

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.781
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.06.2019**

INDIANS WORKING ABROAD

781. SHRI SU. THRUNAVUKKARASAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made a comprehensive database of Indian's working in different countries;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof for different category of jobs and if not, the action proposed to be taken to make such database in the future;**
- (c) whether a large number of NRI workers are facing different kinds of problems in many countries particularly in the Gulf countries and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to protect the interests of the Indian Citizens working in foreign countries?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) & (b) No, Sir. However, the data of Indian nationals holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) category passports and emigrating for employment purpose to any notified ECR country is captured in the e-Migrate system that provides the Government a comprehensive and online database of Emigrant workers, Missions, Recruiting Agents, Foreign Employers, and Insurance Agencies. E-Migrate is aimed at making the emigration process faster, transparent and allows online authentication/verification of credentials of all stakeholders. In addition, the data in eMigrate also includes those persons going for employment under Emigration Check Not Required or ECNR category if they voluntarily register in the system.

(c) The complaints received from emigrant workers are broadly of the following types:

(i) Violation of Contractual obligations: Workers are not received on arrival in destination country; workers are required to work for someone

else other than the Sponsor or forced to do a different kind of job other than agreed upon on the Contract for which they are not trained; Passports are retained in the custody of Foreign Employers (FEs), Iqama (Work Permit) is not obtained within the mandatory 90 days' period; workers are asked to pay for their Exit Visas even on completion of their Contract period; etc.;

(ii) Working conditions: Ill-treatment and harassment; long working hours; false allegations or charges by local Sponsors to the Police authorities; non-provision of free food as per contract, improper arrangements for boarding and lodging, non-provision of essential safety equipment; like safety helmet etc; and physical or mental harassment /assault, etc.;

(iii) Wage related problems: Complaints regarding non-payment of agreed salaries and allowances (food, overtime allowance, etc), delayed payment of salary, under payment of salary, signing of a new Contract on arrival in a foreign country with salary lesser than the originally promised; etc;

(iv) Employer related problems: Not granting emergency leave, refusal to pay for medical treatment, denial of air ticket to emigrant's Home Town on completion of Contractual period as per contractual terms; etc;

(v) Compensation/death related problems: When a worker dies abroad, his relatives requests for dispatch of mortal remains of the deceased along with his/her personal belongings, there are complaints regarding delay in sending mortal remains, compensations claims, etc.

(d) Following steps have been put in place for ensuring welfare and safety of emigrants abroad:

On receipt of complaints from the emigrants, the same are addressed urgently by the Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned local government authorities for resolution. Complaints pertaining to employment related issues are taken up by the Indian Missions with the concerned foreign employer / Labour Department officials in that country for prompt redressal. The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants to the Gulf and other ECR countries. These include:

(i) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances on-line and track their redressal.

(ii) Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries can also be lodged directly by emigrants/relatives or through the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) on eMigrate portal. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedures.

(iii) Indian Missions conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can speak on their working conditions and seek redressal of their grievances.

(iv) A multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) in New Delhi provides information, guidance and grievance redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals.

(v) Missions have also established 24x7 help lines and Toll Free help lines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.

(vi) Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up at Dubai (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.

(vii) Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras (KPSK) have also been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Lucknow to assist emigrants or their relatives to redress their problems/complaints regarding overseas employment.

(viii) Grievances brought to the notice of the Ministry and the Missions through social media, including twitter, are also promptly addressed.

(ix) The Missions utilise the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide assistance to overseas Indian nationals in times of distress. The guidelines of the Indian community welfare fund have been revised recently to expand the scope of welfare measures and to cover three key areas, namely, assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, community welfare activities and improvement in consular services.

(x) Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review labour related issues. In accordance with the Labour and Manpower Cooperation/Agreement, Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings are held on regular basis to discuss various labour related issues.
