

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3047
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.03.2018

FAKE AGENCIES SENDING INDIANS ABROAD

3047. DR. VIKAS MAHATME:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that various agencies mostly fake in the name of facilitating study or seeking jobs abroad are mushrooming without any checks and balances, charging exorbitantly high fees from students/job applicants;
- (b) if so, whether steps have been taken by Government to contain such activities; and
- (c) if not, the steps Government proposes to take against such agencies and to give relief to trapped students/job seekers?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(GEN. (DR) V.K. SINGH (RETD))

(a) Yes. It has been reported by a few Indian Missions/Consulates that they do receive complaints from Indian students abroad regarding fraudulent agents/consultants who mislead them about credentials of foreign universities, incorrect information about fees to be paid to the University, demand of high tuition fees in the middle of the academic session, unauthorized agents demanding hefty amount for visa facilitation, poor quality of hostel facilities etc. Besides, the Government has also been receiving from time to time complaints/grievances from prospective emigrants of being cheated by illegal agents.

(b) Missions/Consulates on receipt of such complaints from students, take up the matter with University administration and local authorities for redressal of these grievances. The Government has also constituted an Expert Group on Indian students abroad with representatives from Foreign Missions in India and senior officials from respective Ministries to look into such issues. The first meeting of Expert Group was held on 13.03.2018 wherein, it emphasized that Indian students have to be provided with genuine and correct information about the University and their fee structure through official website of Missions, Central Governments and State Governments etc.

Complaints in respect of emigrants/intending emigrants are forwarded to concerned State Governments and Police authorities urging them to apprehend illegal agents and prosecute them on the basis of complaints. Wherever required such

complaints are also referred to Missions/Posts abroad for providing relief/rescue/repatriation.

Government has also issued a Standard Operating Procedure on 26th May, 2016, to be followed by States on receipt of complaints. The State Governments have also been requested to launch periodic visual and print media campaign(s) for creating awareness amongst the populace to use the services of Registered Recruiting Agencies, and not to go abroad through Illegal agencies.

Government has also undertaken the following measures for protecting emigrants as follows:

- (i) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances online and track their redressal.
 - (ii) 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 eMigrate portal. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedures.
 - (iii) Missions especially in ECR countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can seek redressal of their grievances.
 - (iv) A multi-lingual 24x7 helpline of Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in New Delhi provides information, guidance and grievance redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals.
 - (v) Missions in many countries have also established 24x7 helplines and Toll Free help lines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
 - (vi) An Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) has been set up at Dubai (UAE) and four more IWRCs have been set up in Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh and Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.
 - (vii) Migrant Resource Centres are operational in Delhi, Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Lucknow. They have been merged with PoE Offices for greater synergy in assisting emigrants and/or their relatives to redress their problems/complaints regarding overseas employment.
 - (viii) Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is in place to assist Indian nationals abroad in times of distress, on a means tested basis.
 - (ix) Suitable accommodation to distressed Indian nationals has been set up in Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Malaysia to provide temporary accommodation.
 - (x) 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.
 - (xi) Additional safeguards/protocols have been instituted to protect women workers going abroad including Nurses in ECR countries.
- (c) Does not arise.
