

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5229

ANSWERED ON:30.04.2008

EXPLOITATION OF INDIAN WOMEN ABROAD

Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Nahata Smt. P. Jaya Prada;Nikhil Kumar Shri ;Yadav Shri Anirudh Prasad (Sadhu);Yaskhi Shri Madhu Goud

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

(a) whether a number of cases have come to the notice of the Government where poor Indian women have been forced into prostitution by organized gangs abroad as reported in the "Hindustan Times" dated April 03, 2008;

(b) if so, the facts reported therein; and

(c) the concrete steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS(SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) & (b): In the Hindustan Times dated April 3, 2008, the following three cases have been reported:

(i) A lady from Ludhiana, who was held captive in Singapore and Ukraine.

(ii) A lady from Moga (Punjab) who returned to India after spending six years in Singapore as an illegal immigrant and was physically tortured and forced to work as a maid.

(iii) A woman from Kerala who was rescued in Muscat last month.

In the first case ,the High Commission of India, Singapore has reported that no facts of the case are available with them as no complaint was registered with the Mission.However,as reported by the Indian Mission in Kyiv (Ukraine), two ladies, including the one mentioned in the newspaper repoprt, entered the territory of Ukraine as illegal migrant through land border from Russia with the help of some Indian/foreign agents, who promised them jobs in western Europe.Their case was brought to the notice of our Mission by the local Ministry of Internal Affairs. Our Consular Officer explained to them the futility of such endeavour and persuaded them to go back to India. Both of them were to be sent back to India on 16.1.2008. On 28, January, 2008, the Mission came to know that while one of them had gone back to India, the other lady escaped from the custody of local authorities for reasons best known to her. On March 6, 2008 the Mission learnt that she had been brought to the office of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), which is intensively working with stranded foreign nationals for facilitating the voluntary return of such nationals to their respective countries of origin. The Consular Officer of the Indian Mission again had a personal meeting with her and arranged for her urgent medical attention and simultaneously it was decided to issue her a duplicate travel document facilitating her speedy return to her parents in India.During her interview with the Consular Officer, she did verbally complain of some wrong doing by some persons of Indian origin during her stay in Ukraine without being able to name the culprits involved. She also failed to explain convincingly about her disappearance from custody. Finally, the Mission ensured, with the help of IOM and local authorities that she departed from Kyiv for Delhi.

In the second case, as reported by our Mission in Singapore, the lady worked as a domestic maid in Singapore during 2002-03. After working for one year she had a problem with her employer and since then she was staying in Singapore for 5-6 years.She approached the Mission on 26th February, 2008 seeking early repatriation to India for her marriage.She did not make any complaint of physical or mental harassment against any person.The Mission requested the Singapore Ministry of Manpower to arrange for her early repatriation.

In the third case, as per report received from our Mission in Muscat, a lady from Kerala landed up in Muscat on a family joining visa obtained on the basis of a fake marriage certificate (spouses of workers working in Oman are given family joining visa), through an unauthorized visa agent. On arrival in Muscat, she was received by two Indians (Gopi and Vinayan)and was taken to an apartment where she was tortured in confinement. Upon a complaint received from her husband, our Mission, in coordination and liaison with local police authorities, got a raid conducted on the premises during which one Indonesian woman along with three Indian men (Shanmugkhan, Radhakrishnan and Venu Gopal) were arrested. Some culprits (including Gopi and Vinayan) are reportedly still at large. A criminal case is being filed by the local prosecution authorities against those arrested in the relevant local criminal court of competent jurisdiction. Investigation by the local authorities is still on in order to catch the kingpins.

(c): Details are annexed (Annexure-I).