

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:47

ANSWERED ON:02.12.2015

Database of Indians Abroad

Girri Shri Maheish;Patil Shri Chandrakant Raghunath

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

- (a) whether any database of Indians including workers, students, etc. working in foreign countries is maintained and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government monitors the compliance of labour laws in letter and spirit in consultation with these countries;
- (c) if so, the details in this regard along with the complaints received by the Government from various countries regarding violation of labour laws; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to provide assistance to such Indians in distress along with the role and achievement of Indian Council for Overseas Employment (ICOE) in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

SMT.SUSHMA SWARAJ

(a) to (d): A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*47 FOR 02.12.2015 REGARDING "DATABASE OF INDIANS ABROAD"

(a): A database of Indians who require Emigration Check prior to emigration to 18 ECR Countries for employment is available under the e-Migrate system, since its operationalization. This database is appropriately accessible to the stakeholders concerned. The data on estimated country-wise population of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) is at Annexure-I. No database of students studying abroad is maintained.

(b) & (c): As per reports received from Missions in twelve ECR countries in November, 2015, 7432 complaints on different aspects were received by them in 2015. Details are at the Annexure-II. Most of these complaint were addressed by the Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned foreign authorities. Complaints pertaining to employment were taken up by the Indian Missions with the concerned foreign employer/ Labour officials in that country.

Government of Indian has signed MoUs with 6 Gulf countries namely UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia to provide, inter-alia, that the host country will take measures for protection and welfare of the workers in organized sector and the recruitment and terms of employment will be in conformity with the laws of both the countries.

These MoUs are renewed/ signed afresh, from time to time during which process any modifications are duly considered for inclusion.

(d): The Government of India has set up Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in the Indian Missions abroad to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various welfare activities for overseas Indian citizens who are in distress. The objectives of the ICWF include:-

- i) Boarding and lodging for distressed Overseas Indians in need;
- ii) Extending emergency medical care to the Overseas Indians in need;
- iii) Providing air passage to stranded Overseas Indians in need;
- iv) Providing initial legal assistance to the Overseas Indians in deserving cases;
- v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased Overseas Indians in such cases where the sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost;
- vi) Providing the payment of penalties in respect of Indian nationals for illegal stay in the host country where prima facie the worker is not at fault;
- vii) Providing the payment of small fines/penalties for the release of Indian nationals in jail/detention centre.

The Ministry has set up a 24X7 helpline 'Overseas Workers Resource Centre' (OWRC) in Gurgaon, Haryana which provides information and guidance on all matters and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals. Indian Workers Resource

Centre (IWRC) set up in Dubai by Embassy of India, in UAE, provides guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers in UAE. Shelter homes for Indians in distress have been set up in Malaysia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These shelter homes provide free boarding and lodging to distressed Indians pending their repatriation.

Government of India have also started 24x7 Helpline on 'Madad' for lodging the grievances of the emigrants, which are attended to on priority basis.

ICOE, renamed as India Centre for Migration (ICM) in 2013, was set-up in 2008. It is a research think tank of the Ministry and provides research and policy inputs to Ministry on various issues related to migration and overseas employment of Indian migrant workers.