

# **PANEL DISCUSSION - II**

## **DELIVERING CONSULAR SERVICES**



**PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS 2017**  
**Action Taken Report**  
(Bengaluru, January 2017)

# Snapshot of consular services delivery

- Size of Indian Diaspora: **1.14 crore** NRIs and **1.55 crore** PIOs in 146 countries. Total number of Indian Diaspora is nearly **2.69 crore**.
- Spread of Indian Missions/Posts:
- Inbound tourists:
- Visas issued: Total visas issued – **5523649** e-TV issued – **1701349**; Visa work outsourced in **67** Indian Missions/Posts abroad; IVFRT scheme has been introduced in **166** Indian Missions/Posts abroad; **77** Missions/Posts have implemented biometric enrolment procedures
- OCI/PIO Cards: Total applications – **2496013** OCI cards issued – **2404357**
- Attestation of documents: **3,53,646** General and **1,74,878** Commercial documents attested in 2015; **4,36,601** documents Apostilled; **34, 724** documents attested/apostilled at four MEA Branch Secretariats at Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata and Guwahati.
- MADAD – Grievances Registered – **16725**; Grievance resolved – **10379**; Students Registered – **8444**; Total users Registered - **59982**

# Key recommendations

- **OCI card related issues**
- **Registration of Indian nationals at Indian Missions/Posts**
- **Simplification of the nationality renunciation process**
- **Problems with Consular services at Indian Missions/Posts abroad**

# Key recommendations

- **Voting arrangements, Aadhaar and PAN cards for NRIs**
- **Regulating recruiting agents**
- **Creative usage of ICWF funds**
- **Attestation reforms**

# Key recommendations

- **Concurrent accreditation of Indian Missions/Posts**
- **Publicity of success/best practices related to Consular services**
- **Other issues**

# OCI card related issues

- **Recommendation:** Extension of deadline for conversion of IO card to OCI card  
**Action Taken:** Deadline has been extended again from 31 December 2016 to 30 June 2017.
- **Recommendation:** Procedural simplification for conversion  
**Action Taken:** The process of conversion has been fairly simplified. A FAQ section has also been added on MEA website.
- **Recommendation:** Extension to beyond 4<sup>th</sup> generation  
**Action Taken:** It has been decided to use Girmitya records of Mauritius to extend OCI cards facility

# Registration of Indian nationals at Indian Missions/Posts

- **Recommendation:** All Missions/Posts should have a database of the Indian community in each country. This would help generate reliable data that could be useful in times of emergency.
- **Action Taken:** Ministry has instructed all Missions/Posts to proactively register Indian nationals abroad; Students travelling abroad are being advised to register on Madad; Prominent PIOs database

# **Simplification of the nationality renunciation process**

- **Recommendation:** Process of renunciation to be made simple and uniform; Fees and penalties to be brought down to a minimum level; One-time amnesty based on a deadline; Pre-surrender process
- **Action Taken:** These proposals are under consideration by the Government.



# Problems with Consular services at our Missions/Posts abroad - I

- **Recommendation:** Consular Services Charter; Rationalization of visa categories; Emergency visa facilities ; Better facilities in the Consular wings of Indian Missions/Posts; Employment additional local staff in Missions/Posts.
- **Action Taken:** A Consular Services Charter has already been formulated by the Government and the same is available on the website; The Consular officials of Indian Missions/Posts work in 24X7 fashion and grant visas and other services in case of emergencies; Sustained efforts are being made to provide better facilities. and to engage additional local staff wherever required.

# Problems with Consular services at our Missions/Posts abroad - II

- **Recommendation:** Organizing consular camps and Open Houses on a regular basis; Tighten penal clauses in contracts with outsourced service providers; Putting in place a 24x7 helpline; Designating welfare officers in Indian Missions/Posts; Address the problems of heavy visa demand at Indian Missions/Posts
- **Action Taken:** Open houses and consular camps are being organised increasingly by Indian Missions/Posts; A revised RFP has been formulated; Welfare officers have been designated in Indian Missions/Posts with substantial Diaspora. The list of these welfare officers is also available on MEA's ad Mission/Consulate's website; visa processing centre has been set up in New Delhi.

# Voting arrangements, Aadhaar and PAN cards for NRIs

- **Recommendation:** Extending voting facility to NRIs and providing Aadhaar and PAN cards directly or through outsourced arrangements.
- **Action Taken:** This matter is under active consideration of the Government.

# Regulating recruiting agents

- **Recommendation:** Streamline the process of emigration and tighten regulation of recruiting agents in coordination with State authorities concerned to prevent unscrupulous elements from operating; Issue of human trafficking
- **Action Taken:** These proposals are under consideration by the Government.

# Creative usage of ICWF funds

- **Recommendation:** Explore creative ways to use ICWF funds available with Indian Missions/Posts to address the needs of overseas Indians
- **Action Taken:** Extant ICWF guidelines are being revised; Online prisoners module has been created as part of MADAD

# Attestation reforms

- **Recommendation:** Simplify and modernise the attestation process.
- **Action Taken:** Launch of e-Sanad, an online attestation platform; Integration with National Academic Depository of MHRD; Decentralisation of Attestation/Apostille work to RPOs (Bangalore, Chandigarh, Goa, Mumbai and Trivandrum); Discontinuation of postal orders and payment through online payment gateway of NTRP; Plans to extend attestation services to NRI using the e-Sanad platform.

# Concurrent accreditation of Indian Missions/Posts

- **Recommendation:** List of countries to which Indian Missions/Posts are concurrently accredited to be reviewed and rationalised with the aim of making Consular services conveniently accessible to PIOs. The possibility of appointing more Honorary Consuls could also be looked into.
- **Action Taken:** The Government has undertaken comprehensive examination of the concurrent accreditation of our Missions abroad and appointment of Honorary Consuls in consultation with various stakeholders, taking into account our bilateral relations, economic ties, functional requirements and our focus on facilitating easy access of consular services to PIOs. The final proposal is under submission for consideration and approval of the Competent Authority.

# Publicity of success/best practices related to Consular services

- **Recommendation:** MEA should proactively publicize all new initiatives and success stories related to Consular services for greater awareness about the same amongst members of the Indian community.
- **Action Taken:** XP Division of the Ministry of External Affairs has been spearheading these efforts. Using tools of digital diplomacy.



# Other issues

- **Recommendation:** India should pursue mutual recognition of qualifications with as many countries as possible, to enable greater opportunities for migration of Indians and PIOs; Conduct a census survey to obtain the latest country-wise statistics of Indian Diaspora.
- **Action Taken:** A committee was constituted to look into the problems of equivalence of qualifications at various stages of education system. MoUs/Agreements regarding equivalence of qualifications at various stages of education system have been initiated with countries like France, EU, Germany etc; The country-wise data of NRIs and PIOs was re-compiled by Government in April 2016. This data has been posted on Ministry's website for ready access.

# Other issues

- **Recommendation:** MEA to request foreign Missions/Posts in India, particularly from the GCC countries, to empanel more hospitals for pre-departure medical check-up in an easy and cost-effective manner; Ministry of Finance to review application of service tax on remittances; MEA to support Punjab Governments proposal to build NRI Bhawan in New Delhi.
- **Action Taken:** Director General, Executive Board of the Health Ministers' Council for GCC States has been requested to empanel more hospitals and for recognition of reputed Indian hospitals for pre departure medical check-up of Indian emigrants; This is under consideration of the Government; Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra has been launched.



**THANK YOU**