



25 million Overseas Indians across the globe

**Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
Annual Report 2006-07**

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" We are one family. The whole world is our home. That is why I have often said that while the sun has set on many great empires of the world in the past, the sun will never set on the world of the Indian diaspora! From Fiji in the East, to Los Angeles in the West, from Cape Town in the South to Toronto in the North, the people of Indian origin are the world's most globalised community...

... India has now emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. India's growth process creates enormous opportunities for promoting cross border flows of trade, capital and technology. I would like overseas Indian communities to take full advantage of these exciting opportunities that are now on the horizon. I would like you to reach out and invest in a new India. Invest not just financially, but intellectually, socially, culturally and, above all, emotionally "

**- From the Inaugural Address of Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh
at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, New Delhi, January 7, 2007**

Overseas Indians – An overview

The size, spread and the growing influence of overseas Indians today are truly impressive. Estimated at over 25 million in 130 countries, the overseas Indian community comprises of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Non-Resident Indians (NRI). Overseas Indians constitute a significant and successful economic, social and cultural force in the world. This vast and diverse overseas Indian community grew out of a variety of causes – mercantilism, colonialism, and globalisation - and over several hundreds of years of migration in different waves.

In the pre-colonial era, traders from India crossed the seas to the Persian Gulf region and the east coast of Africa and overland to Central and West Asia in search of fame and fortune. Another major emigration from the subcontinent in this era was to Southeast Asia. It started as military expeditions by Hindu, and later Buddhist kings of India and resulted in the settlers' merging with the local society. The influence of Indian culture is still felt in Southeast Asia, especially in places like Bali in Indonesia.

During the nineteenth century and until the end of the Raj, much of the migration was to other colonies as indentured labour for plantations and mines in the Atlantic, Pacific and the Indian ocean regions and under the 'Kangani' system to Southeast Asia. The major destinations were Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Fiji, South and East Africa, Malaya, Ceylon and Burma. The event that triggered this mass migration was the Slavery Abolition Act passed by the British Parliament on August 1, 1834, which freed the slave labour force throughout the British colonies. This resulted in an extreme shortage of labour throughout the British colonies which was resolved by massive importation of workers engaged under contracts of indentured servitude.

In independent India, there have been two distinct categories of migration: the migration that began in the the early 1950s as Indians from the subcontinent moved to the United Kingdom, Europe, North America and Australasia. This migration to the western world was permanent and the migrants were mostly educated and well qualified. The second phase was the large outflow of unskilled, semiskilled and skilled workers to the countries in the Gulf region which began in the mid-1970s. This migration was temporary with a large number of workers returning on completion of their contracts.

The vastly different origins and roots of the migrants, the divergent routes and patterns of migration and settlement, the varying degrees of socio-cultural integration with their new homelands and the emergence of new identities and ethos make the overseas Indian community unique. It is a reflection of the pluralism that India today represents – a confluence of many languages, cultures and histories.

With increasing globalisation, the Indian diaspora is growing and becoming even more visible, successful and influential across a wide variety of sectors and virtually every walk of life. Yet it is difficult to speak of one great 'Indian Diaspora'. There are communities within communities whose bond with India and the manner and extent of engagement is marked by its own experiences as well as time and distance.

A nuanced understanding of the diversity of the overseas Indian community brings before us the idea of the 'Global Indians' and the invisible thread that holds them together and binds them with India, the idea of 'Indian-ness'. The Prime Minister best articulated this in January 2005 while inaugurating the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:

“The idea of ‘Pravasi Bharatiya’ has been in the making throughout the 19th and 20th Century. Today, at the dawn of the 21st century it is an idea whose time has truly come. We speak different languages, we practice different religions, our cuisine is varied and so is our costume. We are over a billion Indians and over 25 million overseas Indians, living in 130 different countries. Yet, there is a unifying idea that binds us all together, which is the idea of “Indian-ness”.

Overseas Indians are not merely people of Indian origin who have settled in new or imaginary homelands. They are a representation of India: its peoples, regions, values, and diverse cultures. They recreate in their socio-economic and cultural institutions a version of India and preserve perceptions of the homeland that they remember. They maintain a real, even if intangible, bond with India, keep renewing it and above all keep returning to the idea of India.

The Ministry and its Mandate

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) is a young Ministry. Established in May 2004 as the 'Ministry of Non-Resident Indians' Affairs', it was renamed the 'Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs' (MOIA) in September 2004. The emigration division of the Ministry of Labour and Employment was attached to the new ministry in Dec 2004. The erstwhile NRI division of the MEA now functions as the Diaspora division in the Ministry. The Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) administers the Emigration Act, 1983. He oversees the eight field offices of the Protectors of Emigrants located at Chandigarh, Chennai, Cochin, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram.

The Ministry is headed by a Cabinet Minister and is organized into four functional service divisions: Diaspora Services, Financial Services, Employment Services, and Social Services. A small team of eleven officers (DS and above) is working in the Ministry in a de-layered and multi-task mode leveraging the power of partnerships and outsourcing.

The MOIA is the nodal Ministry for all matters relating to overseas Indians comprising Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI). The Mission of the Ministry is to promote, nurture and sustain a mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship between India and overseas Indians. In achieving this mission the Ministry is guided by four key policy imperatives:

First, the overseas Indian community has distinct and often-varied expectations from the home country, the Ministry must provide for this wide range of roles and expectations.

Second, there is a need to bring a strategic dimension to the process of India's engagement with its overseas community, take a medium to long term view and forge partnerships that will support sustained engagement.

Third, overseas Indians represent a reservoir of knowledge and resources in diverse fields - economic, social and cultural - and that this reservoir must be drawn upon as partners in development.

Finally, the states of India are important players in this process. Any initiative that overseas Indians, individually or collectively, take must be anchored in one of the states.

The policy focus of the Ministry therefore is to establish an institutional framework that can support sustainable engagement and can benefit from networks with and among overseas Indians based on three value propositions:

- Through multi-skilled market driven entities spawned by MOIA and with knowledge partners from the private sector.
- The States will be stakeholder partners since OI related initiatives have to be anchored in the States.
- MOIA will stay small, facilitate activity on the ground and drive policy changes.

To fulfill its mandate, the Ministry is striving to design and implement policy initiatives through a wide variety of programmes and schemes with the following goals:

1. Effectively address the needs, problems and concerns of the vast and diverse overseas Indian community through appropriate programmes supported by public-private partnerships.
2. Facilitate sustained interaction of overseas Indians with India and extend a host of services in economic, social and cultural matters.
3. Extend institutional support for individual initiatives and community action to harness the knowledge and other resources of overseas Indians for India's social development.
4. Strengthen the bond between India and the overseas Indian community by recognizing and celebrating its success and achievements.

The business allocated to the Ministry covers a wide range of subjects as well as sectors. Besides the task of handling all matters relating to PIOs and NRIs, the Ministry also has been assigned responsibilities in such diverse functions as promotion of trade & investments, emigration, education, culture, health, Science & Technology etc in so far as they relate to the overseas Indians.

Given the diversity and geographic spread of the overseas Indian community and with it, the emergence of distinct region / country specific ethos, the needs and expectations of the overseas Indians vary considerably. The policies, programmes and the Schemes of the Ministry are therefore designed to meet these wide ranging needs and expectations and include:

- (i) Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)
- (ii) Know India Programme (KIP)
- (iii) Scholarship Scheme for Diaspora Children (SSDC)
- (iv) Tracing the Roots
- (v) MOU with Doordarshan and ICCR
- (vi) Establishment of a PIO University
- (vii) Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra

- (viii) India Health Care Initiative - AAPI.
- (ix) Overseas Indian Investment Facilitation Centre
- (x) India Development Philanthropy Foundation
- (xi) Awareness Campaign on NRI marriages
- (xii) Legal assistance for women facing problems in NRI Marriages
- (xiii) E – Governance in Emigration
- (xiv) Pre departure Orientation & Skill Upgradation for Emigrant workers.
- (xv) Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment (CPOE)
- (xvi) Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)
- (xvii) Overseas Indian Centres

In addition, the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (including the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman) continues to be the flagship event of the Ministry. The Programme aims at bringing the expertise and knowledge of the overseas Indians on a common platform and integrating it with the country's development process.

For the Ministry, the year 2006-07 was significant in that we signed the pioneering Social Security Agreement with Belgium. Work has commenced to negotiate and conclude similar agreements with other countries in the European Union with a large Indian population like the Netherlands, France, Norway and Sweden. These agreements will provide for exemption from social security contributions for Indians working in these countries on short-term contracts of up to five years and export of benefits for those who have worked for a longer term and choose to relocate to India. The agreement provides for reciprocity in its application.

