

PRESS RELEASE

(01.04.2025)

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PARLIAMENT HOUSE
NEW DELHI**

**REPORT ON THE SUBJECT 'INDIAN DIASPORA OVERSEAS, INCLUDING NRIS, PIOS, OCIS
AND MIGRANT WORKERS: ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR CONDITIONS AND WELFARE,
INCLUDING THE STATUS OF THE EMIGRATION BILL'**

The Committee on External Affairs headed by Dr. Shashi Tharoor presented their Sixth Report on the subject 'Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill', today *i.e.* **01 April 2025**

SOME OF THE IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Working on an Agreed Definition for NRIs

When it comes to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), the Committee have found that a common definition is lacking and multiple definitions are in vogue across the country or even between States. It is also different amongst the various Acts of the Government of India. The Committee have viewed that multiplicity of definitions has a potential for multiple interpretations which in turn impacts the decision making process and accessibility of services. The Committee have felt that

there is an urgent need for a common definition of the term across the nation to avoid confusions. The Committee, therefore, have desired that the Ministry of External Affairs work towards proposing a common definition for the term 'Non-Resident Indians' which would be binding on all Acts as well as the State Legislations in tandem with other stakeholder Ministries/Departments.

(Recommendation No. 3)

5. Voting Rights to NRIs

The Committee are aware that through an amendment to Section 20A of the 'Representation of People Act 1950' in 2010, NRIs have been conferred limited voting rights. As per existing norms, NRIs who have enrolled in the voters list have to be present physically to cast their votes. Since travelling to India is an onerous task considering the logistical and practical problems involved, only a few among the registered voters come down for voting. The Committee have felt that due to limitations in exercising their franchise, the issues/concerns of NRIs are being completely side-lined from electoral politics. The Committee have been given to understand that the matter regarding grant of voting rights to NRIs is currently pending with the Ministry of Law and Justice (MoLJ). The Committee have been further given to understand that the issue will also need amendments in the Representation of People Act 1950' and 1951 as well as engagement with national political parties before implementation. The Committee feel sad that despite being one of the largest emigrant populations in the world, direct involvement in India's electoral politics is limited for our NRIs though the right to vote is universally recognised as an important ingredient of a vibrant democracy. With ever growing technological advancements and capabilities, the Committee have felt that solutions like Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) can be looked into for extending the voting rights of NRIs. The Committee, therefore, have urged the Ministry to vigorously pursue the matter with the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Election Commission of India and other stakeholders and come up with clear timelines for the reforms while keeping the Committee apprised of the developments in

the matter. The Committee will continue consideration of this question, in consultation with the authorities concerned.

(Recommendation No. 5)

3. Need for Authentic Data on the Indian Diaspora

The Committee have noted that as per the official records and inputs received from Missions and Posts, Indian Diaspora comprise of 15.85 million NRIs and 19.57 million PIOs and OCIs, adding to a total of 35.42 million in January 2024. However, as per the UN Population Division's estimate there were around 17.86 million Indian migrants in 2020 implying that the number of migrants would have significantly increased by now than the figures reflected by the Ministry. The Committee are extremely concerned to note that the Ministry does not have any authentic data on the Indian Diaspora as registration with Indian Embassies is voluntary and the official data collection is restricted to Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. The Committee are surprised to note that despite being aware of the magnitude of the issue, no efforts are being made to address the same. While acknowledging that accurately tracking the large Indian Diaspora spread across the globe is a challenging task requiring enhanced data collection methods through regular surveys, census data, and collaboration with host countries, the Committee have felt that lack of reliable data acts as a major hurdle in the international migration governance. In the absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date database, effective framing of programmes for migrants as well as proper delivery of welfare schemes for them would be challenging. The Committee, therefore, have desired that the Ministry, together with the Bureau of Immigration, may devise mechanisms to collect and collate reliable data on migrants and returnees on real time basis and apprise the Committee of the same.

