

Defaulting agents sending people abroad

62. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases that were detected during 2008 about the defaulting agents sending people abroad relating to mal-treatment or working in inhuman conditions;

(b) whether any institutional steps have been codified to specifically and effectively deals with such cases; and

(c) whether these agents of Indian origin or foreign nationals have also found either doing this in connivance with Indians or they are indulging in such activities independently depending upon their sources?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) During 2008, action on 118 cases against Registered Recruiting Agents and 93 cases against Unregistered/Unauthorised Agents have been initiated for offences committed under Emigration Act.

Instances of complaints of exploitation of Indian emigrant workers by Recruiting Agents, Foreign Employers and unscrupulous middlemen are received by the Ministry and the Indian Missions abroad from time to time. These complaints mainly pertain to cheating, overcharging, contractual violations by employers such as non-payment/delayed payment of salary, non-availability of medical facilities and proper food, unhygienic living conditions etc. Such harassment include withholding of passports and even physical abuse by the employers.

On receipt of such complaints this Ministry swings into action against such elements.

In the case of Registered Recruiting Agents (RA), on receipt of a complaint, a show cause notice is issued. If the RA fails to redress the grievances of overseas Indian workers, action is taken to suspend/cancel his registration and forfeit his Bank Guarantee.

Complaints against Unregistered/Unauthorised Agents are referred to the concerned State Police authorities for investigation and action under the law. Concerned Protector of Emigrants (POEs) are also instructed to initiate due action.

State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have been advised to instruct all Police Stations to keep a strict vigil on the activities of unscrupulous agents.

Foreign Employers (FEs) who are found to be harassing the Indian Workers, are placed in the Prior Approval Category.

Demand of Indian workers

†63. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether various countries have shown interest in calling for workers from India for development of their manufacturing industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken thereon by Government?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) Indian workers are in demand abroad in various sectors including manufacturing industries. There are about 4.5 million Indian workers in the Gulf countries apart from the large number of high-skill Indian workers in the USA, Canada, Australia and the European Union.

During 2008 about 8.49 lakh workers from India took emigration clearance to leave India for employment abroad.

The policy of the Government is to facilitate orderly and legal emigration of Indian workers, discourage illegal/irregular migration and ensure the protection and welfare of emigrants. In pursuit of this policy, the Government is implementing emigration process reforms and is pursuing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the management of migration.

India had signed Labour agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s. The Ministry, after its creation in 2004, made concerted efforts to enter into bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the major receiving Countries for ensuring protection and welfare of our emigrants. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed with United Arab of Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November, 2008, with Malaysia in January, 2009, and with Bahrain on 17th June, 2009. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.

An MoU for forging a labour mobility partnership has been negotiated with Denmark. The Government is also pursuing labour mobility partnerships with some other countries as well as with the European Union.

The Government has signed social security agreements with France, Germany and Belgium and has concluded negotiations with the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Switzerland and Luxembourg. Negotiations are in progress with several other countries including Australia, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Hungary and Denmark. These agreements protect our workers abroad from double coverage, loss of contributions and loss of benefits in the field of social security.

Problems of Indian brides abroad

64. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the increasing incidents of exploitation, torture, demand of dowry, beating and threatening to kill or deportation to India to Indian brides by their NRI husbands and their families residing abroad;