

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1037
ANSWERED ON- 13/02/2025

MEASURES TAKEN FOR WELFARE OF INDIANS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

1037. SHRI ANIL KUMAR YADAV MANDADI

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether Government has formulated any comprehensive policy to look after the welfare and well being of the Indians who migrate to foreign countries for one reason or other;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken any concrete steps from racial discrimination point of view to protect the Indians in foreign soils so that they can seek help/protection whenever they are subjected to such discrimination;
- (d) If so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefore?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a to e) The Government accords highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals including Indian emigrant workers abroad.

In pursuance of this objective, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has entered into Migration and Mobility Partnerships which are aimed at fostering mobility, expanding work opportunities and promoting welfare of emigrant Indian nationals and have already been signed with France (2018), UK (2021), Germany (2022), Italy, Australia, Austria (2023) and Denmark (2024). Discussions with other countries on similar agreements are underway especially with those in Europe and the Far East. Agreements have also been signed with Israel and Mauritius for recruitment of Indian workers while ensuring their protection and welfare. The agreements also provide for regular and structured consultative mechanisms for discussing, inter-alia, issues related to welfare of Indian workers and professionals abroad.

The Government has also entered into bilateral Social Security Agreements (SSA) with other countries in order to protect the interests of Indian professionals / skilled workers working abroad for short

durations. SSA provides exemption from making double social security contributions. As on date, India has signed and operationalized Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with 19 countries - Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, South Korea and Brazil. India has also signed Social Security Agreements with Argentina and Poland which are in the process of getting operationalized. India has also signed SSA with the Quebec Province of Canada.

Additionally, India is also actively participating in the various international/regional/multilateral fora and platforms on international migration such as the International Migration Review Forum, Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, Budapest Process, the International Dialogue on Migration, Global Compact for Migration regional reviews which involves sharing of best practices and discussions on critical areas aimed at facilitating safe and regular labour migration. Last year, India also assumed the chair of the Colombo Process.

The Government of India is also committed to skilling and capacity building of its emigrants workers. In this context, the Government has been implementing its flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) since 2015 to impart skill development training through Short-Term Training (STT) and upskilling and re-skilling through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to youth across the country. Through PMKVY, individuals can avail themselves of placement opportunities, both domestic and overseas, based on their acquired skills and certifications.

Additionally, the Government implements the Pre-departure Orientation Training (PDOT) for aspiring emigrant workers to equip them with essential information on the cultural, legal and occupational aspects of some select destination countries. This training ensures that Indian workers are better prepared for their overseas employment, thereby promoting their safety, welfare and integration abroad.

For registering and redressal of grievances, the Government has established various mechanisms. Indian emigrants workers can contact the Missions/Posts through various channels like walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portals like MADAD, CPGRAMS, eMigrate, social media, toll free helplines, whatsapp numbers and Missions/Posts have also launched mobile Apps to enable Indian nationals contact respective Indian Missions/Posts when in distress or in emergency situation. Consular camps and Open Houses are also held by Indian Missions/Posts to reach out to the Indian nationals abroad who might need any assistance/guidance from the Government.

Our Missions/Posts abroad also utilize the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide the following services/assistance to the Indian diaspora in distress on a means tested basis:

- (i) Transportation of mortal remains to India or cremation with the consent of the family;
- (ii) Emergency medical care;
- (iii) Legal assistance;
- (iv) Boarding and lodging; and
- (v) Air passage for stranded Indians.

Specifically for ECR countries, the Emigration Act, 1983 provides the regulatory framework for emigration of Indian workers for contractual overseas employment and seeks to safeguard their interests and ensure their welfare. The Act provides for regulations on issues such as Recruiting Agents, Emigration clearances, registration of foreign employers and prevention of exploitation of Indian workers recruited to work overseas. The Protectorate General of India (PGE) under Government of India (GoI) is responsible for the welfare and protection of emigrant workers. The PGE operates through offices located across India who verify documents, register complaints and provide assistance to emigrant Indian workers abroad.

The Labor and Manpower Cooperation MOUs/Agreements that provide the overarching framework for cooperation on labour and manpower related issues are in place with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) and Jordan. These MOUs and Agreements have provision of implementation through Joint Working Groups. All prevailing labor and manpower-related issues are discussed by the respective JWG .

Further, to safeguard the specific interest of domestic workers in GCC Countries, agreements on Labor Cooperation for Domestic Sector workers have been signed with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. A Protocol on Domestic Workers has also been signed with UAE.

Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up in New Delhi and at Dubai (UAE), Riyadh & Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to provide assistance, guidance and counselling to Indians in distress.

Whenever issues of racial or community based incidents happen abroad involving Indians, our Embassies and Consulates take it up with the concerned authorities, as appropriate.