(Recommendation No. 6)

4. Inward Remittances from NRIs

The Committee have noted that inward remittances from NRIs have witnessed a steady increase during the last three years and in 2023-24 it was 118.7 billion US Dollars. The Committee are aware that the hard power that the Non-Resident Indians wield through the money they send back to their families and relatives in India, bolster India's economy by fuelling consumption, enhancing foreign exchange reserves and ensuring macroeconomic stability. Considering the fact that NRI investments have emerged as a significant driving force in shaping the trajectory of the Indian economy by playing a pivotal role in catalyzing growth across various sectors, there should be consistent efforts to foster greater economic engagement with the diaspora. Remittances being the second largest source of external financing after service exports and accounting for a significant chunk of India's GDP, the Committee have desired that the Government should streamline online transfer platforms, reduce transaction fees, communicate government policies regarding NRI remittances, address taxation concerns, etc. to build trust and transparency. In addition to easing out business opportunities, the Government should promote other investment options available to NRIs in India, like mutual funds, stocks, and real estate. Above all, MEA should actively engage with NRI communities to understand their needs and concerns regarding sending money back to India.

(Recommendation No. 9)

5. All-of-Government Approach in Diaspora Matters

The Committee have understood that India's engagement with its Diaspora has moved from 'All of Ministry approach' towards an 'All-of-Government approach' in which other wings of the Government, other Ministries and Departments as well as the State Governments are involved in all aspects of Diaspora affairs. The Committee have been informed that the collaborative model of 'All-of-Government approach' ensures that the diverse and evolving needs of the diaspora are met more effectively by drawing on the expertise and resources of multiple government stakeholders. The Committee have, however, noted from the testimony received from the State representatives

that the State Governments do not feel connected most of the time. Since the concerns of Indian Diaspora transcend Ministries and are largely State specific, the Committee have recommended that regular consultations are held with States to align concerns/issues of the Diaspora with the policy priorities.

(Recommendation No. 12)

6. Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons

The Committee have found that India has so far signed 31 bilateral Agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons with Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Egypt, Estonia, France, Hongkong, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkiye, United Arab Emirates (UAE), United Kingdom and Vietnam, by virtue of which Indian prisoners lodged in foreign countries can be transferred to India to serve the remainder of their sentence and vice-versa. With India signing two multilateral conventions on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, namely Inter-American Convention on Serving Criminal Sentences Abroad and Council of Europe Convention on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, the Committee have noted that most of the countries in Europe, North America and South America are covered for the purpose. However, countries in Asia, Africa and few countries in Eastern Europe are yet to be covered by bilateral agreements. The Committee, hence, have recommended that the Government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is the nodal Ministry for this subject, may pursue, process and sign such agreement with the remaining countries.

(Recommendation No. 17)

7. Transfer of Sentenced Persons from Foreign Jails

The Committee have found with dismay that despite having bilateral and multilateral agreements/conventions on Transfer of Sentenced Persons which covers several countries in Middle East, Europe, North America and South America, only 8 Indian prisoners were transferred from foreign countries to India in the last three years. This low success rate in bringing back Indian prisoners calls for an assessment of the efforts taken in this regard. Keeping in view the large number of prisoners languishing in foreign jails, the Committee have desired that the Government study the obstacles in implementing the agreements/ conventions and, if need be, amend existing agreements or create new ones to facilitate smoother repatriation of prisoners. The Committee have also stressed the need to enhance diplomatic efforts and negotiations with other countries to streamline the process of transferring prisoners and ensuring fair treatment for Indian nationals in foreign jails.

(Recommendation No. 18)

8. Setting up of More Protector of Emigrants (PoE) Offices

The Committee have noted that the process of emigration of Indian workers, with Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) category passports is regulated under the Emigration Act, 1983, which is administered by the Ministry of External Affairs through the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE). The Protector General of Emigrants oversees the functioning of all Protector of Emigrants (PoE) offices across India. As of now there are 16 offices of the Protector of Emigrants located Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Raebareli, Patna, Bengaluru, Guwahati, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Agartala. However, the Committee have noted that PoE offices are not present in States like Gujarat and Telangana which account for a large number of emigrants. The Committee have, therefore, desired that the Ministry may explore the feasibility of establishing PoE offices in States where currently such offices do not exist in addition to

setting up additional PoE offices in migration hot-spots including States like Punjab, Kerala, etc. to ensure better outreach and support for emigrants.

