

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3913**  
ANSWERED ON- 06/04/2023

**DIFFICULTIES FACED BY LABOURERS WORKING ABROAD**

3913. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) whether government is aware that a large number of Indian citizens are working abroad as labourers in extremely difficult conditions and in some cases their passports have also been confiscated by the employers, particularly in Middle Eastern countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of people who are working as labourers in the Middle Eastern countries; and

(d) the measures being taken by Government to make the working conditions better for the labourers working in such countries?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a & b) The Government attaches highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indians, including labourers, in foreign countries. Indian Missions/Posts abroad remain vigilant and closely monitor the incidents related to Indian nationals in foreign countries.

Majority of complaints received from Indian workers are on violation of local labour laws and non-fulfillment of contractual obligations including passport retention by the respective sponsors, ill treatment at the work place, non-payment of salaries/ wages etc resulting in hardship of the Indian labourers.

As soon as the information about a distressed Indian national is received by an Indian Mission/Post, it immediately gets in touch with the Indian national, local Foreign Office and other concerned local authorities, as the case may be, to ascertain the facts of the case, confirm his/her Indian nationality and ensure his/her welfare.

Apart from extending possible consular assistance to Indian nationals in distress, Indian Missions/Posts also assist in providing legal aid wherever needed. Missions/Posts also maintain a local panel of lawyers where Indian community is in sizeable numbers. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is set up in Indian Missions/Posts abroad for assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations on a means tested basis in deserving cases. The support extended under ICWF includes financial assistance to Indian nationals for legal aid as well as travel documents / air tickets.

(c) The data on number of Indians (including those working as labourers) in GCC countries based on available inputs, is as under:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Indians</b>
Bahrain	3,23,292
Kuwait	10,28,274
Oman	7,79,351
Qatar	6,91,539
Saudi Arabia	25,92,166
UAE	34,19,875

(d) To safeguard the interests of Indian workers in GCC countries, the Government of India has signed various Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs). The broad principles covered in these MoUs include:

(i) Declaration of mutual intent to enhance employment opportunities and for bilateral cooperation for protection and welfare of Indian workers;

(ii) The host countries to take measures for protection and welfare of the Indian workers working in their organized sector;

(iii) Statement of the broad procedures that the Foreign Employers shall follow to recruit Indian workers;

(iv) The recruitment and terms of employment are in conformity with the laws of both the countries;

(v) Constitution of Joint Working Groups aimed at finding solutions to bilateral labour issues arising from time to time.

In addition, there are various other mechanisms in place for the welfare and protection of Indian nationals abroad like MADAD, eMigrate portal, Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK), etc. Dedicated Labour / Community Welfare wings have been established in Indian Missions and Posts in the countries with large number of Indian workers. Missions have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.

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