The Ministry also signed a memorandum of understanding on labour with the United Arab Emirates. In 2007, efforts are on to expeditiously conclude similar agreements with the other Gulf countries and Malaysia — home to more than 500,000 workers from India. These agreements provide for the protection and welfare of overseas Indian workers.

A national skill upgradation and pre-departure orientation-training programme for emigrant workers was launched in partnership with the states. The primary objective of the scheme is to make potential overseas Indian workers globally competitive by helping them upgrade their skills to meet the needs of the international labour market. Five pilot states - Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Punjab will implement the programme to train about 40,000 workers. In the ensuing year, it will be expanded to cover all major states in the country.

On the occasion of the 5th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the Prime Minister released three publications of the Ministry - a 'Handbook for Overseas Indians', a

‘Compendium on Investment Policies and Opportunities’, and a ‘Guidance Booklet on Marriages to Overseas Indians’.

Looking ahead at 2007-08, the Ministry has planned several activities targeting specific outcomes for the benefit of the vast and diverse overseas Indian community. While there is high interest amongst overseas Indians to invest in India, there is a need for a market-driven institutional platform that will facilitate a two-way flow of overseas Indian investments into India and promote business-to-business partnerships of Indian businesses with overseas Indians. Plans are on the anvil to establish an “Overseas Indians Facilitation Centre” to provide a host of investment and business advisory services to potential overseas Indian investors. The Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre will serve as a “one-stop shop” for the overseas Indian community.

Overseas Indians have also responded to India’s call to be catalysts for development and contribute in nation-building activities back home. Another initiative proposed, therefore, is to establish a credible institutional platform to enable overseas Indians to contribute to the social development process in India by providing avenues to overseas Indians for philanthropy in education, health and rural development in India.

The MOIA Team

Cabinet Minister

Secretary

Joint Secretary
(Diaspora Services)

Joint Secretary (Financial Services)

Protector
General of
Emigrants

Director
(Diaspora
Services)

Director
(Social
Services)

Director
(Emigration
Policy)

Deputy
Secretary
(Financial
Services)

Deputy
Secretary
(Admin)

Deputy
Secretary
(Budget
and
Vigilance)

Director
(Emigration
Services)

Diaspora Services

The Diaspora Services Division deals with all matters relating to Overseas Indians comprising Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), overseas citizenship matters, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, admission of NRI/PIO students to various educational, technical and cultural institutions in India, scholarships to NRI/PIO students in India and new initiatives to promote interaction of overseas Indians with India in Tourism, Media, Youth Affairs, Education, Culture etc.

OVERSEAS CITIZENSHIP OF INDIA (OCI) SCHEME

In response to a long and persistent demand for “dual citizenship” particularly from overseas Indians in North America and the western world and in view of the Government’s deep commitment towards fulfilling the aspirations and expectations of Overseas Indians, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had announced at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2005 held in Mumbai the grant of Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) to all Persons of Indian Origin where local laws permit “dual citizenship” in some form or the other except Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Accordingly, the citizenship (Amendment) Ordinance was promulgated on 28.06.2005 amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 extending the facility of Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) of all countries (who were citizens of India or eligible to become citizens of India on 26 January, 1950 and are citizens of the countries (except Pakistan and Bangladesh). The Citizenship (Amendment) Act was passed in the Monsoon Session of the Parliament in August 2005.

The scheme has been in operation from December 2, 2005. OCI has been introduced by statute to facilitate life-long visa, free travel to India and certain economic, educational and cultural benefits. This is not to be construed as ‘dual citizenship’ since it does not confer political rights. Any Overseas Indian applicant who is comfortable with his present citizenship status in the country of his residence can apply for OCI. Till date, over 1,12,000 OCI documents have been issued, mostly to overseas Indians in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2006 OCI cardholders were given parity with NRIs in:

- (i) Entry fees for national parks & wildlife sanctuaries.
- (ii) Inter-country adoption.
- (iii) Airfares on domestic routes.

The Ministry hopes to extend more benefits to overseas citizens of India in the ensuing year.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME FOR DIASPORA CHILDREN (SPDC)

This scheme seeks to make higher education in India accessible to the children of overseas Indians and promote India as an education hub. Under the scheme, the Ministry provides 100 scholarships for undergraduate courses in Engineering, Technology, Humanities/Liberal Arts, Commerce, Management, Journalism, Hotel Management, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, etc. (except medical courses) to partially fund the tuition and hostel fees each year from 2006-07. The current annual outlay is Rs. one crore. This is being doubled to Rs. Two crores for the ensuing year and is likely to go up to Rs.4 crores in the fourth year.

For the academic year 2006-07, 69 children of overseas Indians from 23 countries covering Africa, Asia, the Gulf and the Caribbean, which represent an overseas Indian population of over 12.5 million, have been covered under the scheme. The students were selected on the basis of an entrance test conducted by M/s Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed.CIL), an autonomous body under MHRD with whom the Ministry is working on a partnership basis.

Children from developing countries with inadequate educational facilities, lesser opportunities for higher studies and where there is a significant concentration of the diaspora population were targeted. The scholarship amount provided this year would cover approximately 60-70% of the tuition fees, depending on the courses selected.

It is proposed to increase scholarship amount to cover the entire tuition fees of the applicants from the next academic year. The number of countries from where applications are sought is also being increased.

KNOW INDIA PROGRAMME (KIP):

The Ministry organises four week internship programmes for diaspora youth to promote awareness about contemporary India, its socio-cultural diversities, the rapid economic transformation underway and thus help the younger generation of overseas Indians bond with India. Earlier called the IPDY and now known as the 'Know India Programme' (KIP), the scheme is implemented in partnership with state Governments and the logistics support of the Nehru Yuvak Kendra.

The 5th programme was organized from 15th May to 12th of June 2006 for 24 participants selected from 9 countries where large numbers of overseas

Indians reside. The programme was organized in partnership with the Government of Himachal Pradesh and the logistics support of the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangthan. Participants of the programme hailed from Canada, USA, New Zealand, Malaysia, Israel, South Africa, Reunion Island, UAE & the United Kingdom.

The 6th programme was organized from 19 December 2006 to 17 January 2007. Two groups comprising of a total of 50 youth of Indian origin from 12 countries (Canada, USA, UK, New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Israel, Palestine, South Africa, Kuwait, Mauritius and Trinidad & Tobago) were called to participate in the youth session of the PBD 2007 besides taking part in the orientation programme. The youth also participated in other working sessions of their interest. The first group of 29 participants went to Kerala for two weeks from 21 December 2006 to 03 January 2007 under partnership of Government of Kerala, and the second group of 21 participants was sent to Rajasthan under partnership of Govt. of Rajasthan for a week from 11 – 16 January 2007.

Since the programme has been successful, plans are afoot to increase the number of internships and to partner with professional apex associations to expand the programme.

Establishing a PIO University

The High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, appointed by the Government in 2000 had visited various countries with large concentration of Indian Diaspora and had recommended, among other things, the setting up of new Universities and professional institutions offering courses of international standards in Management, Information Technology, Media, Agricultural Research, Medicine, Food processing, etc.

At PBD '07 in New Delhi, PM announced that the proposal for establishing a University for Persons of Indian Origin is under active consideration of the Government and that the challenge is to create an enabling framework. The Ministry mandate is to take up new initiatives in the field of education and therefore endeavors to promote India as a competitive destination for the benefit of overseas Indian students.

The policy framework to set up a NRI/PIO University within the Special Educational Zone (SEdZ) in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is being examined and will be finalized shortly.

MOUs WITH DOORDARSHAN & ICCR:

The Ministry has signed a MOU with Doordarshan for publicizing, awareness, action and disseminating policies and activities for the Ministry. A Memorandum of understanding has also been signed with Indian Council for Cultural Relations to support Indian performing arts, languages and culture in the diaspora and to promote dynamic interaction between India and overseas Indians in the cultural space.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

After a gap of two years, the fifth edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was held in New Delhi again from 7-9 January 2007. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs organized the conclave of the Indian diaspora in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi as the State partner. Professor S. Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore was the Chief Guest at the conference. 1200 Overseas Indians from over 50 countries participated in the event.

The theme of the Fifth edition of PBD was 'Rooting for the roots – Meeting India's Social development Challenges' with the objective of inspiring Overseas Indians to be part of the socio-economic development of India. The focus areas were Education, Healthcare, Women, Youth, and Investment.

Inaugurating the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called upon the vast Indian diaspora to be active participants in this great saga of adventure and enterprise of building a new India and said that while the sun has set on many great empires of the world in the past, the sun will never set on the world of the Indian diaspora. Stating that India has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, he called upon overseas Indians to take full advantage of the opportunities arising out of the Country growth process.

