

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:250

ANSWERED ON:09.07.2014

DIFFICULTIES OF INDIANS IN GULF COUNTRIES

Nayak Shri B.V.

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of difficulties being faced by emigrants of Gulf countries and if so, the details thereof;;
- (b) whether the number of such emigrants is increasing day-by-day and if so, the number of persons who emigrated to Gulf and other countries during the last three years, country-wise; and
- (c) whether the Government has made any arrangements/provided facilities to such persons to resolve their issues and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS General (Retd.) V.K. Singh

a): Complaints from Indian workers received from time to time are generally in the nature of non-payment/ delayed payment or underpayment of salaries, long working hours, inadequate living conditions, physical harassment, non-renewal of visa and labour card on time, refusal to pay for the medical treatment, denial of leave and air-ticket to the hometown on completion of period of contract, refusal of leave or 'exit/re-entry permits'/final exit visa' etc.

(b): There is marginal increase in emigration to some of the Gulf countries. Emigration clearances granted to Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries including Gulf countries during the last three years is Annexed.

(c): (i) Whenever a complaint is received from any Indian worker abroad, action is initiated by the Ministry by asking the concerned Indian Mission to look into the matter. If the complaint is received by the Indian Mission, the Indian Mission also initiates action to resolve the issue by getting in touch with the foreign employer/local authorities and emigrant worker concerned and visiting Indian labour camps, if required, and actively pursuing until their logical conclusion. Wherever necessary, the complainant is also provided counseling and accordingly referred to concerned labour office/court, Immigration and police authorities etc. The Missions also provide interpreting services to the Indian complainants.

(ii) Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been established in all the Indian Missions for on-site welfare of emigrants, which includes offering short term food and accommodation for Indian workers in distress/ allowance, air-ticket at Government cost for the repatriation to India, transportation of the mortal remains, initial legal assistance and emergency medical help, organizing awareness camps at prominent workers accommodation sites.

(iii) For redressal of grievances of emigrants, Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) at Dubai, UAE, has been established which is a 24X7 toll free multilingual helpline and also provides free legal,

psychological and financial counseling to distressed Indians. Other Missions also have helpline/help desks to attend to grievances of Indian nationals.

(iv) Computerized emigration clearance system exists in all Protector of Emigrants (POE) offices. Security stickers are pasted on the passport, giving information about the Recruiting Agents (RAs) name of foreign employer, occupation, wages, insurance policy number, passport/visa number and the helpline number. In support of vulnerable categories (Unskilled and Domestic Sector Workers and Housemaids), pre-attestation of document by Indian Mission is required before emigration clearance could be given by the POE Offices.

(v) India has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Labour with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s, bilateral MoU with the major emigrants receiving Countries like United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November, 2008, with Malaysia in January, 2009, and with Bahrain in June, 2009, and Saudi Arabia in January, 2014 (for Domestic Sector Workers).

(vi) Age restriction of 30 years for women emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries, with Minimum Referral Wage fixed by Mission and a Security deposit of US\$ 2500 to be paid by foreign employer and compulsory pre-attestation of employment documents by the Indian Mission concerned for all women emigrants.