(Recommendation No. 25)

9. Criminalization of Recruitment Malpractices

The Committee have observed that the Recruiting Agents (RA) are required to obtain Registration Certificate (RC) from the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) before they can engage in recruitment of Indian workers for overseas employment. The process of registration of RA is done through a web-based application, e-Migrate portal, which brings all the stakeholders, including the RAs, Foreign Employers (FEs) and the prospective emigrants on a common platform. The Committee was further informed that the Ministry initiates action against agents involved in exploitation, abuse, or other illegal practices through issuing Show Cause Notices or suspending the licenses ,etc. and publishes the list of unregistered RAs on the e-Migrate portal. Till October 2024, a total of 3,094 unregistered agents in country have been notified. However, the proliferation of unregistered/illegal RAs and illegal migration through them is indicative of the lacunae in the existing system which is extremely disconcerting. The Committee are of the opinion that the penalties and fines provided for in the Emigration Act are insufficient considering the severity of crimes committed by unscrupulous recruiters. Hence, in addition to having a vigorous oversight mechanism for RAs, the Committee have recommended that the Government should bring in provisions to effectively criminalize illegal recruitment practices and impose stringent punishment, including imprisonment, to address the widespread exploitation of migrant workers and to deter fraudulent recruitment practices.

(Recommendation No. 26)

10. Prioritization of State-Run Recruitment Agencies

The Committee have found that in States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, etc. there are Recruitment Agencies which have received license from the MEA and act as State recruitment agencies. As of now, there are 13 such State Recruitment Agencies in various States. In order to ensure safe and ethical recruitment practices, the Committee are of the opinion that the Government should prioritize such State-run recruitment agencies, which can even adhere to a zero-cost migration model, where employers bear the recruitment costs. They, therefore, have desired that the Ministry to take it up with all high-emigration States to encourage them to have their own State-run Recruitment Agencies and replicate the best practices of the best performing States in this regard. In addition to working out ways and means to strengthen them, without prejudice to the rights of legitimate private recruitment agencies, the Government should also incorporate at least one State-run Agency into bilateral labour agreements to widen their scope and impact.

(Recommendation No. 28)

11. Deportation of Illegal Immigrants from United States

In the wake of deportations of illegal Indian immigrants back to the country from the United States and probable mass deportations in the future, the Committee have expressed their feelings in unequivocal terms about the humanitarian concerns surrounding the issue. In this regard, the Committee have been apprised that since India is against illegal immigration, the country is committed to taking back its national who is an illegal immigrant to another country. Further, it was informed that most countries have necessary SOPs in place to handle deportation-related matters and, accordingly, MEA too has an SOP in place, whereby nationality and security verification process is undertaken by MEA in coordination with other agencies. Responding to the Committees' shared feelings about detainees restrained by handcuffs, waist chains, and leg irons during flights by US Air Force, it was informed that

the US actions were in accordance with the Restraints Policy No. 11155.1, Section 5.10, effective from November 19, 2012. The Committee were further informed that honouring the repeated requests from MEA not to shackle deportees, particularly women and children, in the second deportation flight undertaken on 15 February, 2025, women and children were not shackled by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Though the Committee also view that it is the mandated responsibility of any government to take back its citizens who have entered and lived in a country without proper documentation, they have desired that the Government should deal with situation in a more empathetic manner upholding the human rights of migrants and explore ways and means to facilitate the return of such illegal immigrants to India without hurting their self-respect.

