

the State Governments for filing criminal cases against them. Whenever there is a complaint against a foreign employer, proceedings for black listing such an employer are initiated. Indian missions also take up these issues with the foreign employers/local Governments to protect the interest of the workers.

The Government has taken several initiatives for the protection and welfare of Overseas Indian Workers which include:—

- (i) A Nation wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through media has been launched to educate the intending emigrants about legal emigration procedures, risks of illegal migration and precautions to be taken during emigration.
- (ii) The Ministry has set up the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in 42 Countries for providing onsite support and financial assistance to Indian workers in distress.
- (iii) The Government has established an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) which is a 24x7 hour telephone helpline which provides information to intending emigrants as well as emigrants on all aspects of emigration. Complaints can also be lodged through this helpline.
- (iv) India had signed Labour Agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s to protect the interests of the Indian Workers. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed with United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November 2008, with Malaysia in January 2009, and with Bahrain in June 2009. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.

Under these MOUs Joint Working Groups (JWGs) have been constituted that meet regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues including the cases of atrocities which come to notice from time to time. These MOUs enhance bilateral co-operation in management of migration and protection of labour welfare.

Workers returning from middle east

1768. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether many workers who were working in Dubai and other middle east countries are coming back to India;
- (b) if so, the number of workers that have come back to India; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government of India to protect the job of Indian workers?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) Indian workers go for employment to the Gulf countries for a specific period in accordance with their

employment contract and return on the expiry of their employment contract or of the work visa period unless renewed. Indian workers also leave for other reasons such as personal circumstances or because of disputes with employers.

Since no official statistics on the number of expatriate Indian workers are maintained by the Indian Missions, accurate figures regarding the return of Indian workers are not available.

However, according to reports received from Indian missions and a study conducted on the impact of global recession in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Malaysia, it is estimated that the return/retraining of workers was significant only in UAE, during 2008-09. The estimated number of workers who returned to India as a result of the delay in execution of projects due to economic slowdown in UAE is minimal.

The steps taken by Government to protect jobs of overseas Indian workers include the following:-

- (i) When complaints are received from overseas Indian workers the Recruiting Agent is directed to settle/resolve the complaint in the first instance and to ensure that the Foreign Employer meets the terms of the contract.
- (ii) The Indian Mission when it receives complaints against foreign employers takes immediate action for redressal of the grievances of Indian workers.
- (iii) Indian Missions also recommend inclusion of defaulting foreign employers in the Prior Approval Category (Black list). This Ministry places such foreign employers on the PAC list, and allows such employers to recruit Indian workers only after prior approval.

Assistance for Skill Upgradation Training Programme

1769. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Kerala has submitted any proposal for Central assistance for Skill Upgradation Training Programme of Non Resident Keralites returning to the State; and

(b) if so, whether Government would sanction the funds requested?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) The State Government of Kerala had sent a proposal for Skill up gradation training to potential emigrant workers from the State, as part of the Action Plan. The proposal is not specifically for returnee migrants. The proposal received from the State has been sent to the Planning Commission for inclusion under the Plan Scheme for allotment of funds to this Ministry to facilitate implementation of the Scheme.