

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1159

ANSWERED ON- 06/02/2026

FEMALE WORKERS WITH ECR CATEGORY PASSPORT

1159. MS. MAHUA MOITRA

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

(a) whether it is true that only state-run recruiting agencies are authorized to hire Indian female workers holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) category passports for overseas employment to ECR notified countries, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Government is aware that such a policy restricts opportunities for women compared to their male counterparts, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is true that there is a minimum age criteria of 30 years for female workers with ECR category passports for overseas employment but similar restriction does not apply to male workers;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether the Government is aware that such discriminatory policies violate fundamental rights of equality, non-discrimination, etc?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) & (e) The Government attaches high priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals, especially Indian women, in foreign countries. Recruitment of Indian female ECR category workers is regulated through the provisions of Emigration Act, 1983 in view of their vulnerability based on complaints received from Indian female workers. On the recommendation of the National Commission for Women, a ban was imposed on grant of emigration clearance to women holding ECR passport below the age thirty (30) years for all kind of employment in any ECR country. Incidents of confinement, abandonment of domestic workers by their sponsors have also been reported. The restriction imposed by the Government of India in 2016 restricting the recruitment of Indian female ECR category workers for employment in ECR countries through state-run RAs only is to ensure informed, safe and legal emigration with proper documentation, thereby safeguarding their welfare and preventing exploitation.
