. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to conduct in-depth

study regarding data management system of countries which have large diaspora community at the earliest and develop a module for migrant workers and overseas students within a specified time-frame. The Committee may be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is exploring possibility of creating a facility for compulsory online registration of all emigrants who are proceeding abroad for employment through various airports/check posts of India. Initial discussion regarding design of the web-page and details of information to be sought from the migrant workers, have been done with Tata Consultancy Services, the present service provider for the eMigrate Project. However, the process for selection of a new service provider for eMigrate V2 through eTender is underway and the new service provider is expected to be selected by the end of October 2022 and the matter would be taken up further with the new service provider and other stakeholders immediately after that.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)

The Committee observe that the profile and geographical distribution as well as the enormous and diverse Indian diaspora presents a great opportunity for the promotion of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy abroad. The Committee, therefore, desire that this opportunity should be tapped and the potential it

provides should be harnessed to serve as an effective tool in furthering India's interest and influence globally. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should prepare a policy framework in this regard and work out an action plan to implement the same in a time-bound manner.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has a diaspora policy framework in place which is characterized under the rubric of 4Cs - Care, Connect, Celebrate & Contribute. The Ministry connects to the Indian diaspora abroad through thematic events and conferences aimed at promotion of sectoral expertise on various subjects including economy, energy, science & technology, culture, trade & tourism, health, social and other contemporary issues, and through various welfare schemes and programmes aimed at promotion of cultural ties with the diaspora. The policy of the Government also evolves based on the feedback which it gets from the diaspora from time to time. Missions are also given grants from the Ministry under Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD) Scheme. Missions also have other funds at their disposal to make effective outreach to the diaspora.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) accept the strategic significance of the work of soft power projection through public and cultural diplomacy as among the key tools in the formulation and implementation of India's foreign policy and therefore, Heads

of Mission attach top priority and importance to the task of soft-power projection. Missions draw the country specific demand based on local interest including the presence of any diaspora and recommend activities which should be effective in promotion of the soft power. All ICCR's activities, including those conducted through its extended arms Indian Cultural Centers, the Chairs of Indian Studies in Foreign Universities, and the foreign students' scholarships programme, are conducted in close coordination with Indian Missions/posts in the country concerned.

For greater coordination among other stake holders, MEA/ICCR is working with other department involved in projection of soft powers such as Ministries of Culture, Education, Sports and Youth Affairs, Textiles, AYUSH, Information and Broadcasting, Department of Commerce. Further cooperation with the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats to project democracy, constitutional values, electoral practices, good governance and other aspects of soft power, in a more sustained manner to foreign Parliamentarians, legislature staff and media is also being enhanced.

ICCR closely works with the Ministry of Culture(MOC) in implementation of Cultural Exchange Programmes(CEPs). The Standing Committee for planning and coordinating Festivals of India abroad is chaired by Secretary(Culture) where DG, ICCR is

also a member. The Governing Body of ICCR includes members from Ministry of Culture as well as all major principle organizations working the area of cultural and soft power projection.

The above mechanism broadly takes care of tapping and harnessing the opportunity provided by the enormous and diverse Indian diaspora in furthering India's interest and influence globally. The Ministry and ICCR will continue to supplement the efforts of Government in this regard.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4)

The Committee observe that the Ministry of External Affairs engages with the diaspora through its various programmes and schemes and the policies of the Government evolve based on the feedback from the diaspora from time to time. The Committee also acknowledge that India's engagement with its diaspora has moved from 'All of Ministry approach' towards an 'All-of-Government approach' in which other wings of the Government, other Ministries and Departments as well as the State Governments are involved in the process of diaspora affairs. The Committee are, however, surprised that a clear-cut policy on its diaspora is yet to be drafted by the Government despite having a huge diaspora playing a very important role in the socio-

economic development of their home country. In view of the Government's evolving policy in relation to its diaspora, the Committee, desire that the Ministry should bring out a policy document on its diaspora to serve as a guiding principle for deeper and wider engagement with the diaspora community with an objective that all involved in the process of diaspora affairs may work in tandem to achieve the objectives set in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has a diaspora policy framework in place, as has been explained in Recommendation No. 3. In times of crisis, the government can mobilize all available resources at its disposal for the rescue and taking care of Indian nationals in distress; which was demonstrated during Vande Bharat Mission, Operation Ganga and Operation Devi Shakti, etc. For connecting with diaspora, the Ministry has a number of engagement programmes like the Know India Programme, Scholarships for diaspora Children, Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojna, Promotion of Cultural Tie with Diaspora, Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz etc. and events like the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas Convention, pre- PBD Conferences, Regional PBDs, Youth PBDs etc., many of which are being conducted in partnership with State Governments. The Government also promotes sectoral expertise in partnership with other Ministries through programmes like Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS), Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN), Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) faculty scheme, Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES), Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employees Employer Mapping (ASEEM) etc. Most of the state governments have a dedicated NRI Wing. The Ministry also has dedicated state outreach programmes and a States Division, to promote

connection and coordination with states. More and more states are organizing Global Investment Summits and other events where they are attracting diaspora participation.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5)

The Committee note that the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) was merged with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in 2015 and the merger has been like a re-integration bringing in a more holistic approach towards dealing with the issues of the Indian diaspora. The Committee, however, are of the view that the success and efficacy of the merger can only be known after proper evaluation by an independent body. The Ministry has recently constituted a Working Group to analyze the objectives, working and challenges of various schemes/programmes/initiatives undertaken by it for the welfare of the Indian diaspora. The Committee hope that the Working Group will specifically focus on the outreach and delivery under the said welfare schemes post merger of MOIA with MEA. The Committee also desire that evaluation of the said schemes be completed at the earliest so as to ensure effective implementation of the schemes for the welfare of the Indian diaspora.

Reply of the Government

In accordance with the Recommendations of the Committee, a Joint Working Group has been constituted by the Ministry to analyze the objectives, working and challenges of various programmes/ initiatives/ schemes for welfare of Indian diaspora under the chairmanship of Secretary (CPV & OIA). The first meeting of the JWG has already been held and the Recommendations of the Committee are noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7)

The Committee note that a dedicated Community Welfare Wing has been established in Missions and Posts where there is a sizeable Indian community. The Committee are of the view that such wings would facilitate closer contact between Indian diaspora and Indian Missions/Posts. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry do apprise the Committee about the objectives achieved through establishing such community welfare wings in Missions/Posts and also to establish Community Welfare Wing in all important Indian Missions/Posts on priority basis.

Reply of the Government

Dedicated Community Welfare Wings have been set up in Missions in all countries with large population of Indian Diaspora. In countries with lesser number of Diaspora, community welfare activities are assigned to officers handling Consular matters. All Missions have also set up 24X7 Emergency helplines which are displayed prominently on website of the Missions. Missions are

accessible to Indian community through these helplines on 24 hours basis. This mechanism has resulted in bridging the gap between the Indian community and Missions abroad. These mechanisms have also instilled a feeling of better connection between the community and the Government.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11)

While examining 'The Registration of Marriage of Non Resident Indian Bill, 2019' referred to the Committee for examination and report, the Committee had considered all the issues relating to NRI marriages including the provisions for registration of NRI marriages in various Central legislations and made recommendations/suggested amendments in the Bill. The Report of the Committee was presented to Parliament on 12 March 2020. The Committee desire that the Ministry should complete its consultations with all the concerned Ministries/Departments and stakeholders in this regard at the earliest and enact a Legislation for the benefit of the Indian diaspora/NRIs.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry submitted the Recommendations of the Standing Committee on External Affairs in its 3rd Report on the

Registration of Marriage of Non-Residential Indian Bill, 2019 along with the inputs received from Department of Legal Affairs (MoL&J), Legislative Department (MoL&J) and Judicial Wing (MHA) to the Department of Legal Affairs (MoL&J) for further examination by the Ministry of Law and Justice and further reference to the Law Commission of India for in depth study/examination as suggested by the Legislative Department (MoL&J).

The matter has subsequently been referred to Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice for recommendation to Law Commission of India vide Letter dated 31.08.2022 for detailed and in depth examination of the Registration of Marriage of Non-Residential Indian Bill, 2019.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12)

The Committee note that the Government had launched the Rishta Portal in December 2020 for real time engagement with the diaspora and around 15,000 registrations have been done on the Portal so far. Keeping in view the huge population of the Indian diaspora in various countries, the Committee find the response lukewarm and desire that publicity/awareness programmes about the Portal should be disseminated widely so that the objective behind launching of the Portal is achieved. Efforts may also be made to ensure that the Portal serve as an

effective tool for the diaspora to contribute to the National development efforts of the Government.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the esteemed Committee are taken into account. Missions/Posts are making all out efforts to popularize the Portal through various means such as using social media including Facebook and Twitter handles, community Whatsapp groups, Mission's virtual news letters and adding the link of the portal to the Homepage of the Mission's website. Heads of Missions have also held meetings with the office bearers of the Indian Associations and prominent members of the diaspora. Indian Associations have been requested to spread the word about the existence of RISHTA portal and popularize the Portal among Indians abroad. Missions and Posts have been explaining about the usefulness of the RISHTA portal to the India diaspora in various events of the Missions/Indian Cultural Centres such as during Pravasi Bharatiya Divas events, Hindi Divas, National Days, celebration of ICCR Foundation Day, various Indian festivals, etc. The response to the Portal has been picking up slowly as overseas Indians have started interacting with the Missions through the Portal. After getting some feedback from feedback from Missions/ Posts, the portal has been tweaked to improve its functionality.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 14)

The Committee note that e-Sanad, an electronic service delivery platform for Apostille and Attestation of documents issued by the Government of India aiming at contactless, cashless and paperless attestation, launched in 2017 is currently operational in 14 Centres (Branch Secretariats/RPOs) across the country as well as at Attestation/OI Section of CPV Division of MEA, New Delhi. The Committee further note that since the launch of the e-Sanad Portal till 4 January 2022, 8,16,213 documents have been successfully processed. The Committee feel that the project is extremely beneficial to the Indian diaspora community and urge the Ministry to extend the service to Indian citizens residing abroad at the earliest. The Committee also desire that e-Sanad should be operationalized in all the States and UTs of the country in a phased manner. A timeline for the same may be prepared and shared with the Committee.

