

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5676
ANSWERED ON:07.09.2011
VISA TO INDIAN PROFESSIONALS
Jagannath Dr. M.;Thamaraiselvan Shri R.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the US authorities had made many changes in their policy towards granting visa to scientists/professionals;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government had asked the US to relax visa regime for Indian scientists and IT professionals; and
- (d) if so, the response received by the Government from the US authorities in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) & (b) The Government is aware of long-standing U.S. policy and procedures for issue of visas for foreign scientists working in specified areas of science and technology. The U.S. policy is not India-specific. The Government is also aware of recent cases of difficulties being faced by Indian IT professionals in obtaining U.S. visas and of the increase in fees for H1B and L categories of visas in 2010 through legislation by the U.S. Congress.

(c) & (d) The Government has taken up at all levels with the United States its concerns over the difficulties faced by Indian scientists and IT professionals in obtaining U.S. visas. The issue was again raised by the External Affairs Minister with the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during the second India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue held in New Delhi on 19 July 2011. Secretary Clinton assured to convey our concerns to the U.S. authorities concerned. India and United States have set up a Joint Working Group to discuss visa and other consular matters and the first meeting was held in Washington D.C. on 25 July 2011.