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Title: Regarding defective bill on religious practices of Sabarimala Temple

SHRIMATI MEENAKASHI LEKHI (NEW DELHI): Sir, you have allowed me to speak on a very important issue of Sabarimala.

In this House, many times, this subject has been brought up. On the 28th September, 2016, the Supreme Court passed an order and denied the special Denomination Status to Shri Ayyappa Temple, and because of that denial, the rituals and practices which are exclusive to this temple have been denied. In the absence of the special denominational status, the protection of Article 26 which is available to other religious practices is not available to this Temple. A Bill has been sought to be brought in which I feel is defective because the special denominational status which had to be catered to or had to be applied has not really been applied in the absence of which the religious practices are denied. It has got two-fold problems. One is that the Hindu temples and Hindu institutions suffer because of this particular judgment. In Hindi translation of Article 26 of the Constitution, it uses the word '*Sampradaya*'. So, if '*Sampradaya*' can be protected and if *Sampradayik* practices can be protected, the Hindu temples will see that the rituals and practices are protected.

In the morning also, some people tried to bring the issue of Triple Talaq etc. Let me put it across in this House once again that the Constitution talks about Uniform Civil Code, not Uniform Religious Code. The religious practices need to be discriminated from the civil

practices and these are religious practices. There are festivals like Attukal Pongala where men are not allowed and if Attukal Pongala needs to be protected, I think the 'denominational practices' need to be defined which is the job of this House. We should define it.

A defective Bill is only serving the purpose of optics creating some headlines in some newspaper in Kerala and down south. I think, we as a legislative body need to understand the difference when review petition is pending. The debate should be on 'what are denominational practices' and protect all the worshippers of Ayyappa and rituals. *Jai Jai Ayyappa!*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel, Shri Devaji Patel, Shri Nalin Kumar Kateel are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati Meenakashi Lekhi.