Reply of the Government

CPV Division in MEA which is the nodal Division for Attestation/Apostille services for legalisation of documents is already in the process of making e-Sanad online portal for Attestation/Apostille of documents more useful and accessible to all to get these services through online portal in an efficient and transparent manner. In order to streamline the process of pre-authentication involved before final Attestation/Apostille

documents, CPV Division in April, 2022 organised a brainstorming session with all Resident Commissioners of the State Governments based in Delhi, which was chaired by Secretary (CPV & OIA), followed by his letters to Chief Secretaries and Administrators in all the States and UTs to integrate various Documents Issuing Authorities (DIAs) in States and UTs to e-Sanad and to enhance the coordination and cooperation between MEA and State/UT Governments to appoint Nodal Officers in States/UTs to speed up the process of pre-authentication of documents issued by various DIAs in States/UTs in timely manner by the designated Regional authentication Centres of the State/UT Governments.

CPV Division is also in process of integrating around 1200 academic institutes which are already registered with National Academic Depository (NAD) and on-board on DigiLocker through API Setu to e-Sanad. Out of 1200 institutes, 538 have already been linked to e-Sanad and being uploaded in the phase manner after trial.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 15)

The Committee observe that a large number of Indian students are studying abroad but many of them have not been registered with the Indian Missions/Posts. The Committee are apprehensive that without such imprint, our Missions/Posts will not be in a position to reach out to them in times of need/crisis.

The Committee also feel that without constant cultural engagement, students might lost touch with our Indian culture and ethos. The Committee, therefore, desire that these students should be brought into closer contact with the Indian Embassies. In this digital era, increasing use of ICT tools may be promoted for the purpose. The Committee also urge the Missions/Consulates abroad to organize more cultural events/themes showcasing the rich historical and cultural heritage of India on a regular basis. Wide publicity of such cultural programmes may be given including through social media platforms and Indian students abroad may be encouraged to participate actively in such events. The Committee further desire that Indian Embassies/Consulates should be very proactive in reaching out to our students in their universities/institutes so that they are made to feel that our Missions/Posts are really a 'Home away from Home'.

Reply of the Government

Ministry through Missions/Posts abroad have been actively encouraging students to get themselves registered online to enable the Government in taking decisions in time of need. The Ministry has been able to put in place a mechanism to enable a successful outreach in times of crisis; which the Ministry has been able to demonstrate during the recent Ukraine crisis. Also, it facilitates in creation/ modification database for various schemes

of the government. Head of Mission/Head of Post and senior officers visit Universities and educational institutions, where there are large numbers of Indian students, for regular interactions. As already informed, Indian students are engaged in various cultural events of the Missions/Posts and are also encouraged to regularly interact with the Missions/ Posts on various digital platforms.

Ministry is making all out efforts to involve Indian students through regular interactions either directly with the students or through various students Associations. Indian students are also invited to National Day celebrations and other cultural events of the Missions/Posts.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 16)

The Committee note that the Ministry as well as our Missions/Posts have been receiving complaints from students regarding fake universities, unreasonable fee structure and fraudulent agents/consultants duping the students going abroad. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and holding of only online classes, students are also facing difficulty in getting remission or refund of certain kinds of fees. The Committee desire that the issues faced by such students should be resolved at the earliest and urge the Ministry as well as Indian Missions/Posts abroad to pursue the matter with the host countries, local authorities and universities to ensure prompt redressal of the grievances of the said students.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has received information from Missions/Posts abroad that there have been very few cases of complaints regarding fake universities, unreasonable fee structure and cases of refund of fees. Our Missions/Posts have been actively taking up the matters, if received, whenever they occur, with the concerned authorities in the host government. Most of the cases do get resolved with the intervention of Mission/ Post.

The Missions/Posts also issue advisories to warn students about fake/unrecognized universities. Missions/Posts also share the link of the list of genuine universities on their website so that students may apply to these universities only. Social media platforms are also utilized to sensitize the Indian students about the unrecognized universities. As per our information, the total number of such cases is not large.

Global Indian Students Portal (GISP): The Ministry has been working on setting up of the GISP. The need to set up this portal was felt due to the fact that a large number of Indian students are pursuing undergraduate, post graduate, post doctoral studies in various courses such as Medical, Engineering, IT, Media, Management, Humanities etc, across the world and these

students face a number of issues before taking admission in foreign countries and after joining the courses as well. These issues can be addressed to a large extent if proper updated information is available to the students at one platform. The proposed Portal would provide such information to students in order to assist them in taking an informed decision in selecting courses in universities abroad and also in addressing their grievances during their stay abroad.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 17)

The Committee are deeply concerned about the plight of thousands of Indian students pursuing medical and other courses in Ukraine and China, who could not return back to these countries due to closure of their universities. These students have been left in a quandary as they could not re-join their courses physically or complete their internship or training in India. The Committee have been informed that MEA had recommended to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to consider allowing Indian private medical institutions to enroll returnee students from Ukraine in their institutions on a one-time exemption basis. The Committee urge the Ministry to pursue the matter with the MoHFW vigorously as this step alone may solve

the current crisis being faced by the students enrolled in Ukrainian universities and enable them to complete their courses.

With regard to the Indian students enrolled in Chinese universities, the Ministry has stated that the Indian Embassy in Beijing is preparing a list of students to be shared with the Chinese side for consideration for their return to China, on a need-assessed basis. Moreover, National Medical Commission has issued a circular on 04 March 2022 stating that it has decided to accept application from such affected foreign medical graduates to complete the remaining part of their internship in India. The Committee appreciate the efforts made in this regard and desire that the Ministry should finalize the list of students at the earliest and make all out efforts to ensure their smooth return through continuous interaction with the Chinese authorities at the Highest level, especially as COVID-19 related health protocols are in place and vaccination has also been widely done. Keeping in view the fact that China has nearly five lakhs foreign students from various countries, the Committee urge the MEA to get in touch with the Embassies of other countries so that coordinated efforts are made to facilitate the return of such students to China for resumption of their in-person classes. The Committee also urge the Ministry to coordinate with the MoHFW and National Health Commission so as to facilitate the medical students enrolled in

medical colleges in China also to complete the remaining part of their internship in India.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has been consistently taking up the matter of return of Indian students with the Chinese authorities both in New Delhi and through our Embassy in China. The Government of People's Republic of China had restricted travel to China by suspending visa and residence permits with effect from 28 March 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

During the External Affairs Minister's meeting with Foreign Minister of China on 25 March 2022, he raised the issue of medical students noting that such a restrictive policy puts the future of many Indian students in jeopardy.

The Chinese side expressed its willingness to consider facilitating the return of a limited number of Indian students on a trial basis depending upon need. Accordingly the Embassy of India in Beijing issued a Press Release on 29 April 2022 seeking the details of students who intend to return to China to continue their studies. A list of all such students willing to return to China was provided to the Chinese side for their consideration.

On 13 June 2022, Chinese Embassy in India issued a notice updating its visa policy for Indian citizens. The notice stated they

will start accepting visa applications from (i) foreign nationals and their accompanying family members going to China for resumption of work and production in all fields; (ii) Family members of Chinese citizens and foreigners with Chinese permanent residence permit going to China for family reunion or visiting relatives.

The two sides continued to work out further modalities for facilitating the return of Indian medical students to China. The two sides also discussed this issue during External Affairs Minister's meeting with Foreign Minister of China on 07 July, 2022 in Bali, Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Indian students who are studying in China were advised to continue checking our Embassy website for regular updates on the matter. They were also advised to remain in touch with their universities for any updates.

The Chinese side later conveyed that their universities are reaching out to Indian students to inform them about their eligibility to return. From 24 August 2022, the Chinese Embassy in India updated its visa requirements, indicating application procedures for students returning to China to resume their studies.

The Ministry and Embassy have been continuing to pursue the Chinese side to complete the necessary formalities enabling the students' return at an early date. In parallel, efforts are being made to raise with Chinese authorities issues being faced by Indian students (including difficulties in travel owing to restrictions imposed by the Chinese side). We have been actively seeking facilitation from the Chinese side for students' return.

The Ministry has been in contact with the NMC and MoHFW regarding the issues pertaining to Indian medical students unable to return to China.