"All of you are children of Mother India" Minister Vayalar Ravi, said while addressing participants at the Inaugural Session of PBD 2007. He also announced a host of benefits for OCI cardholders. Professor S. Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, Chief Guest said that India's is intrinsically bound up with East Asia. The economic engagements apart, he said that India would have a central strategic role in the region.

As India reinvents itself, and finds newer areas of expertise and excellence, there is but one issue that remains paramount in the minds of Indian

Leaders and the global community. How is India addressing the Developmental Challenges? This was discussed at the PBD2007 at length. According to C.K. Prahalad, professor of Business Administration at the University of Michigan's Business school, the most important challenge India faces today is to find ways to make its economic transformation more equitable.

One of the highlights of PBD 2007 was, for the first time sessions on various regions of the world with substantial population of the Indian Diaspora were organised. These sessions were chaired by union Ministers of the Government of India, and discussed various solutions of the regional problems faced by the Indian Diaspora.

The sessions on Education, Healthcare, Women, Youth, and Investment held during three days of the conference presented the best opportunities for collaborations and partnerships – partnerships between central Government and the States, partnership between the public and the private and partnership between India and the world for the social transformation of India. Finance Minister of India in his address said if NRIs decide to invest in India's infrastructure that will give an impetus to our economic growth and sustain it.

Speaking at the Valedictory session of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam called upon Indians across the world to join in the mission of taking the country into the league of advanced nations in the next decade. He said a great opportunity awaits Overseas Indians in contributing to the transformation of the motherland. Talking about the World Knowledge Platform, which will integrate the core competencies of partner countries. He said that World Knowledge Platform would take up missions in the areas of energy, water, healthcare, food, knowledge products; automobiles with the available quality human resources.

The 25 million people of Indian origin with experience and specialization in diverse area can definitely be an important partner in the development of quality resources, which will be a prime output for the world knowledge platform. He requested all Overseas Indians to participate in the mission of 'Developed India' 2020' and to make it reality by their knowledge sharing and experience. President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam also gave away the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman to distinguished Overseas Indians.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Establishment of an "Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre" to promote investment by overseas Indian investors to India.

- Establishment of “Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment” to promote Overseas employment.
- Setting up of “University for Persons of Indian Origin” meeting needs of overseas Indian community in most sought after disciplines including engineering and management.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PBD 2007

- 1200 Pravasi delegates from over 50 countries participated in the event.
- Theme of the PBD 2007 was ‘rooting for the roots – meeting India’s social development challenges’.
- The focus areas were education, health, women, youth and investment.
- Professor S. Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore was the Chief Guest of the Conference.
- The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India and culminated with valedictory address by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India.
- Twenty-eight sessions on a wide and inclusive range of topics.
- Five overseas Ministers attended the conference.
- 175 speakers, 44 of them from overseas.
- Twenty-nine Indian Ministers, four chief Ministers and seven members of Parliament addressed the conference.
- Four publications of the Ministry were released in the conference.
- Establishment of Overseas Indian Facilitation Center announced by the Prime Minister.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA SAMMAN AWARDS

President A.P.J.Abdul Kalam honoured fifteen distinguished overseas Indians with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman on the concluding day of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007. Introduced in the year 2003, the awards are conferred to honour distinguished overseas Indians in recognition of their achievements, their contribution to strengthening of India’s relations with other countries, promoting the honour and prestige of India and fostering the interests of overseas Indians.

Nominations to the awards are made by India’s Heads Of Missions, PIOs who are MPs in their respective countries, past awardees of the Gandhi Peace Prize/Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament for MEA/MOIA. The Vice President of India is the ex-officio Chairman of the Jury-cum-Awards Committee. The maximum number of awards has now been increased to 15 and institutions and

organizations have also been made eligible. This year, 15 distinguished overseas Indians were selected for the Award.

The largest number, four of the awardees, are from the United States. Two are from the United Arab Emirates and the others from the United Kingdom, Canada, Fiji, Portugal, Kenya, Malaysia, Germany, Jamaica and South Africa.

The ministry has constituted a committee chaired by the Secretary with representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs to revise the scheme and make the selection process more broad based, objective and transparent.

Migration Management

Labour migration from India has a long history. Movement of people to the Persian Gulf region and Southeast Asia goes back several centuries. Large-scale migration of labour however occurred in the colonial era under the indentured labour system. The primary motivation for employment abroad remains economic. Since independence there have been two distinct categories of movement of people. While the educated and highly skilled persons emigrated to the developed economies, semi-skilled and unskilled workers went primarily to the oil producing countries in the Gulf. This trend continues and is expected to increase in the near future.

Overseas Indian Workers are estimated at over 5 million, with a net outflow of about a million each year, excluding returnees. A significant number of the overseas Indian workers women. The vast majority of these workers are temporary migrants and 90 percent of them work in the Gulf. These workers often face difficult living and working conditions in the host country and put up with separation from their families for considerable periods of time.

The economic and social significance of these important constituents of Overseas Indians can be judged by the spectacular growth in remittances by migrant Indian Workers from the Gulf. In 2005-06, India was the highest recipient of remittances from Overseas Indians estimated at over US \$ 23 billion. About 45 percent of these remittances – estimated at about US \$ 12 billion - are the contribution of the un-skilled and semi-skilled Overseas Indian Workers.

The temporary migration of un-skilled, semi-skilled or skilled workers mostly to the Middle-East is unique, in that, the social cost of education or vocational training is modest while the economic and social benefits derived from remittances or skill formation are significant.

There is evidence to suggest that remittances in the aggregate as well as per capita from Overseas Indian Workers are significantly higher than remittances from others. Overseas Indian Workers are at the lower end of the income scale; their remittances however, not only support household consumption back home but also provide resources for investment in the rural sector, particularly agriculture. Return migration however, can increase the incidence of un-employment by exerting pressure on the scarce job opportunities in the rural areas.

One of the key functions of the Ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs is to look after all emigration under the Emigration Act, 1983 from India to overseas countries. The Act seeks to protect emigrants from exploitation by unscrupulous agents and foreign employers and provides the framework for regulating

recruitment and emigration of Indian workers seeking employment overseas on a contractual basis.

With the availability of large workforce and surplus manpower of all categories, India is in a position to meet the manpower demand of the world. Major outflow of emigrant workers in the last few years from India has been to the Gulf countries where about four million workers are employed. The number of workers who were given emigration clearance for contractual employment abroad during the last five years and data on distribution of labour outflows is detailed in **Tables A, B and C**

There has been a consistent and steady increase in the number of persons emigrating for employment abroad from the year 2002 onwards. The number of emigration clearances granted by the eight offices of the Protectors of Emigrants has increased from 3.68 lakhs in 2002 to 6.77 lakhs in 2006. U.A.E. has become the main destination for Indian workers followed by Saudi Arabia. Outside the Gulf region, the intake of Indian manpower by Malaysia has shown a significant and consistent increase till 2005. There is considerable decline noticed in 2006. Employment for Indian workers in these countries holds a great potential.

The migration process extant tends to be exploitative for the overseas Indian workers and needs transformation into a more orderly economic process offering a win-win for all stakeholders. The regulatory framework needs to be modernized to bring about the transformation with emphasis on greater transparency, better regulation and deterrent punishment. The focus of the Ministry has therefore been on making the migration process humane and orderly.

Policy Initiatives

Several policy initiatives have been taken to make the regulatory framework governing migration liberal, transparent and progressive and include:

1. Exemption from EC/ECRS has been extended for 173 countries. EC/ECRS is now mandatory only for 18 countries out of the 192 countries in the UN system.
2. All persons with educational qualification of class-X or above have been exempted from the provisions of the Emigration Act. The earlier criteria was class-XII or above.

3. A Proposal for abolition of ECRS has been initiated.
4. Introduction of skill upgradation and pre-departure orientation program for emigrants.
5. Process for comprehensively amending the Emigration Act, 1983 has been commenced.
6. Labour MOU signed with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and finalized with Kuwait. Process initiated for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Malaysia. Additional Protocol to the existing labour agreement with Qatar finalized and initiated.
7. E-governance covering PGE and POE offices.
8. Proposal for constituting a Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment initiated.
9. Upgradation of the rank of POEs from the level of Section officer / Under Secretary to Under Secretary/ Deputy Secretary for better accountability.

AMENDMENTS TO THE EMIGRATION ACT, 1983

The Emigration Act, 1983 does not fully address the problems faced in emigration in the present day such as exploitation by recruiting agents and foreign employers and ill treatment of emigrants by foreign employers etc. Besides, there is a need to transform emigration into a more orderly economic process to enable Indian workers to reap the demographic dividends of globalization. The emigration law must address these issues and provide for promotion of overseas employment, greater transparency, better regulation and deterrent punishment. In particular there is a need to redefine the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the emigration process, promote and regulate the overseas employment of the citizens of India and ensure the protection and welfare of emigrants over the medium to long term. The emigration law must become an effective instrument for promotion of employment related migration, prevention of irregular migration and facilitation of the upward movement of Indian workers along the wage chain. The Ministry has, therefore, initiated the process of comprehensively amending the Emigration Act, 1983. It is expected that the process will be completed during 2007-08.

