

Interim Report on the  
Persons of Indian Origin Card  
(PIO Card) Scheme





The High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora is unanimously of the view that it would be appropriate to submit interim recommendations to the Government of India on certain specific issues, pending the preparation of its Final Report. The High Level Committee has come to the conclusion that the PIO Card Scheme is an appropriate subject for making interim recommendations. Hence, the present Report.

### **Background of the PIO Card Scheme**

- 24.2. The genesis of the PIO Card Scheme lay in the long-standing demand for dual citizenship which has been raised from time to time by persons of Indian origin who have, for various reasons, obtained citizenship of foreign countries. The demand has also received wide support from certain sections of Non-Resident Indians. While the issue of dual citizenship will be addressed by the Committee in some detail in its main Report, a brief recapitulation of the background and developments would provide the perspective essential for a proper understanding of the Scheme as it was formulated, the response it has evoked, and a review of the further steps needed to make it effective.
- 24.3. The desire and the demand for dual citizenship was particularly strongly articulated by substantial segments of Indians in the countries of Europe and North America. To many of them, the idea of dual citizenship means an affirmation of their Indian nationality and identity. Many of them and their children are post-Independence immigrants to the western countries. Many others and their families went to Europe and North America from different parts of the world, more particularly from East Africa. They continue to cherish their Indian identity. They had taken the passports of the countries in which they had settled down because it was logical and convenient, but they wanted a way to maintain their connection with the mother country. Many NRIs are eligible for the citizenship of the countries in which they have settled, and the acquisition of the passports of those countries would facilitate visa-free travel for them to certain countries, but they do not wish to lose their Indian citizenship for a variety of reasons. The PIOs and NRIs in West Europe and North America have, therefore, been putting forward their demand for dual citizenship. It was also argued in favour of the demand that grant of dual citizenship will promote free flow of capital, investments and human resources, as a large number of PIOs would like to make their

contribution in the economic development of the country, that it would give practical advantage for facilitating movement and travel for business and employment and will provide them better legal rights to urban real estate and other kinds of movable and immovable properties in India, without seeking approvals of the Reserve Bank of India thus promoting their participation in trade, business, industry and philanthropy in India. On the other hand, in many countries where the Indian Diaspora was permanently settled from the nineteenth century onwards, people of Indian origin do not seek dual citizenship; they identify themselves as citizens of the countries where they have been settled for generations. They would find the PIO Card or a Document of Indian National Origin a welcome facility and a useful link with India. Their interest in those links is largely cultural, religious, educational and economic.

- 24.4. The demand for dual citizenship was considered by the Government, in some detail in 1992, when a Committee of Secretaries and a Group of Ministers considered the issue. The High Level Committee understands that the demand for Dual Citizenship was not accepted in view of various constitutional, legal, political and security implications. The issue has, however, remained a live issue and is a part of the Terms of Reference of the High Level Committee.
- 24.5. After prolonged consideration over a number of years, the Government decided to introduce a PIO Card Scheme in March, 1999. The Scheme was designed to meet the aspirations of the NRIs/PIOs substantially. The Committee is of the considered view that PIO Card Scheme would remain relevant for many PIOs who would not wish to seek or opt for dual citizenship in any event.

### **Salient Features of the Scheme**

- 24.6. The PIO scheme was notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Gazette of India on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1999. A copy of the Notification is at the Annexure to this chapter. The main features of the Scheme, as notified, are as under:
- 24.7. **Person of Indian Origin** means a foreign citizen (not being a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries as may be specified by the Central Government from time to time) if,
- (i) he/she at any time held an Indian passport; or
  - (ii) he/she or either of his/her parents or grandparents or great grand parents was born in and was permanently resident in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 and other territories that became part of India thereafter provided neither was at any time a citizen of any of the aforesaid countries (as referred to in 2 (b) of the Ministry of Home Affairs Notification referred to above);
  - (iii) he/she is a spouse of a citizen of India or a person of Indian origin covered under (i) or (ii) above.
- 24.8. **Validity of PIO Card:** A PIO Card shall be valid for a period of twenty years subject to the validity of the passport of the applicant.

