

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1469  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2021**

**FAKE AGENCIES**

**1469. DR. SUBHAS SARKAR:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether various fake agencies are luring people in the name of facilitating study or job opportunities abroad and charging exorbitantly high fees from students/job applicants;
- (b) if so, the details of agencies/companies booked under the law during the last four years and the details of initiative taken by the Government to contain such activities;
- (c) whether the Government has initiated any steps to provide relief to trapped students/job seekers in the country and abroad; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof for the last five years?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]**

(a) & (b) Complaints are received from time to time by the Ministry of External Affairs from and/or on behalf of Indian students/emigrants or their relatives who are dispatched for study or overseas employment fraudulently by illegal agents/fake agencies and are thereafter subjected to charging exorbitantly high fees from students and denial of jobs, poor working conditions etc. to emigrants. The Ministry of External Affairs, (MEA) has a robust grievance redressal mechanism including MADAD and e-migrate portals for online registration of grievances of students/emigrants who have been subjected to cheating.

On receipt of details of such illegal agents, the complaints are forwarded to the concerned State/UT Government and Police authorities urging them to apprehend illegal agents and prosecute them. On receiving request from the concerned State Government/Police authorities, Prosecution Sanction are issued expeditiously by the Ministry of External Affairs, enabling them to initiate legal action against the accused illegal agents. Wherever required, such complaints are also referred to Mission/Posts abroad for providing relief/rescue.

Government of India has also issued Standard Operating Procedure to be followed by States on receipt of complaints against fake agencies. Visual and print media campaign is also launched from time to time, encouraging emigrants to utilize the services of the registered Recruitment Agents and not to go through illegal/fake agents. These messages are also being uploaded and disseminated through social media profile of External Affairs Minister, Ministry of External Affairs and other means for greater outreach. The States are encouraged to initiate awareness spreading activities in their respective jurisdictions.

In order to promote safe and legal emigration and to curb malpractices, high-level Conferences of major labour sending States have been convened by Ministry of External Affairs, during which State Governments were inter-alia requested to take strict action against illegal agents who indulge in overseas recruitment activity illegally. The aspect of safe and legal migration is also included in various State Outreach Programmes (SOP) conducted in States from time to time.

As per data available, the number of complaints against unregistered agents received and referred to the State Government/Police during the period to 2016-2020 is as under:-

Year	No. of Complaints received	Cases referred to State Government for action	Prosecution Sanction sought	Prosecution Sanction issued
2016	231	231	42	42
2017	446	446	30	30
2018	350	350	15	15
2019	769	769	35	35
2020	166	166	07	07

(c) & (d) About 1 million Indian students are pursuing undergraduate, post graduate, post doctoral studies in various courses across the world. We have received feedback from Indian Missions/Posts and also Indian students about issues and challenges faced by Indian students before taking admission in foreign countries and after joining the courses as well. Issues faced by students include poor standard or fake universities; dismal quality of the education imparted at the foreign institutions; lack of information about procedure for obtaining visa, bank loans, insurance etc; misleading information about fees to be paid to the universities; issues of recognition/equivalence of degrees; teaching/training in local language rather than English medium etc.

The Government has taken several steps to provide relief to trapped students/job seekers. These include:

**(i)** The Global Indian Students Portal (GISP) currently under preparation, would create a Portal along with a Mobile App to provide information to students to assist them in taking an informed decision in selecting courses in universities abroad.

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

**(iii)** 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 e-Migrate portal, relating to employment. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedures.

**(iv)** Indian Missions conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where Indians can speak on their working conditions and seek redressal of their grievances. Missions have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indians to seek help.

**(v)** A multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline 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.

**(vi)** Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have also been set up at Dubai (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 been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow and Delhi 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 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 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.

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