Computerization

To bring in greater transparency, efficiency and accountability in the emigration process and to support the legislative framework, the Ministry has planned comprehensive computerization of its emigration function. The initiative comprises two projects:

- (i) Automation of POE offices – The project has been assigned to the National Informatics Centre (NIC) for implementation. Automation of the office of POE in Delhi will be completed by April 2007. The remaining 7 POE offices will be automated by July 2007. This will replace the existing manual system of granting emigration services to prospective emigrants with a computerized system, which will lead to greater transparency, better monitoring, less discretion, less harassment, speedier processing and greater control on data.
- (ii) E-governance in Emigration – The project will be implemented through the National Institute for Smart Government (NISG) and is aimed at a comprehensive transformation of the emigration process. The objective is to provide efficient, convenient, cost-effective and reliable emigration services in a transparent manner, lay down a robust mechanism for protection of emigrants by developing ICT applications for registering of recruiting agents, foreign employers etc, bring various stakeholders on a common platform through an integrated ICT solution in the interest of transparency and accountability, enforce performance standards and provide enabling environment for value added services to emigrants and prospective emigrants. Such a transformation requires a fundamental rethinking and re-engineering of the existing processes to support high-quality services. The project will be implemented during 2007-08.

Bilateral Labour agreements

Bilateral cooperation between India and the major labour receiving countries is of vital import in ensuring protection and welfare of Overseas Indian Workers (OIWs). At present, India has bilateral labour agreements with two countries – Qatar and Jordan. These agreements were signed in the late eighties.

After the creation of the Ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs, the issue relating to signing bilateral labour memoranda of understanding (MOU) has received special attention. Bilateral agreements formalize government-to-government engagement to facilitate better management of international

migration as an orderly and humane process aimed at benefiting both countries apart from the emigrants. Such MOUs provide both countries a platform for implementing best practices, finding practical solutions to migrants' problems and preventing irregular migration.

The Ministry is negotiating bilateral labour MOUs with six countries – Malaysia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain. These countries account for almost 90% of the labour outflows from India. The progress made so far in this regard is as follows:

1. The MOU with the UAE has been signed on 13th December 2006.
2. The MOU with Kuwait has been negotiated, finalized and initialed at the official level. It is likely to be signed at the ministerial level by March 2007 after completing all procedural requirements by both sides.
3. An additional protocol to the existing labour agreement between India and Qatar has been negotiated, finalized and initialed at the official level. It is likely to be signed at the ministerial level by June 2007 after completing all procedural requirements by both sides.

Specific provisions have been incorporated in the MOUs for promoting overseas employment, extending protection of law to all categories of emigrant workers, preventing illegal migration of workers and constituting a Joint Committee to monitor the implementation of the MOU and resolve issues connected therewith.

Pre-departure orientation and skill upgradation

The demand for unskilled workers is rapidly declining in the overseas employment market. The future belongs to those who have skills, preferably multiple skills and are willing to upgrade their skills. Hence, it is extremely important for India to take immediate steps for preparing its young workforce to meet the challenges of future needs in the overseas employment market.

India is not the only country supplying manpower for overseas employment. Countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines and China are our competitors. This is all the more reason why we must take steps to upgrade the skills of our workers so that they could move higher and higher on the wage ladder.

The overseas employment market is a highly imperfect market leading to malpractices by intermediates, low wages, poor working and living conditions, ill treatment and exploitation of workers. The situation becomes worse due to lack of awareness and skills amongst potential emigrants.

The Ministry has therefore launched a scheme in order to bring the skill level of Indian emigrants at par with the overseas market requirement and to equip them with a basic knowledge about laws, language and culture of the destination country. The scheme is being implemented through state governments, SISIs, tool rooms and other technical training centres. The scheme finances a week-long module for refreshing the skills of the potential emigrants compatible with the needs of different countries and for familiarizing them with good working practice safety norms and use of tools. There are inputs on human behavior, recruitment, visa and emigration procedures as well as elementary inputs in bookkeeping.

Under this scheme, the Ministry bears 75% of the expenditure on training, upto a ceiling of Rs one crore per state. During 2006-07 about 40,000 workers will be trained on a pilot basis in 5 states at a cost of Rs. 4 crore to the Ministry. Funds have been released to the state governments of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Kerala and Karnataka. The scheme will be expanded to cover other major states in the ensuing financial year.

Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment

In a rapidly globalizing world there is a need to bring a strategic dimension to the process of emigration of Indians abroad in search of employment and to forge partnerships that will best serve India as a supplier of skilled and trained manpower and meet the expectations of the Overseas Indian Workers (OIW) as a significant constituency across the world.

Although the Emigration Act, 1983 lays down the regulatory framework for protecting the worker, it does not provide an institutional mechanism for promotion and facilitation of overseas employment. To take full advantage of the emerging employment opportunities abroad and meet the challenge of competition from other labour sending countries (like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Indonesia), it is important that appropriate steps are taken by the Government to promote and facilitate overseas deployment of Indian workers. There is also a need to address issues relating to the welfare of the increasing number of overseas Indian workers particularly the categories like the unskilled, semi-skilled workers and housemaids as well as that of the returnees.

The vast manpower that India has makes overseas employment for Indians a key opportunity area. However competition is eating into low wage jobs and localization is reducing the number of low-skilled jobs. Due to rapid development of technology, the demand for skilled manpower is on the rise. The labour supplying countries of the world are progressively working out strategies for upgrading the skills of workers to enhance their professional capabilities, ensure their upward movement in the wage chain, sharpening their edge in

competitiveness and reducing their vulnerability to exploitation by foreign employers.

In order to make Indian workers globally competitive, the Ministry has initiated a proposal for constituting a Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment.

Social Security Agreements

At present 54% population of India is in the age group below 25 years. By 2020 India will be the world's youngest nation with a workforce of 820 million as compared to 400 million today. Developed countries would have major population over 50 years of age by 2020. On the other hand the population of most of the developed countries is aging. Obviously, for their sustained economic growth these countries would need a large emigrant workforce in future.

India has vast reservoir of technically qualified manpower in sectors like Information Technology, Engineering, Health, Finance and Management. With increasing globalization, rapid growth in the Indian economy, emerging opportunities in the global economy, a large pool of young and technically qualified persons in India and an ageing population in the western world, migration of professionals from India is bound to grow considerably in the foreseeable future.

Bilateral social security agreements with these countries can protect the interests of Indian professionals persons by securing exemption from social security contribution in case of short-term contracts (provided the worker is covered under the Indian social security system and continues to pay his contribution to the Indian system during the period of contract) and exportability of benefits in case of relocation to India or any other country after having made social security contribution during a longer term employment, given the social security system extant in most countries. Such agreements would also make Indian companies more competitive since exemption from social security contribution in respect of their employees substantially reduces costs.

The first initiative of MOIA in the area of social security for overseas Indians has been with the Kingdom of Belgium. The Ministry signed a Social Security Agreement (SSA) on November 3, 2006 with Belgium further strengthening bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries. The importance of this agreement which will constitutes a model for similar agreements with other countries is that it is a bilateral instrument that best meets the needs of a rapidly globalizing economy such as India. The significance of the agreement arises from the fact that the investment by Indian companies in Belgium and the investment by Belgium companies in India have been growing rapidly in recent years leading to increasing movement of technically qualified and trained persons between the two countries. The agreement provides for the following benefits to Indians and Belgians working in each other's countries:

- (i) Those working on a short-term contract of up to sixty months are exempted from social security contributions in the host country provided they continue to make social security payments in their home countries.
- (ii) Those who live and work for periods longer than sixty months and make social security contributions under the host country laws will be entitled to the export of the social security benefits should they relocate to the home country on completion of their contract or on retirement.
- (iii) These benefits will also be available to employees sent by a company to the host country from a third country.
- (iv) Self-employed Indians in Belgium contributing to the Belgian social security system will be entitled to the export of social security benefits should they choose to relocate to India.

Based on the Indo-Belgian model, the Ministry has initiated the process for signing similar agreements with the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Germany, Norway and Bulgaria. The matter is also being discussed with the USA at the Digital Video Conferences.