Issues relating to education of Indian medical students from overseas are dealt as per extant rules and regulations of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the National Medical Commission (NMC).

NMC has devised a scheme under which Indian medical students who did not undergo physical clinical training due to the extraordinary situation, but were granted certificates of completion of degree by respective institutes in foreign countries, on or before 30 June 2022, will be permitted to appear in the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE). Upon qualifying the FMGE, such students will be required to undergo Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship (CRMI) for a period of two years in order to be eligible for registration in India.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 18)

The Committee are pleased to note that the Government has launched various programmes like VAJRA Faculty Scheme, PRABHASS and VAIBHAV to facilitate the diaspora community to contribute or give back to the country. The VAJRA Faculty Scheme taps the expertise of International Faculty/scientists/technologists including NRI and PIO/OCI in highly competitive areas of research and development by offering them adjunct/visiting faculty positions in Indian Institutions/Universities while PRABHASS: Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark – Integrating Indian diaspora with the Motherland is an initiative to develop a database and a virtual platform to bring on board the Global Indian S&T Community to address the domestic social challenges/problems. Under the aegis of PRABHASS, the VAIBHAV Summit, a global virtual summit of overseas and resident Indian researchers and academicians was held in 2020. The Committee desire that more programmes should be conducted under the aegis of these initiatives and wider dissemination of the Schemes should be made amongst the diaspora through the Indian Missions/Posts. The outcome of the deliberations held under these initiatives may also be integrated into the National Development Agenda.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry envisages engagement with all cross-sections of diaspora abroad, including academic and scientific verticals. The Recommendations of the Committee are noted by the Ministry.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 19)

The Committee observe that Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is the flagship event of the Government to celebrate the contributions of Indian community abroad in the development of the country. The participants of PBDs include Head of Governments/Head of States and Ministers of Indian origin from other countries besides businessmen, educationists, scientists, engineers, doctors, research scholars and members of the common diaspora. The Committee are further informed that the participation for PBD celebration is open for all diaspora including the migrant workers. The Committee, however, are apprehensive that low/semi-skilled and blue collar workers may not find place or feel comfortable to participate in the said celebration as the general profile of participants is seen to be of very high level. The Committee have a strong view that the participation and involvement should be more broad-based accommodating the vulnerable sections of the diaspora community too. The Committee regret to note that at present the Ministry has no proposal to review the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Events. In the

opinion of the Committee, there is a need for greater outreach and diverse participation under the PBD celebrations and events. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should conduct a review on the implementation of its flagship programme viz. the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to make the 'Divas' truly representative of the 'Pravasi Bharatiya' community.

Reply of the Government

Government has taken various steps for wider engagement with our Diaspora. The scale of organization of PBD has been revamped in 2015 with much greater participation of diaspora. Level of participants include HoGs/HoSs & Ministers of Indian origin from other countries, renowned businessmen, eminent members of diaspora abroad and experts from various fields. We have tried to get diaspora participants from various sectors and disciplines, including but not limited to trade, business, youth, sports, science & technology, academics, research, engineering and culture; as well as from various segments of society, including youth diaspora, migrant workers and women.

During the upcoming 17th PBD Convention scheduled in January 2023, there are special plenary sessions dedicated to women and emigrant workers respectively. There would also be a special focus on the Ministry's Scheme of 'Surakshit Jao, Prashikshit Jao' during the inaugural session.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 20)

The Committee note that the action points generated out of PBD Conferences are discussed with concerned Ministries and

stakeholders so that the same could be integrated into the policy framework for the diaspora. The Ministry is, however, silent on the achievement regarding integration of such action points into its diaspora policy. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to present a comprehensive details in this regard and ensure that the policy inputs out of such discussions are derived and integrated into its policy framework for the diaspora of concerned Departments / Ministries so that the PBD Conferences/Conventions become more meaningful to the diaspora community.

Reply of the Government

The action points generated out of PBD Conventions and Conferences are discussed and shared with Ministries concerned for integration into policies. Some of them do find resonance in the outcome of various initiatives of the Government. For example, tweaking of the migration policy, policy towards foreign nationals studying in India, changes in various diaspora- related schemes, offering of scholarships to diaspora children, cultural outreach programmes, implementation of VAJRA, PRABHASS, GYAN, SWADES, ASIM schemes are some outcomes of such inputs.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 22)

The Committee note that Bharat ko Janiye Quiz is one of the important initiatives of the Government of India to engage Indian diaspora and friends of India. However, the details regarding the level of participation under the various categories has not been provided by the Ministry. The Committee desire that the Ministry should popularize the programme through wide publicity so that the number of participants, especially students, is increased and the desired impact is achieved amongst the diaspora community. The Committee also desire that a separate category for school children should be introduced under the BKJ Quiz.

Reply of the Government

The Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz is open for all NRI, OCI and Foreign youths between the age group 18-35 years irrespective of their profession. All out efforts for popularizing the quiz were made through Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The BKJ quiz has one element of Bharat Darshan tour for winners which is to encourage more participation. Recently, Ministry organized a quiz titled "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotasav", to commemorate the 75 years of India's independence, which was opened for all NRI, OCI and Foreign youths. In order to increase the participation of school children the minimum age for participation was decreased to 14 years from 18 years and the response was good, especially from foreign youth.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 23)

The Committee commend the initiatives taken by the Ministry in organizing the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) online Quiz for the overseas Indian/Foreign youth and MEA AKAM Week to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence and the glorious history of our people, culture and achievements. It is also seen that during the MEA AKAM Week, a series of commemorative events and activities were organized by the Ministry across the country with participation of various stakeholders including members of the public, dignitaries, foreign diplomats, students, media etc. The Committee note that the Ministry has made special efforts to ensure active and enthusiastic participation by the residents of Foreign Missions in India also during the MEA AKAM Week to make it truly reflective of our ideals and practice of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. The Committee are of the view that these initiatives will bring the Indian diaspora community closer to their roots, foster the sense of patriotism amongst Indian nationals in the country and abroad as well as promote Indian culture and its soft power projection abroad. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to organize events on themes related to the history and culture of India annually through the Indian Missions/Posts abroad and make the celebration of MEA AKAM Week an annual affair.

Reply of the Government

Indian Missions/ Posts abroad have celebrated over 8800 AKAM related events in physical/ hybrid format keeping in view the Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions in various countries. The details are being regularly shared with the Ministry of Culture. A wide range of events commemorating the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' were held by the Indian Missions/ Posts in July- August 2022. The Missions/ Posts abroad will also continue to publicize multiple AKAM events being organized by them by directly uploading the details on Ministry of Culture's AKAM portal (amritmahotsav.nic.in) on real time basis.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 25)

The Committee appreciate the assistance rendered to distressed/stranded Indian nationals abroad under the ICWF during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The funds collected under the ICWF have been adequate for the Indian diaspora abroad and an amount of Rs. 429 crore is available in the ICWF as on 31 December 2021. The Committee also observe that in case some Missions/Posts had to incur expenditure beyond the ICWF collected by them, funds are transferred from one Mission/Post to another upon request. The Committee acknowledge that due

to various unforeseen circumstances like the COVID-19 Pandemic, political crisis requiring evacuation of Indian nationals, natural disasters etc., some Missions/Posts might require additional funds and desire that the Ministry should have an institutional arrangement to assist such Missions/Posts to meet any eventuality. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should facilitate transfer of funds from one Mission/Post to another upon request after ensuring its merit expeditiously.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry receives requests from Missions/Posts abroad for additional funds to replenish their ICWF account, especially during emergent situations to assist Indian nationals including evacuations from the affected countries. During January-July 2022 Ministry has approved several such transfers of funds from one Indian Mission to another Mission abroad to replenish the ICWF accounts of the recipient Mission. During this period approximately Rs.7.63 crore was transferred to nine (9) Indian Missions/Posts abroad to replenish their respective ICWF accounts by other Missions/Posts from their respective ICWF accounts, to incur expenditure on ICWF assistance, including handling of crises/emergency situations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 26)

The Committee note that the ICWF guidelines have been revised *w.e.f* 1 September 2017 considerably expanding the scope of on-site welfare activities for the benefit of distressed

Indian nationals who could be assisted through the Fund. The revised guidelines now include provisions for setting up of legal panels in countries with sizeable Indian diaspora, payment of fines/penalty for petty crimes for release of prisoners and assistance to distressed Indian women abroad. The Committee further note that all Indian Missions/Posts, where there are a substantial number of Indian workers, have legal panels. However, keeping in view the fact that migrant workers and distressed Indian women, who are the most vulnerable sections of the diaspora community, are in almost all the countries but may not have the resources for legal assistance in case of need, the Committee recommend that legal panels may be set up in all the Indian Missions/Posts having diaspora community, irrespective of the size of the diaspora.

