

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3623
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.08.2018

NRI MARRIAGES

3623. SHRI RAVNEET SINGH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is monitoring the rising complaints of harassment faced by brides in NRI marriages abroad and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has formed a special body to help such brides and their families in distress, to ensure help in India and abroad and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government would consider freezing of the assets of NRI families in India as a repercussion of misbehavior, harassment and physical/mental abuse of brides abroad and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Ministry of External Affairs would work with Ministry of Women and Child Development to identify the women flying abroad post marriage and could arrange regular feedback and check calls for first few years to ensure their safety; and
- (e) if so, the details of any such action plan and timeline, if any, especially for the State of Punjab?

ANSWER

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

(a) The Government has been receiving petitions from Indian women deserted or harassed by their NRI spouses. In the year 2017, it received 1022 petitions compared to 1510 in 2016 & 796 in 2015. Between January, 2018 to and 30th July, 2018 the Ministry has received and redressed 765 complaints. Most complaints received from them pertain to:

- i) Harassment and ill treatment by the husband and his family;
- ii) Loss of communication with the spouse after he goes abroad;
- iii) Request for assistance in serving judicial summons for court proceedings in India
- iv) Assistance in obtaining maintenance and child support from the spouse;
- v) Request for impounding or revoking passport of overseas Indian spouse;
- vi) Request for extradition, deportation of spouse to India; and
- vii) Child custody issues.

This Ministry (including the Indian Missions abroad) has addressed these complaints of distressed Indian women deserted by their NRI spouses by way of providing them counseling, guidance and information about procedures, mechanisms for serving judicial summons on the Overseas Indian husband; filing a case in India, issuing Look Out Circulars; impounding and revocation of

Indian passport of the husband; getting access to lawyers and NGOs empanelled with Indian Missions etc.

In addition, with an aim to provide financial and legal assistance to distressed women married to NRI spouses by all Missions and Posts, the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) Guidelines were revised in September, 2017. The amount of legal & financial assistance to distressed Indian women has also been increased to US\$ 4000 per case. 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.

(b) to (e) The Government has accepted the recommendation of the Expert Committee set up under the chairmanship of Justice Arvind Kumar Goel, ex-Chairperson, NRI Commission Punjab, to look into the issues and difficulties faced by Indian nationals married to overseas nationals of Indian origin, and suggested amendments in existing laws/policies/regulation. An Integrated Nodal Agency has been set up under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development. The other members of the INA are a) Joint Secretary (Internal Security) & Joint Secretary (Foreigners), Ministry of Home Affairs, b) Joint Secretary (OIA-II), Ministry of External Affairs, and c) Joint Secretary (Legal), Ministry of Law & Justice.

The INA is functioning as an effective body and providing a single window timely solution to the problems of affected women. The INA has so far held eight meetings and has issued five Look Out Circulars against the erring spouses.
