

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.217
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.12.2018

HARASSMENT OF MARRIED WOMEN

*217. SHRIMATI V. SATHYA BAMA:
SHRIMATI VANAROJA R.:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that a large number of Indian women married to NRI men are suffering due to harassment and torture by their husbands and in-laws and not getting any support from the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the total number of complaints filed so far in this regard; and
- (d) the concrete measures taken by the Government to protect the interests of the Indian women in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*217 REGARDING “Harassment of Married Women” FOR
ANSWER ON 26-12-2018**

(a) to (d) This Ministry has been receiving petitions from Indian women deserted or harassed by their NRI spouses. Between January, 2015 and 30th November, 2018 this Ministry (including the Indian Missions abroad) has addressed **4985** complaints of distressed Indian women deserted by their NRI spouses. 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.

An Expert Committee was set up to identify legal and regulatory challenges faced by Indian nationals married to overseas Indian nationals and to suggest amendments in existing Acts/legislations or new policies / laws / regulations. Some of the recommendations of the Expert Committee have been accepted including the constitution of an Integrated Nodal Agency.

The INA is headed by Secretary, Women & Child Development. The other members of the INA are (a) Joint Secretary (Judicial) & 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 Indian women married to overseas Indian spouses. So far, the INA has had twelve sittings and has issued eight Look Out Circulars against the erring spouses.

Besides, this Ministry has cancelled 1 passport and impounded/ revoked 20 passports of erring spouses based on the complaints received and issuance of Look Out Circulars by the Integrated Nodal Agency, Police and Courts.

To create awareness, a comprehensive FAQs and information about legal provisions prevailing in foreign countries, data base of Organisations / NGOs / lawyers registered / empanelled with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad, with respect to various issues faced by aggrieved Indian women and how they can be addressed has been prepared bilingually and are placed on the website. The State authorities and the Regional Passport Offices have been requested to translate the above mentioned information into local languages to be posted on their website and share the resources in regional languages, to disseminate information to Indian nationals.