- 24.9. **Fee** A fee of US \$ 1000, inclusive of US \$ 250 (non-refundable) as processing fee, will be payable along with the application. In case of rejection of the application, only US \$ 750 shall be refunded to the applicant.
- 24.10. **Facilities to be extended to a PIO Card Holder**
- (i) A PIO Card holder shall not require a visa to visit India.
  - (ii) A PIO Card holder will be exempted from the requirement of registration if his stay in India does not exceed 180 days.
  - (iii) In the event of continuous stay in India of the PIO Card holder exceeding 180 days, he/she shall have to get himself/herself registered within 30 days of the expiry of 180 days with the concerned Foreigners Registration officer at District Headquarters.
  - (iv) A PIO Card holder shall enjoy parity with NRIs in respect of all facilities available to the latter in the economic, financial and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural/plantation properties. No parity shall be allowed in the sphere of political rights.
- 24.11. **Authority to grant a PIO Card** The Card would be issued to eligible applicants through the concerned Indian Embassies/High Commissions/Consulates. For those staying in India on a long term visa, the card would be issued by the concerned Foreigners Regional Registration officer at Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, the Chief Immigration Officer at Chennai), or the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.

## **Response to the Scheme**

- 24.12. The PIO Card Scheme was designed to provide certain additional facilities to Persons of Indian Origin to enhance their sense of belonging and to address their desire to strengthen links with their motherland. It was meant to meet the demand for dual nationality to a considerable extent. The Scheme has, however, failed to evoke an enthusiastic response. We understand that **only about 1100 Persons of Indian Origin have applied for and obtained PIO cards so far.**
- 24.13. One of the reasons for the lukewarm response to the PIO Card Scheme seems to be lack of information and publicity. The Scheme has not been adequately explained and projected. Many of its benefits are not understood and appreciated. It may be that some of the foreign passport holders of Indian origin feel, rightly or wrongly, that a PIO Card is a poor substitute for dual citizenship. From the avalanche of representations received by the Committee, it is, however, clear that the main reason for the marginal response to the PIO Card Scheme is that the fee of US\$ 1000 per person for the PIO Card is regarded as excessive and exorbitant. Many would-be applicants for PIO Cards find a five year visa a more economical option. On the other hand, “the price tag” cannot be said to be so prohibitive for the more affluent PIOs in Europe and North America as to make the Scheme attractive to only an insignificant number. We are of the view

that the message of the Scheme and its positive aspects were not projected attractively and that is why the Scheme appears to have failed. We feel that the Scheme should be re-launched and should be made more attractive. We should also not entertain exaggerated estimates of prospective applicants for PIO Cards or even for dual nationality if that idea were to be accepted. We are of the view that the Scheme should be projected as a part of the bridge-building exercise and not as a revenue-raising project. The fee of \$ 1000 per person for a PIO Card clearly proved to be a psychological and monetary disincentive even for the PIOs in the affluent countries of Europe and North America. In any case, in countries in which no fee is charged for an Indian visa and in the countries where the average income level is not as high as that in the more industrialised countries, the fee of \$ 1000 for each member of the family ruled out the PIO Card as a practical proposition.

## Benefits under the Scheme

24.14. We consider it necessary to point out that a holder of a PIO Card is eligible for a number of social-economic, financial and educational benefits. These benefits, included in the Scheme, **but not notified in detail, and inadequately publicised**, are listed below:

- (i) Visa free entry into India for a period of 20 years i.e. validity of the card.
- (ii) No requirement to register with the Foreigners Registration Offices, for a continuous stay upto 180 days, registration required to be done within 30 days of the expiry of 180 days.
- (iii) Parity with Non Resident Indians (NRIs) in respect of facilities available to the latter in economic, financial and educational fields viz.,
  - (a) All facilities in the matter of acquisition, holding, transfer and disposal of immovable properties in India, excluding agricultural and plantation properties.
  - (b) Facilities available to children of NRIs for getting admission to educational institutions in India including medical colleges, engineering colleges, Institutes of Technology, Institutes of Management etc. under the general category.
  - (c) Facilities available under the various housing schemes of LIC, State Governments and other Government agencies.
  - (d) All future benefits to be extended by the Government of India from time to time in different sectors to NRIs after the commencement of the scheme will be applicable to the PIO Card holders as well.
  - (e) PIO Card holders can undertake employment in India without any separate permission. However, permission from other Departments (e.g. appointment as Managing director on the Board of Public Limited Companies/Director will require permission from the Department of Company Affairs or in case of practising professionals such as doctors etc., prior approval of Ministry of Health/Medical Council or India etc), if required, is to be obtained separately.

