

Policy measures for the protection and welfare of Indian female domestic workers

The Government of India has taken several policy measures since the year 2007 for the protection and welfare of Indian female domestic workers coming to the GCC countries for employment, as stated below:-

- I. A female domestic worker should not be less than 30 years of age;
- II. The Employment contract should be between the sponsor and the worker and that the attestation of this contract is mandatory from Indian Embassy;
- III. Every foreign employer recruiting Indian female domestic worker has to provide bank guarantee of US\$ 2,500 with the Indian Embassy;
- IV. A pre-paid mobile phone should be provided by the employer to domestic worker;
- V. Payment of minimum monthly wage to female domestic workers (KD 70 per month in Kuwait); and
- VI. 24X7 Telephone Helpline, run by the Embassy, for information and advice to Indian workers as regards their grievances, immigration and other matters.

2. The bank guarantee policy measure has already been implemented in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar. As it is now necessary to submit bank guarantee of US \$ 2,500 by sponsors in Kuwait employing Indian female domestic workers, the Embassy had issued a press release on 12 September 2014. There is no denying of the fact that there have been many instances in the past of non-payment of wages, severe physical and mental abuse, and acute harassment of Indian domestic workers in Kuwait. Very often passports of Indian domestic workers are kept by their sponsors in Kuwait.

3. While the bank guarantee provision has been implemented for Indian female domestic workers in other GCC countries since 2007, its implementation has been effective in Kuwait from 13 September 2014. The bank guarantee is required only for female Indian domestic workers and that too those coming to Kuwait after the introduction of bank guarantee provision in September 2014. The bank guarantee is not needed for those Indian female workers who are already working in Kuwait.

4. The bank guarantee will be returned to the sponsor once he/she fulfils his/her contractual obligations. Only in rare cases of non-payment of dues etc., the bank guarantee will be used to settle the dues.

5. The Indian authorities have proposed in March 2014 to the authorities of Kuwait to conclude early an Agreement on labour cooperation for domestic workers recruitment. India has signed a similar agreement with Saudi Arabia in January 2014.

6. The Embassy is working with concerned authorities in Kuwait for the strengthening further of historically close and friendly ties between India and Kuwait.

Kuwait

9 December 2014

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