

(a) whether Government has signed labourer mobility partnership agreement with various countries including the European countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the aims and objectives of such agreements; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to create more employment opportunities for the educated unemployed youths of our country in foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has signed Labour Mobility Partnership Agreement (LMPA) with Denmark.

The aims and objectives of the such agreements are:

(i) Facilitating legal migration by removing undue barriers and securing labour market access.

(ii) Combating and preventing all forms of irregular migration.

(iii) Enhancing the protection and welfare of migrants and exchange of information and cooperation introducing best practices for mutual benefit.

(c) Labour Mobility is facilitated through the institutions of Protector General of Emigration (PGE), offices of Protector of Emigrants besides through Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC). The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has also started a skill development initiative in the North-Eastern States and is in the process of designing a Plan Scheme for skill development to promote overseas employment.

Exploitation of Indian women in Gulf countries

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

(a) whether Government is aware of the sexual and other forms of exploitation faced by Indian women workers in the Gulf countries;

(b) the steps being taken by Government to prevent this exploitation and to address the complaints by the workers; and

(c) whether Government would provide any financial assistance for rehabilitation of these women workers who return to India?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Indian Missions receive complaints from women workers particularly housemaids on account of non-payment of salaries, long working hours, inadequate living conditions, physical harassment, refusal of leave or 'exit/re-entry permits' 'final exit visa' etc.

(b) The Government has taken various measures for protecting the safety and welfare of women migrant workers of the ECR (Emigration Check Required) category who emigrate to 17 notified (ECR) countries. These include:-

- (i) Age restriction of 30 years has been made mandatory in respect of all such women emigrants.
 - (ii) The employment contract must be duly attested by the Indian Missions in respect of all such women.
 - (iii) Women household workers are allowed to emigrate after the Indian Mission has attested the identity of the foreign employer and terms and conditions of contract.
 - (iv) A pre-paid mobile facility must be provided by the employer to every woman household worker. If the foreign employer recruits the worker directly, he is required to deposit a security of \$2500 with the Indian Mission.
 - (v) The Ministry has set up the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) with a 24x7 Helpline to enable emigrant workers/prospective emigrants including women to obtain information on all emigration related matters and to seek redressal of their complaint.
 - (vi) The Ministry undertakes Awareness Campaign through the print and electronic media to sensitize potential emigrant workers including women emigrants about the legal emigration process and hazards of illegal emigration.
 - (vii) Indian Community Welfare Fund has been established in all the Indian Embassies/Missions including all ECR countries. Financial assistance is provided by the Indian Missions out of this fund to all Indian emigrants who are stranded and are in need of assistance.
- (c) There is no such proposal with the Ministry.

Bilateral agreement for migrant labour

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

- (a) whether India has signed bilateral agreement on migrant labour with countries like Middle East, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and USA;
- (b) if so, whether labour are included;
- (c) the other steps that are being taken by Government of India for the protection of India migrant labour in other countries;