Reply of the Government

Forming of a Panel of Lawyers in the GCC and top 20 countries with large Indian Diaspora has been provided for in the revised ICWF guidelines just as an internal procedural requirement of the Missions. This does not affect timely legal assistance to the Indian nationals requiring legal assistance through ICWF. Indian nationals needing legal assistance have to approach the concerned Mission to seek legal assistance irrespective of the fact whether a panel of lawyers exists or not. All Missions are authorized to provide legal assistance to needy

Indian nationals through ICWF on means tested basis even if panel of lawyers has not been set up.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 27)

The Committee note that though the Ministry attaches highest importance to the issue of expeditious transportation of mortal remains of Indians who die abroad, several instances of facing extreme difficulties have come to notice in bringing the dead bodies back home. Hence, the Committee felt the need for simplification of procedures in this regard. However, it is seen that at present the Ministry has no plans to simplify the latest guidelines of the ICWF as it has already simplified almost all aspects of ICWF guidelines including the process for transportation of mortal remains. The Ministry has also stated that the local procedures for transportation of mortal remains differ from country to country and the time taken in obtaining necessary clearances etc., depends upon the local rules in foreign countries. The Committee, therefore, desire that utmost priority should be attached to the humanitarian concerns relating to the transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals who die abroad and all out efforts should be made by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad to ensure the expeditious transportation of the mortal remains. Head of Missions/Head of Posts may be proactive in coordinating with the local authorities for obtaining

the necessary clearances and utilize their delegated powers whenever there is a delay.

Reply of the Government

The utmost priority is accorded to the humanitarian concerns relating to the transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals who die abroad and all out efforts are being made by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad to ensure the expeditious transportation of the mortal remains. Head of Missions/Head of Posts are proactive in coordinating with the local authorities for obtaining the necessary clearances and utilize their delegated powers whenever there is a delay. During January-June, 2022 the Missions/Posts have incurred an expenditure of Indian Rupees 3.82 crore out of ICWF and recorded 251 instances in which mortal remains of Indian nationals were sent to India.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 28)

The Committee observe that multiple grievance Portals such as MADAD, e-Migrate, and CPGRAMS exist in addition to Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras for online redressal of grievances of Indian nationals abroad. MADAD is the primary platform for consular complaints in general while e-Migrate is for addressing all matters related to recruitment and employment of workers including related grievances. The Ministry has further stated that consular grievances are also received through CPGRAMS, mainly from family members of NRIs residing in India. While acknowledging that MADAD and e- Migrate portal are interlinked

and e-Migrate is also a sub-portal for MADAD handling a specific area, the Committee are apprehensive that multiple grievance Portals might lead to delay in resolving the grievances of Indian nationals abroad. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to ensure that multiplicity of grievance portals do not lead to duplication or overlapping of work or difficulty in sieving the complaints/grievances registered so as to ensure quick and satisfactory resolution of the grievances of the Indian workers abroad and make the desired modification in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry tries its best to ensure that multiplicity of grievances do not lead to duplication or overlapping of work or difficulty in sieving the complaints/grievances. A senior level officer in the OE&PGE Division has been assigned to monitor and to ensure quick and satisfactory resolution of the grievances received from the Indian migrant workers, in a timely manner.

The MADAD Portal is regularly monitored at higher level in Ministry. Given its popularity and effectiveness in the grievance redressal, MADAD Portal has been further expanded and MADAD has now become an effective tool for providing consular assistance as well. Multilingual Call Centres, Student Registration, Prisoners Module, Integration with the portal "eMigrate", Integration with State Governments in India, Module

for assistance through Indian Community Welfare Fund, etc. have been added to the scope of the portal.

MADAD can be accessed through website (www.madad.gov.in) or through mobile app. So far around 81000 grievances have been registered and out of which around 77000 with an impressive resolvment rate of over 95% have been resolved. Similarly, on MADAD Twitter handle, over 186000 tweets have been received so far, out of which around 99 percent have been replied to.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 29)

The Committee note the CPGRAMS portal is the quickest way to interact with the State Governments or district police as it is connected down to the thana level. Despite its advantages, the CPGRAMS portal is not as popular overseas as it is within the country. In view of the fact that the resolution of grievances in most cases may require a connect with the local level, the Committee desire that the Ministry should generate more awareness regarding the CPGRAMS Portal among the Indian nationals abroad too so that the Portal can serve as an effective tool in speedy redressal of their grievances.

Reply of the Government

It may be mentioned that the progress in redressal/disposal of grievances on CPGRAMS is closely monitored by DARPG as well as PMO at the highest level through periodically review meetings stressing on expeditious action on the cases pending on CPGRAMS Portal for redressal, especially those which are pending beyond the stipulated time of 30 days. Therefore, from time to time, MEA instructs the Indian Missions/Posts for due importance to be given to grievances/complaints lodged/registered in CPGRAMS to ensure speedy redressal of grievances/complaints on CPGRAMS and to generate more awareness among NRIs to make the Portal successful in abroad also.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 30)

The Committee note that a large number of grievances have been registered on the online MADAD portal/e-Migrate portal over the years but the status of redressal of such grievances has been far from satisfactory. The number of grievances unresolved/pending in the various Embassies, Consulates and offices of the Protector of Emigrants are quite high. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements in the grievance redressal system so that all the pending cases are resolved within a specified timeframe and the response time is also reduced to the minimum. The Committee may also be apprised of the specific steps being taken/proposed to achieve the same.

Reply of the Government

A large number of grievances are being registered by Indian emigrants on eMigrate and MADAD Portals. The Ministry has taken several steps to strengthen grievances redressal mechanisms and other measures to ensure speedy resolution of emigrant's grievances including those received by our Missions/Posts abroad. A multilingual 24X7 helpline of Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) provides information, guidance and grievances redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to Indian workers. The unresolved/pending grievances are monitored by a senior level officer, who remains in touch with the Protector of Emigrants(POEs) and Missions/Posts abroad for timely resolution of pending grievances. From time to time, the Head of the Division interacts with all concerned authorities to resolve the grievances in a specified time frame. Necessary instruction are also issued to the concerned Registered Agents at regular intervals to make necessary efforts for resolution of all pending grievances against them to the satisfaction of migrant workers/Ministry and provide update about the efforts made by them in this regard.

As MADAD Portal is regularly monitored at the higher level in Ministry, all concerned including Indian Missions/Posts abroad have been instructed to give top priority to attend and resolve the grievances and complaints registered on MADAD Portal. As a result, MADAD Portal has a very impressive resolvment rate of 95 percent and become an effective and popular tool in the grievance redressal and to provide consular assistance as well.

The number of grievances/complaints which remain unresolved are below 5 percent are related to cases where the action on foreign governments are involved, like matters related to death compensation, release of sentenced prisoners and other legal issues, jobs, students studying in foreign universities, etc.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 31)

The Committee note that the Emigration Bill, 2022 which seeks to establish a robust, transparent and comprehensive emigration framework involving State Governments, Union Territories and other stakeholders has been under consultation and vetting for long. The Committee urge the Ministry to complete all the formalities at the earliest and introduce the Bill in Parliament so as to ensure the welfare/protection of Indian migrants and empower them for overseas employment.

Reply of the Government

The Emigration Bill, 2022 in consultation with Ministry of Labour and Employment is in advanced stage and will be introduced into the Parliament in near future.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 32)

The Committee note that the number of insurance policies issued under the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana has gone down since 2017-18 with drastic reductions in the number during 2020-21 and 2021-22 as compared to the earlier years. Since 2016-17, only 2915 claims have been received upto 2021-22 out of which 2112 claims have been settled which is far from satisfactory. The Ministry has revealed in this regard that the insurance companies rejecting the claims of the migrant workers on flimsy grounds has been the reasons for pendency of claims. Keeping in view the fact that migrants workers are the most vulnerable section of the diaspora community, the Committee are of the view that special protection is needed for these poor and simple workers so that they are not left at the mercy of insurance companies. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to take up the cause of these workers and ensure that their claims are settled by the insurance companies expeditiously. Efforts may also be made to increase the number of insurance policies issued so that all the eligible workers are covered under the PBBY.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry invariably takes up the cause of such workers whenever such cases are brought to its knowledge and ensures that their claims are settled by the insurance companies expeditiously. Besides, efforts are being made to increase the number of insurance policies issued so that all the eligible workers are covered under the PBBY. PBBY, is mandatory for all citizens of India who apply for and obtain an emigration clearance

as required under the Emigration Act, 1983 (31 of 1983) as well as emigrants going for overseas employment for various professions falling under work categories covered under Section 2 (o) of Emigration Act, 1983 irrespective of the passport category.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 33)

The Committee note that the Ministry is expanding its PDOT programme by opening more centres at major overseas migration hot spots in the country taking the total number of such centres from 31 to 100. The Committee further note that for new centres, the Ministry is planning to partner with industry bodies such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and Common Services Centre, e-Governance Service India limited of Ministry of Electronics and Information besides the NSDC. Keeping in view the fact that enhancing the soft skills of migrant workers is crucial for their employability and realisation of better returns for their skills/jobs, the Committee desire that the modalities for imparting PDOT by industry bodies and Government agencies should be finalized at the earliest. The Committee also urge the Ministry to prepare a year and area-wise action plan to cover such parts of the country which are not covered under the programme so far, including the North-eastern region. Since collaboration with the State Governments is essential for the successful implementation of the programme, an effective mechanism for the same may also be evolved at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

Recently, Ministry had opened 58 new PDOT centres to be run through State Agencies of concerned State Government. Presently, 90 PDOT centres are operational. A new PDOT centre will be opened in Tripura soon.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 34)