(Recommendation No. 31)

12. Need for a Mechanism to Track Labour Migration to Non ECR Counties.

The Committee have found that the e-Migrate system captures key data related to the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category migrant workers right from the time she/he applies for foreign employment in the system. Emigrant data is also shared with Embassies and Consulates to facilitate easy tracking and assistance when needed. However, the Committee have noted that the Government only tracks people moving to ECR countries with an ECR Passport and not migration to non ECR counties. Though the e-Migrate portal has also opened registration for non-ECR countries, such an online registration for Indian Emigration Check Not Required (ECNR) passport holders is voluntary and not mandatory. Hence, the data is not captured. While noting that the Government only tracks people moving to ECR countries with an ECR Passport, the Committee have been convinced that it is quite important to have a mechanism to detect/track labour migration to even non ECR counties. Hence, they have recommended that the Government may come up with possible options to capture the data despite the constraints faced and apprise the Committee of the same.

(Recommendation No. 35)

13. Integration of Returnee Migrants

The Committee have noted that as per the information available with the Ministry, about 5,95,101 emigrants have returned to India from foreign countries from 2019 to 2024. This is a significant number. This surge, largely driven by COVID crisis, economic disruptions, stricter immigration policies and a reduction in job opportunities abroad has created considerable reintegration challenges. The Committee have noted that a national level policy on re-integration of migrant returnees is still awaited. The Committee have further noted that Kerala is the only State in India that offers economic reintegration and welfare programmes for returning migrants, all of which are worth emulating by other States and even other countries. The Committee have been of the view that though the responsibility for rehabilitation of Indian migrants is currently placed on State Governments, with the Central Government providing neither logistical nor financial support, it is high time that this gap is addressed. To address this gap, the Government, in coordination with States, should develop a sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration policy with shared responsibilities between the Centre and State Governments. The Committee have, therefore, recommended that the Centre should assist State Governments through grants and soft loans to help integrate the returnee migrants into the domestic industries so that they continue to be economically productive. Such a collaborative approach only would ensure a more comprehensive and sustainable system for migrant reintegration across India.

(Recommendation No. 37)

14. Need to Prioritize New Emigration Bill

Keeping in view the contemporary global migration dynamics and the requirements of Indian citizens, the Committee have underscored the pressing need for a comprehensive legislative overhaul to replace the outdated provisions of the Emigration Act 1983 and the Committee have found that a

legislation on Emigration [Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024] for the same is on the anvil. This presents a long overdue opportunity to reform the recruitment process for seeking overseas employment. The Ministry has informed the Committee that the proposed draft is under internal consultation and, thereafter, will be put up for public consultation which will be followed up by Inter-Ministerial consultations along with the Draft Cabinet Note. Though the efforts to revamp the migration management framework through the introduction of a new Bill is commendable, the Committee are not happy with the delay in the process despite witnessing harrowing incidents of illegal emigration from our country day in and day out. The Committee have, therefore, recommended that the Bill should be prioritized and the Committee may be intimated about the timelines for presenting the new Bill in both houses of Parliament.

(Recommendation No. 38)

15. Need to Address Student Migration in the Emigration Bill

The Committee have also noted that under emigration, the student migration is generally not covered and currently, the Emigration Bill does not cover student migration. But, the Committee have seen from the available data and surveys that the student community form a sizeable per cent of all emigrants from the country. When irregular and unscrupulous recruitment elements misguide students about universities and job opportunities abroad, a large number of students end up doing menial jobs, not wanting to come back empty-handed and become a socio-economic problem in the countries from where they migrate. So, the Committee have desired that the Ministry should give due importance to student migration also in the new Emigration Bill and student recruitment agencies need to be put under the scanner.