## Restrictions on PIO Card Holders

24.15. The only restrictions that have been placed on the PIO Card holders are as follows:

- No political rights will be available to them.
- They cannot acquire agricultural/plantation land.
- Prior permission of the Government would be required for undertaking missionary work, research and mountaineering expedition in India.
- Prior permission of the Government would be required for visiting areas notified as restricted/protected, from time to time.

We may point out that in many countries which provide for dual citizenship, non-resident Diaspora is not given electoral and other political rights. The requirements of prior permission in respect of certain specified work, or to visit certain notified restricted or protected areas are clearly quite reasonable.

## Scope of the Scheme and the Task of the Committee

24.16. The Committee is of the view that the PIO Card Scheme is based on an essentially sound footing. In a sense it provides for “dual nationality” to an extent without dual citizenship. The Committee is of the opinion that the Scheme ought to be modified in certain particulars, and certain additional benefits should be extended to the Card holders. Moreover, the Scheme would have to be explained and publicised more fully as a substantial functional substitute for dual nationality. There are many countries of the world which do not accept the concept of dual citizenship. The PIO Card recognizes national origin and is thus a document of nationality or national origin. Whereas an Indian citizen’s passport is a document of citizenship, a PIO Card is a **passport of nationality or national origin. It confers a cluster of rights and privileges, which are not conferred on foreign citizens.** Those rights and privileges can also be enlarged from time to time. Our recommendations are intended to strengthen the Scheme known as the PIO Card Scheme.

## Issues Before the Committee

24.17. On the basis of numerous representations made to it, and consultations with the concerned officials, the Committee identified the following issues which need to be addressed:

- (i) Validity of the Card: Should it continue to be 20 years? Should we introduce additionally a card with a shorter validity?
- (ii) Should we provide a special dispensation for dependant children, to make the Scheme more popular to the Second and Third Generation PIOs?
- (iii) What factors should we take into account to make the fee structure rational and pragmatic?

- (iv) What other measures should be adopted to make the Scheme more attractive to the persons for whom it is intended?

## Nomenclature

24.18. We should launch it as a Document of Indian Nationality or Passport of Indian National Origin which may be taken by persons of Indian origin as a badge of honour and national pride. It should be attractively designed when it is re-launched. Like a passport, it would serve as a travel document for travel to India and for identification for various purposes within India.

## Validity of the Card

24.19. The Committee is of the view that many would-be applicants would prefer a Document with ten-year validity at a reduced fee. A 10-year card would be more affordable for medium-sized or large families, who may like to obtain the documents of national origin for the entire family. Retired persons, pensioners and senior citizens would find a document of ten-year validity at a lower fee more affordable. The document may, however, be allowed to be renewed or extended on payment of an additional fee.

24.20. The Committee unanimously **recommends the introduction of a Document of Indian Nationality or Indian Origin or a PIO Card valid for ten years at a lower fee. The Committee also recommends that the scheme of Cards of twenty years' validity should be continued.**

## Special Dispensation for Children

24.21. The Committee noted that the first generation PIOs have a strong emotional bond with the motherland and may be more inclined to obtain the PIO Card. However, there is a need to promote the Scheme more vigorously amongst the second, third and fourth generations of PIOs, and encourage them to identify in a concrete, constant and visible manner with India. One option would be to lower the fee for the 20-year card for the children of the PIOs. After detailed discussions and in the interest of a simple fee structure, the Committee decided **to recommend that PIOs up to the age of 18 years should be given a 20-year PIO card, while paying only the fee for the 10-year card applicable to adults.**

## FEE STRUCTURE FOR THE PIO CARD:

24.22. There are a number of ways to address the issue of a rationalised fee structure for the PIO Card. These are discussed below:

### (i) Visa fees currently payable by the PIOs for entry into India

Since a PIO Card is conceptually not merely a substitute for a visa and carries with it many other benefits as explained above, the visa fees payable by PIOs cannot be the sole determinant for the PIO Card fees. However, the Committee felt that this is an important factor to be taken into



account, since the PIO card permits visa free entry into India during the period of its validity, irrespective of the number of visits. Free access to India is an important consideration for many PIOs. A number of PIOs visit India regularly to renew family ties or on business, but most of them visit India only once in a while. Moreover, according to the uniform visa fee regime applicable to citizens of most countries, a five year visa for India costs US\$ 130 only. The US passport holders pay US \$ 130 for a five year and the same fee for a ten year visa. They also pay an application fee of US\$ 20. Gratis visas are granted on the basis of bilateral reciprocity to nationals of Argentina, Hungary, Jamaica, Korea (DPRK), Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Poland, South Africa, Slovak Republic and Uruguay. Amongst the countries with which India has a bilateral gratis visa fee regime, Jamaica, Mauritius, and South Africa have significant populations of Indian origin. For the PIOs in those countries, the visa-free entry feature of the PIO Card Scheme which entails a heavy cost, is not at all attractive. Where entire families have migrated, without any relatives in India, the visits of such PIOs to India are rare. To those PIOs also, the visa-free aspect of the PIO card is not particularly meaningful.