The Committee note that online PDOT is helping the Ministry in providing training to more migrants even in remote areas and has drawn very positive response from participants, especially women participants. The Committee are happy that the Ministry intends to continue online PDO training post COVID and provide both online and in- person training options to prospective emigrants. The Committee are of the view that the number of prospective emigrants would increase with the opening up of international labour markets in the post COVID period and hence urge the Ministry to work out a target oriented annual action plan for imparting both offline and online PDO training and make provisions for adequate resources to meet the challenges.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is able to make provisions for adequate resources to meet the challenges arising on account of increase in the number of prospective emigrants with the opening up of international labour markets in the post COVID period.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 38)

The Committee are pleased to note that after the launch of the Global Passport Seva Project, no complaint regarding passport services has been received from the Indian diaspora. The GPSP system has provided a platform for expedited redressal of grievances because of real time availability of the data and standardized processes developed under the system. The Committee further note that as on 25th December 2021, a total of 176 Indian Missions/Posts have been integrated into the Passport Seva Programme through the Global Passport Seva Project and integration of the remaining 5 Indian Missions/Posts viz, Chiangmai, Thailand; Islamabad, Pakistan; Pyongyang, DPR Korea; Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan and Kabul-Afghanistan is in progress. The Committee urge the Ministry to complete the integration of these Missions/Posts through the GPSP system within a specified timeframe so that the Indian diaspora community in the said countries can enjoy smooth, hassle free and expedited passport services.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has launched a new updated portal in October 2018 for Diaspora seeking passport related services. The Diaspora can easily apply and avail services smoothly through a single window portal <https://embassy.passportindia.gov.in/>. As

on date 178 (179 including Taiwan) Indian Missions/Posts have been integrated into passport seva programme.

In the upcoming PSP V2.0, the Diaspora will be provided with the facility to upload their photograph online and would not require to print the online filled up form to be produced at the time of processing to the outsource agency engaged by the Ministry. The Ministry is also working on the modalities of accepting fee online directly through the online portal at the time of submission of online form. The applicant would also be provided with 'Chat Bot' assistance and the online form will be dynamically designed with guided document advisor.

The police verification (PV) process has been integrated online and any Mission/Post requiring a fresh police report for an applicant can directly trigger the PV process to concerned Police District online (or to Thana level wherever integrated). The GPSP application has provision to cater to these requirements. Once the police authority verifies and submits the PV report, the same is received on a real time basis by the concerned Mission/Post. This has drastically reduced the PV time for the Mission/Post. The integration has also helped in real time fetching and verification of applicant available credentials directly from the central passport database (PRIDE) and thus resulting in timely and appropriate decisions by the PIAs across the Globe.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 39)

The Committee note that since inception of the Know India Programme (KIP) in 2004, 59 editions of KIP have been held with the partnership of 22 States and Union Territories and a total of 2061 diaspora youth participated in the KIPs. The Committee further note that the Ministry could not host any KIP edition in 2020-21 and 2021-22 because of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. Keeping in view its objectives of reconnecting young persons of Indian origin with their motherland and motivating and inspiring them by the transformations taking place in contemporary India, the Committee urge the Ministry to conduct more editions of KIP in the current financial year, as the COVID-19 Pandemic situation has improved. States and Union Territories who have not partnered with the Government so far under KIP should be pursued to ensure their active participation under the Scheme.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has already announced the six (06) editions, from 60th to 65th, for the current Financial Year 2022-23 and the 60th edition of KIP has successfully been conducted from 25th August to 14th September, 2022 with the partner State Goa. Willingness from 06 partner states for hosting the state leg of the 06 editions scheduled in FY 2022-23 has already been received

by the Ministry. However, the views of the esteemed Committee has been duly noted and more stringent effort would be made regarding the partnership under KIP with the State Government/Union Territories who have not partnered in previous edition.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 40)

The Committee note that the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) is a fairly new scheme launched in the financial year 2018-19. Only four editions of this programme have been conducted so far with the participation of 160 PIOs. Two editions of PTDY are scheduled for 2021-22 but have not yet been announced due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Committee desire that the Ministry should make efforts to conduct PTDY in the current year as the COVID-19 Pandemic situation in the country has improved. The Committee also urge the Ministry to popularize the Scheme amongst the elder generation of the diaspora community so that they can utilize the opportunity to reconnect with their roots.

Reply of the Government

The PTDY was not conducted in the FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to COVID-19 pandemic. MOU for the year 2020-21 could not be signed due to the ongoing pandemic conditions at the time. However, the Ministry is continuously in touch with the

IRCTC and the Ministry of Railways and is making efforts to start the PTDY as early as possible.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 41)

The Committee note that the Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC) introduced in 2006-07 was revamped in the Academic Year 2015-16 extending it to children of Indian workers in 17 ECR countries. Out of the 150 scholarships offered every year, 50 are reserved for PIOs, 50 for NRIs and 50 for children of Indian workers in ECR countries. The Committee further note that except for the year 2019-20, the number of slots have not been filled up totally. Moreover, the number of seats utilized for children of Indian workers who studied in India has been very low. The Committee regret to note that the progress under this important Scheme has been slow from the start and the applications received from eligible students were not many. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to popularize the scheme through wide publicity with the active participation of the State Governments and other stakeholders so that children of Indian workers who may not have the resources to continue higher studies, may get the opportunity to do so.

Reply of the Government

This is to state that all 150 slots under the SPDC Scheme were filled in the academic year 2019-20. The SPDC for the year 2020-21 was not announced due to COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, after the programme was restarted after the Covid-19 pandemic, all 150 slots were filled up for AY 2021-22, and the programme is back on track.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 42)

The Committee also note that the SPDC Programme for the year 2020-21 could not be announced due to the COVID-19 Pandemic while the Programme for the year 2021-22 is under process. The Committee urge the Ministry to finalize the SPDC programme for 2021-22 and 2022-23 without delay so that the needy students belonging to the diaspora community are not deprived of the benefits of the Scheme.

Reply of the Government

The SPDC for the year 2021-22 had been announced and all the 150 slots were filled. The process for the SPDC Scheme for the year 2022-23 is underway and the same will be announced shortly.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 43)

The Committee note that under the Scheme of Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora started in 2005, the Ministry provides

grants to Indian Missions/Posts abroad to support their initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with the Overseas Indian Community and also in preserving, maintaining and showcasing Indian heritage and culture. Grants are also provided to think-tanks and organizations in India which organize events pertaining to the overseas Indian community. The Committee further note that the Ministry has started a concerted effort to encourage our Missions/Posts to organize activities under this Scheme and an amount of Rs. 5.45 crore has been utilized since 2016. However, the Committee are of the view that the number of programmes and activities organized under the Scheme so far are not adequate and the expenditure incurred since 2016-17 for the same is very meagre. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to pursue the Indian Missions/Posts abroad to conduct more programmes and activities aimed at promoting cultural ties with our diaspora and provide sufficient funding to think-tanks/organizations for the same. The Ministry may also assess the nature and types of programmes/activities that can be taken up to nourish and strengthen the cultural bonds between India and its diaspora.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has made all out efforts and our Missions and Posts and Posts abroad have been able to design more programmes under the PCTD Schme since the reopening of engagement activities after Covid-19 pandemic; and we have

been able to sanction a higher budget in the current FY for this purpose.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 44)

The Committee note that there are about 479 Diaspora Associations working with Indian Missions to support their initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with the Overseas Indian Community under PCTD. The Committee further note that Diaspora Association(s) do not exist in some countries and Missions/Posts work directly with the diaspora in many countries. The Committee feel that only a strong and vibrant Diaspora Association can effectively coordinate and implement various programmes/activities for strengthening the cultural bonds between India and its diaspora. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad should encourage establishment/formation of Diaspora Associations in those countries where no such association exists. The Committee also urge the Ministry to facilitate deeper and broader engagements with the Diaspora Associations by all the Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

Reply of the Government

Most of outreach and cultural promotion events particularly under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav are carried out under 'Jan Bhagidari'. The Ministry has been encouraging Missions/Posts for

establishment/formation of Diaspora Associations in those countries where there are no associations. There are various schemes and initiatives which arm our Missions and Posts abroad to strengthen these associations and also assist them financially. As a result, we have made a headway in increasing the number of Diaspora Associations and Organizations and as per data available, there are now 566 Diaspora Associations/Organizations working with the Missions as on date.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 45)

The Committee note that the erstwhile PIO Card Scheme, launched in 1999 was merged with OCI Scheme in 2015. The process of submission of OCI card application has also been streamlined. In view of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the timeline for re-issuance of OCI cards has also been temporarily extended upto 31 December, 2022. The Committee further note that the registration of OCI cardholder has been increased significantly during the last few years and a total of 23,39,104 OCI cards have been issued from 2015 till 29 December 2021 bringing the average cards issued per annum to 3,35,157. However, keeping in view the fact that there are over 18 million PIOs spread across the globe, the Committee feel that the response under the Scheme has been slow and the number of OCI cards issued so far is inadequate. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to popularize the Scheme amongst the targeted group through wider dissemination of information through social

media platforms also, in coordination with the State Governments and other stakeholders.

