

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.891
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2017**

LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN

†891. SHRI HARI MANJHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of those countries for which scheme for providing legal assistance to the Indian women deserted by their foreigner husbands is going on;**
- (b) whether there is demand for launching such scheme in other countries also;**
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard;**
- (d) the reason for providing legal/financial help to only 80 beneficiaries under this scheme between the years 2012 and 2016; and**
- (e) the planning of the Government to make this scheme more suitable for the deserted women?**

ANSWER

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

(a) The Ministry's scheme for providing legal/financial assistance to Indian women cheated, abandoned or abused by overseas Indian spouses was in operation initially in 13 countries namely USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

(b) & (c) The Ministry had earlier received requests to include some more countries under the scope of this scheme. The existing scheme for distress Indian women married to NRI spouses has been merged with Indian Community Welfare Fund with effect from 1st September, 2017 and is now applicable to all overseas countries that have Indian Missions/Posts.

(d) While several petitions were received from distressed Indian women abroad seeking legal assistance, 127 of them have been benefitted from the scheme. Remaining women either chose to withdraw their petitions at the last minute and preferred to return to India to file a court case against their erring spouses or

after counselling by the Missions/Ministry, they reconciled/resolved their differences.

(e) Under the ICWF Scheme, the amount of legal & financial assistance has been increased to USD 4000 per case, which is now applicable to all Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The assistance is released to the empanelled legal counsel of the applicant or Indian Community Association/Women's Organisation/NGO concerned to enable it to take steps to assist the woman in documentation and preparatory work for filing the case. There is also a provision in the revised ICWF guidelines for maintaining a panel of 3-5 local lawyers/firms proficient in local language and law, and who enjoy credibility and have commitment and experience to assist deserving Indian national in distress in Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) and Top 20 countries with major Overseas Indian national population.
