

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 811

ANSWERED ON- 29/11/2024

CANCELLATION OF THE SDS VISA SCHEME BY CANADA

811. SHRI HIBI EDEN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) the details of the impact, including issues and difficulties likely to be faced by Indian students, in view of the cancellation of the SDS Visa Scheme by Canada for Indian students;

(b) whether the Government has made any plans to remedy the issues that will be faced by the Indian students seeking to study in Canada due to the withdrawal and cancellation of the said visa scheme by Canada; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a to c) As per the Student Direct Stream (SDS) program, which was launched in 2018, the Canadian Government allowed eligible international students to “fast-track” their study permit application process. However, the fast-tracking process involved meeting specific requirements like paying one year’s tuition fee in advance, providing a mandatory Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) worth \$20,635 as proof of funds and meeting language proficiency levels.

On 8th November 2024, the Canadian Government ended the SDS program. The Canadian Government conveyed that its objective in doing away with the SDS program is in line with its efforts to strengthen the program’s integrity, address student vulnerability, and give all students equal and fair access to the application process, as well as a positive academic experience. Following the cancellation of the SDS Scheme, all international students would now have to apply for “regular study permits” for studying in Canada. Under the regular route, students are no longer required to pay full one-year tuition fee upfront, but only for six months and demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to cover their living expenses. This makes the admission process more affordable for students, particularly those who were previously unable to meet the more costly SDS requirements.

Currently, there are approximately 427,000 Indian students in Canadian colleges and universities. All issues facing Indian students in Canada are regularly discussed and raised with Canadian authorities. Government of India places high emphasis on the well-being of Indian students pursuing education in Canada.
