

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 563
ANSWERED ON 23.07.2026

ABANDONMENT OF SPOUSES BY NRI HUSBANDS

563: **SHRI RAJINDER GUPTA:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of NIPCCD finding that 60 per cent of NRI marriages in Punjab were unregistered, a primary enabler of subsequent desertion and ex-parte foreign divorces without the wife's knowledge and if so, Government's assessment thereof;
- (b) whether Government proposes to reintroduce the Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indians Bill, 2019 and if so, the timeline and salient features thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken for legal and financial assistance to deserted Indian women, including the number of beneficiaries from Punjab and whether the scheme's coverage and quantum are considered adequate?

ANSWER

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

(a) Registration of marriages can create a degree of deterrence for NRIs from deserting their legally married spouses and adopt ex-parte foreign divorces. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India had directed that marriages of all citizens of India, including NRIs, should be compulsorily registered in their respective States where they have been solemnized. All Indian States and Union Territories have complied with the aforesaid directive of the Hon'ble Court by enacting enabling legislations.

The fact that despite the aforesaid enabling legislations of the Indian States and UTs, Indian citizens still do not register their marriages, can be attributed to their lack of awareness or their unwillingness to abide by such laws. Government of India and the State Governments need to explore mechanisms to create greater public awareness through media and digital campaigns and encourage Indian nationals, including NRIs, to comply with the legislations and register their marriages.

(b) As stated above, all Indian States and Union Territories have already passed legislations to comply with the directive of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India that obligate Indian nationals, including NRIs, to compulsorily register their marriages in their respective States and UTs where they have been solemnized. Enactment of another legislation at the national level to enforce the same obligation on Indian nationals does not appear necessary.

(c) Government of India has taken number of steps to address the issue of abandonment of women, domestic violence, harassment and other matrimonial disputes involving women

married to NRIs living abroad. This Ministry, through its Missions/Posts abroad, provide appropriate counselling, legal assistance, guidance as also information on appropriate legal procedures and available remedies to the aggrieved Indian spouses overseas. Indian Missions/Posts also interact regularly with the members of the Indian Community Associations and NGOs in areas of their jurisdiction for dissemination of information regarding these facilities. Walk-in sessions and Open House meetings, Consular Camps etc. for distressed Indians including abandoned spouses, are also conducted to address their grievances. Online consular assistance is provided to distressed Indians through MADAD, CPGRAMS and social media. Further, Indian Missions and Posts abroad maintain a 24x7 Helpline for extending assistance to Indian nationals overseas during emergencies. Financial and legal assistance is extended under the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to distressed spouses of NRIs. Assistance through other mechanisms, such as through women organisations, NGOs, Indian Associations etc are also provided by Indian Missions/Posts abroad. Government of India has recently established One Stop Centres in 8 Indian Missions/Posts abroad--at Dubai, Riyadh, Singapore, Toronto, Doha, Muscat, Bahrain and Jeddah --- under the Nirbhaya Fund of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, with the specific purpose of extending assistance to Indian women in distress in foreign lands.

Although this Ministry does not maintain state-wise data of beneficiaries of the aforesaid assistance extended to distressed Indian women overseas, the country-wise and year-wise data of financial and legal support extended to them for the last five years is attached at **Annexure-I**. Government of India remains committed to assisting Indian women in distress in foreign lands, whenever required.

Annexure – I

Sl No.	Name of Country	Number of Indian Women deserted by NRI husbands who have been financially and legally assisted by Indian Missions/Posts abroad				
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1	Bahrain	0	3	4	0	0
2	Canada	0	0	1	0	1
3	Malaysia	2	0	2	0	0
4	Philippines	0	0	0	0	2
5	United Kingdom	1	2	2	2	2
6	USA	3	2	14	11	13
7	Uganda and Burundi	0	0	0	0	3
