

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.260
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.03.2020

PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIANS

*260. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

SHRI SYED IMTIAZ JALEEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has recently reviewed the complaints of problems being faced by Indians living abroad;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Indian students are trapped due to false information about foreign universities and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to come up with a portal to help students by verifying the genuineness of foreign higher educational institutions; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and time by which this portal is likely to come up?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*260 REGARDING 'PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIANS TO BE ANSWERED' ON 11.03.2020

(a) & (b) The Government has a robust grievance redressal mechanism and continuously reviews the complaints by Indians living abroad.

The strengthened version 7.0 of the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) was launched in February 2020. Besides CPGRAMS, which has been implemented by the Ministry since its inception in 2006, the Passport Seva Programme (PSP) has its own online grievance redressal system. At Ministry of External Affairs, a dedicated Public Grievance Redressal Cell (PG Cell) has been functioning. There is a Public Grievance redressal mechanism in all Passport Offices in India as also in Missions/Posts abroad. The Ministry also extensively uses Twitter services to resolve grievances.

Members of diaspora may also lodge their grievances on MADAD (MEA in Aid of Diaspora in Distress) portal of the Ministry, which has been functioning successfully for the last five years, since February 2015. MADAD (www.madad.gov.in) provides for online registration, tracking and resolution of grievances by Indians around the world in a transparent, time bound and accountable manner. The MADAD Portal is regularly monitored in our Missions and Posts abroad at various levels, which give high priority to addressing grievances of Indian nationals in distress. As on 1 March 2020, a total of 58,350 grievances were registered on MADAD since its inception, out of which 50,613 have been resolved/closed and 7,737 are under process.

A Consular Help-Line is being run in 11 Indian languages including Hindi and English. Twitter Seva [@meaMADAD] was also launched in March 2017 to manage and respond to grievances received on twitter. 38,642 tweets have been received so far on this twitter handle, out of which 37,726 have been replied and remaining 916 are pending/under process as on date.

With regard to labour matters, on receipt of complaints from or on behalf of 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 and other concerned officials in that country for prompt redressal.

The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants in the Gulf and other ECR countries. These include the on-line MADAD portal, which enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances on-line and track their redressal. Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified ECR countries can also be lodged directly by emigrants/relatives or through the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK), on e-Migrate portal. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs). 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. 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. Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras (KPSK) have also been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad,

Chennai, Lucknow and Delhi to assist emigrants or their relatives to redress their problems/complaints regarding overseas employment.

Several Missions have established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers. Grievances brought to the notice of the Ministry and the Missions through social media, including twitter, are also promptly addressed. Indian Missions conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can speak on their working conditions and seek redressal of their grievances.

The Missions utilize 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 cover three key areas - assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, community welfare activities and improvement in consular services.

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.

(c) Instances where Indian students have unwittingly enrolled in fake foreign universities have come to Ministry's notice. These include:

- (i) Two cases of fake universities, namely the University of Northern New Jersey and University of Farmington in USA, in recent years.
- (ii) Instances of Indian students enrolling in two unauthorized/fake universities came to the notice of the Indian Mission in UAE, in 2018.
- (iii) Complaints from 16 Indian students regarding Sevanan Business School, Switzerland, an unauthorized school, were received by the Indian Mission in Switzerland, in 2017-18.
- (iv) Complaints about Washington University of Barbados were received by the Indian Mission in Suriname, after closure of the University, in 2018.
- (v) Complaints against Czech College, Prague were received by the Indian Mission in Prague, from Indian students in 2016-17.

(d) & (e) Government proposes to launch a Global Indian Students Portal. The objective of the Portal is to provide information relevant to students wishing to study abroad, so that they make an informed decision. The work on creating a Global Indian Students Portal is under progress and is expected to be completed during Financial Year 2020-21.