(Recommendation No. 40)

16. Settlement of Claims under Pravasi Bharatiya BimaYojana (PBBY) Scheme

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a mandatory insurance scheme initially launched in 2003 for Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries for overseas employment. PBBY provides an insurance cover of Rs. 10 lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and some other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of Rs. 275/ Rs. 375 for a period of two/three years. The Scheme has been comprehensively revamped in 2017 with facility for online renewal. The Committee have found with dismay that only 2197 claims have been settled out of 80,37,200 policies issued since its inception. From FY 20-21 to FY 23-24, out of 418 claims, only 156 have been settled showing a dismal settlement ratio. Given the large number of migrants, having very limited claims seems odd to the Committee making them feel that there is a problem in the way the scheme is working. This is especially so when the PBBY scheme provides for reimbursement of medical expenses up to Rs.1 lakh on hospitalization in emergencies, reimbursement of cost of transportation of mortal remains in accidental death along with cost of return airfare of one attendants, etc. This, the Committee, have felt might be on account of not honouring most of the claims by insurance companies on flimsy grounds. Since migrants workers are the most vulnerable section of the diaspora community, the Committee have been of the view that they should not be left at the mercy of insurance companies making the scheme infructuous. The Committee, hence, have recommended that our missions should assist and guide the emigrant during the claim process and direct the insurance companies not to deny the claims without proper justification. Further, the missions may also help emigrants navigate the complaint process when their claims are not honoured. The Missions may also ensure that the cost of transportation of mortal remains in accidental death of an insured emigrant is reimbursed by the companies and apprise the Committee of the details of such reimbursement done in the last five years.

(Recommendation No. 42)

17. Fund for Transportation of Mortal Remains

The Committee have been made aware that the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is used for transportation of mortal remains of deceased Indian nationals to India, under the provisions of ICWF guidelines. In 2002, an amount of Rs. 8,45,83,770/- was used for the same whereas in 2023, the expenditure incurred out of ICWF on transportation of mortal remains was Rs. 2,32,51,964/-. The Committee have found from the data provided by the Ministry that since 2012 till June 2024, airlifting of 3808 mortal remains of Indian nationals were done by Missions/Posts using ICWF. The Committee are of the feeling that as of now Indian Community Welfare Fund is being utilized in limited cases which is evident from the small number of cases. According to the Committee, the right to get the mortal remains transported to the homeland at the expense of the Government, particularly with less well-off people should be recognized. While urging the empowerment of the Missions with adequate funds, the Committee have desired that the procedure for utilizing the Indian Community Welfare Fund for transportation of mortal remains may be further simplified and the authorities vested with discretionary powers in our Missions to take action without awaiting clearance from New Delhi. Missions may also be sensitized to take a humane approach rather than a bureaucratic one in offering help, especially financial assistance, in such cases.

(Recommendation No. 46)

18. Outcome of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions

The Committee have noted that the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is being celebrated since 2003 to recognize the contribution of Overseas Indian Community in the development of India and celebrate Indian Diaspora's connection with its roots. The biennial Convention provides a platform to the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and people of the land of their ancestors for mutually beneficial activities. These conventions facilitate networking among the

overseas Indian community residing in various parts of the world and enable sharing of experiences in various fields. The Committee have noted that for the last few years, the Government of India has been organizing the PBD Convention in partnership with one of the State Governments and the recent ones were held in the cities of Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Bengaluru (Karnataka), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and with the very latest being held in Bhubaneswar from 8-10 January, 2025. The Committee are, however, surprised to note that no Outcome Report of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is being prepared by the Ministry. The Committee have failed to understand how in the absence of Outcome Reports the Ministry is able to assess tangible benefits or failures of the Convention or to make improvements in areas where it is lagging. To make PBDs more meaningful and outcome oriented, beyond just grand celebrations, the Committee have recommended that the Ministry prepare Outcome Report and, to begin with, the Outcome Report of the 18th PBD held at Bhubaneswar may be prepared and placed before this Committee.

(Recommendation No. 52)

19. Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences (RPBDs)

The Committee have noted that Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences (RPBDs) were being organised by the Ministry in different parts of the world to reach out to a vast majority of our Diaspora who, for various reasons, were unable to attend the main biennial event in India and benefit from its deliberations. The Committee have further noted the Ministry has so far successfully organized 10 regional PBDs, with the last one being held in Singapore in 2018. Due to COVID pandemic, the Regional PBDs could not be held in 2020 and 2022. The Ministry has further informed that the policy of holding Regional PBD has not been abandoned by them and that the next Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is expected to be organized in 2026. The Committee have felt that Mini/Regional PBDs are a means to embrace and involve thousands more of Overseas Indians and utilize their potential to showcase India in the countries where the events are scheduled. Delay in conducting

such events result in loss of opportunities for overseas Indians to connect and engage with their homeland. The Committee, hence, have desired that Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2026 is organized without fail in a manner that compensates for the gap of eight years and the tentative plan for the same may be communicated to the Committee.

