

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1805  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.07.2019**

**“GRIEVANCES OF WOMEN ABANDONED BY NRI HUSBANDS”**

1805.DR. MANOJ RAJORIA:

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the grievances/ plight of abandoned wives of NRI men;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto along with the details of steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government to address the issue; and
- (c) the existing mechanisms for the redressal of the grievances of the women abandoned by their NRI husbands abroad?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

**(a) to (c) This Ministry has been receiving petitions from Indian women deserted or harassed by their NRI spouses. Between January, 2016 and 31st May, 2019 this Ministry (including the Indian Missions abroad) has addressed 4698 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. Besides, with an aim to provide online consular assistance expeditiously to Indian nationals who are in distress abroad (including marital**

dispute), MADAD portal - an online Consular Grievance Monitoring System- was launched in 2015 and a module "Marital Disputes" was added to the portal to provide digital platform to the distressed Indian nationals married to NRIs.

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.

Further, 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. Upon recommendation of the Expert Committee, an Integrated Nodal Agency was constituted.

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 fifteen sittings and has issued eight Look Out Circulars against the erring spouses.

Despite the measures taken by the Government of India to ameliorate the problems faced by Indian citizens married to NRI spouses, it was felt that these measures are not sufficient and the existing laws need to be amended to provide a more effective solution to the problem. Therefore, a bill titled "The Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill, 2019" was introduced in Rajya Sabha on February 11, 2019.

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