

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 392
ANSWERED ON- 06/02/2025

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNED INDIAN MIGRANTS

392 SMT. JEBI MATHER HISHAM

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

- (a) the number of Indian migrants who have returned over the last five years due to economic downturns abroad and reasons therefor, including employment loss or economic instability in host nations;
- (b) whether any programs or policies have been implemented to support the reintegration of returned Indian migrants; State/UTs-wise details on financial aid, reskilling initiatives, and other support measures;
- (c) the details of Indian migrants who returned from conflict-affected nations in the last five years;and
- (d) the steps Government has taken to ensure health, safety, and welfare of Indian migrant workers, especially those in high-risk sectors?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) Data on the number of Indians who returned to India due to economic downturns abroad, employment loss or economic instability is not available.
- (b) The responsibility of reintegration of returned Indian migrants rests with the State governments, from where the emigrants belong. Various State Governments have developed ways and means to reintegrate workers returning from abroad.

During the pandemic, under the Vande Bharat Mission, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Ministry of External Affairs jointly launched 'SWADES – Skilled Worker Arrival Database for Employment Support'. The initiative aims at empowering the returning citizens with relevant employment opportunities by creating a database of qualified citizens based on their skill sets and experience to tap into and fulfill demand of Indian and foreign countries. The returning citizens are required to fill up an online **SWADES Skills Card**. The database thus generated has been integrated with India's ASEEM portal. The portal provides employee connect for prospective employers.

(c & d) The Government accords highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals abroad. The Emigration Act, 1983 provides the regulatory framework for emigration of Indian workers for contractual overseas employment and seeks to safeguard their interests and ensure their welfare. The Act provides for regulations on issues such as Recruiting Agents, Emigration clearances, registration of foreign employers and prevention of exploitation of Indian workers recruited to work overseas.

The Government has taken several initiatives like the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) and Pre-departure Orientation Training (P-DOT) in ensuring that Indian migrant workers undertake safe migration, have decent working and living conditions in destination countries, are aware of their rights and have access to various welfare schemes of the Government. To emphasise, Ministry also launched the 'Surakshit Jaayen, Prashikshit Jaayen' – Go Safe, Go Trained' campaign in 2018 to raise awareness and facilitate safe and legal migration.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a mandatory insurance scheme aimed at safeguarding the interests of ECR category Indian migrant workers going for employment to 18 ECR countries. The scheme provides an insurance cover of INR. 10 lakh and other benefits in case of accidental death or permanent disability leading to job loss, at a nominal insurance premium of INR 275/- for two years or INR 375/- for three years validity. P-DOT is a one-day training programme on soft skills imparted by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), State Governments and other stake holders. Data on number of migrant Indian workers imparted P-DOT is at Annexure 'A'.

Our Missions/Posts abroad also utilize the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide the following services/assistance to the Indian diaspora in distress on a means tested basis:

- (i) Transportation of mortal remains to India or cremation with the consent of the family;
- (ii) Emergency medical care;
- (iii) Legal assistance;
- (iv) Boarding and lodging; and
- (v) Air passage for stranded Indians.

The Government has established various mechanisms to enable Indian workers abroad to reach out in case they need any assistance. The workers can contact the Missions/Posts through various channels like walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portals like MADAD, CPGRAMS, eMigrate and social media etc.

Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up in New Delhi and at Dubai (UAE), Riyadh & Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to provide assistance, guidance and counselling to Indian workers in distress.

Emigrate 2.0 - The eMigrate version 2.0 project is a transformational initiative of the Overseas Employment (OE) & Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) Division of the MEA aimed at making the emigration process efficient and organized through this e-governance platform. eMigrate 2.0 is powered by modern open-source technologies with API based scalable application architecture. It enables the platform to be part of Government of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

Protection of vulnerable category migrants: The protection and welfare of Indian Emigration Check Required (ECR) category female migrant workers [including Domestic Sector Workers (DSWs)] is a foremost priority for MEA. In this direction, as additional safeguard measures, only the State-run recruitment agents are authorized to undertake the recruitment of ECR category female workers (including DSWs) for overseas employment. Further, a minimum age criteria of 30 years was put in place of ECR category female workers and DSWs for overseas employment to protect them from exploitation.

Indian Missions/Posts abroad have also established 24X7 Helplines including Toll Free Helplines, whatsapp numbers and have launched mobile Apps to enable Indian nationals contact respective Indian Missions/Posts when in distress or in emergency situation.

The Government has also taken extra-ordinary measures for evacuating Indians from conflict zones. The Government evacuated 28594 Indian nationals from conflict-affected nations since 2021. However, the Ministry does not have data regarding the number of Indians who might have returned on their own, from conflict-affected nations.

ANNEXURE-A

Year wise data of Emigrant imparted Pre Departure Orientation Training

Year	Total no. of Emigrants imparted PDOT
2018	31988
2019	45122
2020	18694
2021	12271
2022	15286
2023	13286
2024	35573