- 24.23. After detailed discussions, the Committee came to the conclusion that the visa fee regime as a factor had to be considered in tandem with other factors such as the part of the world where the PIOs live, the exemptions from paying visa fee in certain countries on a reciprocal basis, the income-level of the community, and other factors which are briefly discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

**(ii) Income-level of the Community and cultural differences**

The Committee noted that PIOs in several countries/regions, such as Fiji, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Caribbean etc. have a per capita income much lower than that of the PIOs in comparison to countries of North America and Europe. The Committee feels that it is important to make a special effort to facilitate the acquisition of PIO Cards by members of the PIO communities in those areas, by charging a lower fee.

- 24.24. On the basis of the considerations set out above, the Committee is of the view that the fee for PIO Card need not be uniform for all countries. Having carefully considered various options, **the Committee recommends that a simplified two-tier fee structure should be adopted for issue of PIO Cards, respectively, to applicants, who are citizens of countries with high per capita income, and to those who are citizens of countries with middle and low per capita income.** For classification of countries as high income and middle/low income, the Committee have relied upon the classification adopted in the Human Development Report, 2000 published by UNDP, which classifies 34 countries (mainly from North America and West Europe), as “high income” countries on the basis of GNP per capita. For the purpose of classifying countries by income, the UNDP Human Development Report, 2000 groups various countries by income based on World Bank classifications (valid through July, 2000) as under:

High income countries GNP per capita of \$ 9361 or more in 1998

Middle income countries GNP per capita (\$ 761-9360)

Low income countries GNP per capita (\$ 760 or less)

24.25 The Committee is of the view that the classification of countries into high income and middle/ low income countries, as provided for in the Human Development Report, 2000 is the most appropriate classification for purposes of developing a simplified two-tier fee structure for the PIO Card Scheme. The 34 countries in the high income bracket in the report, are also the countries where the Indian Diaspora has higher income levels. The Diaspora in the remaining countries (middle and low income levels) should be charged a lower fee for the PIO Card.

24.26. The Committee is conscious of the fact that there may be many PIOs in the high-income countries, who would plead that their economic situation is well below the standard assumed by the UNDP in its Human Development Report. However, in devising a system, the problems of such small groups within the larger groups cannot always be satisfactorily resolved.

24.27 Based on the above considerations, the Committee recommends the following two-tier fee structure.

Country of citizenship	20 year PIO Card	10 year PIO Card	Rationale
Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom & United States.	US\$500+US\$100 non-refundable processing fee	US\$300+US\$100 non-refundable processing fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High income countries as per Human Development Report, 2000 published by UNDP</li> <li>● Five year visa for India costs US\$ 130</li> <li>● US nationals get 5/10 years visa for US \$ 130. They also pay application fee of US\$ 20.</li> </ul>
All Other countries covered by the PIO Card scheme.	US\$150+US\$100 non-refundable processing fee	US\$100+US\$100 non-refundable processing fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Middle/low income countries as per Human Development Report, 2000 published by UNDP</li> <li>● Five year visa for India costs US\$ 130</li> <li>● Gratis visas are given to nationals of Argentina, Hungary, Jamaica, Korea (DPRK), Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Poland, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Uruguay.</li> </ul>

**Children below 18 years of age will be given a 20-year card, on payment of Fee prescribed for a 10-year PIO Card for an adult.**

