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Title: Need to check exploitation of Indians working in Gulf Countries by Indian Recruitment Agencies.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN (KOZHIKODE): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I would like to raise the following matter of urgent public importance which requires the immediate attention of this House.

Sir, a large number of Indians are living in the Gulf countries where they have gone to make a living. But, of late, the crimes by Indians against Indians are on the increase. This is mainly due to the fact that a growing number of Indian managers recruit the Indian workers charging extortionist rates and then deny them their assured salary and other basic human rights. They further indulge in usury by diverting their pay roll, implicate those who protest in false cases and have them imprisoned or banned from leaving the Gulf countries.

Then, there is a confusion regarding Citizenship by Descent. A number of persons born to Indian parents are languishing in the Gulf countries without Indian passports.

Parents are supposed to register a child at the embassy within one year of birth and obtain a passport. Due to ignorance and a variety of other reasons, some parents take several years to approach the embassy.

I understand that the embassies are empowered to issue passports only if the birth is registered within one year. For all others, the Home Ministry, back in India, is the competent Passport Issuing Authority. Without passport, these persons are not able to study or work or get treated in a hospital, open a bank account or even get married.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please be brief.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVA : I am coming to the point.

A number of Indian blue collar workers lack the resources to get treatment. Due to extremely harsh weather conditions, very difficult conditions of work and unhygienic conditions in the camps, many Indian workers get serious ill. Many companies neglect to provide even the basic medical care.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please conclude.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN : I am coming to the point.

The number of workers leaving the Gulf countries due to non-availability of medical care as well as the number of deaths due to heart attacks among the 30-year olds is increasing.

Therefore, I would like to suggest to set up a Task Force with judicial powers under the Central Government and empower it to implement deterrent measures like impounding the passports of proven offenders and even attaching their property in India, etc., for such fraudulent activities. Apart from this, the Indian Ambassadors should also be given magisterial powers to act upon at times of necessity. I believe that a couple of exemplary actions would suffice to deter the growth of this malaise.

Secondly, since they are Indian by descent, they need to be issued Indian passports regardless of how old they are now.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please conclude.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN : I am coming to the point.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You are not concluding. You are going on. Please wind up.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN : The Indians by descent should be issued Indian passports regardless of how old they are now.

Medical treatment for the deserving cases should also be included in the Indian Community Welfare Fund that has been approved by our Government. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, Shri Adhir Chowdhury. Please be brief and do not elaborate.