

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:524
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2010
WORKERS STRANDED ABROAD
Singh Shri Bhola

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

- (a) whether many workers have got stuck abroad due to the connivance of the agents sending workers abroad;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received complaints in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the preventive measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) to (d): From time to time complaints against agents, come to the notice of the Government. These complaints relate to not being provided promised job, non-payment of wages by the foreign employer, poor working conditions & accommodation, deployment of workers for employment on visit /commercial visas, etc. Immediate action is initiated in such cases under the Emigration Act, 1983 to suspend/cancel the registration certificates of the registered recruiting agents and to file FIRs against the offenders. During 2009 the Protector General of Emigrants suspended/ cancelled 51 Registration Certificates.

For the protection and welfare of the emigrants, the following preventive measures have been taken by the Government:

All demands for 500 or more workers are verified for the genuineness of demand as well as the Foreign Employer.

All demands from Recruiting Agents and Foreign Employers in the Watch List of the Ministry are attested by the Indian Mission concerned before granting emigration clearance.

Protectors of Emigrants have been asked to conduct appropriate checks and exercise abundant caution while granting emigration clearance, also taking into account instructions of the Ministry.

India has signed Labour agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s. The Ministry, after its creation in 2004, made concerted efforts to enter into bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the major receiving countries for ensuring protection and welfare of our emigrants. MoUs were signed with the United Arab of Emigrates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November, 2008, with Malaysia in January, 2009, and with Bahrain on 17th June, 2009. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007. Similar MoUs are also proposed with Yemen, Maldives and Libya.

Under noted special measures are being taken for better protection and welfare of vulnerable sections of Emigrants:

(i) Age restriction of 30 years for all women emigrating on ECR passports for employment in ECR Countries;

(ii) Establishing Indian Workers Resource Centres in host countries to serve as a one stop service outlet for addressing the information and assistance needs of emigrants;

(iii) A 24x7 Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) helpline has been set up to enable emigrants/ prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/ Foreign Employers;

A comprehensive Insurance Scheme, viz. Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, 2006, is in place, which was further upgraded with effect from 1.4.2008;

A vigorous campaign in the print and electronic media, to educate potential emigrants, including labourers and other vulnerable sections like women emigrants, has been launched to propagate the benefits of legal migration and hazards of illegal migration;

In case of emergencies, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs coordinates with the Indian Missions, the State Government authorities and the Ministry of Civil Aviation for making necessary arrangements for transportation of the migrants and for ensuring their safe passage back to their respective homes;

Indian Community Welfare Fund has been established in 42 countries including all ECR countries for on-site welfare of emigrants.