## Proposal for PIO-Card-Linked Bond Scheme

- 24.28. The Committee is of the view that when a PIO Card with its attendant privileges is granted to an eligible person who has acquired foreign citizenship, the mother country can legitimately expect from such an individual, something in return for the grant of a status that is in many ways at par with Indian citizenship. This may be regarded as a symbolic return for what India would have done for that person in his or her formative years or as an acknowledgement of ancestral origins. The principle of abiding interest in the country of origin is a well-recognized consideration for the grant of dual citizenship. The acquisition of financial instruments such as the Resurgent India Bonds or the India Millennium Deposit Bonds could legitimately be treated as evidence of such abiding interest, even if some would argue that investors in such bonds are encouraged to purchase them by the logic of money which is evident in the high rates of return on offer.
- 24.29. The Committee is aware that several countries have organised special bond issues for the financing of their infrastructure development. The bonds floated by the Government of Israel may, for instance, be of special interest to us as they have several attractive features that we could usefully adopt. For instance, Israel bonds are not even restricted to people of Jewish origin. They can be purchased in denominations as low as US \$ 250. They are freely transferable. Some of them can be cashed in Israel after one year, or used for the purchase of tickets on Israel's flagship airline, EL AL. Most of them can be gifted to one's immediate family members, or donated to charitable institutions.
- 24.30. The Committee recommends that the Government of India and also the State Governments should, from time to time as may be considered appropriate, issue for purchase by PIOs (including, of course NRIs also) special Ten Year India Development bonds which would be designated in such freely convertible foreign exchange as may be decided by the RBI. These could later be made available for purchase even by non-Indians. **A contributor to such bonds of a specified total denomination could, unless there are special reasons for not doing so, be rewarded with a gratis PIO Card valid for 10 years** if he is so interested, for such bonds signify a long-term commitment to India by way of investments.
- 24.31. Such a scheme could, for example, have the following illustrative features, which could be further refined by the Ministry of Finance:
- i) Investments in bonds aggregating US \$ 10,000 would entitle the holder to a free PIO Card that would be valid for a period of 10 years.
  - ii) Each additional bond investment of US \$ 5,000 by the same person would entitle one member of his or her family (spouse or child) to obtain a free PIO Card that would have the same validity as that of the original investor.

- iii) If the above bonds were to be renewed by the original purchaser, for a period beyond 10 years, the validity of the free PIO Card(s) already issued would also be extended for the same period.
- iv) There would be no objection to the sale or transfer of the above bonds. But in the event of any such transaction taking place, the original bond holder, as well as his or her dependent beneficiary, would retain the free PIO Card(s) already granted to them. The purchaser or transferee of such bonds would not be entitled to a free PIO Card.

### **Proposal for Gratis Visa Card to Eminent PIOs**

24.32. The Committee further recommends that if a PIO who has risen to an exceptionally eminent position in the country of his or her adoption or plays an important role in building bridges between India and the country of his adoption expresses a desire to obtain a PIO Card, it should be granted to such a person without any charge. This kind of facility should be accorded to present or past Heads of State or Government, Speakers or other Presiding Officers of their national parliaments, Chief Justices of apex courts, other eminent persons and more especially those who help to build bridges of goodwill for India. A PIO Card could be offered to them *suo moto* in the same way as the keys of a city and its honorary citizenship are sometimes conferred on foreign citizens as a mark of distinction. This would also help in according a higher profile to the PIO Card and make the scheme more popular.

### **Further Suggestions to Make the Scheme More Attractive**

- 24.33. Apart from rationalising the fee structure for the PIO Card Scheme, the Committee also recommends the following measures for consideration of the government, to make the scheme more attractive:
- i) Separate counters may be provided for PIO card holders at all international airports in India.
  - ii) PIO card holders may be charged at Indian rates while paying entrance fee for museums and monuments in India.
  - iii) For purposes of issue of a driving licence in India, a PIO card holder should not be required to produce Ration Card or other proof of residence. production of the PIO card should be sufficient for this purpose.
  - iv) For purposes of opening bank accounts in India etc., production of PIO Card as proof of identity should be sufficient.

To mitigate the difficulties of former citizens of independent India, specially senior citizens, who intend spending the remainder of their lives in India, a provision may be made under section 5 of the Indian Citizenship Act, enabling an eligible person, who has had a PIO Card, to apply for re-

acquisition of Indian citizenship, without fulfilling prescribed requirements of residence in India. This would provide the necessary relief and remedy to many senior citizens who would like to transfer their pension funds to India for purposes of spending the evening of their lives in India, but who are allowed to transfer the funds out of the country of their citizenship, only if they acquire the nationality of another country.

### **Periodic Review of the Scheme**

The Committee recommends the review of the Scheme after every three years.

Sd/  
(L. M. Singhvi)  
Chairman

Sd/  
(R. L. Bhatia)  
Member

Sd/  
(J. R. Hiremath)  
Member

Sd/  
(Baleshwar Agrawal)  
Member

Sd/  
(J. C. Sharma)  
Member-Secretary

3 April, 2001

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**MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**NOTIFICATION**

**New Delhi the 30th March, 1999**

**PIO CARD SCHEME**

F. No. 26011/4/98-IC, I-1, Short title and commencement:

(i) This scheme may be called the Scheme for issuance of Person of Indian Origin Card (PIO Card).