Evacuation of Indian nationals from Lebanon

Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs had made arrangements to receive and assist the Indian nationals evacuated from Lebanon in the wake of its war with Israel on their arrival at Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi airports from 21st July 2006 to 21st August 2006. A total of 1836 Indian emigrants were evacuated. Besides the Indian emigrants, 436 Sri Lankan nationals and 65 Nepalese were brought to India for further transportation to their respective countries.

Bahrain Fire Accident

The Indian Embassy in Bahrain reported that a major fire broke out in a two-storey building in Gudabiya, Bahrain on 30.07.2006. The building housed about 220 Indian labourers. Sixteen Indian nationals, all from Tamil Nadu, died in this fire accident. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, in co-ordination with the Indian Embassy and the Government of Tamil Nadu, made arrangements to send the bodies of the deceased to the families in Tamil Nadu.

Bringing Back the Mortal Remains of Dead Workers

Beside the death of Indian Workers due to accidents, individual deaths also occur often in the Gulf countries and the relatives of such emigrants seek transportation of mortal remains. Quick arrangements are made with the help of the Indian Mission concerned to complete local formalities and bring the bodies to India for handing over to their relatives. The State Governments concerned are also involved in many cases to provide possible assistance on arrival of the mortal remains in India.

Remittances

The employment of Indian workers abroad helps to earn foreign exchange and thereby adds to the foreign exchange reserves of the country. The private transfer of foreign exchange from the year 2000-2001 onwards reported by the Reserve bank of India is given in **Table - D**. It may be observed that there has been a steady increase in the remittances from Rs. 58,756 crore in 2000-2001 to Rs. 51,222 crore in 2006-07 (upto 30th September, 2006). The growing number of unskilled and semi-skilled Indian workers employed in the Gulf countries, Malaysia and Singapore contribute a substantial proportion of this.

Emigration clearance Categories

Categories of persons whose passports have been endorsed as “Emigration Check Required” (ECR), if intending to travel abroad for purposes other than employment are required to obtain ‘suspension’ from the requirement of obtaining emigration clearance. Basically, those traveling abroad as tourists and whose passports carry ECR endorsement obtain ‘suspensions’. The total number of ‘suspensions’ granted by the Protectors of Emigrants during the last five years is given in **Table - E**.

Currently, fourteen categories of persons have been exempted from emigration clearance requirement and have been placed under the ‘Emigration Check Not Required’ (ECNR) category including all persons with educational qualification of class-X or above (**Table - F**). Persons belonging to any of these categories are entitled to get the ECNR endorsement on their passports from the Regional Passport Offices after showing proof of their eligibility. Persons with ECNR endorsement on their passports do not require any clearance from POE Offices.

Persons going to 173 countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan, countries in North America and Europe (excluding certain CIS countries) are exempted from emigration check formalities. EC/ECRS is now required only for 18 countries out of the 192 countries in the UN system. The pilgrims going for Haj and Umrah in Saudi Arabia and those pilgrims traveling with the declared purpose of performing Ziarat at Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and Sana (Yemen) are also exempt from the requirement of obtaining 'suspension' from Emigration Check Requirements from POEs/Passport offices. The complete list of 173 ECNR countries is given in **Table - G**.

Registered Recruiting Agents

The registration of Recruiting Agents under the Emigration Act, 1983, commenced from January, 1984, and upto 31st December, 2006 Registration Certificates were issued to 4915 Recruiting Agents. This figure includes nine State Manpower Export Corporations established in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi. Goa is also shortly joining this category. However, at present about 1600 Recruiting Agents are reportedly active in this business. Major concentration of Recruiting Agents is at Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Kerala.

Manpower Exports for Projects

Indian companies which are executing projects abroad are required to obtain appropriate clearance from the Reserve Bank of India and verification from the concerned Indian Mission is obtained before emigration clearance is granted for taking their workers abroad. A Bank Guarantee of an amount upto Rs.5 lakh depending upon the number of workers proposed to be taken abroad is also obtained from project exporters to ensure adequate protection to workers while working abroad.

The workers going abroad on an individual basis recruited by or directly through foreign employers are no longer required to deposit any security following introduction of the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana w.e.f. 25.12.2003.

Redressal of Grievances

As a result of the liberalisation of the policy while the number of persons going abroad has increased, a fair number of the emigrant workers face difficulties. Complaints are received from various quarters, regarding non-payment/ delayed payment of wages unilateral changes in the contracts of

workers, changing the jobs arbitrarily etc. In extreme though rare cases, the workers are not given any employment at all and are left in the lurch in the foreign country. Such workers, besides suffering untold misery, also become a burden on our Missions. In such instances, the Protector-General of Emigrants (PGE) steps in and gets the concerned Recruiting Agent to get the workers repatriated on his expense. If he fails to do, his Bank Guarantee is forfeited and the amount utilised to pay for the repatriation expenses.

Complaints against Recruiting Agents are enquired into with the help of POEs and the concerned Indian Missions and action, as appropriate in each case in accordance with the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983 and Rules framed there under, is taken. Complaints against un-registered agents are referred to the Police authorities concerned for investigation and action under the law of the land. All State Governments and UT Administrations have also been advised to instruct all Police Stations to keep a strict vigil on the activities of unscrupulous agents. Complaints against foreign employers are taken up with the Indian Missions and if need be the employer is blacklisted. Departmental action is also taken against the erring agents by way of suspension and cancellation of Registration Certificate and forfeiture of Bank Guarantee.

The Protector-General of Emigrants (PGE), Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs holds Public Hearings once a week on Tuesdays from 11.30 AM to 12.30 PM at the office of Protector of Emigrants, New Delhi. Affected parties can meet the PGE on the appointed day for redressal of their grievances. The PGE also holds Public Hearing at POE offices located out of Delhi from time to time, which is notified in advance by the POE concerned. Strict vigilance is enforced to secure proper conduct of the officials handling emigration matters.

Financial Services

Financial Services includes promotion of investment by overseas Indians in India including policy initiatives consistent with overall Government policies, interaction with the Investment Commission relating to foreign direct investment by overseas Indians (OIs), the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, and new initiatives for interaction by OIs in fields such as Trade, Health, and Science & Technology.

As a part of this mandate, the Ministry recently published two documents for the benefit of overseas – ‘A handbook for overseas Indians’ that serves as a ready reckoner for potential investors and ‘A compendium on investment policies’ that gives in considerable detail the investment regime in India. The ministry has also launched other initiatives to promote and facilitate overseas Indian investments in India.

E-remittance Gateway and Online Financial Services (www.overseasindian.in)

A World Bank report ‘Global Economic Prospects’ puts remittances of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to India at around US \$ 23.7 billion in 2005. Of this, a little less than half is estimated to be the remittances from Indian workers in the Gulf.

Though there are several remittance facilities available in the market, overseas Indians have limited choice of either using the fast but expensive facility or the economic but relatively slow facility to remit money back home. Keeping this in view, the Ministry decided to partner with the UTI bank to develop an integrated, universal, electronic remittance gateway that combines the virtues of economy, speed and convenience. This portal also extends financial advisory services called ‘Pravasi Bharatiya Seva’ on investment, taxation and real estate to potential overseas Indian investors.

This *e-remittance gateway* launched in 2006 is aimed primarily for the benefit of the workers in the Gulf and enables overseas Indians to remit money to designated accounts in any of the 23000 bank branches in India, operating on Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) network of the RBI. The facility at present covers Qatar and the UAE and will be fully operational in the gulf region by June 2007 and thereafter, extended to Europe

The financial services for overseas Indians provided through this portal gives real-time data and information to overseas Indians on matters relating to taxation, the capital markets and the real estate market to enable potential investors to make well informed investment decisions. The advisory services are fully operational and are available on the www.overseasindian.in portal.

Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre

India is already the highest recipient of remittances from overseas Indians (\$23bn - 2005). However, given the profile of the Indian Diaspora, the investment by overseas Indians has been far short of its potential. While there is high interest amongst overseas Indians to invest in India, there is a need for a market driven institutional platform that will facilitate a two-way flow of overseas Indian investment into India as well as promote B-to-B partnerships of Indian businesses with overseas Indians.

A need has therefore, been felt for a trusted and neutral body with state of the art facilities to provide a host of investment advisory services efficiently and on a real time basis. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs is in the process of establishing a center as a not-for-profit trust, in partnership with one of the apex industry associations in the country. The centre will serve as a “one stop shop” for the Indian Diaspora.

The OIFC is expected to be operational during the financial year 2007-08.

AAPI-India Rural Health Initiative

The Ministry signed a MoU with AAPI in 2006 to take up initiatives in healthcare all over the country starting with pilot projects in two States i.e. Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The partnership with AAPI and the states provides a framework to tap diaspora knowledge resources to promote and implement innovative and best practices in healthcare in Indian States. The objective of this project is to create a template in rural healthcare through pilot projects, which can then be replicated in other states. The States of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are the pilot States.

