

PRIORITY-VIII

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.293
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.03.2018

PERSECUTION OF INDIAN FEMALE WORKERS IN GULF COUNTRIES

*293. SHRI K.K. RAGESH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has received complaints about persecution of female migrant domestic workers from India in Gulf countries by their employers;
- (b) if so, the number of such cases reported during the last three years; and
- (c) whether any measures are being taken to help such workers?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

- (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.293 REGARDING “PERSECUTION OF INDIAN FEMALE WORKERS IN GULF COUNTRIES” FOR ANSWER ON 22.03.2018

(a) & (b) The Indian Missions receive complaints from women workers, particularly female domestic sector workers, on account of poor working conditions, non-payment or delay in payment of salaries and denial of other benefits such as medical facilities, refusal of leave or denial of exit/re-entry permits for visits to India, denial of final exit visas to the workers to return to India after completion of the contract, maltreatment by the employers etc. Incidents of confinement, physical abuse, abandoning of housemaids by their sponsors have also been reported. Most of the complaints pertain to female workers, who do not have proper employment contracts and have migrated illegally, in violation of Government norms for recruitment of ECR workers from India. The table showing number of complaints received by the Indian Missions in Gulf countries from female domestic workers, during the last three years, is as under:

No.	Name of Mission	Number of Complaints received from female Domestic Workers		
		2015	2016	2017
1.	Bahrain	11	12	10
2.	Kuwait	983	1194	950
3.	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	341	409	527
4.	Oman	128	174	235
5.	Qatar	372	614	397
6.	UAE	136	209	351

(c) The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian female emigrants to the Gulf countries, these are:

- (i) Age restriction of 30 years has been made mandatory in respect of all women emigrants (Except Nurses) emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries irrespective of nature/category of employment;
- (ii) Since August, 2016, emigration clearance of all female workers having ECR passports, for overseas employment in 18 ECR countries has been made mandatory through six State-run recruiting agencies only. These are NORKA, Roots and Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC) of Kerala, Overseas Manpower Corporation Ltd. (OMCL) of Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh Financial Corporation (UPFC) of Uttar Pradesh, Overseas Manpower Company Andhra Pradesh Limited (OMCAP) of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Limited (TOMCOM) of Telangana.

- (iii) Every Foreign Employer desirous of directly recruiting a female ECR worker is required to deposit a Bank Guarantee equivalent to US \$2500 in the respective Indian Missions.
- (iv) Embassy attestation has been made mandatory in respect of direct recruitment of all ECR passport holder women workers in respect of all ECR countries;
- (v) For the safety, security and welfare of Indian Domestic Service Workers (DSWs), the Government of India has signed Domestic Service Workers (DSWs) Agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in January 2014, on Labour Cooperation for Domestic Workers Recruitment.
- (vi) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances online and track their redressal.
- (vii) Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries including gulf countries, can also be logged in directly by emigrants/relatives or through the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) on e-Migrate portal. A multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in New Delhi, which provides information, guidance and grievance redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals.
- (viii) Missions in Gulf countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can seek redressal of their grievances.
- (ix) Missions in Gulf countries have also established 24x7 helplines and Toll Free help lines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
- (x) Indian Workers Resource Centres (IWRC) have been set up at Dubai (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.
- (xi) Shelter Homes for distressed Indian nationals including women workers have been set up in Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
- (xii) Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are already in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review labour related issues.