Reply of the Government

Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme is hugely popular amongst the Indian diaspora as it provides several benefits in various matters to the Indian Diaspora present worldwide. Due publicity is given by the Ministry and Indian Missions abroad for the popularization of the OCI Cardholder Scheme. As recommended by the Committee, Ministry has noted it for compliance and will further issue directions to all Indian Mission/Consulate abroad to give even wider publicity widely through Missions/Posts' websites to the OCI Scheme and share the benefits of OCI Scheme like life-long visa and parity with NRIs in various matters, especially in economic, financial and educational matters. Also, through electronic and print media, digital social media platforms and also regular interactions with the Indian community and reaching them out at all level, so as to popularize the 'PIO to OCI card' Scheme amongst the PIOs spread all over the globe.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 46)

The Committee note that the OCI policy falls under the purview of MHA, while its implementation is done primarily through Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee desire that the process of registration and issuance of OCI cards should be sped up and urge the Ministry to identify all the bottlenecks including lack of clarity in policy matters, procedural difficulties, technical grievances etc. and resolve the same through improved

coordination with the MHA so that conversion of all PIO cards to OCI cards is completed by the deadline of 31st December 2022.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of External Affairs regularly shares and takes up the difficulties being faced by applicants and feedback with suggestions regarding lack of clarity, if received from PIOs directly or through Missions/Posts abroad with MHA on regular basis for appropriate amendments and relaxations in the policies to make it more user friendly and reduce the time in issuance of OCI cards to such applicants.

As recommended by the Committee, for conversion of more and more PIO cards to OCI Cards before the deadline and to encourage more and more PIOs to apply for OCI cards, any bottlenecks which slow down the process and discourage the applicants are being taken up with the MHA. Wider publicity to the OCI Scheme is being given at all levels through all possible channels/platforms to interact and disseminate OCI related information with targeted PIO population abroad.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 48)

The Committee note that MEA is coordinating with MSDE and NSDC to develop skill training of potential migrants in collaboration with the State Governments. Under the Pravasi

Kaushal Vikas Yojana, the MEA and MSDE are jointly collaborating as partners to enhance the skills set of potential emigrant workers in select sectors and job roles, in line with international standards, to facilitate overseas employment. MSDE conducted training for the first batch of 600 candidates on pilot basis in 2018. But the Committee did not find any significant progress in development of new model on Private Public Partnership. The Committee, therefore, desire that MEA and MSDE should work together in a time bound manner in overcoming the challenges in respect of international migration by redefining the 'core employability skills' to include critical soft skills besides technical skills, developing skilling curriculum in line with the demand of the international labour market, dissemination of labour related opportunities abroad and availability of training courses through the State Governments etc. The Committee also feel that adequate steps have not been taken so far to tap the skills and competencies acquired by Indian workers abroad and urge the Ministry to work out a strategy in collaboration with other stakeholders so that skills and technical knowhow acquired at destination countries by the migrant workers are tapped and passed on.. The Ministry has also stated that the IISCs are spread across 261 districts of the country, while covering 68% of the top 50 migrating districts. The Committee desire that each potential migrant worker should be given the opportunity to receive skill training and recommend

for setting up of IISCs in all the remaining migrating districts of the country in the shortest possible time.

Reply of the Government

Inputs received from MSDE are as under:

- NSDCI under international mobility initiatives is providing trainings on technical skills, soft skills, language skills (wherever applicable) and employability skills for Indian workers migrating to overseas countries. Further, NSDCI is in discussions with MEA for revising PDOT scheme, which shall be added as a training component under mobility initiatives.
- NSDCI has set-up its offices in UAE (for GCC countries), Japan and Australia for passing of knowledge on skills and knowhow acquired by the candidates in the destination country after migrating from India. NSDCI has entered into G2G agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for skills harmonization. On similar lines discussions have been proposed with UAE. Furthermore, mutual acceptance of qualifications with Australia is under discussion.
- *NSDCI has developed empanelment guidelines for Skill India International Centre (SIIC). SIIC shall play a pivotal role in servicing demand through facilitation of sourcing, counselling, training, assessment, certification, recruitment*

and immigration of candidates. As on date, 33 SIICs have been empaneled under Skill India International.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 49)

The Committee are pleased to note that the first Upskilling & Training Centre in the UAE has been set up in January 2021 in Dubai for improving the skills of the migrant workers. Such upskilling sessions have also been organized in Sharjah and Ajman and about 350 Indian workers have participated in such programmes. Keeping in view the huge number of migrant workers in the Gulf countries, the Committee desire that adequate number of such training centres should be set up in all Gulf Cooperation Countries where sizeable number of low skilled and semi-skilled Indian migrants are working. Efforts may also be made to increase the level of participation of the said workers in the upskilling programmes to ensure favourable condition of employment and better returns and the MEA through its Missions/ Posts should actively facilitate the same.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry will extend necessary support to requests received from Missions/Posts in other Gulf countries, for establishment of more such Upskilling and Training Centres. Efforts are already being made by our Missions/Posts to increase

the participation of Indian workers in such Upskilling programmes and further impetus will be given on this outreach as recommended by the Committee.

Inputs received from MSDE are as under:

- An MoU was signed between Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and The National Qualifications Authority, UAE on 29th April 2016 to collaborate in the area of mutual recognition of qualifications. This collaboration will specifically benefit Indians who aspire to work overseas.
- NSDC International Ltd. has launched Project TEJAS (Training for Emirates Jobs and Skills) to train, certify and place 10,000 Indians in the GCC region in 1 year in partnership with some of the leading employers, in the region. Going forward, the project will be scaled to place 1,00,000 Indian workers across the GCC region over the next 5 years. Each element of the TEJAS program has been designed to ensure that only skilled and certified candidates are placed in the GCC region. The project will provide the Indian workforce with requisite skills and certification as per global standards.
- NSDC signed an agreement with United Assessment and Certification, UAE to implement the pilot program. Wherein, the Indian training centres mobilized the candidates for providing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on

benchmarked qualifications (Assistant Electrician, Mason General, Mason Tiling, Construction Electrician). Out of 133, 63 candidates were selected for deployment by UAE Government. Post interviews, 18 Certified candidates were deployed in UAE on incentivized work permit fees in February/March 2020.

- In partnership with UAE's leading driving training institution Emirates Driving Institute (EDI) and India's Learnet Driving Training Institute, an India-UAE hybrid training and licensing facility has been established in Ajmer, Rajasthan. Pilot batch of 10 candidates have finished the training and fly out to Dubai in April 2022. Talks have also been initiated with EDI to provide taxi driver training at the existing Ajmer facility. And Dubai Taxi, a 100% government owned company has committed to employ approximately 80 taxi drivers annually coming through this program. Further, NSDCI plans to collaborate with other training institutions to expand the existing facilities across India.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 50)

The Committee note that the international labour market is now demand driven as compared to the earlier supply driven system. With the emergence of new labour markets in East and South East Asia including Japan, Korea, Taiwan etc. and in

countries of Europe, skilling of potential migrant workers and to provide matching skills with the destination countries is a new challenge, especially in the post COVID era. The need of the hour is to improve the quality of our domestic skilling and standardize curriculum across the country so that migrant workers can go abroad and secure employment with better wages. The Committee, therefore, urge the MEA to work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in this regard and make all out efforts to facilitate migrant workers to go abroad with the requisite skill sets and competencies in line with the demand of international labour markets and the destination countries.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has already initiated discussions with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in this regard and is hopeful of arrive at a common agreement in near future.

Inputs received from MSDE are as under:

Global Skill gap studies and market research need to be pursued to keep abreast with the latest job market scenarios – for partnering with prospective destination countries for workforce mobility projects. It gives an insight on the:

- Latest trends of job market in the destination countries
- Popular sectors in demand where worker employment can be pursued
- Skill upgrading required for the current skills imparted through training

Alongside, it is essential to focus on following :

- Skill harmonization and benchmarking of job roles in priority sectors of destination countries with a focus on new high level skill qualifications.
- Recognition of certificates issued by Skilling Centres of destination countries and India and promotion of international/dual certification, virtual/physical exchange programmes.
- Opening of Skill Centres in destination countries and facilitating the assessment for the smooth and easy mobility of manpower.
- Leveraging Global Chain and Extending Joint Training services through strong industry and SSC connect in destination countries and India.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 51)

The Committee note that an agreement on a Memorandum of Cooperation on Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) was signed with Japan on 18 January, 2021. The Committee welcome this step as it would facilitate skilled Indian workers to find employment in select sectors and job roles with favorable condition of employment. The Committee further urge the MEA to actively facilitate signing of such agreements with other countries across various sectors for low skilled, semi-skilled, skilled workers and professionals so that these people can go abroad for a stable, secure and better future.

Reply of the Government

Presently, the procedures for modifying the e-Migrate system to suit the requirements of the Agreement between India and Portugal for recruitment of Indian citizens to work in Portugal, is ongoing and similar cooperation with other interested countries including Japan are also underway. Exploring employment opportunities in Japan for Indian workers under Specified Skilled Worker(SSW) category is one of such recent initiative and similar arrangements would be make with other interested countries as and when the Ministry becomes aware of

such requirements. The recommendations of the Committee is duly noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 52)

The Committee note that the India Centre for Migration has done a labour market assessment study at emerging sectors in countries like Japan, Korea etc. and has identified the opportunities for Indian workers therein. The Committee are of the view that the endeavor of the Government should be to grasp the opportunities and recommend wider dissemination about the new opportunities in emerging labour markets to potential migrant workers across the country with the active participation of all concerned Ministries/Departments and the State Governments.

