Overview

Overseas Employment Division

Every year number of people from India go abroad for overseas employment purposes. Out of these almost 3.5 lakh emigrants (in 2019) went to countries which are notified as 'Emigration Check Required' (ECR) countries. These are Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Many of these emigrants (blue collar workers) are less educated and less skilled or unskilled; their Passports are issued with an 'Emigration Check Required' (ECR) remark affixed on their Passports. Before they travel abroad for employment, they are required to obtain an 'Emigration Clearance' from any of the offices of Protectors of Emigrants (POE). Emigration clearance (EC) is a safety measure which ensures that they will not be duped overseas and is granted after verifying offered salary, working terms and conditions of Employment Contract as well as credentials of Foreign Employer and Insurance through Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY), etc. The Emigration Clearance is now issued online by 13 Protectors of Emigrants whose offices are located in Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Rae Bareli, and Thiruvananthapuram, Bangalore, Patna and Guwahati. In addition to skilled/semi-skilled workers, a number of students and highly skilled professionals also move to countries such as USA, UK, Canada, Australia, etc., where labour and employment laws are well defined and emigrants' interests are well protected under the local law. For migration to such countries no emigration clearance is required to

be obtained. These countries are also termed as Emigration Clearance Not Required (ECNR) countries. Briefly, the sole purpose of Emigration Clearance (EC) process is that any Indian who emigrates, should go safely, after appropriate skill development and pre-departure orientation. To regulate overseas employment especially for protection of less educated blue collar workers, the Emigration Check Required process is regulated through a unique computerised system called "e-Migrate". This is a system which is integrated with the Passport Sewa Project of the Ministry of External Affairs and Bureau of Immigration of the Ministry of Home Affairs on one-hand and the Indian Missions in the 18 ECR countries, Foreign Employers and the Registered Recruiting Agents on the other. This ensures that all Stakeholders are on the same electronic-platform, which greatly enhances the "Ease-of-doing-business" and ensures prompt and easy action on all fronts to all the Stakeholders. Whenever an emigrant arrives at an airport or check-post to proceed abroad, his Passport details are validated online by the Immigration Officers and only those who have obtained Emigration Clearance are allowed to travel. This is a measure to ensure protection against possible exploitation, of the Indian workers overseas. The "e-Migrate" system functions under the control of Protector General of Emigrants who exercises directly or through Protector of Emigrants the powers and responsibilities under the Emigration Act, 1983 through the system, to ensure protection of Indian emigrants proceeding abroad, for overseas employment. After the merger of the erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with MEA, the Overseas Employment Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, is now also reaching out to help Overseas Indian emigrants in distress, in ECNR countries and also ECR Passport

holders and also takes action against illegal recruitment activities being conducted in different States/UTs of India; through the State Governments and their Law Enforcement Agencies for infringement of the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983.