The project envisages canalizing the knowledge resource of AAPI to train the local medical practitioners for early detection and medication of different diseases like Carcinoma Cervix, Diabetes, Heart disease, Carcinoma Prostate and Deafness in children. It also seeks to build capacities in the community to undertake preventive measures and raise awareness on the need for a healthy life style. The project is expected to start on a pilot basis in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar in the beginning of the next financial year.

Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra

The proposal to establish a “Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra” was suggested by the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora to provide a suitable place to commemorate the trials and tribulations, as well as the subsequent evolution and

achievements of the diverse Indian Diaspora. The Kendra would become the focal point for interactions between India and the Diaspora and would also in course of time, become the hub of various activities aimed at creating pride in the achievements of India and the Diaspora. It would be an ideal centre to facilitate harnessing of the talent pool amongst overseas Indians.

The Ministry of Urban Development has recently allotted land in New Delhi for the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra.

OVERSEAS INDIAN CENTRES

The Government has approved setting up one Overseas Indian Centre at Dubai to provide medical, legal and financial counseling to the overseas Indian workers in the Gulf countries. The Centre headed by a Counsellor will provide professional assistance and requisite guidance to the needy workers.

Social Services

Indian women facing problems such as desertion, ex-parte divorce decrees etc in marriages with overseas Indians has been articulated in several forums including the media. The Ministry is working with relevant stakeholders to create awareness on this issue and help find solutions to mitigate the problems. In this effort the Ministry has embarked on an active campaign to educate the people and various stakeholders on the measures that can help address these issues.

PUBLICITY AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Ministry in collaboration with the National Commission for Women organized two regional workshops in Chandigarh in June 2006 and in Trivandrum in September 2006. The objective of these workshops was to involve the State Commissions for Women as well as the women organizations of the states concerned to spread awareness.

The Ministry organized parallel sessions during PBD, 07 in which issues relating to problems of Overseas Indian marriages were discussed. NGOs, women organizations and State Government representatives besides the overseas Indian delegates attended these sessions.

The Ministry has with the assistance of the Indian Society of International Law, published a guidance booklet on Marriages with Overseas Indians for the benefit of prospective brides and their families. This booklet contains information on safeguards available to women deserted by their NRI spouses, legal remedies that can be pursued, authorities that can be approached for redressal of grievances and non-governmental organizations that can provide assistance. The Prime Minister released the guidance booklet during PBD 2007. It will be circulated to the State Governments in various languages and to the embassies & NGOs for dissemination of information in this regard.

The Ministry has also published pamphlets in various languages to educate the masses about the issues involved in such marriages & the precautions that should be taken. In addition a publicity campaign through electronic scrolls on regional T.V networks was done in the states of Punjab and Andhra Pradesh.

Financial assistance for women deserted by overseas Indian spouses

In its bid to assist Indian women who have either been deserted or divorced by their overseas Indian spouses within two years of marriage, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has introduced a scheme to provide them financial assistance for obtaining legal and counseling services, through Indian Missions abroad.

The Ministry has introduced the scheme, to start with, in USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Gulf, which are countries from where several such cases are being reported. The assistance will be provided to Indian women who are victims of fraudulent marriages and deserted by their Overseas Indian husbands or are facing divorce proceedings in a foreign country.

The concerned Indian Missions will involve credible Indian women's organizations and NGOs working in these countries and give them financial assistance to the tune of US \$1,000 per case. The organizations will be expected to provide documentation and initial support for legal proceedings and counseling for the deserted women.

The objective of the scheme is to provide advisory and legal services to women of Indian origin in distress as a welfare measure. A panel of community advocates through credible Indian associations and women's organizations would provide legal services.

The scheme will cover Indian women deserted in India or overseas within two years of their marriage and divorce proceedings initiated by the Overseas Indian husband within two years of marriage. Legal aid will also be provided in the cases of an ex-parte decree of divorce or annulment of the marriage obtained by the Overseas Indian husband and a case of maintenance or alimony are required to be filed.

The scheme has been introduced in the wake of increasing number of complaints of Indian women who opt for NRI/Overseas Indian marriages but are abandoned or ill-treated by their husbands.

Constitution of a Gender Advisory Group in MOIA

The Ministry has also constituted a Gender Advisory Group consisting of representatives from related Ministries, NCW, State Governments, the legal fraternity and non-governmental organizations. This Group will engage in exploring ways and means of providing assistance to women who face problems arising from marriages to overseas Indians.

Budget and financial review

The Outcome Budget of the Ministry for the year 2006-07 and the Performance Budget for the year 2005-06 were presented to the Parliament in March 2006. For the year 2006-2007, the Budget Estimate for the Ministry was Rs 38 crores and the Revised Estimate was Rs 26 crores. The Budget Estimate for the year 2007-08 has been fixed at Rs.50 crores. The trends in expenditure may be seen at the figures A-C in the annexure.

Miscellaneous

VIGILANCE ACTIVITIES

The Vigilance Division of the Ministry is headed by a Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) of the rank of Joint Secretary who functions as a nodal point for all vigilance matters in consultation with the Central Vigilance Commission and Investigating Agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation. Complaints on corruption and malpractices about the functioning of the Protector of Emigrants offices and the Recruiting Agents, received from the general public are dealt with in a time bound manner.

The Ministry is implementing the guidelines / instructions issued by the Department of Personnel & Training and the Central Vigilance Commission on creating greater awareness of vigilance among the users. In order to bring about awareness about vigilance and transparency in functioning of offices that have public inter-face, the Vigilance Awareness Week was celebrated from November 6 – 10, 2006 starting with a pledge taking on November 6.

The investigation reports received from the Investigating Agencies were promptly dealt with and prosecution sanction got issued as per requirement of the Investigating Authorities. The actions pending with the Investigating Agencies are continuously being followed up.

PROGRESSIVE USE OF HINDI

Official Language Section of the Ministry has the nodal responsibility for effective implementation of the Official Language Act and Rules made there under. It is at present manned by one Assistant Director. Efforts were made to

increase the use of Hindi in the Ministry during the period under report with the help of out sourced staff. Provisions of Section 3(3) of the Official Language Act, 1963 were complied with fully. All papers pertaining to these provisions were issued bilingually i.e. Hindi & English. Letters received in Hindi were replied to in Hindi.

The Ministry organized “Hindi Week” from 18th to 22nd September 2006. During this period a Hindi workshop was organized to impart basic knowledge of writing notes and preparing drafts in Hindi on routine subjects. Noting & Drafting in Hindi and Essay competitions were organised. The Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Shri Vayalar Ravi gave prizes and certificates to the successful officers/employees.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT (RTI)

For information under the RTI Act, 2005 citizens may approach the Public Information Officer (RTI) of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs available from 10:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs on each day (except Monday and Friday). The following officers are designated as the Public Information Officer and Appellate Authority in respect of matters pertaining to Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs:

Matter	Public Information Officer	Appellate Authority
All matters relating to the office of Protector General of Emigrants and offices of Protectors of Emigrants	Director (Employment Services)	Protector General of Emigrants
All matters relating to Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, other than emigration related issues	Deputy Secretary (Financial Services)	Joint Secretary (Financial Services & C.V.O)

Cases received during 2006-2007- Upto February 2007, the number of applications received during the financial year was 39. The number of cases disposed off was 33. There were no cases of appeal being made by any applicant. The effort of the Ministry is to send a reply to the applicant at the earliest possible and in any case within the stipulated time limit of one month.

Annexure & Tables

Annexure	Functions of the Ministry
TABLE - A	Emigration For Employment during The Last Five Years
TABLE - B	The Distribution of Annual Labour Outflows from India by Destination
TABLE - C	State-wise figures of Workers Granted Emigration Clearance/ECNR Endorsement (2001-2005)
TABLE - D	Private Remittances
TABLE - E	Suspension of Emigration Clearance
TABLE - F	List of Persons/Categories of workers in whose case emigration check is not required
TABLE - G	List of countries for which emigration check is not required
Figure-I	Budget estimates and expenditure
Figure-J	Administrative expenditure vis a vis scheme expenditure
Figure-K	Reducing net outflow on PBD.