Reply of the Government

As ICM is now merged with Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), recommendations of the Committee will be conveyed to ICWA.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 53)

The Committee note that SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support), a joint initiative of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of External Affairs has been launched for citizens returning under the Vande Bharat Mission at the beginning of the Pandemic with the aim of creating a database of returning citizens based on their skill sets and experience. More than 33,957 candidates have registered SWADES Skill Card as on 28th February 2022. The Committee further note that all the stakeholders have been given access to the SWADES candidate database with uploading of details on the ASEEM (Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping) portal for Employer connect under different sectors and as per an initial stage assessment, job connects have been established with 7,495 candidates by employers registered on the ASEEM portal. The Committee appreciate this initiative and urge the Ministry to generate more awareness about SWADES amongst the migrant workers and improve the registration, in coordination with the Ministries of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Civil Aviation. Efforts may also be made to improve job connects between Employer and Employee and registration of Employers on the ASEEM portal so as to facilitate continuous interaction between employers and candidates.

Reply of the Government

MSDE has been requested to give wide publicity about the SWADES and ASEEM portals and 34118 candidates have registered so far for SWADES skill card (as on June 2022).

Inputs are as under:

- 34,108 candidates have registered SWADES Skill Card as on 31st July 2022.
- Also, Employer's registration from vacancies as registered on SWADES may be considered for deriving skill gap studies.
- Convergence across these Ministries will build a strong supply –demand side of labour market information system supporting overseas engagement of skilled manpower from India to overseas.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 54)

The Committee note that the Ministry does not possess the overall data of migrant workers who returned to India in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, the Committee have been apprised that about eight lakh twenty five thousand workers have returned from all over the world through the flights arranged under the Vande Bharat Mission. The Committee further note that with the development of COVID-19 related health protocols and vaccination, the Government has made efforts for

the return of workers and their families to Gulf countries and 2,26,818 emigration clearances were granted in the last two years. The Committee view the welfare of Indian workers and the issue of their employment/livelihood seriously and urge the Ministry to make all out efforts to ensure the expeditious return of the remaining workers to their destination countries by vigorously pursuing the matter with the respective countries at the Highest level. The MEA may also facilitate new recruitment for such workers and the Indian Missions/Posts may take up the issue of realization of payments due to them on priority.

Reply of the Government

As per data received from the Bureau of Immigration, the number of Indian nationals, holding ECR passports, who went abroad for employment/work from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2022 are summarized herewith.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till 30.06.2022)
Number of Indian nationals	644153	136314	150852	233070

Details of number of Emigration Clearances issued during last three years, as per data available on the eMigrate portal, are also given below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till August 2022)
Number of EC issued	368048	94145	132673	247977

The above data confirms a clear upward trend in number of Indian migrant workers going abroad since relaxation of Covid 19 related travel restrictions in 2021. Senior leadership gave top priority to the issue of return of Indian migrant workers during their visits/interaction with counterparts especially in Gulf countries. Our Missions/Posts in the Gulf have also actively pursued the matter of early return of Indian migrant workers with respective local governments.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY

Recommendation (Sl. No. 8)

The Committee note that while the ICM serves as a research think-tank to the MEA on all aspects of international migration as well as mobility and the ICCR plays a key role in the promotion of India's soft power abroad and supplements the efforts of MEA to leverage Indian diaspora in soft power projection. The Committee feel that the ICM can play a greater role towards policy inputs so that the efforts of the Government for the welfare of the Indian diaspora is more result-oriented. Moreover, potential of ICCR being a bridge between India and other countries and being the 'Indian voice' in various multilateral fora, promoting India's soft power abroad needs to be harnessed effectively. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to deepen its engagement with the ICM and the ICCR so that a strong and vibrant Indian diaspora can be utilized as an effective tool in cultural diplomacy and soft power projection abroad.

Reply of the Government

The ICM has already been merged with Indian Council of World Affairs as one of its vertical unit. ICCR will continue to

supplement the efforts of Government in the implementation of its foreign policy and in achieving the desired goals enshrined in it.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9)

The Committee note that the MEA has been providing funds to the India Centre for Migration and the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad for research/data output relating to the Indian diaspora. The Committee desire that the Ministry should monitor the utilization of such funds; ensure that research activities, seminars and workshops etc. are conducted regularly and the funds provided are actually utilized for the said purpose. The Committee also urge the Ministry to ensure that the findings/data regarding such activities are effectively utilized for policy formulation on diaspora affairs.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has been providing grant to Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad for research related to Diaspora activities. A grant of Rs. 60,00,000 was approved by the Ministry to Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad for Research Activities of Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) for the financial years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. Grants for 2020-21 and 2021-22 have been released.

The Ministry monitors regularly the Utilization of Funds and ensures that the grant is effectively utilization for research activities, seminars and workshops etc. which contribute for policy formulation on diaspora affairs. This is ensured by way of seeking Annual audited accounts along with Utilization Certificate and Annual Performance cum Achievement Report, indicating outputs/deliverables and outcomes generated from the fund given by the Ministry. Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) organised 10 international conferences in the F.Y. 2020-21 besides other regular activities.

The ICM is merged with ICWA and accordingly funds available with ICM has also been transferred to ICWA.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND REQUIRE REITERATION

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6)

The Committee note that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad works with the motto 'Indian Embassies: Home away from Home'. A robust system of grievance redressal which includes bringing such issues through e-mails, twitter and through CPGRAMS portal has been maintained. Keeping in view the fact that the Indian Missions/Posts are the direct link between India and its diaspora community, the Committee desire that they should play a greater and effective role in the welfare of the diaspora and in reconnecting them with the motherland. The Committee, however, find that a large chunk of the diaspora community including migrant workers and students are yet to be registered with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee, therefore, desire that the diaspora community should be encouraged to register with our Missions/Posts and based on an evaluation study fresh initiatives be taken to bring the Indian diaspora closer to their roots may be taken so that the Indian Embassies could truly become a 'Home away from Home' for them.

Reply of the Government

Missions/ Posts have been directed make rigorous efforts for reaching out to the diaspora; which Missions have been doing on traditional platforms as well as through new initiatives. Various forums and initiatives including portals are used to encourage the diaspora for registering on Missions/ Posts' portal. Since registration is voluntary, so 100% diaspora might not be registered with the Mission/ Post. However, enough mechanisms have been created, where Missions/ Posts are able to reach out to the diaspora during times of crisis and diaspora members can also keep in touch with the Mission. This has been seen during the Covid-19 crisis, and also during crises in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 10)

The Committee have been informed that guidelines for establishment of One Stop Centres for helping distressed Indian women abroad has been finalized and conveyed to the Missions/Posts where such centres are due to be opened in the first phase. In view of the pivotal role likely to be played by these centres in providing timely assistance to the vulnerable distressed Indian women, the Committee desire that the Scheme should be

launched without any delay and the status in this regard may be furnished to them.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance. The preparation for the launch of the One Stop Centre Scheme is underway. As soon as it is launched the funds will be allocated to the Indian Missions/Posts abroad where OSCs are to be set up.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 13)

The Committee note that the Ministry has undertaken a lengthy, domain-specific and time-consuming exercise to prepare a Global Indian Students' Portal which would provide information to the students to assist them in taking an informed decision while selecting courses in universities abroad. The Ministry is hopeful that the first draft template of the Portal would be ready in the near future. The Committee are of the view that once the portal is operationalized, cases of duping of students by fake universities and fraudulent agents would be reduced. They, therefore, urge the Ministry to expedite the process of data collection, collation and operationalization of the Students'

Portal along with provisioning of adequate resources for the project.

Reply of the Government

The Recommendations of the esteemed Committee are noted and efforts are being made to expedite the process of operationalizing the GISP portal.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 21)

The Committee note that as an outcome of the first ever Girmitya Conference organized virtually in September 2021, the MEA has written to the Ministry of Education to introduce the history of indentured labour in the school education. The Ministry would also try to conduct more events at regional level to promote interaction between India and Girmitya countries and would propose to establish a Girmitya university/faculty/chair. The Committee are pleased at the positive outcome of the said Conference and urge the Ministry to take follow-up action in this regard so that the said initiatives are implemented at the earliest and the Committee may be apprised of accordingly.

Reply of the Government

The Recommendations of the Committee are noted by the Ministry.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 36)

The Committee note that based on a recommendation of theirs, the Ministry has got an Impact Assessment Study done by the IIMC regarding media awareness campaigns on safe and legal migration run by its OIA II Division. The IIMC has submitted its final report which is under consideration by the Ministry. Based on the findings of the Impact Assessment Study, the Committee feel that media campaigns of the Government are not having the desired impact in curbing unsafe practices in migration of unskilled workers. The Committee are of the view that vigorous campaigns is required to achieve the desired objectives and in this digital age, there is an urgent need to make use of social media platforms like SMS, YouTube etc. in addition to advertisements in the print and the electronic media. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make increasing use of internet, mobile technology and social media platforms for greater awareness and outreach among prospective emigrants on safe and legal migration. A fresh strategy on media awareness campaigns may also be worked out based on the findings of the IIMC. The Committee also recommend that the State Governments should be made to play a greater role in the

dissemination of information on safe and legal migration at the grass-root level through Gram Sabha, Panchayat and Sarpanch.