(Recommendation No. 54)

20. Videsh Sampark Programme

The Committee have noted that the Videsh Sampark Programme aims at engaging with the relevant stakeholders within the State Governments. It gives a platform for organizing brainstorming sessions with the State Governments on various challenges faced by the Indian Diaspora and to enhance engagement with the Indian States to address the same. The Committee have been informed that under this programme, conferences are held in the State capital where MEA officials brief senior State Government officials and other stakeholders in the State about the initiatives, programmes and schemes implemented by the Ministry. The Ministry is, in fact, enthused that the utility of this Programme in sensitizing the State Governments on issues pertaining to the overseas Indians cannot be overstated. However, much to its surprise and anguish, the Committee have observed during the examination of the subject that many States are left uncovered under the programme for years together as the Ministry has been conducting on an average one or two Videsh Sampark Programmes in a year. So far Videsh Sampark Programmes have been conducted with State Governments of Telengana in May 2017, Maharashtra in August 2017, Kerala in September 2017, Gujarat in August 2018, Madhya Pradesh in September 2018, Karnataka in February 2020, Punjab and Haryana in June 2023, Bihar in July 2024, Tripura in July 2024 and Uttarakhand in September 2024. The Committee have felt that there is serious need to look into the schedule of Videsh Sampark Programme to ensure frequent and wider engagement / consultation with the States.

The Committee have urged the Ministry to look into the feasibility of conducting the programme zone-wise so that representatives from more than one State can benefit from the engagement.

(Recommendation No. 60)

21. State Governments as Partners in Migration Management

The Committee have been aggrieved to note that the States feel there is lack of concern on part of MEA with regard to matters relating to Indian Diaspora. The Committee have been worried about minimal or, at times, no contact with States by MEA on issues relating to the welfare of NRIs, including those of migrant workers abroad. The Committee have been aware that the Protector of Emigrants (PoE) offices located in various states serve as the nodal field office of MEA for matters related to emigration and associated grievances, acting as a vital link between Indian Missions, the emigrant's family, local authorities, etc. and is well-positioned to engage with the State police and administration. The Ministry has maintained that regular and timely response to the communications from various State authorities on the issue of emigration is ensured. However, the feedback in this regard is not so positive. Given the fact that State Governments are often the primary entities interacting with migrants and managing migration-related challenges, the Committee have strongly felt that unless Ministry actively ropes-in the State Governments and make them partners, the Ministry will fail to achieve the objectives with regard to Diaspora management. The Committee have, therefore, urged the Ministry to formulate a strategy, designate officers who would be interacting with the State Governments and work towards cohesive collaboration with State Governments to achieve meaningful utilization of various welfare schemes for the Diaspora

(Recommendation No. 61)

22. Standard Operating Procedures for Student Outreach

The Committee have been informed that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad invite students enrolled in various Universities under their jurisdiction for welcome ceremonies organized almost as soon as they reach the foreign shores for pursuing higher studies. Heads of Indian Missions/Posts also organize Orientation Programmes for Indian students and brief them on challenges / threats, if any, that they may confront during their stay in foreign lands and mechanisms to take counter measures. Senior Embassy officials visit Educational Institutions, interact with Indian students and their associations. However, these efforts do not seem to yield much. Being a country having the highest number of students studying abroad, next only to China, the Committee have urged the Ministry to put in place Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding student outreach and engagement by our Missions abroad. In the absence of such SOPs, emergency response mechanism of the Missions/posts in crisis situations would be far from effective.

(Recommendation No. 65)