

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2912
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.07.2019

NRI HUSBANDS

2912. SHRI BALUBHAU ALIAS SUERSH NARAYAN DHANORKAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken necessary steps to protect Indian Women facing abandonment or divorce or other problems from their NRI husbands;
- (b) if so, the number of complaints lodged by women in this regard during each of the last three years; and
- (c) the action taken by the Government on the said complaints?

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 received and addressed 4698 complaints of distressed Indian women deserted by their NRI spouses. The year-wise data of the complaints addressed are as below:

Year	Number of Complaints addressed
2016	1510
2017	1498
2018	1299
2019 (upto 31 st May)	391
Total	4,698

The Government has adopted multipronged approach to give respite to the wives deserted by their NRI husbands. Ministry of External Affairs provides counseling, guidance and information about legal procedures, mechanisms for serving judicial summons on the Overseas Indian husband; filing a judicial case in India, issuing Look Out Circulars; impounding and revocation of Indian passport of the husband to such aggrieved women.

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 (INA) 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. The proposed legislation would offer greater protection to Indian citizens married to NRIs and help as a deterrent to the Non Resident Indians against harassment of their spouses, and force the accused NRI spouse to come back to India to face the legal consequences of his overt and covert acts.