Reply of the Government

The Recommendation of the esteemed Committee have been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 37)

The Committee note that Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements that provide the overarching framework for cooperation on labour and manpower related issues are in place with the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries and Jordan. Specific Labour Mobility Partnership Agreements were signed between India and Denmark in 2009 and with Japan on Specified Skilled Worker in January 2021. A similar Labour Mobility Agreement has been concluded with Portugal. Further, MoUs on Migration and Mobility are under process with Germany, Mauritius, Portugal, BNL (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg), Australia, Russian Federation etc. India had also signed on to the Global Compact for Migration as part of our partnership with the International Organization for Migration and with the International Labour Organization. The Committee acknowledge that Migration and Mobility Agreements are aimed at providing safe and legal

migration opportunities to Indian workers in potential employment destinations all over the world. However, the impact of such MoUs/Agreements and the manner in which they have translated into better deals and more job opportunities for potential migrant workers are not known. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should carry out an impact assessment of the existing Migration and Mobility Agreements and monitor the implementation aspect of such MoUs/Agreements and ensure that the issues of interest of the migrant workers including their grievances are actually addressed through the said MoUs/Agreements.

Reply of the Government

Presently, the procedures for modifying the e-Migrate system to suit the requirements of the Agreement between India and Portugal for recruitment of Indian citizens to work in Portugal, is ongoing. Afterwards, the eMigrate portal can be used as a facilitating tool for recruitment of Indian citizens for overseas employment. The portal can also provide data for impact assessment for Migration and Mobility Agreements in case of recruitment for overseas employment.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 47)

The Committee note that a monitoring committee of Secretaries headed by Secretary (CPV&OIA) has been

constituted to establish a coordinated institutional mechanism on availing employment opportunities abroad. The committee also includes Secretaries of MSDE, M/o Labour & Employment, M/o Education and D/o School Education. Under the mandate of this committee, the Ministry has been carrying out an assessment of employment opportunities abroad with the help of Indian Missions, India Centre for Migration, Industry bodies, State Governments etc. and this endeavour is currently underway. The Committee desire that assessment of employment opportunities abroad should be completed at the earliest and an institutional mechanism to facilitate employment of Indian workers abroad should be established without delay. This assumes greater significance and urgency in view of the easing of COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions, increased vaccination and opening up of labour markets in the Gulf and other countries.

Reply of the Government

Data related to migration for employment purpose has seen an upward trend. As per data received from the Bureau of Immigration, the number of Indian nationals, holding ECR passports, who went abroad for employment/work from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2022 are summarized herewith.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till 30.06.2022)

Number of Indian nationals	644153	136314	150852	233070
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Details of number of Emigration Clearances issued during last three years, as per data available on the eMigrate portal, are also given below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till August 2022)
Number of EC issued	368048	94145	132673	247977

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 55)

The Committee observe that though the Ministry is implementing various programmes and schemes for the welfare of the Indian diaspora, no specific scheme exists for the rehabilitation of the workers who lost their jobs including the huge population of Gulf returnees, in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Committee are aware that many workers have gone back to their employment abroad with the easing of the COVID- 19 Pandemic situation and the re-opening of doors to Indian workers by the Gulf countries. The Committee, however, feel that a rehabilitation scheme to ensure livelihood security for

those workers who lost their jobs/could not return/prefer to stay back in the country, is still needed. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme may be worked out in coordination with other Ministries/Departments concerned as well as the State Governments for those workers who lost their jobs due to pandemics or other disasters to secure means of livelihood for them and their families, at the earliest. The Committee urge the Ministry to initiate consultations with all the stakeholders in this regard without delay.

Reply of the Government

To ensure welfare of returnees, the Government of India has taken various steps which are reflected in various financial packages announced by the Ministry of Finance for state governments. To provide assistance to States for Capital Expenditure, a new scheme 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure' was launched during the financial year 2020-21 with the allocation not exceeding Rs. 12,000 crore in the form of 50-year interest free loan for the financial year 2020-21 and with the allocation of Rs. 15,000 crore in the form of 50-year interest free loan for the financial year 2021-22. The fund allocated under the scheme can be used for new as well ongoing capital projects.

As per data received from the Bureau of Immigration, the number of Indian nationals, holding ECR passports, who went abroad for employment/work from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2022 are summarized herewith.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till 30.06.2022)
Number of Indian nationals	644153	136314	150852	233070

Details of number of Emigration Clearances issued during last three years, as per data available on the eMigrate portal, are also given below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022 (till August 2022)
Number of EC issued	368048	94145	132673	247977

The above data confirms a clear upward trend in number of Indian migrant workers going abroad since relaxation of Covid 19 related travel restrictions in 2021.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation (Sl. No. 24)

The Committee note that the Ministry has launched State Outreach Programme in 2017 under the banner 'Videsh Sampark' which is an in-depth dialogue between Ministry of External Affairs and State Governments with the objective of seeking cooperation in addressing issues pertaining to welfare and protection of NRIs living abroad and also to brief the State Governments about the Ministry's initiatives pertaining to engagement and welfare of the overseas Indian community and curbing illegal migration. However, only six States *viz*, Telangana, Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka could so far be covered under the programme because of the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Committee are of the view that welfare and protection of Indian diaspora as well as deeper engagement with the said community could be effectively achieved only with the active participation of the State Governments and also by maintaining close coordination with them. The Committee, therefore urge the Ministry to organize more 'Videsh Sampark' programmes prioritizing the States with migration hotspots and thereafter in other States in a time bound manner since the COVID-19 Pandemic situation has improved. The Committee also

urge the Ministry to share with this Committee the outcome of Videsh Sampark programmes held so far and step up its efforts of coordination and closer interaction with the State Governments for successful implementation of its programmes and schemes.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance. The Ministry is in consultation with various state governments for organizing of the Videsh Sampark Programme.

The Ministry has also undertaken outreach activities to Telengana, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and other states aimed at promotion of ties with diaspora and emigrant worker community through dedicated state outreach programmes, PGE Conferences, etc.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 35)

The Committee note that India Centre for Migration has so far developed country- specific two PDOT manuals for 18 ECR countries and Japan respectively. Further, India Centre for Migration and International Labour Organisation have also

prepared a pre- departure handbook for Indians going to the European Union. The Committee further note that ICM has also been working on 7 country- specific booklets for Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sudan, South Sudan and Thailand and these are in the final stages of development. The Committee desire that the PDOT booklets should be finalized at the earliest so that prospective emigrants are made aware about safe and legal migration and are also acquainted with the rules and regulation of the destination countries.

Reply of the Government

The work on PDOT training manual is almost complete.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

NEW DELHI
29 March, 2023
8 Chaitra, 1945 (Saka)

P.P. CHAUDHARY,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

APPENDIX- I

MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2022-23) HELD ON 29 MARCH, 2023

The Committee sat on Wednesday, 29 March, 2023 from 1525 hrs. to 1645 hrs. in Main Committee , Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Dileswar Kamait
3. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
4. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
5. Smt. Queen Oja
6. Dr. K. C. Patel
7. Shri N. K. Premchandran
8. Shri Manne Srinivas Reddy
9. Shri Rebati Tripura
10. Dr. Harsh Vardhan
11. Shri E. T. Mohammed Basheer

Rajya Sabha

12. Shri Anil Desai
13. Dr. Wanweiroy Kharlukhi
14. Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Shri Sanjay Verma - Secretary (West)
2. Smt. Vani Rao - Additional Secretary (AMS)

3. Shri Sandeep Chakravorty- Joint Secretary (EW)
4. Shri Anil K. Rai - Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)
5. Shri Prakash Gupta - Joint Secretary (UNP)
6. Shri J.P Singh - Joint Secretary (PAI)
7. Shri Devesh Uttam - Joint Secretary (CPV)
8. Shri K.D. Dewal - Joint Secretary (CT)
9. Shri M. Keivom - Director (CT)

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma - Secretary
2. Shri Amit Agrawal - Additional Secretary
3. Dr. Sanjay Bahl - DG CERT - In
4. Dr. Sandip Chatterjee - Scientist G and Group Coordinator – Cyber Law
5. Dr. S. Sathyanarayanan - Scientist E

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

1. Shri Vivek Aggarwal - AS (Revenue)

Secretariat

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director
3. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Welfare of Indian Diaspora: Policies/Schemes'.

4. The Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. The Members suggested some minor modifications. After deliberations, the Committee adopted the draft Report with these minor modifications.

5. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Report incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

6. XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

7. XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

8. XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

9. XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

The Committee then adjourned.

Appendix II

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FIFTEENTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (17TH LOK SABHA)

- (i) Total Number of Recommendations
55**
- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.**

Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54

**Total-43
Percentage: 78.18%**

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies.**

Recommendation Nos. 8 and 9

**Total- 02
Percentage: 3.64 %**

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.**

Recommendation Nos. 6, 10, 13, 21, 36, 37, 47 and 55

Total-08
Percentage: 14.54%

(v) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited.

Recommendation Nos. 24 and 35

Total- 02
Percentage: 3.64%