

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.573
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2022**

FAKE TRAVELLING AGENCIES

573. SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH CHOUDHARY:

SHRI RAHUL KASWAN:

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 such students/job applicants;
- (b) if so, the details of agencies/companies booked under the relevant law during the last four years and the details of action taken/being taken by the Government to contain such activities;
- (c) whether the Government has received any SOS call from labours of Jharkhand trapped in Mali, if so, the action being taken in this regard;
- (d) whether the Government has initiated any steps to provide relief to trapped students/job seekers in the country and abroad; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof ?

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 and job applicants or their relatives, who are dispatched for study or overseas employment fraudulently by illegal agents/fake agencies or fake institutions. They are also victims of being charged exorbitantly high fees or denial of jobs, poor working conditions etc.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has a robust grievance redressal mechanism, which include registering complaints through MADAD and e-Migrate as well as e-mails, complaint through social media accounts, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSKs) and even walk in complaint at Mission/Consulate and PBSKs abroad.

Wherever required, complaints are referred to Missions/Posts abroad for providing relief/rescue of emigrants in distress and for early redressal of grievance with employer/sponsor and/or local authorities. In India the complaints, with details of illegal agents and fake agencies, are forwarded to the concerned State/UT Government and Police authorities urging them to apprehend illegal agents and prosecute them as per law.

Prosecution Sanction are issued expeditiously by MEA, enabling the State Government/Police authorities to initiate legal action against the accused.

Government of India issued Standard Operating Procedure in 2016, to be followed by State Governments, on receipt of complaints against fake agencies or fake institutions. Visual and print media awareness campaign encouraging emigrants to utilize the services of the registered Recruitment Agents and not to go through illegal/fake agents are organized regularly. The State Governments have also been requested to launch similar campaigns to create awareness amongst the people in regional languages. The aspect of safe and legal migration is also included in various State Outreach Programmes 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 2017-2021 is as under:-

Year	No. of Complaints received	Cases referred to State Government for action	Prosecution Sanction sought	Prosecution Sanction issued
2017	446	446	30	30
2018	350	350	15	15
2019	769	769	35	35
2020	166	166	07	07
2021	139	139	07	07

(c) Upon hearing the information, Embassy of India, Mali (Bamako) proactively engaged with the said migrant workers and the employer. With Mission's intervention, the employer has made payment towards salaries of the workers and initiated process to repatriate them.

(d) & (e) The Government has taken several steps including online mechanism to protect/safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants/job seekers including students, from fraud by fake agencies and institutions, and also exploitation and harassment by foreign employers. These include:

(i) The e-Migrate portal which lists the details of illegal/registered recruiting agencies, and also the list of illegal/ fake agencies & institutions, which is updated regularly. Further, grievances can be lodged on this portal.

(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.

(iv) Indian Missions/Posts conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where Indians can 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 (PBSKs) have 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 (KPSKs) 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/Posts through social media, including twitter, are promptly addressed.

(ix) The Missions/Posts utilise the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide assistance to overseas Indian nationals in times of distress.