Annexure-Functions of the Ministry

1. All matters relating to Overseas Indians comprising Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) excluding entries specifically allotted to other Departments.
2. Promotion of investment by Overseas Indians in India including innovative investments and policy initiatives consistent with the overall Government policies particularly in areas such as exclusive Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for Overseas Indians.
3. To be represented in the Foreign Investment Promotion Board and the Foreign Investment Implementation Authority.
4. To interact with the Investment Commission and to be consulted by the said Commission and to be kept informed of all matters relating to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by Overseas Indians.
5. All emigration under the Emigration Act, 1983 (31 of 1983) from India to overseas countries and the return of emigrants.
6. Matters relating to Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards and Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra.
7. Matters relating to programmes in India for overseas Indian Volunteers.
8. Setting up and administration of Centres for Overseas Indians' Affairs in countries having major concentration of Overseas Indians in consultation and coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs.
9. Policy regarding employment assistance to PIO/NRIs excluding reservations in Government service.
10. Collection and dissemination of information concerning admission of NRI/PIO students to various educational, technical and cultural institutions in India wherever discretionary quota for NRI/PIO students exists, in consultation with the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Culture.
11. Scholarship to NRI/PIO students for study in India under different schemes in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs.
12. Development of marketing and communication strategies to ensure strong links between the Overseas Indian community and India.
13. Matters relating to NRI/PIO contributions to the Government and parental organisations in consultation with the Department of Economic Affairs.
14. Guidance to and Cooperation with the State Governments and coordination with them on matters related to Overseas Indians.
15. To be represented in the Indian Council of Cultural Relations.
16. Establishment of institutions to impart vocational and technical training to meet the requirements of skilled manpower abroad with the concurrence of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
17. External Publicity relating to Overseas Indians' affairs in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs and in consonance with foreign policy objectives.
18. New initiatives for interaction by Overseas Indians with India in the fields such as Trade, Culture, Tourism, Media, Youth Affairs, Health, Education, Science and Technology in consultation with concerned Ministries.
19. Exercise of powers conferred by the section 7B(1) of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955).

TABLE - A

EMIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year	No. of workers (in lakhs)
2002	3.68
2003	4.66
2004	4.75
2005	5.49
2006	6.77

Source: Protector General of Emigrants

TABLE - B

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANNUAL LABOUR OUTFLOWS FROM INDIA BY DESTINATION 2002-2006

SN	Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1	U. A. E.	95034	143804	175262	194412	254774
2	Saudi Arabia	99453	121431	123522	99879	134059
3	Malaysia	10512	26898	31464	71041	36500
4	Qatar	12596	14251	16325	50222	76324
5	Oman	41209	36816	33275	40931	67992
6	Kuwait	4859	54434	52064	39124	47449
7	Bahrain	20807	24778	22980	30060	37688
8	Maldives	--	--	3233	3423	4671
9	Mauritius	--	--	3544	1965	1795
10	Jordan	--	--	2576	1851	1485

	Others	83193	44044	10715	15945	14175
	TOTAL	367663	466456	474960	548853	676912

Source: Protector General of emigrants

TABLE - C

STATE-WISE FIGURES OF WORKERS GRANTED EMIGRATION CLEARANCE/ECNR ENDORSEMENT DURING THE YEARS 2001-2005

SN	State	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1.	Kerala	81,950	92,044	63,512	1,25,075	1,20,083
2.	Tamil Nadu	79,165	89,464	1,08,964	1,17,050	1,55,631
3.	Karnataka	14,061	22,641	19,237	75,384	24,362
4.	Gujarat	11,925	17,012	22,218	49,923	13,274
5.	Andhra Pradesh	38,417	65,971	72,580	48,498	97,680
6.	Maharashtra	25,477	29,350	28,670	29,289	15,356
7.	Punjab	19,638	24,963	25,302	24,088	39,311
8.	Uttar Pradesh	19,288	24,854	27,428	22,558	66,131
9.	Rajasthan	23,254	37,693	35,108	21,899	50,236
10.	Bihar	19,222	17,104	21,812	9,366	36,493
11.	Delhi	4,018	6,513	6,052	6,024	9098
12.	Madhya Pradesh	7,411	10,651	8,888	5,312	7047
13.	West Bengal	8,338	8,906	8,986	5,102	14,929
14.	Haryana	424	1,246	1,267	2,313	193
15.	Goa	3,545	3,494	7,053	1,627	4,063
16.	Orissa	1,742	5,370	6,999	1,258	4,114
17.	Jharkhand	0	1,779	919	974	1,427
18.	Chandigarh	2,813	2,374	2,405	807	6,616
19.	Himachal Pradesh	1,724	1,690	1,506	762	1,180
20.	Assam	2,666	2298	2,695	669	1,075
21.	Jammu & Kashmir	1,323	42	1,944	486	1,661
22.	Pondichery	21	24	560	222	2
23.	Uttaranchal	106	122	58	137	93
24.	Andaman & Nicobar	2	9	29	5	190
25.	Tripura	1,114	4	2	1	1
26.	Chhattisgarh	0	588	580	0	4735
27.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	61	73	0	0
28.	Nagaland	1	54	46	0	0
29.	Mizoram	0	81	38	0	0
30.	Manipur	2	50	29	0	0

31.	Sikkim	16	3	0	0	10
32.	Meghalaya	0	1	0	0	0
33.	DNH/UT	0	0	0	0	11
34.	Port Blair	0	0	0	0	1
35.	Others	0	0	0	24	1909
Total		3,67,663	4,66,456	4,74.960	5,48,853	676912

Source: Protector General of Emigrants

TABLE - D

PRIVATE REMITTANCES (upto September, 2006)

YEAR	<u>In US \$ million</u>	<u>In Rs. Crore</u>
2002-2003	14807	71642
2003-2004	18885	86764
2004-2005	14494	66861
2005-2006	24102	106860
2006-07*	11157	51222

Source: Reserve Bank of India

TABLE - E

SUSPENSION OF EMIGRATION CLEARANCE	
YEAR	No. of suspension granted (in lakhs)
2002	4.37
2003	4.96
2004	4.49
2005	4.65

2006	5.54
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Source: Protector General of Emigrants

Table - F

LIST OF PERSONS/CATEGORIES OF WORKERS IN WHOSE CASE EMIGRATION CHECK IS NOT REQUIRED

1. All holders of Diplomatic / Official Passports	8. Deleted
2. All Gazetted Government servants.	9. Persons holding permanent immigration visas, such as the visas of UK, USA and Australia.
3. All Income-tax payers (including Agricultural Income-tax payees) in their individual capacity	10. Persons possessing two years' diploma from any institute recognized by the national Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) or State Council of Vocational Training (SCVT) or persons holding three years' diploma / equivalent degree from institutions like Polytechnics recognized by Central/State Governments.
4. All professional degree holders, such as Doctors holding MBBS degrees or Degrees in Ayurveda or Homoeopathy; Accredited Journalists; Engineers; Chartered Accountants; Lecturers; Teachers; Scientists; Advocates etc.	11. Nurses possessing qualification recognized under the Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947.
5. Spouses and dependent children of category of persons listed from (2) to (4).	12. All persons above the age of 50 years.
6. Persons holding class 10 qualification or higher Degrees.	13. All persons who have been staying abroad for more than three years (the period of three years could be either in one stretch or broken) and spouses.
7. Seamen who are in possession of CDC	14. Children below 18 years of age.

<p>or Sea Cadets, Desk Cadets (i) who have passed final examination of three year B.Sc. Nautical Sciences Courses at T.S. Chanakya, Mumbai; and (ii) who have undergone three months pre-sea training at any of the Government approved Training Institutes such as T.S. Chanakya, T.S. Rehman, T.S. Jawahar, MTI(SCI) and NIPM, Chennai after production of identity cards issued by the Shipping Master, Mumbai/Kolkata/Chennai.</p>	
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Table - G

LIST OF COUNTRIES FOR WHICH EMIGRATION CHECK IS NOT REQUIRED

1. Albania	32. Chile	62. Germany	95. Malta	127. Romania
2. Algeria	33. China	63. Ghana	96. Marshall Islands	128. Russian Federation
3. Andorra	34. Colombia	64. Greece	97. Mauritania	129. Rwanda
4. Angola	35. Comoros	65. Grenada	98. Mauritius	130. Saint Kitts and Nevis
5. Antigua & Barbuda	36. Congo	66. Guatemala	99. Mexico	131. Saint Lucia
6. Argentina	37. Costa Rica	67. Guinea	100. Micronesia	132. St Vincent and the Grenadines
7. Armenia	38. Cote d'Ivoire	68. Guinea-Bissau	101. Moldova	133. Samoa
8. Australia	39. Croatia	69. Guyana	102. Monaco	134. San Marino
9. Austria	40. Cuba	70. Haiti	103. Mongolia	135. Sao Tome and Principe
10. Azerbaijan	41. Cyprus	71. Honduras	104. Montenegro	136. Senegal
11. Bahamas	42. Czech Republic	72. Hungary	105. Morocco	
12. Bangladesh	43. DPR Korea	73. Iceland	106. Mozambique	
13. Barbados	44. Democratic Republic of Congo	74. Iran	107. Myanmar	
14. Belarus	45. Denmark	75. Ireland	108. Namibia	
15. Belgium	46. Djibouti	76. Israel	109. Nauru	
16. Belize	47. Dominica	77. Italy	110. Nepal	
17. Benin		78. Jamaica		