(ii) It shall come into force with effect from 31st March, 1999.

2. Definition - In this scheme, unless the context otherwise requires:-

(a) "Indian Mission" means the Embassy of India/High Commission of India/Indian Consulate in a foreign country.

(b) "Person of Indian origin" means a foreign citizen (not being a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries as may be specified by the Central Government from time to time) if;

(i) he/she at any time held an Indian passport; or

(ii) he/she or either of his/her parents or grand parents or great grand parents was born in and permanently resident in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 and other territories that became part of India thereafter provided neither was at any time a citizen of any of the aforesaid countries (as referred to in 2 (b) above); or

(iii) he/she is a spouse of a citizen of India or a person of Indian origin covered under (i) or (ii) above.

(c) "PIO Card" means a card issued under this Scheme.

3. Form of application for issue/renewal of a PIO Card:-

An application for issue/renewal of a PIO Card shall be made in the prescribed form and shall be accompanied by documentary evidence to show that the applicant is a person of Indian origin as defined.

4. Authority to which application is to be made:-

(i) An application for issue of a PIO Card shall be made to an Indian Mission in the country where the applicant is ordinarily resident.

(ii) Applicants already in India on Long Term Visa (more than one year) shall make the application for issue of a PIO Card to the following authorities:-

(A) Those residing in:-

- |     |          |   |   |
|-----|----------|---|---|
| (a) | Delhi    | - | Foreigners Regional Registration Officer, Hans Bhavan, I.P. Estate, New Delhi - 110 002                         |
| (b) | Mumbai   | - | Foreigners Regional Registration Officer, Annexe II, Commissioner of Police, Crawford Market, Mumbai - 400001   |
| (c) | Calcutta | - | Foreigners Regional Registration Officer, 237, Acharya Jagdish Chandra Bose Road, Calcutta - 700020             |
| (d) | Chennai  | - | Chief Immigration Officer, Bureau of Immigration, Shastri Bhavan Annexe, No. 26, Haddows Road, Chennai - 600006 |



(B) Those residing in areas other than (A) above:-

Joint Secretary (Foreigners), Ministry of Home Affairs, 1st floor,  
Lok Nayak Bhavan, Khan Market, New Delhi - 110003

5. Authority to grant a PIO Card

The authority to grant a PIO Card shall be an officer in an Indian Mission notified for the purpose or the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India or the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer, New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta or the Chief Immigration Officer, Chennai.

6. Validity of PIO Card

A PIO Card shall be valid for a period of twenty years subject to the validity of the passport of the applicant.

7. Fee:

A fee of US \$1000, inclusive of US \$250 (non-refundable) as processing fee, will be payable alongwith the application. In case of rejection of the application, US \$750 shall alone be refunded to the applicant.

8. Facilities to be extended to a PIO Card holder

- (i) A PIO Card holder shall not require a visa to visit India.
- (ii) A PIO Card holder will be exempted from the requirement of registration if his stay in India does not exceed 180 days.
- (iii) In the event of continuous stay in India of the PIO Card holder exceeding 180 days, he/she shall have to get himself/herself registered within 30 days of the expiry of 180 days with the concerned Foreigners Registration Officer at District Headquarter.
- (iv) A PIO Card holder shall enjoy parity with NRIs in respect of all facilities available to the latter in the economic, financial and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural/plantation properties. No parity shall be allowed in the sphere of political rights.

9. Cancellation of PIO Card:

The Central Government may, by order, cancel the PIO Card, If it is satisfied that:

- (a) The PIO Card was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact; or
- (b) The PIO Card holder has shown himself by act or speech to be disaffected towards the Constitution of India and other laws of India; or
- (c) The PIO Card holder is a citizen or subject of any country at war with, or committing external aggression against India; or of any other country assisting the country at war with, or committing such aggression against India; or
- (d) The PIO Card holder has been sentenced in India for indulging in acts of terrorism, smuggling of narcotics, arms, ammunitions etc. or has been sentenced for committing an offence punishable with imprisonment upto one year or fine upto rupees ten thousand; or
- (e) It is not conducive to the public interest that the person should continue to hold a PIO Card.

No reasons shall be assigned for withdrawal of the Card.

M.B.Kaushal, Spl. Secy.