

Agents operating in Passport Offices

†358. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether large number of agents are operating in passport offices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the numbers of complaint received against them so far;
- (c) whether agents are openly operating from outside the passport offices located in Delhi;
- (d) whether there is a policy to transfer the passport officers/employees; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (c) As per the legacy system for submission of passport application forms, travel agents have been authorized to submit applications on behalf of applicants in the Passport Offices subject to condition that they are recognized by International Air Transport Association (IATA) and are members of either the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) or Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI). These travel agents submit passport applications supported with proper authority letters and they are required to produce original documents of the applicants for verification.

Under the Passport Seva Project, there is limited role for travel agents which inter alia includes on-line filling up of passport applications and status enquiry of applications. The applicants have to come to Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) for submission of applications, finger prints and digitization of photograph. Wherever Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) has been opened, the submission of the applications by travel agents has been dispensed with. Presently out of 77 Passport Seva Kendras proposed to be opened all over India, 50 are already in operation and the remainder would be opened in the next two months.

(d) and (e) The Ministry has constituted a Transfer Board to consider transfers of employees working in the Central Passport Organization. The Transfer Board meets every year and takes decision on transfers keeping in view various factors viz. rotational policy, administrative exigencies, request of officials on medical grounds, educational reasons etc.

India's position in HDR

†359. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the reference

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

made regarding the position of India in the 'Human Development Report, 2011' prepared by United Nations Development Programmes;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that India stands at 134th position in the entire list of 187 countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether it is also a fact that inspite of Government's claim of economic development in India, human life standard could not be improved in the country; and

(e) if so, Government reactions thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) Yes.

(c) to (e) A Statement prepared by the Planning Commission in this regard is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Planning Commission

The Human Development Report (HDR) - 2011 titled "Sustainability and Equity: A better future for all", released recently by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) places India at 134th rank in Human Development Index (HDI) among 187 countries. The HDI is a composite index that combines three dimensions of human development namely long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent living standard and thus is a measure of quality of life. Higher value of HDI implies higher level of human development and better quality of life.

The UNDP HDR 2011 reveals that India has registered a consistent improvement in HDI value which increased from 0.410 in 1990 to 0.461 in 2000 and further to 0.547 in 2011. As recorded in the HDR 2011, the HDI growth estimated at 1.56% on average per year has been the fastest for India during the period 2000-2011 compared to that in the 1990s, which registered an annual average HDI growth of 1.38% during 1990-2000. Moreover, there has been a significant improvement in the human development in the country over the years as revealed by various indicators of the human development. As per the Census 2011, the overall literacy rate in the country has increased from 64.83 in 2001 to 74.04 in 2011. The male-female gap in the literacy rate has gone down to 16.68 in 2011 in comparison to 21.59 in 2001. The percentage of population below poverty line has also declined from 45.3% in 1993-94 to 37.2% in 2004-05. The Infant Mortality Rate has come down from 80 per thousand live births in 1990 to 50 per thousand in 2009. The Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) was 424 per lakh live births in 1992-93 and has come down to 212 per lakh in 2007-09. The percentage of people using improved source of drinking water has increased from 68% in 1993 to 90.3% in 2008-09. Similarly, the percentage of households without sanitation facilities has declined from 70% in 1993 to 51% in 2008.