

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *332**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 16TH JULY, 2019/ ASHADHA 25, 1941 (SAKA)

FACILITIES FOR IMMIGRANTS

†*332. DR. SANJAY JAISWAL:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of religious minorities living in India who are having the citizenship of Afghanistan and Pakistan;

(b) whether the Government is aware that they are facing difficulties due to the status of their citizenship and absence of long term visa;

(c) whether the Government has taken any steps to provide facilities like long term visa, education, etc. to them; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
(SHRI NITYANAND RAI)**

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

**STATEMENT IN REPLY TO THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.
*332 FOR 16.07.2019**

Data regarding the number of religious minorities living in India who are having the citizenship of Pakistan and Afghanistan is not maintained centrally. However, as per information available with MHA, 41,331 Pak nationals and 4193 Afghan nationals belonging to religious minorities have been reported to be living in India on Long term basis as on December 31, 2018.

Keeping in view the difficulties being faced by members belonging to six identified religious minorities from Pakistan and Afghanistan living in India in acquiring Long Term Visa (LTV), an online LTV application processing portal was launched in the year 2014. The online application-cum-processing platform was further revamped in Sept, 2018 and a new online platform was launched having features such as time-bound disposal of LTV applications. It further provides facility for extension of LTV at the local level by Foreigners Regional Registration Officers/Foreigners Registration Officers (FRROs/FROs) without referring the matter to State Government or Central Government.

The Central Government, vide notifications dated 07.09.2015 and 18.07.2016, has exempted minority migrants of Pakistan and Afghanistan from the penal provisions of The Passport (Entry into India) Rules, 1950

and The Foreigners Order, 1948. These notifications have legalized the entry and stay in India of such minority migrants who have entered India due to persecution or fear of persecution on grounds of religion upto December 2014 without any travel documents or where the validity of their documents has expired.

The Central Government has also facilitated grant of LTV to these migrants mentioned in the aforesaid notifications of 2015 & 2016 by issuing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in the year 2016.

Pak and Afghan nationals belonging to six identified minority communities and holding LTVs can avail facilities like access to school, college & other educational institutions, taking up self-employment or carrying out their own business, free movement within the State/UT, facility for transfer of LTV from one State to another State, opening of bank account, purchasing small dwelling unit for self-occupation or self-employment, issuance of driving license, PAN card and Aadhar card, access to health facilities, reduction in penalty for overstay to a meager amount of Rs.100/- to Rs.500/- depending upon the period of overstay etc.