

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:208
ANSWERED ON:05.02.2014
REHABILITATION OF NITAQUAT RETURNEES
Karunakaran Shri P.

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

- (a) the number of Indian workers who left Saudi Arabia on account of stringent implementation of Nitaquat, State-wise;
- (b) the details of the arrests made, if any, and harassment of Indian workers during the implementation of the said labour law;
- (c) the details of the rehabilitation programmes formulated for the returnees from the Gulf, State-wise, including Kerala and the number of returnees who have availed the benefits so far;
- (d) whether States have sought support from the Government to rehabilitate returnees;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement as referred to in reply to the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 208 (Position No.8) for 05/02/2014 regarding "Rehabilitation of Nitaquat Returnees"

(a) The number of Indians who left on final exit with Emergency Certificate as well as with regular passport during and after the 7-month grace period (6th April, 2013 to 3rd November, 2013) announced by the Saudi authorities is 141301 (as on 27th November, 2013). These Indian nationals could return to India without facing any penal action and with no ban on their return.

The state-wise list of persons issued with Emergency Certificates by the Indian Missions and Posts in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are as in Annexure-A.

(b) No large scale arrests or harassment of Indian workers during the 7-month grace period has been reported. More than 1.4 million Indian have availed concessions during the above grace period. This includes 4,34,667 Indians who transferred their services to other firms, who are 'Nitaqat' complaint. Additionally 4,81,233 Indians changed their jobs/ profession. Apart from this over 4,70,000 Indians got renewed their licenses/job permits. However, the Consulate General of India, Jeddah has reported that on 21.01.2014 five hundred and three Indians were lodged in Deportation Centre at Shumaisi near Jeddah. These Indians were arrested by Jawazat Police for violating work permit and visa related rules viz. not having valid residential permits, not working with sponsor, running away from sponsor etc.

(c) to (e) Rehabilitation of returnees rests mainly with the State Governments. In this regard, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs had called meetings of Ministers/ representatives of major labour sending States twice, the first on 09-04-2013 and the second on 25-06-2013 to discuss issues arising from implementation of Nitaqat in Saudi Arabia. The State Governments were also asked to consider the issue of rehabilitation of the returnees.

The Government of Kerala Representative requested in the meeting to explore the possibility of giving re-employment to returnees through Indian companies for their rehabilitation and also to give special loans and subsidy to them through Nationalised Banks. In this connection, State Governments were advised that the existing State Government Schemes or Central Government Schemes as and if applicable may be used for this. It was also informed that the State Government of Kerala had issued Government orders for implementation of a rehabilitation scheme for returned Non-Resident Keralites on 11.03.2013. A provision of rupees two crore for the financial year 2012-13 had been provided, and proposed activities included seed capital /subsidy for viable small scale projects in association with financial institutions as well as training and awareness programme for the rehabilitation of returned emigrants. An amount of Rs.1 crore was released to the implementing agency. An amount of Rs.2.97 crore has been earmarked for the Financial Year 2013-14 for this purpose. Consequent to Nitaqat law in KSA the State Government announced a comprehensive rehabilitation package for return emigrants and an amount of Rs.10 crore was announced in the budget speech for 2014-15 for this.

During the grace period, most of the Indians have availed the concessions by transferring their services to other firms, changing their jobs/professions, renewing their licenses/ job permits. Some Indian nationals returned to India without facing any penal action and without any ban on their return with legal work permits. Therefore, the question of rehabilitation of returnees actually did not pose that

much problem as was apprehended.