

Indian women working abroad

4529. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that many women workers recruited from India to Gulf countries as house maids end up in brothels in those countries;

(b) whether there is any system for registration of women workers recruited to Gulf countries before their departure from the country; and

(c) whether Government would make mandatory registration of all women recruited for employment in Gulf countries?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Women workers going to Gulf countries are not separately registered. But all workers, male as well as female, going for employment to the 17 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries on ECR passports are required to obtain emigration clearance. The Government has, however, taken some special measures for protection of women emigrants. Women with ECR passports are not allowed to emigrate for work before 30 years of age. The foreign employers hiring Indian women workers have to deposit a security of 2500 US dollars with the Indian Missions. The Government has stipulated a minimum wage of 300 US dollars per month in case of housemaid. Shelter for run-away maids are operated by the Indian Missions. The Government has stipulated that the employer would provide a prepaid mobile phone facility to the woman worker as a mandatory contractual obligation.

NRIs facing trial abroad

4530. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether NRIs facing trial abroad are not offered the basic principles of natural justice nor granted the right to have a lawyer of own choice;

(b) whether Indian citizens abroad are not treated equally with the citizens of the country and are discriminated;

(c) whether his Ministry has come across this kind of grievances;

(d) if so, the steps taken therefor; and

(e) whether it is possible to safeguard the interest and right of NRIs living abroad?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (e) As per reports available NRIs living abroad enjoy the basic principles of natural justice and have the right to have a lawyer of their own choice. They are treated equally with the citizens of the country of their residence within the prevalent legal system. Interests and rights of NRIs living abroad are

safeguarded by the legal system in their respective countries of residence. Whenever necessary, the Government of India intervenes to look after the interests of its citizens through the Indian Diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad.

NRI welfare fund scheme

4531. SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL : Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has introduced NRI welfare fund scheme;
- (b) if so, the major schemes and benefits available to NRIs;
- (c) the number of NRIs who joined the scheme; and
- (d) the amount of money distributed till date as benefits?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (d) The Ministry has set up the 'Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)' in the Indian Missions in 42 countries which have more than 50,000 Overseas Indian populations, to provide on-site welfare for the Overseas Indian Citizens who are in distress in those countries. The Fund is aimed at providing the following services on a means tested basis:—

- (i) Boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in Household/domestic sectors and unskilled labourers;
- (ii) Extending emergency medical care to the overseas Indians in need;
- (iii) Providing air passage to stranded overseas Indians in need;
- (iv) Providing initial legal assistance to the overseas Indians in deserving cases.
- (v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased overseas Indian in such cases where a sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost.

The Fund is administered by the respective Heads of Missions and financial assistance given by the Missions, in the most deserving cases. The ICWF is funded through budgetary support from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, funds raised by the Indian Missions by levying a service charge on Consular services and through Voluntary contributions from the Indian community. The Ministry had released an amount of Rs. 71.75 lakhs to the Indian Missions during 2009-10.

Cheating of Indian girls by bridegrooms

4532. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the NRI bridegrooms used to cheat the Indian girls to whom they marry and did not take them to their respective countries;