

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3334

ANSWERED ON:16.03.2011

INDIAN WORKERS ABROAD

Danve Shri Raosaheb Patil; Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

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

- (a) the number of unskilled and semi-skilled Indian workers working overseas;
- (b) whether overseas Indian workers are facing problems regarding non-payment/delayed payment of wages, cruelty, sexual harassment, etc; and
- (c) if so, the measures taken to safeguard the interests of Indian workers abroad?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) Indian workers emigrate for seeking employment in all categories of work ranging from low skilled to high skilled professional jobs. Data is available only for ECR (Emigration Check Required) category of workers going abroad. This category includes those workers who hold ECR passports and are emigrating to 17 notified countries. The details of ECR Category workers who emigrated to 17 notified countries during 2008, 2009 and 2010 are at Annexure.

(b) & (c) Complaints from Indian workers relating to non-payment, arbitrary reduction or delay in payment of wages, longer working hours and lack of accommodation, food and medical facilities etc. are received by the Indian missions in the Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries from time to time. Whenever, a complaint is received, action is initiated by the Ministry for suspension or cancellation of the Registration Certificate of the Recruiting Agent (RA). If required, RA is also prosecuted through the State Police. Complaints filed against illegal agents are referred to the State Governments. When there is a complaint against a foreign employer, proceedings for black listing such employer are initiated. Indian missions also take up these issues with the foreign employers/local governments to protect the welfare of the workers.

The Government has taken several initiatives to protect the welfare of Overseas Indian Workers which include:

- (i) The Ministry has notified the Emigration (Amendment) Rules 2009 on 9th July, 2009 revising the eligibility criteria of Recruiting Agents (RAs) and increasing the security amount and service charges.
- (ii) A Nation wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through media has been launched to educate intending emigrants about legal emigration procedures, risk of illegal migration and precautions to be taken during emigration.
- (iii) The Ministry has set up the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in 42 Countries for providing onsite support and financial assistance to Indian workers in distress.
- (iv) The Government has established an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) which is a 24 hour telephone helpline in seven languages to provide authentic information to intending emigrants as well as emigrants on all aspects of emigration.
- (v) India had signed Labour Agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s to protect the interest of the Indian Workers. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed with 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. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.
- (vi) These MOUs enhance bilateral co-operation in management of migration and protection of labour welfare. Under these MOUs a Joint Working Group (JWG) has been constituted that meets regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues.