

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:387
ANSWERED ON:23.08.2006
SENDING OF LABOURERS ABROAD
Malhotra Prof. Vijay Kumar;Rana Shri Kashi Ram

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

- (a) The State-wise details of registered recruitment agencies involved in the sending of skilled/semi-skilled labourers abroad;
- (b) Whether several complaints of alleged exploitations/discrimination of these labourers abroad particularly from Gulf countries have been received by the Government;
- (c) If so, the details thereof including the action taken against the erring agencies in this regard;
- (d) Whether several countries have expressed interest to invite Indian labourers for their works;
- (e) If so, the present policy followed by the Government in this regard;
- (f) Whether the Government has taken steps to resolve various issues viz. safety, health benefits, timely bringing of bodies of the deceased, general welfare etc. of these labourers; and
- (g) If so, the action plan formulated in this regard;

Answer

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) to (g): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 387 for answer on 23.08.2006 by Shri Kashiram Rana and Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra regarding sending of labourers abroad

(a) to (g): There are at present 1,515 recruiting agents with valid registration involved in recruiting skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled labourers for jobs abroad. State-wise break- up of these agents is given in the Annexure. Recruitment can also be made directly by the project exporters and foreign employers by obtaining a permit under the Emigration Act from the Protector General of Emigrants. A number of complaints are received from time to time alleging cheating and exploitation of Indian workers by some registered/unregistered recruiting agents in India and by some foreign employers abroad. In the year 2006 (as on 01.08.2006), 65 complaints against Registered Recruiting Agents, 61 against unregistered agents and 03 against foreign employers have been received. Such complaints broadly relate to the following:

non-payment/reduced/delayed payment of salaries

non deployment on promised jobs

adverse working conditions

denial of appropriate medical facilities

poor living conditions, etc.

Although precise data is not available, overseas Indian workers are estimated about 4-5 million. During 2005, about 5.49 lakhs workers went abroad on emigration clearance. The number of complaints received is quite small in comparison to the number of Indians working abroad.

As and when a complaint is received against a registered Recruiting Agent, the concerned RA is directed to redress the grievance in a time bound manner. If he fails to do so, action is taken to suspend/cancel his Registration Certificate. In cases where the conduct of registered recruiting agent is required to be specifically watched in view of the nature of complaint, they are placed on an Internal Watch List. On complaints against illegal/unregistered recruiting agents, penal action is taken against them for violation of provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983 by referring their cases to the Police authorities of the State Governments concerned. The Foreign Employers, against whom complaints are received, are blacklisted by placing their names in the Prior Approval Category (PAC) List on the recommendation of the Indian Mission concerned, consequently debarring them to make further recruitment of workers from

India.

In the year 2006 (upto 01.08.2006), 61 complaints were received against unregistered recruiting agents which have been referred to the State police authorities for necessary action. The police has registered FIR in 14 cases, In the year 2006 (upto 01.08.2006), show cause notices have been issued to 65 registered Recruiting Agents. Registration Certificates of 25 registered Recruiting Agents have been suspended and those of 11 cancelled.

Indian workers are appreciated abroad for their sincerity, hard work and non- interference. As a result Indian workers are generally preferred by foreign employers. The policy of the Government is to facilitate humane and orderly migration of Indian workers overseas.

With a view to curb the exploitation of Indian workers going abroad, it has been made mandatory w.e.f. 15.11.2003 for the Recruiting Agents to submit all the employment documents, viz., demand letter, power of attorney and specimen employment contract in original for obtaining emigration clearance. Further, in respect of vulnerable categories of workers, i.e., unskilled labour and housemaids/domestic workers, these employment documents are required to be attested by the concerned Indian mission(s). In addition our missions have, with the help of Indian Community Welfare Associations and other community support groups, been providing legal assistance/counseling to protect the interest of Indian workers. A Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM) consisting of local government authorities and officials of the Indian Missions also exists in some of the Gulf countries which have been addressing issues relating to the protection of Indian workers in those countries.

A revised and comprehensive insurance scheme, viz. Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana, 2006 has been introduced w.e.f. 01.02.2006, which makes it mandatory for every emigrant worker to have the insurance cover under the Scheme. The Scheme, inter-alia, provides workers with life insurance, medical expenses and legal expenses cover.

Arrangements for bringing the mortal remains of deceased workers are made through the Indian Missions. Under the employment contract, the employer is bound to arrange transportation of mortal remains in case of death of the worker. A skill up-gradation programme, in collaboration with State Governments and other industry bodies, to enable overseas Indian workers seek better employment opportunities and to help them move up the wage chain is also an important initiative being undertaken by the Ministry.

In addition, to ensure protection and welfare of Indian workers abroad, a proposal to comprehensively amend the Emigration Act, 1983 is already underway.

Annexure

Statement indicating State- wise number of Registered Recruiting Agents having valid registration certificates

Sl. No.	Name of State/U.T.	No. of Agents
1	Andhra Pradesh	65
2	Chandigarh	42
3	Delhi	271
4	Goa	19
5	Gujarat	17
6	Haryana	14
7	Himachal Pradesh	2
8	Jammu & Kashmir	3
9	Karnataka	27
10	Kerala	174
11	Madhya Pradesh	1
12	Maharashtra	567
13	Mizoram	2
14	Orissa	1
15	Punjab	87
16	Rajasthan	29
17	Tamilnadu	174
18	Uttar Pradesh	9
19	Uttaranchal	1
20	West Bengal	10
	TOTAL	1,515