

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4254
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2009
WELFARE FUND FOR INDIANS
Kanubhai Patel Jayshreeben

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

(a) whether a sum of Rs.4.80 crore was made available to be spent for providing food, shelters, legal assistance and other welfare activities to Indians who are in distress during the last three years; and

(b) if so, the details of the disbursement of the funds, mission-wise during the above period?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): From time to time, the Indian Missions, especially in the Gulf, have referred instances of distressed overseas Indians approaching them for welfare assistance. The Ministry had sanctioned an amount of Rs.6.42 lakhs to the Migrant Workers Protection Society through our Mission in Bahrain in 2008, Rs. 18.00 lakhs to our Mission in Iran, Rs. 2.60 lakhs to our Mission in Malaysia and Rs. 2.37 lakhs to the CGI, St. Petersburg in 2009 for extending immediate welfare assistance to the stranded workers in those countries.

Further, the Ministry has set up the 'Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)' in the Indian Missions in 17 Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) Countries and Maldives to provide on-site welfare for the Overseas Indian Citizens who are in distress. The welfare services provided by the ICWF includes boarding and lodging for distressed household / domestic workers and unskilled labourers, emergency medical care to the overseas Indians in need, providing air passage to stranded overseas Indians in distress, providing initial legal assistance to the overseas Indians in deserving cases and incurring expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased overseas Indians in cases where a sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost.

As per the Scheme, the ICWF would be funded through budgetary support from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, funds raised by the Indian Missions by levying a service charge on consular services and through Voluntary contributions from the Indian community. The ICWF has become operational from this year and the Ministry's contribution would be a maximum of Rs.1.60 crores per year for the initial three years. The amount released to the Missions during the current Financial Year, is given below:

S No.	Name of the Indian	Mission Amount sanctioned
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1. Qatar, Bahrain, Malaysia, Oman Rs. 15 Lakhs each

2. Indonesia, Maldives Rs. 5 Lakhs

3. Syria Rs. 1.75 Lakh