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PRESS RELEASE

**SCHEME FOR GIVING LEGAL /FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN
DESERTED BY THEIR OVERSEAS INDIAN SPOUSES**

I. Objective:

The objective of the scheme is to provide some financial assistance to needy women in distress who have been deserted by their overseas Indian spouses for obtaining counseling and legal services. The term "Overseas Indian" would include NRIs and foreign citizens of Indian origin. The counseling and legal services would be provided through credible Indian Women's Organizations/Indian Community Associations and NGOs identified for providing such services and empanelled with the Indian Missions in the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Gulf. The scheme is a welfare measure to support women of Indian origin in distress, through the mobilization of the local Indian community in the endeavor and with some financial assistance from the Government.

II. Scope of and Eligibility for the Scheme:

The scheme would be available to the women who have been deserted by their overseas Indian spouses or are facing divorce proceedings in a foreign country subject to the following conditions:-

- ✓ The woman is an Indian passport holder.
- ✓ The marriage of the woman has been solemnized in India.
- ✓ The woman is deserted within five years of the marriage.
- ✓ Divorce proceedings are initiated within five years of the marriage by her overseas Indian spouse.
- ✓ An ex-parte divorce has been obtained by the overseas Indian spouse within 10 years of marriage and a case for maintenance and alimony is to be filed

The scheme would not be available to a woman facing criminal charges or having a criminal case decided against her. Assistance will be limited to meeting initial cost and incidental charges for documentation and filing of the case by the Indian women's organization/NGO on the woman's behalf.

The assistance will be limited to US \$1500 per case and will be released to the organizations/NGO concerned to enable it to take steps to assist the woman in

documentation and preparatory work for filing the case. The women's organization/NGO will make efforts to enlist community advocates to extend further legal assistance/appearance in court etc on a pro-bono basis.

III. Pattern of Assistance:

Under the scheme Indian Missions in the countries concerned would empanel credible Indian Women's Organizations/ Indian Community Associations/NGOs. The applications for providing legal aid received by the Missions would be examined by an officer designated by the Head of the Mission on case-to-case basis and approved by Head of Mission/Deputy Chief of the Mission.

This article has been obtained courtesy of The Indian Consulate General Website