

- (ii) A National Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign has been launched to create wider awareness among the general public and particularly among the potential migrants on the risks of illegal migration and safeguards against illegal practices by unauthorized intermediaries and fraudulent recruiting agencies.
- (iii) The Ministry has set up Indian Community Welfare Funds (ICWF) in all Countries for providing onsite support and financial assistance to Indian workers in distress.
- (iv) An Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) at New Delhi runs as a 24×7 helpline in eight languages for helping the Overseas Workers as well as prospective emigrants.
- (v) Indian had signed Labour Agreements with Jordan and Qatar in the 1980s to protect the interests of 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.

These MoUs enhance bilateral co-operation in management of migration and protection of Indian workers. Under these MoUs Joint Working Groups (JWG) have been constituted that meet regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues.

#### **Devolution of Powers to Panchayats**

1755. SHRI SHANT ARAM NAIK : Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the devolution of powers to Village Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats is monitored by Government;
- (b) the powers listed out for devolution of powers of the Village Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats under Goa Panchayati Raj Act and the powers actually devolved by the State Governments to the local bodies; and
- (c) the financial powers devolved and financial assistance given to Village Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats in Goa?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATRI RAJ (SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA DEO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

- (b) As per information given by the Govt. of Goa, the functions and responsibilities of the Village Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats have been listed in Schedule I and Schedule II respectively, of The Gram Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. Village

Panchayats perform functions such as imposition of taxes and fees on certain items independently; issuing licenses for construction of buildings, factories business, trade and occupation; licensing of hotels, shops, restaurants etc., including licenses for aerated water manufacturers; filing complaints before the appropriate Court to prohibit public nuisance; impounding spray cattle and disposal of corpses by burning or burial; preparing annual development plan, budget and administration report of the Panchayats and taking action for removal of illegal constructions within the Panchayat area.

(c) Every Panchayat is authorised to levy taxes and fees as detailed below :

- (i) **Taxes :** Tax on building; tax on vehicles other than motor vehicles; tax on entertainment other than cinematograph shows; tax on advertisement and hoardings; tax on lands not subject to agricultural assessment; tax on entertainment; lighting tax; drainage/garbage tax; tax on professional trades; calling and employment; octroi on goods other than petroleum products.
- (ii) **Fees :** Pilgrim fee on persons attending the jattras, festivals, etc.; market fee on persons who expose their goods for sale; registration of cattle brought for sale; buses and taxis and auto-stands; grazing cattle in the grazing lands; sale of goods in melas/fairs and festivals; extraction of sand and laterite stones; issue and renewal of construction permission; issue of various certificates; registration of Births and Deaths; issue of certified copies; impounding of cattle.

The financial assistance given to Village and Zilla Panchayat during 2011-12 include grants to weaker Panchayats for strengthening their administration; grants in lieu of Octroi; grant-in-aid for infrastructure development; matching grants in proportion to tax collected; and grants for salaries of members of Zilla and Village Panchayats.

#### **Revision of Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan**

1756. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN : Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan launched by Government under the Eleventh Five Year Plan has been effective in achieving its goals;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the scheme is going to be revised for implementation under the Twelfth Five Year Plan; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?