18. Bhutan	48. Dominican Republic	79. Japan	111. Netherlands	137. Serbia
19. Bolivia	49. Ecuador	80. Kazakhstan	112. New Zealand	138. Seychelles
20. Bosnia and Herzegovina	50. Egypt	81. Kenya	113. Nicaragua	139. Sierra Leone
21. Botswana	51. El Salvador	82. Kiribati	114. Niger	140. Singapore
22. Brazil	52. Equatorial Guinea	83. Kyrgyzstan	115. Nigeria	141. Slovakia
23. Bulgaria	53. Eritrea	84. Laos PDR	116. Norway	142. Slovenia
24. Burkina Faso	54. Estonia	85. Latvia	117. Pakistan	143. Solomon Islands
25. Burundi	55. Ethiopia	86. Lesotho	118. Palau	144. Somalia
26. Cambodia	56. Fiji	87. Liberia	119. Panama	145. South Africa
27. Cameroon	57. Finland	88. Liechtenstein	120. Papua New Guinea	146. Spain
28. Canada	58. France	89. Lithuania	121. Paraguay	147. Sri Lanka
29. Cape Verde	59. Gabon	90. Luxemburg	122. Peru	148. Suriname
30. Central African Republic	60. Gambia	91. Madagascar	123. Philippines	149. Swaziland
31. Chad	61. Georgia	92. Malawi	124. Poland	150. Sweden
		93. Maldives	125. Portugal	151. Switzerland
		94. Mali	126. Republic of Korea	152. Tajikistan
				153. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
154. Timor-Leste				
155. Togo				

156. Tonga				
157. Trinidad and Tobago				
158. Tunisia				
159. Turkey				
160. Turkmenist an				
161. Tuvalu				
162. Uganda				
163. Ukraine				
164. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island				
165. United Republic of Tanzania				
166. USA				
167. Uruguay				
168. Uzbekistan				
169. Vanuatu				
170. Venezuela				
171. Vietnam				
172. Zambia				
173. Zimbabwe				

Figure-A
Estimates and Expenditure

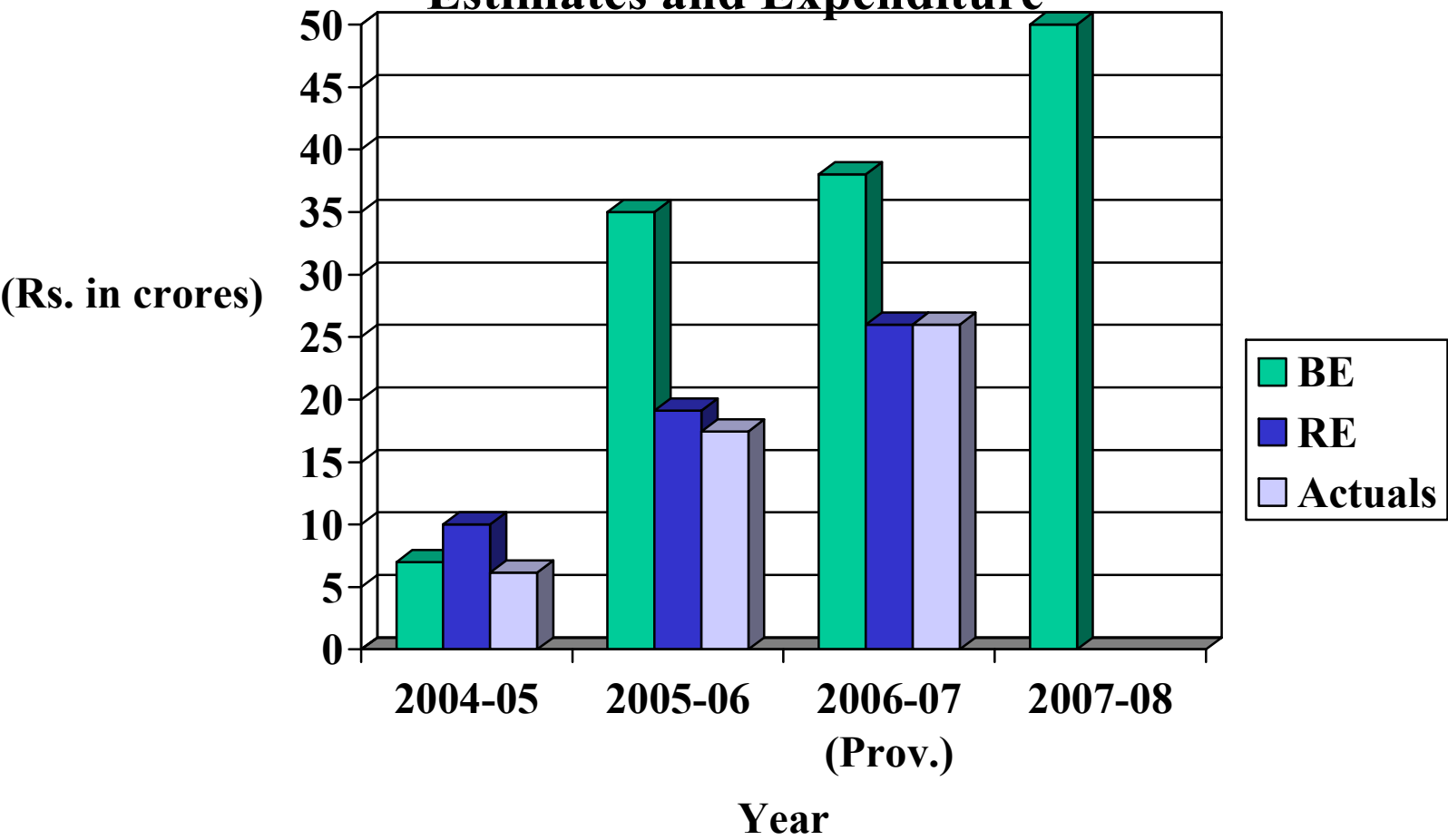


Figure-B
Administrative Expenditure* vis-à-vis Scheme Expenditure

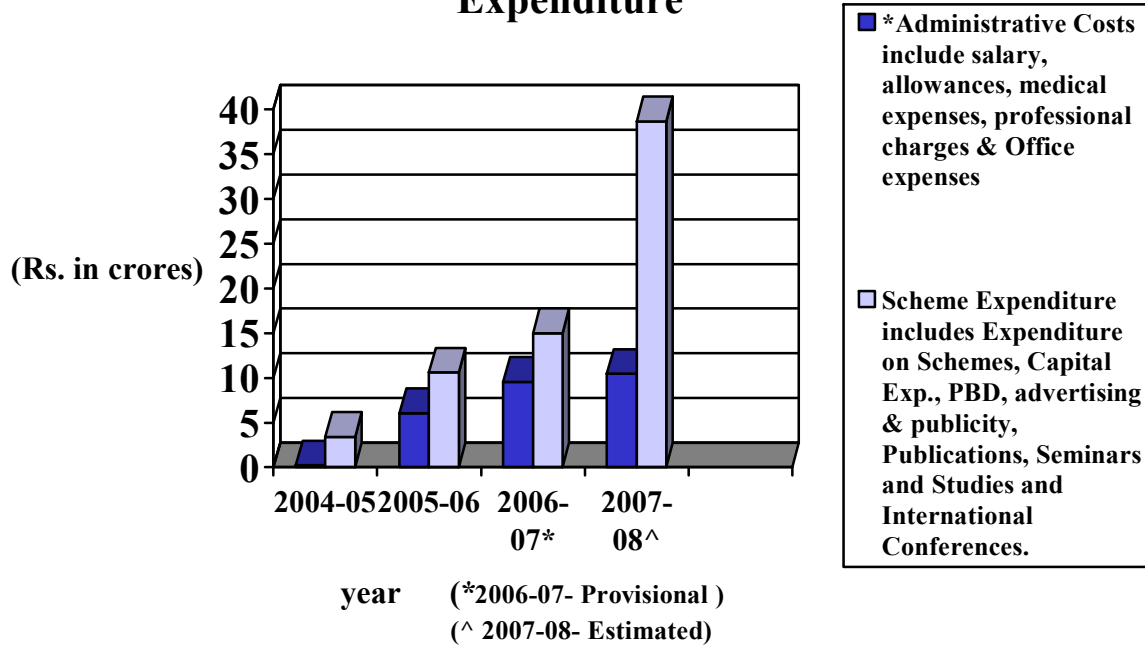


Figure-C
Reduction in Net Budget Outflow* on PBD

